

FOURTH SESSION

Wednesday, 7th June 2017

9.30am

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS** (Reports pp261-272) was submitted by the Very Rev Dr TN Hamilton, together with the following Supplementary Report:

NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL SITUATION

1. As the Council's report was being finalised, a snap UK General Election was called for Thursday 8th June and, subsequently, the talks process aimed at restoring Northern Ireland's devolved institutions was suspended. It is clear that the ongoing political crisis is damaging the very fabric of society: there is no agreed budget; welfare reform lacks ongoing oversight; small but vital community services are under threat; much-talked-about reform of the health service has scarcely / not progressed; and, yet again, victims and survivors are left without much of the support they need.
2. One of the primary functions of government is to provide for the welfare of all the people. Without a well-functioning, locally accountable administration in place, it is the vulnerable who suffer the most. There is, therefore, a clear moral imperative for the current political crisis to be resolved urgently. As the Moderator said in his statement on 16th January, for our institutions to function well, "there must be a commitment to openness, generosity of spirit and cooperation for the common good". We want to see the establishment of good government as soon as possible, based on good working relationships that are progressively formed through the demonstration of these core values.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND PANEL

The Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow (Convener) writes:

3. Since the report of the Republic of Ireland Panel was finalised, the Citizens' Assembly has voted to recommend that Article 40.3.3 (the Eighth Amendment) be replaced with a constitutional provision that explicitly authorises the Oireachtas to legislate to address termination of pregnancy, any rights of the unborn, and any rights of the woman. Such

change requires a referendum. The Citizens' Assembly has further recommended that abortion should be made available through legislation in the following additional circumstances:

Circumstance	Term Limit
Serious risk to the physical health of the woman	No restriction as to gestational age
Serious risk to the mental health of the woman	Up to 22 weeks gestation
Serious risk to the health of the woman	Up to 22 weeks gestation
Risk to the physical health of the woman	Up to 22 weeks gestation
Risk to the mental health of the woman	Up to 22 weeks gestation
Risk to the health of the woman	Up to 22 weeks gestation
Pregnancy as a result of rape	Up to 22 weeks gestation
The unborn child has a foetal abnormality that is likely to result in death before or shortly after birth	No restriction as to gestational age
The unborn child has a significant foetal abnormality that is not likely to result in death before or shortly after birth	Up to 22 weeks gestation
Socio-economic reasons	Up to 12 weeks gestation
No restriction as to reasons	Up to 12 weeks gestation

4. The Citizens' Assembly subsequently voted to recommend that a distinction should not be drawn between the physical and mental health of the woman.
5. The Chair of the Citizens' Assembly, Ms Justice Laffoy, will deliver a report to the Oireachtas before the end of June 2017. A Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment is currently being formed to consider the report and its recommendations when they are received. The Committee is expected to report its conclusions and recommendations to both Houses of the Oireachtas within three months of its first public meeting. Some elected representatives have suggested that a referendum on the Eighth Amendment could be held in early 2018.
6. It is clear that the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly, if implemented, will have very serious consequences in terms of the protection afforded to the unborn. As a referendum may be held

before June 2018, it is proposed that a Task Group be set up by the General Assembly to report and make recommendations on the Eighth Amendment to both the Council for Public Affairs and the General Council, with the General Council authorised to act on behalf of the Assembly. The pace of developments suggests that the PCI may be required to make a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee before the Task Group can report to the next meeting of the General Council. Therefore, an appended resolution authorises the Task Group to inform the Joint Committee of the direction of the Task Group's thinking.

Additional Resolutions:

5. That the General Assembly express serious disquiet about the damage being done to the fabric of Northern Irish society by the current political crisis, and encourage all involved in upcoming political talks to urgently seek a resolution that establishes good government based on good working relationships, so that confidence can be restored, instability minimised and major challenges (including those involving the Brexit negotiations) faced together.
6. That the General Assembly, recognising the important role and responsibilities of government in respect of so many issues affecting people throughout Ireland, north and south, encourage Presbyterians to participate in the democratic process and vote in each election as and when it is called.
7. That the General Assembly:
 - (a) express their deep concern regarding the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly to significantly widen access to abortion in the Republic of Ireland;
 - (b) call upon the Irish Government to ensure that the best possible care and support is made available to women experiencing crisis pregnancies;
 - (c) urge Presbyterians, in judging how to vote in the event of any referendum on the Eighth Amendment, to carefully consider the pro-life position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland upholding the sacredness of human life.

