

GENERAL BOARD

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The General Board covers a wide range of work which is set out as follows:

- (a) The **Memorial Record** to recognise the life and service of those ministers who have died since the last Assembly;
- (b) The **retirement** of the Clerk and **appointment** of a Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly;
- (c) The **General Work of the Board** which refers to work which will not be reported in the other Committee and Panel reports;
- (d) The **Assembly Committee Reports** – Priorities, Planned Giving; Doctrine; Moderator’s Advisory; Church and Society; Global Concerns; Church Relations; Reception of Ministers and Licentiates; and Elders’ Terms. The Structures Review Panel and the Presbytery Engagement Panel will report alongside the Priorities Committee and the Pastoral Care of Manse Families Panel with the Moderator’s Advisory Committee;
- (e) The **Presbyterian Historical Society**, while not accountable to the General Assembly, reports for information only.

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Very Rev Dr Donald Patton reports:

The Rev John Scott Martin, BA, minister emeritus of Drumlough and Annahilt Congregations in the Presbytery of Dromore, died on 12 June 2013 in the 82nd year of his age and the 45th year of his ministry. One of two children he was born on 19 February 1932 to Joseph Martin and his wife Martha, who farmed at Stonebridge in County Monaghan. He was raised in the Congregation of Stonebridge, Monaghan, and educated at Smithborough National School (1936-1944) and then Clones High School (1944-1948). On leaving school he worked on the family farm for some years. He joined the Congregation of First Portadown in 1962. Converted to Christ in his teenage years, he later heard the call of God to the ordained ministry. He studied at Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin (1962-1966), graduating BA and took his theological course at the Assembly’s College, Belfast, (1966-1968). He was licensed by the Presbytery of Armagh on 23 June 1968. He served his assistantship (1967-1970) in Richview Congregation, Donegall Road, Belfast, and was ordained there by the Presbytery of Belfast South on 18 December 1968. He was called to the Congregations of Knowhead, Fahan, and Inch, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Foyle on 19 March 1970. A few years later, he was called to Drumlough and installed there by the Presbytery of Dromore on 27 September 1972. Annahilt was united with Drumlough in 1974 and Mr Martin was installed as minister on 12 September of that year. Mr Martin exercised an evangelical ministry, calling his hearers to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour

and conscientiously pastoring his people. During the 1970s he was active in the Campaign for Complete Withdrawal from the World Council of Churches, a grouping internal to the Presbyterian Church which spearheaded a movement to persuade the Church to withdraw from membership of the World Council, which the Assembly decided to do in 1980. He married Margaret Eleanor Wallace on 15 September 1964 in Clontibret. They had four children, Josephine Elaine, Martha Eleanor Elizabeth (Libby), Ruth Caroline, and Sharon Rebecca. We give thanks to God for the ministry of this 'good and faithful servant' of whom his family can be proud and whom we commend to the comforts of Almighty God.

The Rev Henry Brian Murphy, BA, BD, DD, DipEd, died on 24 June 2013 in the 90th year of his age and the 58th year of his ministry. He was born on 26 July 1923 to Thomas Henry Murphy, a Rate Collector with the Belfast Corporation, and his wife Martha, née Smiley. His sister, Irene, was born two years later. The family worshipped in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church where the Rev John Waddell was minister in Dr Murphy's developing years. Dr Murphy's father was an elder and Captain of the Boys' Brigade Company. He was educated at Rosetta Primary School and Methodist College, Belfast, and, upon leaving school, he worked with The Trustee Savings Bank from 1940 to 1942. The Second World War broke out in 1939 and, as with so many young men of the time, he entered the British Army in 1942 and served with the Royal Engineers as a Sergeant. On D-Day, June 1944, he took part in the Normandy Landings as a skipper of a landing craft, carrying ashore men, tanks and armoured cars. In 1945, it was his responsibility to re-open the Brussels Canal Port to ensure a continuing supply of food and coal to a cold and starving people. He was demobbed in 1947 and returned home to rejoin the staff of The Trustee Savings Bank. Settling again in Fisherwick Congregation he became Captain of the Boys' Brigade and Organist and Choirmaster at Ballylinney Congregation near Ballyclare. With the encouragement of the Rev Dr John Withers, minister of Fisherwick, he left the bank in 1949 to study Philosophy, Greek and European History at the Queen's University, Belfast, graduating BA in 1952. While at Queen's he became President of the Student Christian Movement. Convinced of the call of God to the ordained ministry he trained at the Assembly's College, Belfast, completing his studies in 1955 with a BD. He served as assistant in Newington Congregation and was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 2 June 1955. The following year he was installed as minister in Clogher by the Presbytery of Clogher on 15 March 1956. Tempo was added in 1959. These were busy years with the building of a new hall, the WH Bailey Memorial Hall, and the planning of a new manse, taking up a lot of his time. Mr Murphy took an active interest in the youth work, acting for a few years as the Scout Master. He published a history of the Presbytery, *Three Hundred years of Presbyterianism in Clogher*, in 1958. In 1963 he was called to the historic Congregation of First Derry being installed there on 13 March. As well as attending to his work in the Congregation, he served as Dean of Residences at the Magee University College in the city of Derry, was Chaplain to the Waterside Hospital, was a member of the Board of Governors of Foyle College and administered several city charitable trusts. The BBC on several occasions invited him to conduct Sunday morning radio service broadcasts. The 'Troubles' broke out in 1968 making congregational life very difficult, the Church building being sited just within the ancient walls of the city, and as people were displaced to the Waterside the Church suffered the

