

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev STEPHEN SIMPSON
Secretary: Rev DAVID BRUCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council met on the 14th October 2015 and 15th March 2016, with each of its Committees, Panels and Task Groups meeting regularly to progress their work.

2. The remit of the Council from the General Assembly is:

- Developing PCI's strategic priorities in all-age mission in Ireland, and planting initiatives at General Assembly level where appropriate;
- Considering new Church development and Church planting;
- Overseeing all aspects of the Home and Irish Mission, including the Irish Mission Fund;
- Overseeing the deployment and ongoing support of Deaconesses;
- Supporting a chaplaincy service in the Forces, Healthcare and Prisons;
- Supporting mission and ministry in Universities and Colleges through chaplaincy services.

3. The work of the Council includes oversight of The International Meeting Point and Nightlight. Among other work including the allocation of Mission Grants, these projects report to the Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel. Under the revised structures it is irregular for a Panel to have other Panels reporting to it. A resolution is appended requesting the General Assembly to appoint a Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee to replace this Panel.

4. In 2016, reports to the General Assembly have been completed from The Belfast Task Group and The Alternating Ministry Scheme Review. These Reports are appended.

5. Council work is only possible because of the generous giving of time and the sharing of talents by the many volunteers who serve in membership of its Committees, Panels and Task Groups.

6. The Council calls or supports 40 Home and Urban Mission Ministers, 25 Deaconesses, 5 Irish Mission workers and 2 Nightlight evangelists. It calls and supports full and part-time Chaplains in Hospitals (54), Prisons (4), Forces (15), Universities and Colleges (10). The Council is grateful to God and gives thanks for every way in which these committed men and women serve him. Their names and spheres of work appear in this Report, and the Council commends them to the Church for prayerful support.

7. The Council is grateful to the staff of the Mission Department which serves the needs of the Council and the Council for Global Mission with deep commitment. The Council records its sincere appreciation to Kathryn Anderson (Admin Assistant pt); Lorraine Beatty (Support Officer, Property), the Rev David Bruce (CMI Secretary); Evelyn Craig (Admin Assistant pt); Mr Nehru

Dass (Finance Manager); Mandy Higgins (PA to CMI Secretary); Karen Hutchinson (Senior Admin Assistant); Miss Helen Johnston (Mission Support Officer, Member Care); Michelle McDowell (Office Supervisor and PA to CGM Secretary); the Rev Dr Peter McDowell (Mission Support Officer, Partnerships); the Rev Uel Marrs (CGM Secretary); Beverley Moffett (Senior Admin Assistant); Marianne Trueman (Senior Admin Assistant pt).

8. **Following God's lead.** Informing all its work, the Council has sought to be open to the leading of the Spirit of God. In the first half-year of its work the Council has been learning its brief. Since then, it has progressed to reframing most of the policies it inherited from former Boards, and has broken new ground in some key areas as outlined in this Report. The new structures have created opportunities and requirements for working collaboratively with colleagues in Presbyteries and other Councils. Specifically, this involves sharing staff with the Council for Global Mission, and for some projects, with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. While challenging for the staff-members asked to work this way, the benefits in cross-fertilisation of ideas and methodologies is already evident. It has involved conceiving new structural connections with the Linkage Commission, and imagining new models of decision-making with Presbyteries.

9. **Setting Priorities.** The Council is fully committed to the processes of the newly-formed Priorities Committee of the General Council which has started its work in earnest this year. As the leadership of CMI has prayed and thought about its role, it has been clear that the way in which the Church begins new projects and continues existing work needs careful management if it is not to be wasteful or become stagnant. Two key words have emerged, which the Council believes will help to shape the Council's priorities looking ahead: Flexible and Sustainable.

10. **Sending people.** The way the Church sends people out to do its work, including recruitment and support, needs to be *flexible*. The context in which the Church is doing its work is much changed. The Linkage Commission and the Council for Training in Ministry have each produced helpful, more flexible approaches to missional and ministry deployment in recent years. Part-time ministry of word and sacrament is now a recognised pathway, and currently five Ministers serve in this way including three within the Home Mission. Auxiliary Ministers provide completely new categories under which the Church may send out gifted and trained people to serve. These may be part-time or full-time positions, honorary or salaried. They are sufficiently flexible to be useful as short-term solutions for projects or Congregations in transition, or for pioneering situations where the denomination is trying to start something completely new. Students for the Ministry may soon find a broader set of options opening up for them in the final stages of their training, as they test their sense of call to kinds of work which may or may not be the traditional settings for an Assistant Minister. The Council is aware that flexibility is already built in to the Home Mission but it could be used more effectively. To that end, in March 2016 the Council commissioned a complete review of the Home Mission as a vehicle for missional deployment in Ireland, and will report its findings in due course.

11. **Congregations, and more.** Repeated statements have been made in Assembly Reports since 2002 that "the Congregation is the basic building block for local mission". On the basis that the long term *sustainability* of any

Christian work depends upon a steady flow of committed volunteers to pray and give financially, there is a compelling logic to this statement. While this is so, the Structures Review helpfully identified that while the Congregation is the main driver for local mission, it is not the only driver. There are some things Congregations cannot do, and which may be better (or only) done together. This raises issues of principle on two important fronts for the Council:

12. **Grants.** The Council currently distributes United Appeal finance as grants to Congregations, both within and outside the Home Mission. For one-off capital grants or repair grants for buildings, the matter is reasonably straightforward. For revenue grants towards mission projects however, the questions are more complex. For example, the provision of a three year CMI revenue grant to a Congregation towards the salary costs of an outreach worker may allow a project to commence, but when the grant is exhausted and local sources of funds are inadequate to keep it going the project may be curtailed or closed altogether. In evaluating the effectiveness of this, it might be argued that the policy breeds a culture of dependence in Congregations; that it encourages short-term approaches to mission; that it unsettles the lives of those employed on short-term contracts; that it leaves the service-users of the project puzzled as to its demise. The Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel continues to look carefully at the policies underlying these decisions, with the aim of producing mission-work that is sustainable over time.

13. **Associated Mission Projects.** These are projects run by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland centrally, but which may have only a tangential connection with a local Congregation. An example from the past is the Shankill Road Mission (which formed a Congregation as part of its work). The Shankill Road Mission was closed among other reasons because it became unsustainable financially, and the Congregation was amalgamated with another one close by. The missional need on the Shankill Road remains, but the central resources to finance a major operation like the Mission are no longer available. Today, Associated Mission Projects include Nightlight, The International Meeting Point, South Belfast Friendship House and possibly Derryvolgie Hall. For these projects to be sustainable into the future a firm understanding of the priorities of the denomination is necessary. Each of them do great work for which the Church can be thankful, but their sustainability depends upon the commitment of the Church acting together, and this in turn rests upon the General Assembly identifying clear priorities upon which it can rest its allocation decisions.

14. **Chaplaincy as Mission.** A helpful 2015 Theos report entitled “*A very modern ministry*” (The Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies) posits that in post-Christendom UK, where religion is shrinking and Churches declining the “*proverbial man in the street seems as – perhaps more – likely to meet a chaplain in his daily life ... as he is to meet any formal religious figure.*” The author Ben Ryan’s empirical study of chaplaincy, while being focused on the UK, has opened a door for the Council to explore emerging missional opportunities for Chaplaincy within organisational settings. It is significant to note the relatively high proportion of volunteer chaplains working with sports clubs in Ireland who are Presbyterian. Invitations to explore the provision of chaplaincy services to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the Irish Defence Forces have been taken up by Conveners during the year. The possibility of Chaplaincy as a vehicle for mission and ministry in the Central Business Districts of our cities is an idea

which may be examined with help from other locations and traditions in these islands and beyond.