8. That the General Assembly appoint a Task Group under the Council for Public Affairs, consisting of the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly, Convener of the Council for Public Affairs, Convener of the Republic of Ireland Panel, Public Affairs Officer, Professor Stephen Williams, Dr Victoria Carroll, with power to co-opt up to 4 others, with the following remit:
 - (a) to draw up a report and recommendations concerning the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of Ireland - Bunreacht na hÉireann, to be presented to both the Council for Public Affairs and the General Council, with the General Council authorised, if necessary, to act on behalf of the Assembly in connection with any issue arising;
 - (b) to make submissions to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, following the approval of the General Council or, if time constraints do not permit such approval, as authorised by the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly.

Renumbered Resolution:

9. That the Report of the Council for Public Affairs be received

T NORMAN HAMILTON

Moved by the Very Rev Dr TN Hamilton, seconded by Mr Gavin Norris, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly welcome the establishment of the Controlled Schools' Support Council as a dedicated advocacy and support body for Controlled Schools and strongly encourage the development and maintenance of the Controlled Sector's warm, open, Christian ethos.
2. That the General Assembly thank those who serve as Transferor Governors in schools as they manage increasing and exceptional demands on their time and energy, and the outworking of budgetary uncertainty and decreasing resources.
3. That the General Assembly recognise the need to address educational underachievement and call for the identification of public policies and practical measures that will raise standards and promote the value of education.

4. That the General Assembly:
 - (a) note the four potential ‘options’ in relation to admissions for denominational schools put forward by the Minister for Education and Skills;
 - (b) recognise the difficulties that Protestant and other minority faith schools would face if any of the four ‘options’ were introduced;
 - (c) call again upon the Irish Government to ensure that its policy protects minority rights and enables ongoing access to, and the sustainability of, schools with a Protestant ethos.

With the leave of the House, Additional Resolution 5 was submitted in amended form, substituting the words ‘and encourage’ by the words ‘and strongly encourage’.

5. That the General Assembly express serious disquiet about the damage being done to the fabric of Northern Irish society by the current political crisis, and strongly encourage all involved in upcoming political talks to urgently seek a resolution that establishes good government based on good working relationships, so that confidence can be restored, instability minimised and major challenges (including those involving the Brexit negotiations) faced together.
6. That the General Assembly, recognising the important role and responsibilities of government in respect of so many issues affecting people throughout Ireland, north and south, encourage Presbyterians to participate in the democratic process and vote in each election as and when it is called.
7. That the General Assembly:
 - (a) express their deep concern regarding the recommendations of the Citizens’ Assembly to significantly widen access to abortion in the Republic of Ireland;
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 - (a) to draw up a report and recommendations concerning the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of Ireland - Bunreacht na hÉireann, to be presented to both the Council for Public Affairs and the General Council, with the General Council authorised, if necessary, to act on behalf of the Assembly in connection with any issue arising;
 - (b) to make submissions to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, following the approval of the General Council or, if time constraints do not permit such approval, as authorised by the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly.
9. That the Report of the Council for Public Affairs be received.

Intermission

RECEPTION OF RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS AND NEW LICENTIATES

The Moderator received Ministers recently retired and those recently licensed, who were presented respectively by the Rev NJ McCullough, Convener of the Council for Training in Ministry, and the Rev Dr TD Allen, Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development. The Moderator led in prayer.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY** (Reports pp273-289), was submitted by the Rev NJ McCullough, together with the following Supplementary Report:

1. Union Theological College Management Committee

Correction:

in par 38 of the report (page 278) the last sentence should read 'As Dr Cowan was a licentiate of our Church, the Council issued a Call and he

was ordained and inducted as Lecturer in Historical Theology on 9th December, 2016.’