loss of many families. Mr Murphy involved himself deeply in peace-making and reconciliation work, taking part in cross-community efforts and was often found on the streets at night seeking to calm tempers in riotous situations. Tragically, five members of the Congregation lost their lives in the violence of the time and Mr Murphy had the sad task of conducting their funerals and comforting their families. In 1971 the General Assembly approved the creation of two full-time posts to promote Christian Education and to be responsible also for Sunday school work. Mr Murphy and Miss Caroline (Carrie) Barnett, now Mrs Carrie Barkley, were appointed Joint Conveners of the Church Education Committee. He resigned from First Derry in March 1972 and was formally installed as Associate Secretary for Christian Education and Senior Sunday School Organiser on 3 October of that year. He became responsible for producing study courses for use in the senior Sunday School classes of the Church and in the Bible classes, and also for the teachers' guides in these areas, so helping to inform the minds, character and faith of a whole generation of children and young people. He travelled thousands of miles conducting training classes and networking with other Churches in this important ministry. In this capacity he lectured in Christian Education at the Assembly's College, was editor and contributor to Towards Communicant Membership, a course for new communicants commissioned by the Tripartite Conversations. He acted as Secretary of 'The Child in the Church' group of the Irish Council of Churches and also contributed to the International Bible Reading Association's Notes for Adult Bible Reading in 1976. He found time to study part-time at the Queen's University for a Diploma in Education which he gained in 1975. During these years Mr Murphy, with his family, had returned to Fisherwick Church where he now served as an elder and Sunday School superintendent. Mr Murphy retired on 31 July 1988. His service to the Church, especially to Christian education, was recognised in May 1987 when the Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland conferred on him the degree of DD. Throughout the years of his service Dr Murphy was supported by his wife Mary Agnes Brown, née Hunter, whom he married on 31 July 1954 in Cliftonville Presbyterian Church, Belfast. They had two children, Gillian and Jonathan, whom, along with Mrs Murphy, we commend to the comforts of Almighty God as, together, we give thanks for Dr Murphy's life and ministry.

The Rev Joseph Davison, BA, BD, MA, died on 30 August 2013 in the 100th year of his age and the 75th year of his ministry. He was born at Ballyclose near Cullybackey, on 25 November 1913, the son of James Davison and his wife Mary, née McIlroy. Raised in the Congregation of Cuningham Memorial, Cullybackey, under the ministry of the Rev S McIlveen, he was educated at Ballymena Academy. Becoming convinced of the call of God to full-time ordained ministry he went to Magee University College, Londonderry, followed by Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1936. He followed this with training for the ministry at the Assembly's College, Belfast. He served as assistant in the Congregation of Woodvale, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 5 June 1938. He was called by the Congregation of Drumquin and ordained there by the Presbytery of Omagh at his installation Service on 17 February 1939. He spent his whole ministry there, retiring on 30 June 1977 to Dumfries, Scotland. He married Margaret (Peggy) McMullan from Dungannon on 3 January 1940 and they were blessed in the birth of two daughters, Faith and Honor. Mr Davison was a model of the country minister. He visited his people at least once every

year sharing in their joys and sorrows. He preached the gospel to his people consistently every Sunday. He farmed the manse glebe and understood well the vagaries of how the weather affected this farming community in general. He continued his interest in study, gaining an MA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1949. Mrs Davison was fully involved with her husband in the life and work of the Congregation. Together they ran the Sunday School for many years and Mrs Davison acted as organist from her second Sunday in Drumquin until their retirement on 30 June 1977. Mrs Davison pre-deceased her husband in 2010. Mr Davison was able to turn his hand to many a task. He made the communion table out of old pews and an old organ casing, and during his ministry the Church was divided by a wall to create a hall with kitchen and toilet facilities. We give thanks to God for the faithful ministry of our friend and colleague and extend our sympathy to Mr Davison's family.

The Rev Elizabeth Jamison, BA, DipEd, MEd, DipTh, MTh, PhD, died on 11 September 2013 in the 83rd year of her age and the 24th of her ministry. Born at Belfast on 19 March 1931 she was the only child of Henry Cooke Jamison, a Mechanical Engineer, and his wife Matilda. The family were members of Knock Congregation where she received her early Christian education. She attended Mountpottinger Primary School, and the Belfast Royal Academy. She took her BA degree at the Queen's University, Belfast, and proceeded to IBC. On completion of teacher training she taught in Elmgrove School, later moving to Orangefield Secondary School when it first opened. Her love for, and interest in, children led her to train as an Educational Psychologist and she practised for some years in this capacity in Co Down and the greater Belfast area, advising teachers who had responsibility for children with learning difficulties. Throughout the years she continued her interest in academic study as the list of her degrees bears witness. She was also involved in the life of Orangefield Congregation and in Scripture Union, enthusiastically sharing the Gospel and her own personal faith. She was accepted as a student for the ministry of the Church and trained at Union Theological College, Belfast. She was awarded a PhD for her thesis on 'Religious Understanding in Children aged seven to eleven.' She was licensed on 14 June 1989 by the Presbytery of East Belfast and served as assistant minister to the Rev John McVeigh in the Congregation of Gilnahirk, 1988-1991, where she was ordained on 11 February 1990. In the ensuing years she served in a variety of posts, lecturing in Union Theological College and ministering in Garnerville, Whitehead, Kircubbin and in the border counties of Cavan and Monaghan. Her later years were dogged by ill health and severely restricted her mobility. Together with her circle of friends we give thanks to God for her life and witness.