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COORDINATION PANEL

The Rev Ben Walker, Convener, reports:

15. CMI and the Linkage Commission. Part of the SMC Panel's remit is to provide CMI advisory comment to the Linkage Commission when requested, particularly, but not limited to, times of Home Mission vacancy and Tenure Review. Stemming in part from the work of the Belfast Task Group, an improved method for this has been developing that enables the report to consider not just the "hard data" from a Congregation's statistical return, but also the "soft data" of the story of its life and the motivations of its leadership. Thus, a group tasked with providing some assessment and comment of this sort is equipped to ask increasingly appropriate questions concerning a Congregation's mission, hear the answers of those involved and provide useful, grounded analysis and feedback for the Linkage Commission.

16. Effective Contemporary Ministry. At the invitation of the Council for Training in Ministry, and along with representatives of the Linkage Commission, members of the Panel have been involved in discussions about Effective Contemporary Ministry. A Task Group has met twice to address issues raised concerning the deployment of students who have a missional interest in urban mission and ministry, in order to link their training with their growing vision within a context where it can be developed. The Council Secretary was able to outline some examples of places where such an approach could be of benefit, both to the Church and to the students.

17. The Panel recognises its involvement in discerning where God's Spirit is at work. Sensitive to this, the Panel seeks to move from a position of being simply reactive at points of transition and crisis, to being pro-active in planning, setting priorities and making wise and strategic decisions about new Church developments. This is a matter of prayer for us.

18. The Panel continues to be aware of and to seek to set aside time for discussion in the following areas:

- the priority of urban mission in Irish cities;
- the need for developing vision and priorities in rural mission;
- the purpose and method of missional consultancy with Presbyteries;
- sustainable models for Church planting.

19. The following Panels and Task Groups have been reporting to the Panel during the year. These reporting arrangements will be regularised should the General Assembly agree to appoint a Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee.

MISSION GRANTS PANEL

The Rev Kenny Hanna, Convener, reports:

20. The Mission Grants Panel receives and processes Irish Mission Fund and Mission Support grant applications, bringing recommendations for approval. Commendable work by the Rev Dr Peter McDowell, along with the Panel has

developed and clarified the process for grant application and for evaluating projects. However, there remains further work to be done over and above the processing of grants. The Panel recognises the need to publicise the availability of grants in the appropriate places, and a leaflet to this effect has been drafted. The Panel, along with others within the Council, is addressing the wider question of the effectiveness of the current grant offerings in developing sustainable mission in Congregations and projects. This may include a short-term grant to assist students for the ministry undertaking work in urban situations.

NIGHTLIGHT PANEL

The Rev Danny Rankin, Convener, reports:

21. Nightlight reaches out into the entertainment areas of Belfast. The project involves groups of volunteers reaching into the Golden Mile, the Cathedral Quarter and the Odyssey areas of the city, mainly at the weekends. They encounter young people including students, city workers, party-goers, homeless people, rough sleepers, concert audiences, security staff, Police, street cleaners, and many others. Each story is different, and in each case the gospel is shared, sometimes with a hot drink of tea, always with love and compassion. The two evangelists employed to work with Nightlight spend part of their time in support of the Dock Café, particularly with students at the Belfast Met., and on a temporary basis, with South Belfast Friendship House.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT

The Rev Dr Peter McDowell (Mission Support Officer, Partnerships) writes:

What the International Meeting Point does

22. The International Meeting Point provides a valuable service to visitors from a wide range of backgrounds. Approximately two thirds of the clients are from overseas, and many are in or have come through the asylum system. The other third are local people, many of whom are on the margins of society. The drop-in centre opens from Monday to Thursday with between 60 and 100 people attending each day and over 15,000 lunches being served over the year. The centre has computer facilities with internet access, an informal seating area and table tennis and pool tables. In addition, three English classes operate each week with 9 teachers and 40 volunteers teaching over 70 students. A solicitor offers *pro bono* advice to clients, with assistance from volunteers from the Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Donations of food from local supermarkets, foodbanks and other outlets are regularly distributed to clients. A considerable stock of second hand clothes has also been donated for distribution. Connections with local Congregations and other groups have been fostered, with seven PW groups cooking lunch in the drop-in and a local primary school choir performing on two occasions.

23. IMP is a model of holistic mission, engaging with the full range of its clients' needs. Each week four Bible studies take place, two in the Farsi language for the significant number of Iranian visitors. Several IMP clients have come to faith and between 20 and 30 are now regular attenders at Windsor Presbyterian

Church, with two being elected to the eldership in recent months. On the second Sunday of each month there is a bring-and-share lunch after the service in Windsor and on the third Sunday of the month there is a Farsi language service.

How the IMP is run

24. A Management Group has been formed to formalise the governance of IMP. The group consists of three representatives of the South Belfast Presbytery, three representatives of the Council for Mission in Ireland and two representatives of the volunteers working in IMP. The Project Leader is invited to sit and deliberate at meetings. The Group reports to the Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel of the Council, and to the Presbytery, reflecting the partnership at the heart of the project.

IMP staff

25. The success of IMP owes a lot to the leadership of Keith Preston who has guided its development as it has grown. In March 2015 Sharon Heron was appointed as a Deaconess to IMP (75%) and Windsor Presbyterian Church (25%). Sharon has developed work in crucial areas including Bible Studies for women. The continued growth of IMP has led the Management Group to recognise the need for a third member of staff, resulting in the advertising of a post of Assistant Project Leader in March 2016. It is envisaged that when this person is in post, IMP will be able to open five days a week, to expand the provision of English classes and develop the work in other ways.

Review of the Alternating Ministries Scheme (Mission Partnership Forum)

26. At the 2014 General Assembly and Methodist Conference, resolutions were passed directing the Mission Partnership Forum to “review the purpose of and principles underlying the operation of the Alternating Ministry Scheme between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland and bring proposals regarding the future of the Scheme to the General Assembly/Conference”. The Forum appointed Mr Mervyn McCullagh (ICC Secretary) as the independent Chair of the Review Group, and commenced work. The Council, in receiving the draft report in March 2016, recorded its warm thanks to Mervyn McCullagh for his committed work in bring this Review to completion. The full Review Report is included as Appendix 1. A resolution is appended.

BELFAST TASK GROUP

The Rev Robert Bell, Convener, reports:

27. The 2013 General Assembly passed the following resolution:

That the General Assembly encourage the BMI in its reflection upon the challenges of mission in urban situations, and in particular in its discussions with the Union Commission in seeking to secure sustainable models for resourcing Presbyterian mission in our cities.

It is important to note that while the major piece of work emerging from this resolution was the formation of the Belfast Panel, the resolution encompasses all the cities of Ireland.

28. The aims of the Belfast Panel were agreed as follows when it was initiated in September 2013:

to develop a fully inclusive discussion between Union Commission, BMI and the three Belfast Presbyteries about the challenges and opportunities for developing a sustainable model of Presbyterian presence for mission across the city of Belfast;

to outline a series of options for urban mission by which to extend the range of present opportunities;

to report to the General Assembly 2014, providing an analysis of the issues and a series of directions of travel.

29. Very quickly, it became apparent that the existing decision-making systems in place for the allocation of resources, granting leave to call, initiating new work and dealing with crisis were cumbersome and confusing, especially for Congregations which were seeking permissions and funding decisions from multiple bodies which appeared to have competing agendas. There was an evident need to bring the relevant groups together in a way which would allow decision-making to be streamlined.

30. The Panel therefore proposed that a Consultative Group for Belfast be formed, made up of representatives of the BMI, the Union Commission and the Presbyteries. In January 2015, the Task Group (as it became following the Review of Structures) presented its work to the three Belfast Presbyteries. These gatherings provided an opportunity to cast a vision for re-imagining future Presbyterian presence for mission in the city, address the issue of how to assess sustainability and to test the concept of the formation of a joint Consultative Group for Belfast. The meetings were well attended and feedback was noted. As outlined elsewhere in the Council's report, the ability to develop sustainable and flexible models of resourcing mission in a context of shrinking central resources remains the challenge. How can this be achieved in Belfast?