2. **Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee**

The following additions are made to the recommendations concerning Licentiates and Ministers without charge in Appendix 2 (pages 286-288).

Derry & Donegal

Rev DA Edgar to be retained as Minister without charge

Down

Rev JM Casement to be retained as Minister without charge.

Tyrone

Mr JA Dunn not to be retained as Licentiate without charge.

By way of update and amendment, the note concerning those no longer recorded as Licentiates or Ministers without charge in Appendix 2 on page 288 of the reports is replaced with the following:

DECEASED

Coleraine & Limavady

Rev JD Mark

Down

Rev RN Stewart

Iveagh

Rev EG McAuley

Route

Rev WJ Brown

ORDAINED

Down (transferred to **Armagh** after last General Assembly as Licentiate without charge)

Dr MC Cowan

NO REQUEST TO RETAIN RECEIVED FROM THEIR PRESBYTERY

Ards

Mr Edward Kirwan

South Belfast

Rev KA Drury

East Belfast

Rev DR Baker, Messrs SE Cowan and Paul Orr

Newry

Rev DB Murphy

NIGEL J McCULLOUGH

Moved by the Rev NJ McCullough, seconded by the Very Rev Dr HA Dunlop and agreed:

- 1 That the General Assembly express their appreciation of Professor Stephen Williams for his work as Professor of Systematic Theology and wish him a long and happy retirement.
- 2 That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

Name	Congregation	Presbytery
Philip Boyd	Bloomfield	East Belfast
Richard Hill	Richhill	Armagh
John McCracken	Abbey Monkstown	North Belfast
James O'Neill	Ballyrashane	Coleraine & Limavady
Mark Rodgers	Wellington	Ballymena

Business lapsed on Standing Orders (see page)

The Assembly engaged in worship conducted by the Moderator and others. The Moderator invited the Rev Professor Stephen Williams to address the Assembly.

The sederunt came to a close at 1.02pm, the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction.

FIFTH SESSION

Wednesday, 7th June 2016

2.00pm

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

LISTENING TO THE GLOBAL CHURCH

Leadership in the Crucible

The Rev SE Hughes introduced the presentation with insights from Habakkuk that had been shared with her by a Syrian Pastor. She then interviewed the Rt Rev Fedi Dagher of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria & Lebanon.

The Revs Dr MJ Welsh and Roy Gaston spoke about the Minsters' team that visited Jordan in April 2017, incorporating video clips of Dr Imad Shehadeh, Founder and President of the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary.

The Rev WS Marrs interviewed the Rev Vasco Kachipapa, General Secretary of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – Nkhoma Synod, about the challenges faced by church leaders in Malawi.

The Rev Dr PG McDowell interviewed the Rev Dr Zsolt Barta, from the Hungarian Reformed Church, about lessons in leadership gleaned from ministering in challenging circumstances in Eastern Europe.

Subsequent to each contribution there was a minute of silent reflection. Rev Dr SE Hughes provided a brief wrap-up after which the chorus, 'Spirit of the living God' was sung unaccompanied.

The Moderator brought the presentation to an end in prayer at 3.03pm.

Intermission

Section 2 of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp24-31) along with resolutions 8 & 9 (Reports p180) was submitted by the Rev Trevor Gribben, together with the following Supplementary Report:

Professor of Systematic Theology

1. Paragraph 44 of the report of the Council for Training in Ministry (page 279) refers to the retirement of the Rev Prof Stephen Williams and initial steps taken to source a replacement. The General Council, at its meeting on 13th October, appointed a number of its members ‘to advise the Council for Training in Ministry on making appropriate future provision for both the teaching of Systematic Theology in Union Theological College and the wider denominational role.’
2. This advice was that any replacement be at full professorial level. The Council for Training in Ministry met on 15th December and, in the light of this advice drew of a Job Description and Personnel specification. It appointed an Interview Panel made up as follows: *Principal (Very Rev Prof Stafford Carson), Conveners of the Committee and Council (Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop and Rev Nigel McCullough), Council Secretary (Rev Jim Stothers), Prof. Norma Dawson, a representative of the General Council (Very Rev Dr Rob Craig); and on a sit and deliberate basis, Ms Laura Kelly (or other member of Personnel department), Dr Joan Rahilly (QUB Institute of Theology), Prof Ivor Davidson (Hon. Professor of Systematic Theology in St Andrews University).*