The Rev Hugh Barkley Wallace, BA, MA, Minister Emeritus of Bushmills Congregation, in the Presbytery of Route, died on 21 September 2013 in the 80th year of his age and the 54th year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 18 November 1933 to the Rev JB Wallace, Minister of Drumbo Congregation in the Presbytery of Dromore, and his wife Anne, née Hume. He received his secondary education at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, followed by Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, graduating in 1956. He then attended the Assembly's College, Belfast, for theological training, completing his studies in 1958. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Dromore on 20 October 1958 and served as assistant minister to the Rev Alfred

Martin, minister of Lowe Memorial, Finaghy, Belfast. On receiving a call to the Congregations of Drumhillery and Middletown he was ordained and installed in these Congregations on 20 April 1960. This was followed by another notable milestone when in August of that year he and Margaret Wilma Wallace were married and settled down to manse life being blessed some time later with the birth of a son, John Barkley. Mr Wallace was noted for his love of literature and facility with the English language. He always had the right word for every occasion. He was a convinced Presbyterian and liturgical in his conduct of worship. These gifts were well employed in his capacity as Convener of the Public Worship Committee of the General Assembly 1982-1989 and of the Memorial Record 1991-1997. He was deeply involved in the preparation of the *Church Hymnary, Third Edition* and of the *Irish Presbyterian Hymnbook* and served as a member of the Church Hymnary Trust. He was closely associated with the production of several of the various experimental revisions to *The Book of Public Worship* and work on the *Glory to God* hymnbook. After ten happy years in his first charges he moved to Bushmills Congregation on 19 February 1970, where he remained until his retirement on 30 June 2000 becoming the longest serving minister there of the twentieth century. Over these years he moved in and out among the people showing compassion and care to all in need. During his ministry the Hamill Hall, its ancillary services, and the manse, were renovated. Later a new minor hall was erected. In 1996 the Congregation celebrated 350 years of life and witness and Mr Wallace authored a short history, *Bushmills Presbyterian Church 1646 – 1996*. A man of broad sympathies he fostered and maintained good relations with counterparts in other traditions. In his ministry he was loyally supported by his wife who played an active part in the life and work of the Congregation. In the wider community he served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of Dunluce School and also of Bushmills Primary School and for a time was President of the TCD Association. As Clerk of the Presbytery of Route, 1986-2007 he came to know its Congregations well. Conversant with the laws of the Church he proved a wise counsellor to the Presbytery and a true friend to all of his colleagues, often giving quiet encouragement when needed. We give thanks for the life and service of our colleague, mourning his passing with his loved ones but assured of the hope of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Rev Ernest Morrow, BA, minister emeritus of First Dunboe in the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady, died on 19 November 2013 in the 96th year of his age and the 64th year of his ministry. He was born at Ballyworkan, Portadown, on 24 November 1916 to Hugh Morrow, a farmer, and his wife Abbey. Brought up in the Congregation of First Portadown he received his early education at Ballyworkan Primary School, Edenderry Primary School, and Portadown Technical College. For some years he worked in business, and later, responding to the call of God to the ordained ministry, he proceeded to the Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, graduating in 1948. While at Magee he was President of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He took his theological course at New College, Edinburgh, and the Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Armagh on 28 May 1950 and served his assistantship in the Congregation of Oldpark, Belfast. A short time later, on 27 July 1950, he was ordained and installed in the Congregation of First Dunboe by the Presbytery of Coleraine. He was known to the Congregation

through some assistantship work in the summers of 1948 and 1949 when he had evidently proved his worth. He remained as minister until his retirement on 31 December 1981. During these years Mr Morrow was instrumental in extending the life and work of the Congregation through establishing organisations such as the Boys Brigade, a Youth Fellowship, a Women's Missionary Society (the precursor of the Presbyterian Women's Association) and a Bowling Club. The new minister brought dynamism and vision to the life of the Congregation. At the same time he faithfully proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ, and pastored his people diligently through the vicissitudes of their everyday lives. In all of this he was readily assisted by his wife, Martha, née Campbell, from Strabane. They were blessed with two children, Allison Joseph and Hugh Arthur Charles. Mr Morrow found relaxation in bee-keeping, horses, ornithology and farming life, reflecting his rural roots. On retirement he and his wife moved to Scotland to be near his wife's sister. It is a tribute to the affection in which his memory was held that in the year 2000, twenty years after his retirement, a delegation from First Dunboe travelled to Scotland to mark the 50th anniversary of Mr Morrow's ordination and to present gifts to him and Mrs Morrow. To his family we extend our sympathy in their loss and with them give thanks for the life and service of the Rev Ernest Morrow.