31. **Belfast Research Project** – A significant piece of research was commissioned with the Ulster University to collect relevant statistical data about each Belfast Congregation's locality for mission. This has now been completed and compiled as a dossier. It will allow Belfast Congregations access to a snapshot of their setting for mission, including the most relevant demographic trends in their area. This dossier will be provided in accessible form and will also serve to aid Presbyteries and other relevant bodies in devising future missional strategy and in taking key decisions. A further aspect of the research maps developments in Belfast at a citywide level enabling a realistic, rather than speculative view of how the urban area is developing. This in turn will help to guide our missional responses.

32. Throughout its life and work, the Belfast Task Group has intentionally sought to bring together the relevant bodies of Presbytery, the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Linkage Commission in addressing the issue of the future shape of mission to the city. The building of a unified vision and approach by these bodies is an absolutely crucial component of harnessing the energies of the denomination to rise to this task. However, it has been challenging. The Task Group was charged with the job of producing detailed recommendations for approval to the 2016 Assembly, and these are now included as Appendix 2 for decision, with an appended resolution.

BEN WALKER, Convener

HOME MISSION, IRISH MISSION AND DEACONESS COMMITTEE

33. The Committee has responsibility for all aspects of the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess provision in the Church, including calls, deployment, support and oversight. The Committee records its thanks and appreciation to Miss Helen Johnston (Mission Support Officer, Member Care), for her valued work in support of Irish Mission Workers and Deaconesses, through the Irish Mission Workers and Deaconess Panel.

34. **Serving personnel.** The directory of Ministers serving with the Home Mission, Church Planters, Irish Mission Workers and Deaconesses is included as Appendix 3.

35. *Arklow:* Mr Nathan Duddy received a Home Mission Call as Minister in Arklow. A service of ordination, installation and induction is scheduled for 28th May 2016.

36. *Bray.* The Minister of Dun Laoghaire has been appointed as Stated Supply to the Home Mission Congregation of Bray.

37. *Sandymount.* The Minister of Sandymount has been appointed as Stated Supply to the Congregation of Blackrock.

38. The Council received reports from the PW General Secretary (Acting) on the progress of two student Deaconesses in training at Union Theological College, and, with the support of the PW, approved the recruitment and training of a number of new Deaconesses.

39. At its October 2015 meeting, the Council marked the retirements of Deaconesses, Mrs Jenny Robinson and Miss Muriel Cromie.

40. At its March 2016 meeting, the Council noted the retirement of Mr Harry Moreland, Irish Mission Worker in Cork.

41. The Council issued a Deaconess Call to Mrs Heather McCracken to serve as Assistant to the Chaplains in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (RVH and BCH).

Home Mission Charges

42. *Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo:* A Home Mission vacancy assessment report has been completed and transmitted to the Linkage Commission, pending consideration of an application for Leave to Call. Some issues regarding the manse are being addressed separately with the Presbytery and Congregations through the CMI Property Panel.

43. *Sligo with Boyle (Stated Supply):* A Vacancy Assessment visit is scheduled, and a report will be sent to the Linkage Commission. Discussions are ongoing with the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland concerning future patterns of ministry in the Congregation of Boyle.

44. *Dundalk:* The Council approved an application from the Kirk Session of Dundalk, supported by the Monaghan Presbytery that the Congregation become part of the Home Mission.

Proposed review of the purpose of the Home Mission

45. As part of the Council's aim to develop flexible and sustainable models of missional development, it has been proposed that a complete review of the

purpose of the Home Mission be undertaken.

- There are currently 73 Home Mission Congregations, including Church-plants.
- There are 39 Home Mission Ministers.
 - ◊ 27 of these serve in charges which are under Home Mission Calls.
 - ◊ 12 serve in composite charges.
- There have been 3 Home Mission Church-plants in the last 12 years; Maynooth, Donabate and Cliftonville Road, Belfast. Two of these have become Congregations in their own right, and are still within the Home Mission.

46. The Home Mission purpose as described in the Code (Pars 114, 231 and 300) is largely focussed on Congregations, and their staffing by ordained Ministers.

47. The denomination now faces a significant challenge in continuing to maintain a significant number of smaller Churches in areas which are either marginal (in terms of their potential for growth), or outside our stated priorities for mission. Pressure is sometimes put upon the Home Mission to keep Congregations open, as if this was its primary function. While amalgamating or linking Congregations can be painful and is not done lightly, the opportunities for new work thus created cannot be ignored. The denomination is not in a position where it can afford to maintain its historic presence everywhere, while also commencing new innovative and pioneering work. The remit of the proposed review is under discussion by the Council, and a resolution is appended.

BRIAN COLVIN, Convener

HEALTHCARE, PRISONS AND FORCES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

48. Healthcare Chaplaincy: The following Chaplains have retired recently, and the Council thanks them for their service and witness in this role.

- The Rev Dr Jack Richardson (Lagan Valley, Lisburn)
- The Very Rev Dr Andrew Rodgers (South Tyrone, Dungannon)
- The Very Rev Dr Donald Patton (Antrim Area).

49. The Rev John Gilkinson is covering the work in Antrim Area and the Rev Leslie Patterson in Lagan Valley, both on a temporary basis. Steps are being taken by the Trust to fill the position at South Tyrone.

50. The South Eastern Trust which covers the Lagan Valley and Downe Hospitals has proposed appointing a full-time protestant Chaplain for both sites with responsibility for piloting a chaplaincy service to GP clinics. The Council drafted a response to this proposal which was submitted for consideration by the Trust.

51. Deaconess Heather McCracken has been appointed assistant to the Presbyterian Chaplain on the Royal and City sites of the Belfast Trust.

52. Discussion is ongoing with the management at Altnagelvin regarding a reduction in Chaplaincy hours.

53. Following reports submitted to the meetings of the Church Leaders, the Secretary and Convener attended an inter-denominational meeting (including the Secretary to the NIHCA) held on 2nd March 2016, to discuss mutual concerns about the direction of Healthcare Chaplaincy. Further meetings are planned. The Committee have still to consider the relationship with the NIHCA. The Committee has approved a questionnaire to be forwarded to Healthcare Chaplains as a means of consultation regarding what is happening in the various sites and to shape future thinking and decision making.

54. **Prisons Chaplaincy, and the work of the Prisons Review Task Group:** Following the proposal of a new Funding Agreement between the Churches and the Northern Ireland Prison Service, objections were raised by most of the Churches to some details within the proposals. The draft agreement was withdrawn by NIPS. The financial cuts anticipated for 2015/16 have been applied, and this has had an inevitable effect on the provision of PCI chaplaincy services in the three prisons estates.

55. The Council thanks Mr Norman McCorkell who has been covering the Presbyterian work in Magilligan for the past three years. This arrangement has now been brought to an end. The Rev Rodney Cameron now covers Magilligan for one day each week. The Rev Rodney Cameron has been re-appointed as the Lead (now Co-ordinating) Chaplain for Maghaberry.

56. The Rev Graham Stockdale has reallocated his duties between Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood.

57. The Rev Colin Megaw is Chaplain to Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. Mr Megaw is presently filming a DVD which will be given to all the young people as an introduction to what the chaplaincy service can offer them, to the Christian Faith and to other professional help which they can access.

58. Recent events including the required involvement of the Co-ordinating Chaplain in the funeral arrangements for convicted child killer Robert Black, and the tragic murder of Prison Officer Adrian Ismay serve to illustrate the demanding nature of Prisons Chaplaincy work. The Council commends the Prisons Chaplains to the prayers of the Church.

Chaplaincy in other contexts

59. Police: The Secretary and the Convener attended an inter-denominational and inter-faith consultation on 5th February 2016 at the invitation of some senior officers of the PSNI to discuss the possibility of arranging voluntary chaplaincy to the PSNI. A further meeting is planned for April 2016.

60. Sports: The Committee invited the Rev Andrew Thompson to its meeting on 1st March 2016. He brought the Committee up to date on the involvement of several PCI Ministers who are engaged in informal chaplaincy to a variety of sports clubs under the auspices of INSPIRE, Sports Chaplaincy UK. Presently about 60% of this chaplaincy in Northern Ireland is provided by Presbyterian Ministers.