It was also agreed that the Principal, Committee Convener and Council Secretary be given authority to co-opt replacements for any not able to serve.
3. The Interview Panel met on 27th February to shortlist and agree interview questions. Four applications had been received. Two of these did not meet the essential criteria. The Panel agreed that a wider field to choose from would be important, and that the Personnel Specification placed too much emphasis on a record of academic publications and not enough on both the particular requirements appropriate for the post in the context of contemporary delivery of teaching in Union Theological College, and experience of ordained ministry. It was intended that this would both increase the number of applicants and make it more likely that those who did apply would more fully meet the requirements of the College and the Church. The previous applicants were invited to reapply. The Principal, Council Secretary and Head of Personnel were tasked with drawing up a new Personnel Specification on this basis. The Job Description and revised Personnel Specification are in Appendices 1 and 2.

4. The changes made to the Personnel Specification are:

a. Qualifications and Knowledge

- *An ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, or eligible to become an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, understanding that subscription to the Westminster Standards will be required.*

was reworded for the sake of clarity to:

- ** An ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), or a Licentiate eligible to become such a Minister, **or a Minister of another denomination (or eligible to be ordained as such), and deemed eligible to transfer to PCI.*

* *The essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate be a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as provided for under excepted occupations in the Fair Employment Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*

** *PCI reserves the right to determine whether a candidate is eligible to transfer from another denomination*

and the reference to the Westminster Standards was reworded and moved to Special Circumstances and supplemented with a criterion relating to the doctrinal position and ethos of PCI and willingness to obey the Courts of the Church.

- *The ability to provide research led teaching in the area of Systematic Theology*

was added to the Essential Criteria and

- *A record of research and publications in the area of Systematic Theology*

was changed from an Essential Criterion to a Desirable Criterion.

b. Relevant Experience

- *2 years' experience as a Minister of a congregation*
- *Experience in the management and delivery of on-line courses or learning experiences*
- *Experience of effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning*

were made additional Desirable Criteria.

c. Special Circumstances

- *In full sympathy with the doctrinal position and ethos of the PCI and willing "loyally to implement" all decisions of the Courts of the Church*

- *Willing to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly's formula;*
"I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code (Chapter 1, Pars 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."

were made additional Essential Criteria.

5. The new Personnel Specification was agreed by the Council for Training in Ministry at its meeting on 27th March.
6. The General Council, at its meeting on 13th April, passed the following resolution:
That the General Council gives the Interview Panel, appointed by the Council for Training in Ministry in respect of a new Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological College, authority to nominate directly to the General Assembly on behalf of the Council.
7. The Interview Panel met on 27th April to shortlist and agree interview questions. Due to the unavailability of some of the previous members the panel membership on this occasion was:
Principal, Conveners of the Committee and Council, Council Secretary, Mrs Rosemary Hamilton; Very Rev Dr Michael Barry (General Council); and on a sit and deliberate basis, Ms Laura Kelly, Dr Joan Rahilly, Dr Stephen Holmes (Senior Lecturer in Theology in St Andrews University). Eight applications had been received. Four of these did not meet the essential criteria.
8. The Interview Panel met on 8th May and interviewed four applicants. It was agreed to nominate the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan for appointment by the General Assembly as Professor of Systematic Theology in Union Theological College from 1st September, 2017.
9. Brief factual descriptions of Dr McClenahan's Academic Training and Qualifications and Ministry Training and Experience are given at Appendix 3.