The Rev Norman John Linkens, BD, died on 21 November 2013 in the 82nd year of his age and the 48th year of his ministry. The eldest of two brothers he was born at Deal, Kent, on 2 October 1932 the son of AJ and WM Linkens. His early years were spent in Walmer, Kent, and in his teens he was educated at Birkenhead School 1943-1950. The family attended Trinity Presbyterian Church, Birkenhead. He was won to personal faith in Christ in his teens, and attendance at a Christian Camp one summer set him on the pathway to maturing faith. Finishing school at age eighteen he became an apprentice engineer at Crewe railway yard. He was called up for National Service with the Royal Engineers from 1953 to 1955. In association with the Forces he took on the role of Forces Welfare Officer in Germany with the YMCA. This period confirmed for him the call of God to full-time Christian ministry. He attended London Bible College/ University of London graduating BD in 1956. He came over to Northern Ireland and worked with the CSSM movement, a ministry to children and a focus he would maintain over the course of the years together with ministry to families. In 1960 he was installed as the minister of Crosscollyer Street Evangelical Presbyterian Church, North Belfast. In 1960 he married Ruth Patricia Smith. They moved to Scotland in 1963 where Mr Linkens acted for a time as Scripture Union Children's Evangelist and Camps Organiser, until, following ordination by the Presbytery of Ayr on 16 December 1964, he became a minister of the Church of Scotland and was installed in Muir Kirk Parish Church. This was followed by service in two further parishes – Old Port Glasgow Parish Church 1969-1971 and Holytown Parish Church, Lanarkshire, 1973-1978. The family returned to Northern Ireland in 1978 and Mr Linkens was accepted into the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and installed in Westbourne Congregation by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 1 September 1978 where he remained until September 1987 when he was installed in Dunlop Memorial on 3 September of that year. He resigned on 29 February 1996 and served as Stated Supply in Cloughey and Portavogie until his retirement on 30 August 1998. He was Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1993. Throughout his ministry he was supported by his wife, Ruth, and they had

four children, Fiona, Paul (Minister of Ebrington Congregation, Londonderry), Rachel and Timothy. To his immediate family we extend our gratitude to God for the faithful ministry of their loved one and our sympathy in their loss.

The Rev William Ernest Ronald Barton, MA, minister emeritus of Mosside in the Presbytery of Route, died on 5 December 2013 in the 79th year of his age and the 46th year of his ministry. One of three brothers, he was born at Belfast on 3 July 1935 to James Benson Barton, who was a Methodist Minister, and his wife Ivy Gwendaline, née Allen. His father died suddenly when they lived in Bangor and Mr Barton joined Trinity Presbyterian Church in the town. He attended Shaftesbury House Tutorial College and followed the well-worn tertiary educational path to Magee University College, Londonderry, then Trinity College, Dublin, and the Assembly's College, Belfast, in preparation for the ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 1 May 1965 and served as assistant minister in the Congregations of St Andrew's; Joymount, Carrickfergus; Trinity, Omagh and Cooke Centenary, Belfast where he was ordained on 15 January 1967 by the Presbytery of East Belfast. He was installed in his first charge of Trinity, Bailieborough, Bellasis and Seafin on 14 February 1968 and a year later, 17 September 1969, he moved to Clogher and Tempo. In the interim, on 8 March 1969, he married Maud Esther Elliott, whom he met while a patient in Newtownards Hospital where she was a nurse. They had one son, James. In 1973 he moved to Mosside being installed on 18 September, and remained there until his retirement on 9 July 2000. He moved among his people regularly, a welcome visitor to their homes, pastoring their needs and sharing the joys and sorrows of their lives. He involved himself in the local community, supporting and playing with the local football team and being active in the Orange and Black Institutions. He prepared thoroughly for the pulpit and took the Senior Young People's Bible Class and assisted the Youth fellowship. His wife became likewise involved in the life of the Church and the community, leading the Girls' Brigade work for many years as Captain. Her death in 1995 was a severe blow to Mr Barton which undermined his health. Mr Barton was for a time a member of the Board of Studies and Church Extension Agent for the Presbytery. Mr Barton was a model of the traditional minister, preacher and pastor, for whose service we give thanks to God and extend our sympathy to his son James and the wider family circle.

The Rev George Cunningham, BA, died on 29 December 2013 in the 78th year of his age and the 47th year of his ministry. He was born on 16 November 1936 to Thomas Cunningham, a chauffeur, and his wife Mary Agnes, née Shaw. The family worshipped in Whitehouse Presbyterian Church where the Rev James Nutt was minister. He was educated at Whiteabbey Primary school and then Carrickfergus Technical College. He worked as a joiner until, hearing the call of God to missionary service, following his conversion at a Jack Shuler evangelistic campaign in the King's Hall, Belfast, he enrolled as a student at Belfast Bible College. Two years later, 1959, he was appointed a missionary with the Londonderry City Mission. At that time, the Rev EA Russell, later Professor of New Testament at the Assembly's College, Belfast and who had lectured at the Belfast Bible College, recognising his gifts encouraged Mr Cunningham to study for the Presbyterian ministry. So he enrolled at Magee College, then Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1965 and completed his studies at the Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast

on 11 June 1967 and served his assistantship in Bethany Congregation, Shankill Road, Belfast, with the Rev John Girvan, where he was ordained on 14 December 1967. Two years later he received a call to the Congregations of Knappagh and Lislooney and was installed there on 25 June 1969 by the Presbytery of Armagh. These years saw considerable movement of population from various parts of the Province to towns such as Craigavon, Carrickfergus and Antrim. The Church Extension Committee of the Presbyterian Church planned new Churches to cater for Presbyterians settling in these new developments. So it was that the Committee asked Mr Cunningham to consider Church Extension work believing he had the requisite gifts. He responded by moving to the fledgling Congregation of Greystone Road, Antrim, which had been established in 1969 with the Rev Derek Weir of Killead as Stated Supply. Following his induction there, on 2 April 1971, he threw himself into the work. His friendly personality and community involvement was rewarded with rapid growth and a Church building was opened on 9 September 1972. Within five years the Congregation had grown to over 400 families leading to full congregational status in 1977 and the installation of Mr Cunningham as the minister on March 6 of that year. A few years later, in 1983, he took up a new Church Extension challenge when he was installed in Burnside, Portstewart, on 20 January that year. Once again he gave himself enthusiastically to the work, building up the membership, steering the fund-raising, and augmenting contributions through the sale of tapes in which he sang, accompanying himself on the guitar. He also served as a Chaplain to the Coleraine site of the University of Ulster for some years. In 1996 he took up what would be his final full-time position in the united charges of Armoyn and Ramoan, being installed on 28 May of that year and serving until his retirement on 31 December 2001. In this busy life he relaxed by playing golf, utilising his joinery skills, and painting, all of which he continued in retirement until, in latter years, ill health restricted his activities. Throughout these years Mr Cunningham was fully supported by his wife, Marion Ann Smith, née Mulholland, whom he married on 26 September 1959. They had three children, Diane, David George, and Alison. We commend them and their families to the prayers of the Church, as, with them, we give thanks to God for the faithful service of our brother and their loved one.

The Rev George Alfred Grindle, MBE, DD, Minister Emeritus of the Kinghan Church, Belfast, died on 17 December 2013 in the 76th year of his age and the 42nd year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 26 April 1938, the eldest of three sons, to Charles John Grindle, a teacher to the deaf community, and his wife, Anna Mary, née McIntyre, from Malin. Brought up in the Parish Church of St Nicholas, he was educated at Malone Primary School followed by Methodist College, Belfast (1949-1956) and followed a course of teacher training at Stranmillis College, Belfast (1956 to 1959). From 1961 to 1962 he attended Manchester University to qualify as a teacher to the deaf. He gained a teaching position in the Jordanstown School for the Deaf. It was there he met Isabella Margaret Jack who was a housemother in the school. Love blossomed and they were married in October 1963. He was approached by the wife of the Rev Dr Robert Allen who persuaded him to succeed her husband in ministry to the Kinghan Mission community, now the Kinghan Church. He worked in the Kinghan Church from 1967 at the same time pursuing theological study at the Assembly's College, Belfast. He learned to sign and became fluent in the

language, helping to gain public recognition of the language in the United Kingdom. On completion of his course he was licensed by the Presbytery of South Belfast on 24 October 1971 in Malone Presbyterian Church where he had become a member, and was ordained and installed as minister of the Kinghan Church by the Presbytery of South Belfast on 26 April 1972. He remained there until his retirement on 26 April 2003. He not only conducted Sunday Worship but travelled widely, visiting people in their homes and acting as interpreter in hospitals, courtrooms, police stations and with social workers. His warm heart and reassuring smile opened many a door for ministry in the name of Christ and lives were spiritually changed and strengthened. In 1990 he saw the realisation of his hard work to remodel the Church building. The interior was redesigned to provide a modern worship centre downstairs and a recreation hall upstairs which was named in his honour. He travelled widely to make the ministry of the Church known and raised a lot of the funding for the building work. He was a friend to many and extended his ministry by acting as administrator of the clergy conferences run by the Kairos Trust. His steady commitment to, and tireless work for, the deaf community over the years, was doubly recognised when, firstly, in 1987 he was awarded the MBE, and then in 1998 the Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland conferred on him the Degree of DD. Mrs Grindle, son Richard, and daughter Elizabeth, are joined by many in the Church and beyond, who have cause to give thanks to God for the life and ministry of George Grindle and who mourn his passing with them.

The Rev William James Lamont, BA, minister emeritus of Killymurriss Congregation in the Presbytery of Ballymena, died on 31 December 2013 in the 89th year of his age and the 59th year of his ministry. He was born at Ballymenagh, Garvagh, on 10 June 1925 to John Lamont, a farmer, and his wife Margaret. His home Congregation was First Garvagh. He received his early education at Carhill Primary School. He left school aged fourteen and worked on his father's farm with his younger brother, Samuel, until hearing the call of God to the ordained ministry. He prepared for service by studying at the Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, from where he graduated BA in 1952. He took his theological course at New College, Edinburgh and the Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 4 June 1954 and was assistant to the Rev James McFarland of Sinclair Seamen's Congregation in Belfast. He was called to the Congregation of Killymurriss and ordained and installed there on 6 October 1955 by the Presbytery of Ballymena. He was to remain there until his retirement on 31 December 1994. He shepherded the people over these years nurturing them in the faith that is in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, sharing with them the highs and lows of their lives, moving among his people as friend and guide. The young were challenged to vital faith and discipleship through coffee bars he and others arranged on the Church premises. He prepared well for the pulpit bringing only a few notes with him to the Sunday preaching. He exercised an expository ministry opening the Scriptures chapter by chapter. He was also kept busy with duties and responsibilities out-with his Congregation. Within the wider Presbyterian Church he served on the General Assembly's Business Committee, the Committee on Temperance and Gambling and was a member of the Board of Education. He acted as Clerk to the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine from 1972 to 2003 and was Moderator of that Synod in 1992. He also served as a member of the Irish Council of Christian Endeavour and

National and Young People's Convenor and Young Adults Convenor, evidencing his strong interest in nurturing the spiritual life of the young. He found relaxation in gardening and bee-keeping and was Chairman of the Mid-Antrim Beekeepers Association. He married Eileen May McConaghy soon after his installation in Killymurry and they had five children – Helen Maxine, Isobel Margaret, John Victor, Samuel David, and William James Alistair. To them, Mrs Lamont, and their wider family circle, we extend our sympathy finding victory in loss through the assurance of the Lord Jesus Christ who said 'I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there you may be also.'