FORCES CHAPLAINCY PANEL

The Rev Prof JP Taylor, Convener, reports:

61. The following is a directory of Forces Chaplains currently serving, including part-time:

PCI FORCES CHAPLAINS	
Rev Mark Donald	Army Reserve, (part time)
Rev Mark Henderson	Army
Rev Colin Jones	Army
Rev Ivan Linton	Army
Rev Graeme McConville	Army
Rev Norman McDowell	Army
Rev Heather Rendell	Army
Rev Dr Paul Swinn	Army
Rev Dr Philip Wilson	Royal Air Force
Rev Joseph Andrews	NI Wing Chaplain, Air Training Corps (part time)
Rev Kenneth Crowe	Army Cadet Force (part time)
Rev Richard Graham	Air Training Corps (part time)
Rev Dr Ivan Neish	Air Training Corps (part time)
Rev Prof Patton Taylor	Air Training Corps and Officiating Chaplain (part time)
Rev Derek Weir	Officiating Chaplain (part time)

62. **Forces Chaplaincy in the Irish Republic:** The Panel Convener has met with representatives of the Irish Defence Forces to explore the possibilities of developing a Presbyterian Chaplaincy. The numbers of serving Presbyterians in the IDF is very small. A meeting with the IDF Chief Chaplain is proposed.

63. The Panel has been considering ways for Congregations to provide pastoral support for Forces personnel and their families. Armed Forces Sunday in the last week of June each year may provide a Congregation with an opportunity to reach out to families with a connection, and who have an involvement with the Forces.

64. **Recruitment of Chaplains:** The Interview Panel has met several Ministers and Licentiates considering Forces Chaplaincy. Ministers and Licentiates considering this work in a full- or part-time capacity will need to navigate the selection procedures of the branch of the Forces they apply to, and be interviewed by the Council's Panel. An early conversation with the Convener of the Panel is recommended. There are full and part-time vacancies available at present.

65. **Centenary of the Battle of the Somme:** Given the many events marking the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, which commenced on 1st July 1916, the Council appends a resolution encouraging Ministers to mark this important anniversary at services of worship close to the date. The Panel noted events planned elsewhere and by other organisations. The Church will be formally represented as appropriate.

Reception of Forces Chaplains

66. Those serving Chaplains who are able to do so will be present at the Assembly. As is our custom, they will be presented to the Moderator for prayer.

DONALD PATTON, Convener

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

67. Arguably University and College Chaplains are among those in PCI who work closest to the fore-front of the changes in our post-modern secular society. For example, although their positions are officially recognised by the university and college authorities, in practice they increasingly vie for position with other religions and philosophies, and are conscious of the need of the institutions to be even-handed. Some regret the change to the central role that Chaplains may have had in the past, but others see that challenge as an opportunity to do things differently and adopt a more missional approach.

68. Over the past year the Committee has established closer links with the Chaplains through visits, the encouraging of each Chaplain to provide an annual evaluative report to share with their colleagues and the Committee and, more recently, prayer requests. There is, however, more to be done to strengthen these links and support networks. The Committee's hopes of bringing Chaplains together once a year has proved difficult because of their scattered locations and other responsibilities. As can be seen in the directory below, almost all the Chaplains are part-time and their parish work is, more often than not, entirely separate because the parish is at a distance from the university or college, or because the parish is socially and culturally very different or because traditionally the roles have always been separate. The basis on which the Chaplains' appointments have been made, the duties attached to each post, the time afforded, the accountability structures and the level of remuneration are all variable and so how the job is done and the expectations set by the Chaplains are also variable. These issues beg questions around how we see the role of a Chaplain, what training is necessary for Chaplains, how far chaplaincy should be linked to an all-age worshipping community which can embrace the university or college community as part of its missional goal, and to what extent an interdenominational or collaborative approach with other agencies may be developed.

69. The directory of those serving as University and College Chaplains is as follows:

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CHAPLAINS	
Rev Karen Mbayo	Queen's University, Belfast (full time)
Rev Cheryl Meban	University of Ulster, Jordanstown and Belfast (full time)
Rev John Coulter	Ulster University, Coleraine Campus (part time)
Rev Nigel Craig	Ulster University, Magee Campus (part time)
Rev Julian Hamilton (MCI)	Trinity College, Dublin (part time)
Mrs Gillian Kingston (MCI)	University College, Dublin (part time)
Rev Brian Brown	Letterkenny Institute of Technology (part time)

Rev John Faris	University College, Cork (part time)
Rev Helen Freeburn	University College, Galway (part time)
Rev Vicki Lynch (MCI)	University College, Limerick (part time)
Rev Dr Keith McCrory	National University of Ireland, Maynooth (part time)

70. Since the beginning of 2016, the UCC Committee has made some progress on implementing the recommendations from the report of a Review of UC Chaplaincy in Greater Belfast. Two Task Groups have been formed to progress the findings of the Review, under the convenership of Mr Craig Lynn, (QUB) and Mr Josh McCance, (UU). Although the context of Queen's University (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) are very different, the essential question being explored is how chaplaincy can be more closely integrated with an all-age worshipping community. In the case of QUB, those discussions have involved representatives from Fitzroy, Fisherwick and Windsor Presbyterian Churches along with Union College. The UU Task Group has representatives from Carnmoney, which has been successfully running Alpha courses in the Titanic Quarter of Belfast. In addition there is representation from the North Belfast Presbytery City Quays Panel and a member of UUU academic staff with expertise in area planning. One of the questions being explored in the UU group is how far these strands of work might connect with the Chaplain in mission and discipleship. Each of these task groups is due to report by the end of June 2016.

DERRYVOLGIE HALLS AND CAFÉ GRACE MANAGEMENT PANEL

The Rev Johnston Lambe, Convener, reports:

71. A Management Panel has been appointed and is currently carrying out a review of the condition of the Derryvolgie and Grace Café premises. The work of the new Panel will both reduce the burden on the Chaplain and inform the work of the UCC Committee. It will be particularly helpful in relation to Grace Café, which has reduced its operation in a bid to address the considerable financial losses being sustained year on year. A schedule of work with associated costs has been formulated.

72. The first report in respect of Derryvolgie Halls was considered in detail by the Panel. The Report finds that the Derryvolgie Halls building has been well maintained over the 20 years of its life, but that there are now substantial works required to ensure that it is made compliant with current residence legislation and fit for purpose going forward as student accommodation of 88 beds. Works proposed over a five year phased programme include replacement of old timber framed single-glazed windows, the installation of a replacement boiler (gas fired), the installation of solar panels to reduce electricity bills, upgrading of security systems including electronic locks to external doors, upgrading and replacing of sanitary ware, re-design and replacement of all kitchens, upgrading of ventilation systems to shower rooms, upgrading of fire-protection structures in roof spaces. This represents only the main points of a comprehensive schedule of necessary work identified as needed between 2016 and 2021, which in total is costed at £1.3 million, plus VAT and fees. Funds are being secured to progress the initial essential work (mainly to ensure regulatory compliance) on Derryvolgie.

73. Further decisions on Café Grace are pending.

74. **Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy as mission:** The work PCI Chaplains do poses a significant question for PCI because right at its heart it asks how do we do Church in a post-modern society where we can no longer rely on a privileged relationship with the state and ‘a come and see’ model of parish ministry. Rather our role is a ‘go tell’ one where we need to take the message of Jesus into the world and (in the case of Belfast alone) to 60,000 students.

MAUREEN BENNETT, Convener

PROPERTY PANEL

Sale of the Shankill Road Mission Building

75. The premises continue to be regularly inspected while the property has been on the market for sale. Following lengthy negotiations with delegates from the Argyll Business Centre, the sale of the Shankill Road Mission premises has been agreed in principle, subject to the following conditions:

- General Assembly permission to sell the property (according to the terms of the Deeds). A resolution is appended.
- A non-returnable deposit to be paid, from which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would continue to insure and maintain the property until formal transfer of title.
- Following payment of this deposit, the option to purchase would be taken up on or before 1st June 2017.
- The purchaser would have no use of the premises for activities or development until title to the premises had been transferred with payment.