Appendix 1: Job Description

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Professor of Systematic Theology

Council/Agency: *Council for Training in Ministry, Union Theological College*

Salary Scale: *E6 (£40,125 to £48,884 for 2017)*

Responsible to: *The Principal of Union Theological College*

Main function of job: To design and develop the curriculum in the area of Systematic Theology as part of the Department of Systematic Theology & Church History, and to provide research-led teaching in keeping with the theological position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Under the overall leadership of the Principal of Union Theological College:

- to develop and deliver appropriate learning experiences for ministerial training and degree courses as required;
- to contribute to the spiritual and ministry formation and related assessment of Students for the Ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;
- to supervise departmental and inter-departmental postgraduate students as required;
- to contribute to the life of the College as a community of learning, worship and faith closely related to the Church whose students it seeks to train;
- to share in the pastoral care of students and/or residents of the College;
- to take part in the management and general administration of the College;
- to engage in on-going academic research and publication (sabbatical leave may be granted to facilitate this at the discretion of the Management Committee);
- to participate as a member of Committees and Panels of the Council for Training in Ministry, and in other Committees and Councils of PCI as required;

- to provide theologically-informed leadership and resources for the work of the Councils and Committees of the General Assembly, as required;
- to participate in the Institute of Theology of the Queen's University of Belfast, as required;
- to represent the College, as required;
- to adhere to the Equal Opportunity Policy and to promote equality of opportunity where possible;
- to work in accordance with other relevant workplace policies and procedures e.g. Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy.

Such other duties as are appropriate to the post as may be required by the Principal or the Union Theological College Management Committee.

Appendix 2: Final Personnel Specification

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Job Title:	Professor of Systematic Theology
Location:	Union Theological College
Responsible to:	The Principal of Union Theological College
Salary:	E6 (£40,125 - £48,884)

CRITERIA

1. Qualifications and Knowledge

Essential

- A PhD in Systematic Theology from a recognised university or academic institution
- * An ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), or a Licentiate eligible to become such a Minister, **or a Minister of another denomination (or eligible to be ordained as such), and deemed eligible to transfer to PCI.
- The ability to provide research led teaching in the area of Systematic Theology
- An informed understanding of the main theological issues affecting the contemporary Christian Church

Desirable

- A record of research and publications in the area of Systematic Theology
- An understanding of the challenges and opportunities of ministry in Ireland

- A postgraduate qualification in education, or the willingness to work towards achieving a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching (PGCHET)

2. Relevant Experience

Essential

- 2 years' experience of pastoral ministry or of working as part of a ministry team in a Christian congregation
- Previous experience of teaching in an academic or educational environment
- Proven administrative competence e.g. organisational skills, report writing, etc.
- Appropriate IT skills and experience

Desirable

- Experience of teaching Theology in a variety of contexts with students from different backgrounds.
- 2 years' experience as a Minister of a congregation
- Experience in the management and delivery of on-line courses or learning experiences
- Experience of effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning

3. Personal Attributes

Essential

- The ability to supervise the academic work of undergraduate and postgraduate level students
- A commitment to working with colleagues in achieving and maintaining the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- A commitment to undertaking academic research
- A commitment to continuous professional development
- The ability to contribute to the spiritual and ministry formation of students for the ministry
- A commitment to the work of Union Theological College, and the wider ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, which takes precedence over other opportunities and invitations
- A commitment to play a full and active part in the life of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Good communication skills, written and verbal, in both informal and formal settings
- Well-developed relational skills in both informal and formal settings
- The ability to work co-operatively as part of a team
- The ability to inspire, motivate and encourage others
- The ability to work under pressure
- The ability to work creatively and to use initiative

4. Physical Requirements

Essential

- Health – such as to allow for attendance reliability and work proficiency (reasonable adjustments will be made for those with a disability)
- Dress and appearance – must be acceptable to management within the working environment

5. Special Circumstances

Essential

- Respectful of the diversity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including theological diversity
- In full sympathy with the doctrinal position and ethos of the PCI and willing “loyally to implement” all decisions of the Courts of the Church
- Willing to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly’s formula;
 - I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code (Chapter 1, Pars 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*
- Willing to be flexible in working arrangements and hours to suit the needs of the post

* The essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate be a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as provided for under excepted occupations in the Fair Employment Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

** PCI reserves the right to determine whether a candidate is eligible to transfer from another denomination

Appendix 3: Rev Dr Michael McClenahan

A: Academic Training and Qualifications

The Friends’ School, Lisburn 1985-1992: 10 GCSEs and 3 ‘A’ levels.