The Rev Robert (Bertie) Alexander Crooks, BA, MA, died on 4 January 2014 in the 87th year of his age and the 60th year of his ministry. One of four children, two brothers and sisters, he was born at Broughshane on 9 July 1927 to James Crooks and his wife Lavinia. The family worshipped in High Kirk Congregation, Ballymena, where the Rev James Nutt was minister. He received his secondary education at Ballymena Academy and continued his studies at the Queen's University, Belfast, (1946); Trinity College, Dublin; Magee College, Londonderry, (1949) and New College, Edinburgh (1950). Responding to the call of God to the ordained Christian ministry he studied at the Assembly' College, Belfast. He was licensed on 13 July 1952 by the Presbytery of Ballymena, and served as an assistant to the Rev David Porter in the Congregation of Richview, Donegall Road, Belfast. During this period he met Elizabeth (Betty) Florence McKee, a Canadian, who was visiting two aunts in Belfast. Romance blossomed and following ordination on 10 January 1954, he moved to Canada where, a few weeks later, he and Betty married on the thirtieth of that month. In February he was installed as minister of St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Parry Sound, Ontario. He ministered there for twenty-three years exercising a biblical and evangelical ministry. He was in demand as a preacher and conducted many Gospel Missions and spoke at Conventions. In 1976, following the retirement of the Rev Dr JW Orr from Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, Belfast, he was invited to preach as sole nominee. After a lengthy period he accepted the call and was installed in Bloomfield on 2 September 1977 by the Presbytery of East Belfast. For eleven years he served the Congregation as a much loved pastor and preacher where his gifts were again deployed fruitfully and throughout Northern Ireland. He retired to London, Ontario, on 15 June 1993. His wife predeceased him. We express our sympathy to their children, Colleen, Carolyn, Brian, and to the extended family, joining them in thanksgiving for the service of one who knows fulfilment of a favourite text 'And I -in righteousness - I shall see your face; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with seeing your likeness.' Psalm 17:15.

The Rev Aylmer Ernest Armstrong, DipArt, minister emeritus of Moneydig, died on 10 January 2014 in the 90th year of his age and the 54th year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 7 April 1924 to Aylmer William Armstrong, who worked in Belfast docks, and his wife Kathleen, née Vint. Mr Armstrong was educated at the Belfast Technical High School and Belfast College of Art (1940-1945) qualifying with a Diploma in Art and in Art teaching. A gifted artist, he continued to paint throughout his life, exhibiting in private and public art galleries in Ireland and in the Royal Ulster Academy, selling many of his etchings and landscapes. He taught Art in Coleraine Technical College and Coleraine High from 1945 to 1955. During these years he was an active member

of the Congregation of New Row, Coleraine, and was elected a ruling elder there. His life took a new direction when, hearing the call of God to full-time ordained ministry, he entered the Assembly's College, Belfast, in 1956 and completed his theology course in 1959. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 26 May 1959 and assigned as assistant to the Rev Dr Thomas Fitch, Minister of Ravenhill Congregation, Belfast. A few years later, on receiving a call to the Congregation of Dungiven, he was ordained and installed there by the Presbytery of Limavady on 2 November 1961. A couple of years later Mr Armstrong was joined in the manse by Anne Margaret Holly of Portstewart upon their marriage on 7 August 1963. Mrs Armstrong supported him in his ministry and predeceased him in their retirement years. The 'Troubles' in the early 1970s brought disruption to the town and the Church building suffered bomb damage on several occasions, the memorial windows being shattered during one of these incidents in June 1972. In the mid 1970's Mr Armstrong moved to Moneydig where he was installed on 28 July 1976 and ministered there until his retirement on 30 September 1984. Mr Armstrong exercised a faithful and caring pastoral ministry among his people, also serving on the Social Witness Board and the Committee on Church Architecture of the General Assembly. For relaxation he enjoyed painting, gardening and writing. He often wrote reports of the Portstewart Convention, as it was then known, for the Presbyterian Herald, and also other articles on a variety of subjects. His good work is recorded in the hearts of those whom he served as also in the annals of heaven and we give thanks to God for the life and witness of our colleague.