76. Since these negotiations, the purchaser has indicated that funds are in place for completion. The matter, having been discussed and agreed in principle by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, is now before the Assembly.

77. **Maynooth New Church Building:** Congregational representatives await further comment from planning officers in Kildare County Council before the purchase of the identified site for a new Church can proceed. In the meantime initial discussions have been held with architects regarding Church layout and design.

78. **Donabate new Church building:** Due to revised local area plans, Fingal County Council has withdrawn the original proposed site from the market. Further discussions will be held when possible new sites are made available for sale.

79. **Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cork:** Substantial essential conservation repair works have been completed to high level defective roof flashings and dressings to parapets along with external stonework mortar pointing. A property repair grant of €80,000 has been made.

CYRIL CAVAN, Convener

FINANCE PANEL

80. **Capital projects.** The Panel has prepared projections of income and expenditure for the Council’s capital programme. It is known that new Church buildings will be required in Maynooth and Donabate. The project in Maynooth

has moved forward and a significant financial commitment will be required in 2016 and 2017. The projections for capital expenditure prepared reveal a major monetary shortfall and as a consequence the Council intends to seek additional funding from the United Appeal for at least each of the next five years even if the considered asset disposals proceed on more favourable terms than currently exist.

81. **Cost control and Budget:** Expenditure within the Council's complete control continues to be well managed and improvements made in areas of new work, following the implementation of the structures review.

82. **Grants:** Grants are considered in conjunction with the Strategy for Mission Committee and the Property Panel. It must be noted that uptake of grants in relation to mission objectives has not been high and steps are being taken to advise Presbytery Clerks that funding is available, subject of course to the necessary financial scrutiny.

83. **Summary:** It was said previously "Testing times lie ahead for the finances of the Council". We are now in the middle of those financially testing times and indeed foresee such times continuing for some years ahead. We are nonetheless thankful and grateful for all that God has provided for the continuing work both by way of people and finance.

DENIS GUILER, Convener

APPENDIX 1

REVIEW OF THE ALTERNATING MINISTRIES SCHEME

1. Terms of reference for the Review Group

In 2014 the following resolution was passed by the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Methodist Conference.

"That the General Assembly/Conference direct the Mission Partnership Forum to review the purpose of and principles underlying the operation of the Alternating Ministry Scheme between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland and bring proposals regarding the future of the Scheme to the General Assembly/Conference in 2015."

In October 2014 the Mission Partnership Forum [MPF] agreed that a review would take place under an independent chair with the following remit:

To review "the purpose of and principles underlying the operation of the Alternating Ministry Scheme [AMS] and bring proposals regarding the future of the Scheme..."

With regard to each part of the remit, the following areas were covered:

- (a) **Purpose of the Scheme**
 - Historical narrative and assessment of the original purpose
 - Current situation and needs
- (b) **Principles underlying the operation of the Scheme**
 - Missional purpose
 - Governance arrangements
 - Understanding of these principles in each centre

(c) **Proposals regarding the future of the Scheme**

- Recommendations and conclusions made

2. Membership of the Review Group

The chair of the Review Group was appointed by the MPF with the following membership nominated by their respective traditions:

Independent Chair

Mr Mervyn McCullagh

Joint Secretaries

Rev David Bruce (Secretary, PCI Council for Mission in Ireland)

Rev Dr Heather Morris (Secretary, MCI Home Mission Department)

Methodist Church in Ireland [MCI]

Rev Roy Cooper (Chair, Inter-Church Relations Committee)

Mr Doug Edmondson (Treasurer, Home Mission Department)

Ms Gillian Kingston (Convener, Church Relations Committee)

Presbyterian Church in Ireland [PCI]

Very Rev Dr John Lockington (Chair, Union Commission)

Rev Dr Keith McCrory (Convener, Dublin and Munster Presbytery Mission Standing Committee)

Rev Ben Walker (Convener, Strategy for Mission Co-ordination Panel)

3. Methodology

Discussion papers were prepared on a range of topics including historical context, missional priorities, the Methodist – Church of Ireland Covenant, pastoral models and strategies for mission.

Field visits to the three Congregations operating the Scheme took place to gather informed learning on how the Scheme operates and has developed in practice.

An interim report was brought to Assembly and Conference in 2015.

A thorough interrogation of all the available information was undertaken in order to draw together agreed conclusions.

4. Key questions

Following discussions the review group identified the following key questions for exploration within the review:

- What was the historical motivation and basis for the Scheme as evidenced through the history of agreements from 1921 to present?
- What are the present day default missional positions of each tradition? Are they compatible and why has the Alternating Ministries Scheme ceased to be a default position?
- If similar conditions that inspired the Scheme were experienced again in other geographical locations in Ireland would the Scheme be a viable option for today?
- What are the current strategic priorities of mission for each tradition?

- (e) Are single denominational models most successful or put differently, do formal, agreed Schemes limit missional potential?
- (f) What, if any, models of pastoral ministry has the Scheme enabled and how have these models related to social change in Ireland?
- (g) Is there any symbolic importance to the Scheme, the removal of which would have missional consequence and what are the perceptions of the public in terms of credibility, strategic location and evidence of two reformed Churches working together?
- (h) What is the identity of Congregations born out of the Scheme, what happens if they separate from or return to the parent tradition?
- (i) What, if any, might be the impact of Methodist – Church of Ireland Covenant on the Scheme?
- (j) The suitability of the governance arrangements with particular reference to:
 - Transitional arrangements between tenures
 - Finance
 - Oversight, both local and District/Presbytery
 - Ownership by traditions
 - Representation at Church Courts
- (k) What is the sustainability and missional potential of these Congregations?
- (l) How are Ministers supported pastorally given their relative distance from other Methodist and Presbyterian ministry colleagues?
- (m) Are there other models of collaboration that should be expressed beyond or complimentary to the formal Scheme?

This report does not provide detailed answers to each of the questions, nor provide a detailed portrait of each of the Congregations visited. They are rather listed to indicate the scope of the issues considered and the thought process of the Review Group both of which have led to the final conclusions and recommendations.

5. Missional priorities and strategies for mission

Clear points of commonality were identified in both the missional purpose and strategy of each tradition. Both traditions have a rich theology of mission and see mission as flowing out of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. This charge stands as an overarching mandate to all Christians regardless of denomination.

The mandate is to make and baptise disciples into a worldwide communion under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is not to make specific denominational adherents. These disciples are then ambassadors for Christ in the world in which they live. This concept is a whole-life discipleship where each believer should engage in ‘mission’ in whatever location each is placed – at the ‘front-line’ of everyday life.

(a) For MCI

Mission is best developed in the public square rather than in the pew. Stephen argued in the High Council; Paul debated on Mars Hill; Philip discussed with the Ethiopian in his carriage; Paul preached in prison, and also sought to support himself financially. In similar vein Wesley,

and others, have preached across the Britain and Ireland, as it then was, in barns, in halls, at cross-roads and in homes.

For Wesley, and thus MCI, the exercise of faith is not humanity's escape to a more tolerable heavenly realm but, rather, it is active participation, now, in God's redemptive enterprise. Effective participation will inevitably emphasise the cost of discipleship as we confront the 'principalities and powers' at work in this world and as we speak truth to power.

Through the direction of the Holy Spirit, Wesley spearheaded a movement whose spiritual heritage still seeks to encourage experimentation, diversity and flexibility of approach in 'Mission' all the time supported by an analytical appreciation of what is happening in society around us.

MCI espouses this vibrant approach today. Its members are encouraged to engage in evangelism, in social participation, and in sacrificial living for the benefit of others. MCI does not advocate a specific action model for mission. It rather seeks to encourage its members to develop models, within the umbrella of the Great Commission, that are appropriate for their local conditions.