St John’s College, the University of Oxford 1992-1996: MA (Hons)

Jurisprudence (2.1).

Exeter College, The University of Oxford 1999-2006: MA (Hons) Theology (1st class); MST (Ecclesiastical History); DPhil.

Union Theological College, Belfast 2006-2007: PG Cert in Ministry, PTFI (Passed).

B: Ministry Training and Experience

Union Theological College, Belfast 1998-1999.

Union Theological College, Belfast 2006-2007: PG Cert in Ministry, PTFI (Passed).

Licensed, West Kirk, North Belfast: 2007.

Licentiate Assistant, Greenwell Street (Newtownards), Ards: 2007-2010.

Ordained Knappagh & Lislooney, Armagh: 2011.

Minister Knappagh & Lislooney, Armagh: 2011-2015.

Minister Without Charge, Armagh: 2015-date.

Stated Supply, Vinecash, Armagh: 2015-date.

Additional Resolution:

- 8a. That the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan be appointed Professor of Systematic Theology from 1st September, 2017.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

Moved by the Rev TD Gribben, seconded by the Very Rev Dr RL Craig, and agreed:

9. That the priorities outlined in Priorities Appendix 1 be adopted as the priorities for the work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at General Assembly level, as delivered through its Councils, Committees and Panels.
10. That the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan be appointed Professor of Systematic Theology from 1st September, 2017.

The Rev Dr Michael McClenahan was duly informed by the Moderator of his election and, having signed the Westminster Confession of Faith, he was declared appointed.

SUBSCRIPTION 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.

MICHAEL McCLENAHAN
Attested by TREVOR D GRIBBEN
Clerk of Assembly
7th June 2013

The Moderator, leading in prayer, commended the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan to the care and guidance of God.

The Rev Dr Michael McClenahan thanked the Moderator and members of Assembly.

Moved by the Rev Rev TD Gribben, seconded by the Very Rev Dr RL Craig, and agreed:

11. That Section 2 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Section 3 of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp32-71) along with resolutions 10-18 (Reports pp180-181) was submitted by Mr John Hunter, CB, together with the following Supplementary Report:

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE – PROPERTY PANEL

1. Since the report of the Property Panel was finalised, the tendering process for the work on the ground floor of Assembly Buildings has progressed. The Property Panel, with the permission of the Support Services Committee and the General Council, included in the tender documents work relating to a number of practical and beneficial improvements, some of which will be necessary to complete in the foreseeable future. These included:

- upgrade of sprinkler system;
- upgrade of the ‘Comms Room’;
- new gas boilers for the entire Assembly Buildings complex;
- necessary repair work on the flat roof above the concourse area, including new drainage system;
- ‘flooring over’ the current open space at the concourse level (to greatly increase the usable space on the concourse).

At the time of finalising the tender document, the estimated cost of these items was £154,000. Though additional to the amount of approx. £1,126,000 reported to the 2016 General Assembly (based on figures drawn up in late 2015), these items will in a few years’ time mostly fall into the ‘essential’ category, and are much more cost efficient to progress as part of a larger contract at this juncture.

2. The tender documents also include some provisional items which can be removed from the contract if necessary:

- the fit out of units to facilitate the return of the Presbyterian Historical Society (Ireland) to the ground floor of Assembly Buildings (final inclusion is dependent on grant aid being forthcoming) - £238,000;
- the basic preparatory fit out of new lettable office accommodation in space not required by PCI - £76,000;
- the AV fit out of the new downstairs meeting and conferencing area.