The Rev John Carson Lee, Minister Emeritus of Culnady and Swatragh Congregations in the Presbytery of Tyrone, died on 10 January 2014 in the 94th year of his age and the 49th year of his ministry. He was born at Monkstown on 19 June 1920 to William Lee and his wife, Margaret, née Carson, who were members of Whiteabbey Congregation. He attended Whiteabbey Primary School, followed by Carrickfergus Model School, and took a distance learning course with Wolsey Hall Tutorial College, Oxford. On leaving school he qualified as a cabinet maker and French polisher and worked for the Belfast firm of Lees, Hyman and Lees. He came to personal faith in Christ at the age of sixteen and served as Sunday School Superintendent in his home Congregation and was elected an elder at a young age. He married Pat Gibson in June 1944. He became convinced that God was calling him to full-time service and was accepted into the Belfast City Mission, leading the work for ten years on the Shore Road. During this time Mr Lee prepared for the ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church and attended the Queen's University, Belfast, followed by the Assembly's College, Belfast. At the same time, though technically the assistant in Megain Memorial, he was, effectively, minister in Mersey Street Congregation. Sadly, his wife Pat took ill and died. On completion of his studies, Mr Lee was licensed by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 30 May 1965 and ordained in Mersey Street on 5 December 1965 by the Presbytery of East Belfast. He received a call to the Congregations of First Bailieborough, Glasleck and Corraneary and was installed there as minister on 15 November 1967. He and his new wife, Anne Gamble, of Whiteabbey, whom he married in April 1966, and sons Ivan and Kenneth by his first marriage, settled down to happy family life and pastoral ministry in the County Cavan. Six years later Mr Lee accepted a call to minister in the Congregations of Culnady

and Swatragh and he was installed in these two charges on 14 December 1987. He preached the Gospel faithfully to his hearers and ministered the challenges and comforts of the Word of God in the ups and downs of life. He and Mrs Lee started a Girls' Brigade Company which still prospers. Mr Lee retired in 1987 but continued in active ministry as stated supply in Largy, 1988 to 1994. We give thanks to God for the witness of our brother to the grace of the Gospel and assure Mrs Lee and Mr Lee's sons, Ivan and Kenneth, by his first marriage, of our sympathy and prayers in their loss.

The Rev John Brian Moore, BA, MA, DD, died on 14 January 2014 in the 82nd year of his age and the 56th year of his ministry. He was born at Bangor, Co Down, on 20 January 1933 to John Moore, a parcels Manager with LMS, and his wife Evelyn, née Jackson. His home Congregation was First Bangor and he came to personal faith in Christ through a CSSM mission at Ballyholme. He was educated at Bangor Grammar School and in 1950 started further study at the Magee University College, Londonderry, continuing at Trinity College, Dublin, from which he graduated BA in 1953. He pursued his theological studies at New College, Edinburgh, and the Assembly's College, Belfast, in preparation for the ordained ministry. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 27 May 1956 and served his assistantship with the Rev James Dunlop in the Congregation of Oldpark, Belfast, until he was ordained and installed in First Portglenone on 5 November 1958 by the Presbytery of Ballymena. It was during these years that he developed his conviction of, and skill in, expository preaching and its application to daily life. Then on 16 December 1965 he was installed as minister of Albert Street Congregation, Belfast. Some months later he married Jean Stewart Lowry from Portglenone and they settled down to manse life in Belfast. They had two children, Christine and Iain. Four years later the 'Troubles' broke out and had a devastating impact on the Congregations' worship, work and witness. Security gates were erected nearby and were closed in the evenings, and part of the Church halls was occupied by the British Army. This gave impetus to a radical rethink of the future of the Congregation which led to the union of Albert Street and Argyle Place in February 1971, the new Congregation meeting in the Argyle Street premises on the front of the Shankill Road and renamed West Kirk. The civil unrest of the following years took Mr Moore into riotous situations and into many homes severely affected by violence and intimidation. His preaching focus on the Lordship of Christ during these years gave hope and inspiration to many in the Congregation living through the social upheaval of the times. He gave himself unsparingly in ministry to the needs around him which took their toll and led to a life-threatening illness of many months duration in 1976. He took a keen interest in the Boys' Brigade often joining in Five-Aside football games, perhaps seeking to emulate some of the players of Liverpool Football Club which he supported. Within the wider Presbyterian Church he served as Convener of the Home Board 1996-2000 and Co-Convener of the Board of Mission in Ireland 2000-2003. He was a delegate to the Nineteenth General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1964 and a member of the Foreign Mission Committee. Himself a life-long student of theology he encouraged Christian witness in university and college life through his membership of UCCF committees and sharing his convictions and insights with students for the ministry. The Church recognised his work when the Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland, awarded him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1997. Dr Moore retired to his birthplace

of Bangor on 30 June 2001. To Mrs Moore, Christine and Iain, we extend our prayers and assure them of our gratitude to God for the life and work of their loved one, our brother and colleague.