(b) **For PCI**

The denomination's historic commitment to reaching Ireland for Christ has been warmly expressed through the formation of the Irish Mission and the Home Mission, reflecting the Church's reformed ethos of contextual and incarnational mission.

For almost the past decade, the vision of the PCI, from its Board of Mission in Ireland has been to move further towards "vibrant communities of Christ serving and transforming Ireland." In itself, that too carries a rich theology of mission emphasising the place of the local Congregation.

This strategy has been informed by several broad-brush priorities, largely summed up in the idea of "going where the people are". In particular focusing on:

- The eastern seaboard (Following the European route E01 from Larne to Rosslare).
- Ireland's six major cities – Belfast, Dublin, Londonderry/Derry, Limerick, Galway, Cork.
- Population centres with no other reformed witness.
- Places where the Presbyterian Church has had an historic presence.

Presbyterians are a people who desire to hold onto the best of what has gone before and yet are convinced that they must be always reforming. Thus, PCI's recent structural changes, resulting in the new Council for Mission in Ireland, mean that its priorities and strategy in mission are at a new point of refinement intending to be fit for purpose in a contemporary context.

(c) **Implications for the Scheme**

It was clear to the members of the Review Group that the Congregations currently operating the Scheme fell within the common emphases of the two traditions. It was also noted however that in neither Church had collaboration been assumed as each established/developed its own priorities for Mission. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the Scheme,

and over the course of time, three living Churches have emerged from a context of decline.

6. Chronology and impact of the Methodist-Church of Ireland covenant

1968: The CoI, MCI and PCI formed a Tripartite Consultation with a view to seeking unity.

1988: A Tripartite Theological Working Party was proposed, and though accepted by the CoI and MCI, PCI voted not to participate. The CoI and MCI thus formed a Joint Theological Working Party (JTWP).

2002: Following ten years' discussion and reflection, the CoI and MCI discerned that the time was right to deepen their relationship by entering into a Covenant to work towards unity, with a particular emphasis on mission. After due process, the Covenant was signed in September 2002. Thus the Joint Theological Working Party was replaced by the Covenant Council. PCI is an observer on this Council.

In understanding the new and important relations that now exist between MCI and CoI it was made very clear that there was no desire on the part of MCI that the Covenant would have a negative effect on relationships with PCI. Furthermore, account will be taken by Stationing of the particular characteristics of United Presbyterian-Methodist Congregations.

7. Contextual changes

The ecclesiastical landscape of Ireland in 2016 is radically different from that existing when the Alternating Ministries Scheme was conceived.

In a relatively few years, attitudes to the established Churches in Ireland have varied from apathy to anger to suspicion. Thus assumptions about the place of the Churches in Irish society need to be constantly refreshed.

At the same time our towns and cities are increasingly multi-cultural; there are continuing socio-economic shifts and our Congregations reflect this new diversity.

Churches which we might previously have imagined would close within a generation are now thriving and are continuing to grow despite economic recession and reverse migration.

Possibilities for mission beyond the traditional boundaries of denominational affiliation exist where they previously did not. The emergence of a wide variety of new expressions of Church entities, formal and informal, present both opportunities and challenges.

There continues to be a genuine need for Presbyterian and Methodist witness as distinctive voices among the several Christian voices in Ireland, even where their numbers may be small. Many hundreds of people still find a spiritual home with both because of their long traditions. Recent efforts to plant new Presbyterian and Methodist Churches have been successful.

8. Field visits

Field visits to the three Congregations operating the scheme were carried out to learn how the scheme operates and has developed in practice. In meeting with the Minister and congregational representatives the Review Group sought to understand:

- the encouragements and challenges faced
- the contemporary identity of the Congregation
- the missional vision and potential
- the denominational support and the impact of the scheme within this
- the suitability of the present buildings owned by the Congregations
- transitional arrangements at times of change of tenure
- Church governance
- pastoral support and the Minister's and Congregation's relationship with each denomination

The members of the Review Group wish to express their sincere thanks for the way they were hosted and welcomed by the Congregations.

These visits were significant in highlighting a number of areas. Members of the review group described what they witnessed as inspiring, discovering where a maintenance missional model has ultimately led to thriving Congregations in unique, strategically important, city locations. This transformation took place over a significant period of time but the fruit of the partnership was evident.

Each of the Congregations demonstrated the life of the Spirit and openness to God's leading as He takes them forward in Mission. Each had active members and valued their Ministers. Each spoke of their present identity as being fueled by the two denominations but manifested as essentially United. This was shown in the repeatedly heard phrase expressed in a matter-of-fact manner: "the Congregation is united, it's the Minister who alternates". One Congregation described their United identity as a missional advantage in reaching to diverse and multicultural communities but able also to draw on the richness of two identifiable and credible traditions. Significant responsibility therefore rests on each of the Ministers to pay attention to each denomination and those seeking to minister in these Congregations need to be people who respect both traditions.

Some concern was expressed that the terms of Elders (who are ordained for life in PCI) and Committee (who are elected to serve for three year periods in MCI) mean that the stable, life members of the committee will always be Presbyterian. This could create an inherent imbalance and it is recommended that this be considered further by the MPF.

There are still significant challenges in times of transition, particularly where, given both the passage of time and differences in governance models, experience gained from a previous transition, cannot be assumed to be present. Therefore there needs to be both local and central anticipation of the need to prepare Congregations in advance of transitions so that they will have sufficient capacity to manage them successfully.

Overall the Working Group was highly encouraged by these visits. The Congregations are alive, impacting the communities in which they serve, including many marginalised and vulnerable people, and will need our continued support, both in prayer and in finance.

9. A brief timeline tracing the history and mechanism of alternating ministry

1921: The cooperation between the PCI and MCI, particularly in the area of Home Mission, began formally when both the Presbyterian General Assembly

and Methodist Conference received a document entitled “*General Principles for Joint Worship by Members of the Two Churches*”

Both Churches were concerned about offering pastoral care in contexts where there were declining numbers. Thus, initially the “scheme” was need-driven, primarily where there was no resident Minister. The legislation was permissive but not directive.

1958: The Assembly and Conference received revised and updated versions of these General Principles which referred to the existence of a Joint Negotiating Committee formed between the two Churches, and reporting to the MCI Conference and the PCI Inter-Church Relations Board.

The emphasis in the report was that federation was a better option than agreed withdrawal. What would eventually become the Alternating Ministries Scheme was born out of this philosophy. In a time when the complete disappearance of reformed witness in towns and cities, particularly in the Irish Republic, was a strong likelihood, this level of close collaboration seemed a sensible way to preserve our shared witness.

Thus by 1958 it is established that there could be co-operation between both traditions to enable a joint rather than united scheme. The Congregation moves to one Church building. Communion may now be more than quarterly. Members had to choose one denomination and are recorded as such. For each Minister (from one tradition) there is an identified corresponding Minister to serve specific needs of members. A Presbyterian/Methodist Joint Meeting was held regularly which supervised the arrangements in existing locations, and agreed new ones.

1973: The present Alternating Ministries Scheme was proposed to the General Assembly and Methodist Conference, and the Joint Committee was formed which would supervise the operation of the Scheme for the next 32 years, until the formation of the MPF in 2005. In the 1973 document the concept of “co-operation” had changed to “unity”.

By the end of the 1970’s there were schemes operating in Limerick, Sandymount, Waterford and Enniscorthy/Wexford/Gorey. However, attempts to start similar schemes in Kilkenny, Tullamore, Athlone, Birr, Portlaoise, Mountmellick and Athy had been unsuccessful, largely due to local opposition to the concept.

A reading of the Minutes from this period demonstrates that this policy was driving the strategy of both the MCI and PCI Home Missions departments. 1970-76 was not just a time of massive change but also carried a sense of emergency and in this context the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches were closest natural allies. They had very little co-operation with the Church of Ireland [CoI] or others and there were key people within each tradition who were able to generate the necessary support from within the Assembly and Conference.