3. The actual cost of the contract will only be finalised once a tender is accepted, following detailed negotiation and decisions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of certain items. As costs have no doubt increased since the original estimates were drawn up, and in the light of the inclusion of the additional items above, this may necessitate a slight lengthening of period of the annual assessment for the Church House Repair Fund. An appropriate resolution is therefore appended to give retrospective approval for the inclusion of the additional items listed in point 1 above and authorisation to agree the final tender price.

Additional Resolution:

- 15(a) That the General Assembly give approval to the additional items included in the tender document (as listed in paragraph 1 above) and authorise the Property Panel of the Support Services Committee to agree the final contract price, with the leeway of up to an additional 15% if deemed essential.

JOHN HUNTER

Moved by Mr John Hunter, CB, seconded by the Rev DJ Irvine:

12. That for 2017, the Assessment Rates, along with the related allocation of funds, be as set out in Support Services Appendix 1 and that the rate of assessment for the Pension Fund be set at 24% of stipend paid in the year.
13. That the 2017 budgeted expenditure of the Incidental Fund be as set out in Support Services Appendix 2.
14. That the amended Rules of the Prolonged Disability Fund, as set out in Support Services Appendix 4, be approved and that those receiving a benefit from the Prolonged Disability Fund (and who were age 56 or over on 1st January 2015) retain entitlement in

- retirement to an amount equivalent to the former annual bonus, under Code Par 315(5).
15. That approval is given to the pre-65 retirements of the Revs Brian McManus (Cloughwater), Harry Robinson (Downshire) and Alastair Bill (Saintfield Road, Belfast) and that the General Council approval of the pre-65 retirements of Revs David Chapman (Second Islandmagee) and John Hanna (Glendermott) is noted.
 16. That the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in June 2010 regarding the appointment of Members Nominated Trustees (MNT) to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) be amended to allow for an unfilled position in one of the MNT constituencies to be filled by a nomination to one of the other constituencies.
 17. That approval be given to the Support Services Committee to explore the merits or otherwise of a change to the financial year end to 31st August and, if appropriate, to engage in a period of consultation with the wider Church and report back to the 2018 General Assembly.
 18. That the General Assembly give approval to the additional items included in the tender document (as listed in paragraph 1 above) and authorise the Property Panel of the Support Services Committee to agree the final contract price, with the leeway of up to an additional 15% if deemed essential..
 19. That the United Appeal for 2018 be as set out on the Schedules to the report of the United Appeal Committee.
 20. That the General Assembly encourage all Congregations to make use of the available United Appeal for Mission promotional materials and to mark the first Sunday in March (or other suitable Sunday) as United Appeal for Mission Sunday.
 21. That Section 3 of the Report of the General Council be received.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY – debate resumed (see page)

Moved by the Rev NJ McCullough, seconded by the Very Rev Dr HA Dunlop and agreed:

- 3 That the General Assembly encourage members of the Church to pray concerning applications for the ordained ministry.

- 4 That the General Assembly note the intention of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland, to move its Graduation Service to the end of June from 2018.
- 5 That the recommendations concerning those whose retention as Licentiates and Ministers without charge has been sought by Presbyteries be adopted.

CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION

6. (a) That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £100,000.
(b) That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £380,000.
7. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.

The sederunt came to a close at 5.40pm, the Moderator leading in prayer.

On Wednesday evening, 7th June 2017, at 7.45pm, an evening Celebration with the theme 'Everyday Disciples' was led by the Moderator.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS LICENSED

ITEM 14: COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND (Thursday 11.15am)

A written request, signed by ten members of the Assembly, to separate the Consolidated Resolution (Resolution 3 (page 340)) into three individual resolutions has been received.

Amendment to Resolution 3(b) (page 340):

That the General Assembly encourage the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee in its work to develop chaplaincy in the rapidly expanding campus of the Ulster University in Belfast, and in its efforts to develop a chaplaincy presence in the major third level campuses in Dublin, and that the decision to sell the property at 12-14 Elmwood Avenue (Café Grace) be deferred and that a task group be set up to consult with other interested student ministries and investigate ways in which it may be retained for ministry purposes at no ongoing cost to the church.

E PETER GAMBLE