1980: Proposals to introduce the Alternating Ministries Scheme appeared to be the default position of both denominations in areas where numbers were small or declining. Thus, by this time, Galway, Sligo, Killarney, Dundalk, Carlingford, Casteltellingham, Lucan, Tallaght, Greystones, Bray, Wicklow, Drogheda, Skerries and Cavan were all under consideration by the Committee, in addition to the four established schemes. However, the Committee may have been ahead of local opinion as none of these options, with the exception of Galway, ever gained local acceptance.

1983: The Scheme had settled to five circuits/linkages:

- Limerick
- Sandymount
- Wexford, Enniscorthy and Gorey
- Waterford and Tramore
- Galway and Ballinasloe.

In addition, both Churches had *ad hoc* arrangements in place to share buildings or other variants of local collaboration:

- Greystones
- Skerries
- Boyle
- Braniel
- Taughmonagh
- St Andrews, Rosetta
- St Columba's, Lisburn
- Firhouse

Therefore the pathway of the life of this Scheme moved from functional to contented co-operation to a "Divinely guided" understanding, and the corresponding practice moved from joint worship to federal to united.

The mid-eighties saw the development of a more intentional single identity model of mission.

1994: It was agreed that Ministers in alternating appointments would be invited to the Conference/Assembly of the other tradition.

2000: It was agreed that Ministers attending would be non-voting delegates at the Courts and Councils of the other tradition, and that all would have access to the printed reports of both traditions.

It was also agreed in 2000 that, in the light of new Methodist legislation on flexibility in the itineracy, the period of ministry would be normally eight years but that consultation, from the Presbyterian side, to facilitate call, could take place earlier than the seventh year. New regulations for the filling of mid-term vacancies were proposed, agreed, and successfully implemented. It was noted that in this and in many other matters, a measure of flexibility is essential to enable appropriate procedures of MCI Stationing and the PCI Linkage Commission to take place.

2006: The Alternating Ministries Scheme in Wexford, Enniscorthy and Gorey was ended. Gorey joined the local Methodist circuit, and Wexford and Enniscorthy became a Linked Home Mission charge within PCI. The latter Congregations retained the descriptor "United Presbyterian and Methodist Church".

2009: The Alternating Ministry Scheme in Waterford ended with the United Congregation coming under the pastoral care of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

10. Conclusions

In light of all of the above the Review Group wishes to celebrate that the conversations which have taken place have been rigorous and that the process has been completed – with a strengthened desire to forge co-operation between our two traditions for the cause of the gospel.

A summary of the main findings is as follows:

(a) *What the process discovered*

- That the field-visits uncovered Churches in the Irish Republic with a strong identity, and sense of purpose. They have a strong missional vision for their contexts.
- That it is unlikely that these Congregations would be in existence if the Alternating Ministries Scheme had not been implemented in the 1970's.
- That their identity as Congregations has evolved over time from being Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, to being United Churches and that this "unitedness" has forged a fresh and unique identity consistent with 'The rock from which they are hewn'. The heritage of the two denominations remains important to them and to their mission, as it provides a point of clear recognition for 'New Irish' coming from other cultures.
- That new future mission plants will inevitably emerge from the mission agencies of each tradition.

(b) *Finance*

- That each of the Congregations benefits from resources released from the central structures of Methodism and Presbyterianism. That each of the Congregations is not financially viable and unlikely to be so in the short to medium term. Central funds from the two denominations will still be required over time. A recommendation in this regard is appended.

(c) *Transition*

- That points of tension arise typically during transition between ministries, both with Methodist Stationing and the Presbyterian Linkage Commission. That each tradition has its own process of assessment of the viability of Congregations at times of transition and that these mechanisms of assessment analyse the narrative of the life of the Congregation over time and not merely capture a snapshot at a particular moment.
- That Congregations should be prepared and supported in advance of transitions to ensure they have sufficient capacity and understanding to approach alternate models of transition.
- That if the scheme is to be successful going forward it needs to continue to evolve, to be agile and to be flexible in its implementation.
- That solid and regular communication between the two Mission Departments of Presbyterianism and Methodism is crucial to the success, both of the Mission Partnership Forum and the Alternating Ministry Scheme.

11. Recommendations

- (a) That the MCI and PCI continue their commitment to the Scheme as it stands. By the Scheme is meant its outworking in current situations today. That the existence of the Scheme and the continued commitment of both traditions to it will not preclude either tradition from developing its missional vision as led by the Spirit of God. Nevertheless, a duty of

courtesy exists to maintain positive relationships through our joint and individual missional activities, both locally and centrally.

- (b) That the Mission Partnership Forum provides a space for the generous exchange of future missional opportunities. This may or may not result in further implementations of the Scheme as it is understood but may also include opportunities for co-operation and, or, collaboration in new missional settings. The purpose is to bless each other and partner in mission where appropriate. It is important not to codify how these collaborations and co-operations may be managed, since each will develop according to need.
- (c) That the Mission Partnership Forum consider how best to realise balanced and sustainable models of local governance which honour both traditions.
- (d) That the rules for deployment of ministerial personnel under each tradition shall be applied during their period of tenure. If either tradition wishes to change the allocation of ministerial duties, either in tenure transition or midterm, that the Mission Partnership Forum considers such changes in advance, and makes a recommendation to the relevant denominational bodies.
- (e) That a composite funding model be considered whereby the costs of ministry are shared between the two traditions, rather than alternating according to the tenure in place at any given time.
- (f) That in light of the adoption of these recommendations, the remit of the Mission Partnership Forum be revised to encompass its additional responsibilities.

APPENDIX 2

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BELFAST TASK GROUP

1. Introduction

In considering a way for the Belfast Presbyteries, the Linkage Commission and the Council for Mission in Ireland to collaborate in resource allocation decisions, the Task Group was asked to draw up several options for consideration, showing their respective advantages and disadvantages. These options are as follows:

2. Options

Option A: A centralised model

In this approach the Linkage Commission and the Council for Mission in Ireland would determine the broad priorities for mission and ministry in the city of Belfast and would use these priorities for resource allocation decisions, whether for new or existing projects – or Congregations at times of transition such as Leave to Call, Tenure Review etc.

Advantages:

Since the process would take place within the committee structures of the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Linkage Commission, there would be clarity of decision making and its basis. Authority to act and responsibility to finance lie, in effect, with the same body. It is likely to facilitate quicker decisions.

Disadvantages:

Presbyteries (and through that vehicle, Congregations) would have little say, other than through their representatives on the Linkage Commission and the Council, as to the setting of these priorities. This may foster feelings of distrust of “the centre”.

Option B: The status quo

In this model the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Linkage Commission collaborate in resource allocation decisions, whereby the Linkage Commission seeks advisory comment from the Council, at its own instigation, and where the needs demand it. Such circumstances typically include:

- where Additional Pastoral Personnel are sought in a Congregation in augmentation
- where Leave to Call is sought in a Congregation with Urban Mission Status
- where missional comment is sought in a situation determined by the Linkage Commission
- where the local context demands such an opinion.

Advantages:

It is well tried and systems are in place, including executive decision making systems which release funds from the Central Ministry Fund or the grant making facilities within the Council for Mission in Ireland.

Disadvantages:

Presbytery has a limited say in these strategic decisions. Presbytery priority setting may be limited to its stated position in mission plans drafted in 2009 (as revised).

It is painfully bureaucratic and slow. This is one of the original reasons given for seeking an alternative.

It often engenders tension between the three key players, which can escalate to conflict. This is surely a poor witness.

It is reactive, rather than proactive, in that it deals almost exclusively with problems or difficult decisions thrown up at times of vacancy.

Option C: The formation of a Consultative Group for Belfast

In this approach the Linkage Commission, the Council for Mission in Ireland and the three Presbyteries act together. They collaborate to draft priorities and to assess projects. They collectively arrive at decisions by agreeing to set aside elements of their autonomy.

Advantages:

Each Presbytery retains a significant say in the decision-making within their bounds, and indeed gains a say beyond their bounds within the city of Belfast.

Each Presbytery has a role in the setting of priorities for the city of Belfast.

There is collective wisdom in the room producing a more nuanced outcome from the multiple perspectives of

- big picture urban mission strategy (CMI)
- local knowledge and insight (Presbytery)
- reality about financial sustainability and monitoring of progress (LC)

Disadvantages:

Each of the 3 participants (Presbyteries, CMI and Linkage Commission) are required to set aside a degree of their autonomy and to cede aspects of their powers, in order to act collaboratively in the Consultative Group. For some, this has proved challenging.

Option D: The Belfast Conference

In this approach the Linkage Commission and the Council for Mission in Ireland act collaboratively, as they currently do. The Council offers advisory comment in certain circumstances as requested by the Linkage Commission. Resource allocation decisions are arrived at by this route for allocation of funds (from the Central Ministry Fund) and CMI grant making funds (through its Mission Grants Panel).

In addition, however, the CMI would convene a permanent Conference for Belfast, made up of representatives from each of the three Belfast Presbyteries. This would be chaired and facilitated by the Council for Mission in Ireland, whose job would be to set priorities for mission and ministry within the city of Belfast. Resource allocation decisions, from the Linkage Commission and the Council for Mission in Ireland, would be tested against these priorities.

Advantages:

Each Presbytery acting alone would retain its remit to set priorities within its own bounds, but this would be informed by the Permanent Conference deliberations.

The Presbyteries talking together would have the main say in the setting of strategic priorities for mission and ministry within Belfast.

The Council and Linkage Commission will bring a wider-Church dimension to the discussions.

Disadvantages:

Historically, Presbyteries have found it difficult to achieve the setting of priorities, when asked. There is a concern that when such work is done, the priorities which emerge prove to be too general to be meaningful. Proximity to neighbours makes this even more difficult.

The model does not resolve the initial problem identified in this process; the separation of functions:

- the authority to set priorities (the Conference)
- the capacity to allocate resources (The Council and the Linkage Commission)

While the CMI is the one partner common to both, its position may become untenable over time, as it may be pressurised to advocate for both local and central interests.

3. Recommendation

- (a) The consensus of the Task Group following debate is that Option D is preferred. This option allows the regulatory bodies to function without setting aside the powers they have been given by the General Assembly, while also ensuring that it is the Presbyteries which set missional priorities within their bounds. It has the added advantage that the three Belfast Presbyteries act together rather than separately in this important task, while not setting aside the principle that a Presbytery is *“responsible for corporate oversight of the Congregations and causes within its bounds...and the advancement of Christ’s kingdom generally within its bounds.”* (Code Par 69(1))
- (b) The place of Presbytery Mission Plans was discussed, and it was noted that to be meaningful, these would need to be revised and updated.
- (c) The specific opinion of the Conference would not be sought in every vacancy or for every project proposal.
- (d) The process of facilitation of the Conference would require the input and support of the Mission Development Officer.
- (e) Priorities, to be meaningful must not be general statements of intent, but specific, considered judgements:
 “Here, and not there.”
 “This and not that.”

APPENDIX C

Directory of Home and Urban Mission Charges, Ministers and Church Planters, Irish Mission Workers and Deaconesses serving under the call of the Council for Mission in Ireland

HOME MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev RS Agnew	(1st Monaghan) and Smithborough
Rev RSG Beacom	Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler
Rev Janice M Browne	(Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan
Rev A Carroll	Donabate
Rev D Conkey	Enniscorthy and Wexford
Rev Molly Deatherage	Ballina, Killala, Ballymote
Rev Nathan Duddy	Arklow (from 28th May 2016)
Rev AJ Dunlop	Howth and Malahide
Rev DTR Edwards	Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount

HOME MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev JG Faris	Cork and Aghada
Rev H Freeburn	Galway (Alternating Scheme)
Rev S Glendinning	Moville, Greenbank, Carndonagh and Malin
Rev WJ Hayes	Tullamore and Mountmellick
Rev KA Jones	(Waterside) and Fahan
Rev Chris Kennedy	Bray (Stated Supply)
Rev SJ Lockington	Corboy and Mullingar
Rev Vicki Lynch (MCI)	Christ Church, Limerick (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Dr DK McCrory	Maynooth
Rev Gary McDowell	Greystones
Rev IT McKee	(Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane
Rev G Jean Mackarel	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis
Rev Colin McKibben	(Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore) and Alt
Rev Katherine P Meyer	Sandymount (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Alan Moore	(Cavanaleck) and Aughentaine
Rev W Montgomery	Fermoy and Cahir
Rev M Proctor	Naas (part time)
Rev SW Rea	Carlow and Athy
Rev DW Reid	(Ardstraw) and Douglas
Rev D Reyes Martin	Kilkenny
Rev SJ Richmond	Donegal and Stranorlar
Rev S Stewart	Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss (pt)
Rev RB Thompson	(Badoney, Corrick) and Glenelly
Rev Dr DJ Woodside	Drogheda
Rev Andrew Watson	Carrigart and Dunfanaghy (pt)
Vacant	1st Bailieborough, Corranearry, (Trinity Bailieborough)
Vacant	(Frankford, Castleblayney), Corvalley and Ervey
Vacant	Inch (Stated Supply)
Vacant	Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo
Vacant	Kells (under review)
Vacant	Sligo with Boyle (Stated Supply)

URBAN MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev M Gibson	Westbourne
Rev R Love	Taughmonagh
Rev I McDonald	New Mossley
Rev D Rankin	Strand, Belfast
Rev L Webster	Craigavon

CHURCH PLANTERS	
Rev Dario Leal	Cliftonville Road. The Living Room

IRISH MISSION WORKERS	
David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Keith Preston	International Meeting Point, Belfast
William Workman	Athy
Philip Whelton	Arklow

DEACONESSES	
Sonya Anderson	Shore Street, Donaghadee
Eileen Black	1st Magherafelt
Jenny Clegg	Ballycrochan, Bangor
Amanda Cooper	Deaconess without charge
Doreen Draffin	Whitehouse and Hospice Chaplaincy Team
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington, Ballymena
Joanne Dunlop	Chaplaincy Teams, Antrim and Craigavon Hospitals
Sharon Heron	Windsor and International Meeting Point
Roberta Irvine	Greystone Road, Antrim
Christine Kyle	Ulster Hospital Chaplaincy Team
Phyllis Linton	West Church, Ballymena
Heather McCracken	Belfast H&SC Trust Chaplaincy Team
Sadie McCullough	Whiteabbey
Lynda McFaul	1st Carrickfergus
Amy Magee	Muckamore
Tracey Nicholl	St James, Ballymoney

DEACONESSES	
Julie Peake	Deaconess without Charge
Michelle Purdy	Ballyclare
Hazel Reid	1st Broughshane
Margaret Robertson	Elmwood, Lisburn
Kathleen Spence	Deaconess without Charge
Rosemary Spiers	1st Antrim
Evelyn Whyte	1st Lisburn

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report of the Mission Partnership Forum's, *Review of the Alternating Ministries Scheme* (Appendix A) be received, and its recommendations adopted.

2. That option A/B/C/D [one option to be chosen] in Appendix B of the report of the Council for Mission in Ireland (*Belfast Task Group*) be adopted.

3. That a review of the Home Mission be undertaken on terms agreed by the Council for Mission in Ireland, and that a report with recommendations be brought to the General Assembly, ideally in 2017.

4. That the General Assembly authorise the sale of the Shankill Road Mission building on terms agreed by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

5. That the sacrifice of those who fought and died at the Battle of the Somme, and marked on its centenary anniversary on 1st July 2016, be acknowledged at services of worship the Sunday following, or another suitable occasion.

6. That the work of PCI Chaplains in Healthcare, Prisons, the Forces, Universities and Colleges be commended to the Church for prayer, both privately and at services of worship.

7. That the General Assembly agrees to the formation of a Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee, and place it under the Council for Mission in Ireland, with the Convener and membership to be nominated by the Nominations Committee.

8. That the Report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be received.