The Rev Alexander Stuart Cromie, MA, LLB, the father of the General Assembly, and minister emeritus of Lisnabreen, Bangor, in the Presbytery of Ards, died on 5 February 2014 in the 103rd year of his age and the 80th year of his ministry. The younger of two brothers (Dr Robert Cromie was killed during the Second World War) he was born at Ballymoney on 13 March 1911 to Samuel James Cromie, a draper, and his wife Sarah Morton Cromie, née Killough, from Carnageeragh, Kilraghts. The family worshipped in First Ballymoney Congregation and Mr Cromie was educated at Ballymoney Model School (1916-1922) and Ballymoney High School, now Dalriada, (1922-1927). He then went to Magee University College, Londonderry, at age 16, the youngest ever student to be admitted, and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, BA, in 1931. He continued with academic study in the ensuing years, gaining an MA in 1933 and LLB in 1947. On leaving Trinity he studied theology at Princeton, New Jersey, USA, and at the Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Route on 2 May 1933 and served as assistant to the Rev Dr James Paton in the Congregation of Malone, Belfast. He received a call to the Congregation of Gilford, County Down, and was ordained and installed there as minister on 29 November 1934, remaining in this village charge until moving to Limerick and Ennis on 10 October 1946. In 1950 he moved to Trinity, Cork, and was installed there on 13 December. He was active in promoting friendship and co-operation among the Churches, organising monthly meetings for local clergy from all the denominations. He returned to the north in 1955 and was installed in Clifton Street United, Belfast, on 12 December 1955. The later 1960's saw movement of population to new urban and economic centres in Northern Ireland. The Church Extension Committee planned and built new Churches to cater for the spiritual needs in these new developments. Mr Cromie felt called to this work and spearheaded church planting first of all at Abbey, Monkstown, from 15 April 1966 to June 1971 and then Bloomfield Road, Bangor, now Lisnabreen, from 1 July 1971 until his retirement on 26 September 1973. Mr Cromie was involved in the work of the wider Church, acting as Clerk to the Presbytery of Belfast from 1960 to 1962; as Clerk to the Synod of Belfast, 1963 to 1971; Convener of the Parish Boundaries Committee of the General Assembly, 1976 to 1981; Secretary and Treasurer to the Widow's Fund of the Southern Association. When the Rev Dr Tom Simpson, Deputy Clerk to the General Assembly, was elected Moderator of the General Assembly in 1983, Mr Cromie acted as Deputy Clerk during that year. He played an active part in the founding of the Rural Settlement Trust and in the running of the Presbyterian Mutual Society in its early years. Throughout his ministry Mr Cromie was encouraged and supported by his wife, Mabel, née Seawright, of Lurgan, whom he married in 1939. Her death in March 1995 was a great loss to him and to their son Stuart and his family. We assure the family circle of our sympathy and prayers as we give thanks to God for, and pay tribute to, the long life and service of our brother and colleague.

The Rev William Eoin Davison, BA, MA, PhD, DipEd, died on 14 March 2014 in the 91st year of his age and the 65th year of his ministry. He was born at Dromore, Co Down, on 8 March 1924, the youngest of five children, to William John Hill Davison, a Manager in the Ulster Bank, and his wife, Amy, née

Cosbie, of Ballymena. The family worshipped in the Congregation of Banbridge Road, Dromore, but, due to Mr Davison's senior's career, they moved to Newtownhamilton, and later, Stewartstown, becoming associated with the local Presbyterian Congregations in those communities. Mr Davison was educated at the Royal School, Armagh (1935-1941). As a teenager of fifteen he heard the call of God to the ministry of our Church while attending a Service of worship led by the Rev Alfred Neill in First Armagh Presbyterian Church. On leaving school he proceeded to Magee University College, Londonderry (1941-1945) and the Assembly's College, Belfast (1945-1948) graduating with BA and MA degrees. He served his assistantship in Townsend Street Congregation, Belfast, under the ministry of the Rev JW Johnston, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Tyrone on 9 December 1947. In 1949 he was called to the Congregations of Carrowdore and Ballyfrenis being ordained in Carrowdore on 25 August 1949. Soon after, he married Elsie Graham whom he had met in Townsend Street. A son, Peter, was later born to them. Some years later, with the encouragement of the Rev Dr Joseph Gibson, Clerk of the General Assembly, Mr Davison moved to minister in the Church Extension charge of Rathcoole and was installed there on 15 April 1955. The fledgling Congregation had been meeting in temporary premises, but, under Mr Davison's enthusiastic leadership, a Church building was opened on 27 April 1957. These were busy years gathering and establishing the Congregation and developing various ministries which placed the Church at the heart of the community. Mr Davison's warm heart and friendly disposition, together with his ability to communicate in the pulpit, commended the Christian Gospel to many around. Throughout these years Mr Davison showed a particular interest in ministry to, and the education of, children. During this time he continued his own academic study attaining his DipEd from Queen's and completing a PhD thesis on the Presbyterian Church's involvement in social issues. He did some part-time teaching at Belfast Royal Academy, leading to his appointment in 1967 as an RE teacher in Ballyclare High School. This led to his full-time appointment as Religious Education Adviser to the North Eastern Education and Library Board in 1972, which post he held until his retirement in 1989. In this capacity he shaped the religious education policy of schools within the catchment area, ensured a good focus on the value and importance of RE in the curriculum, encouraged teachers of the subject and influenced the spiritual development and understanding of young lives. Many ministers have been glad of the series of children's addresses which Dr Davison collected and made available for use. A keen advocate of temperance, he was a supporter, and, for a short time, a Director of the Irish Temperance League and gave the 1990 Robert Allen Memorial Lecture to the Presbyterian Historical Society, Ireland, on 'Presbyterianism and Social issues'. For a time he served on the Council of the Society. Throughout these busy years he was supported and encouraged by his wife Elsie, who also gave good service to the world of education as Vice Principal of Abbott's Cross Primary School. We join with Mrs Davison, son Peter, his wife Gillian and their children, in giving thanks to Almighty God for the ministry and fellowship of our brother, assuring them of our sympathy and prayers in their loss.

ASSEMBLY APPOINTMENTS

1. As previously reported the Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Dr DJ Watts, will retire on 31 August, 2014. At the last Assembly the Rev TD Gribben was appointed Clerk-Designate. Resolutions are attached to accept the retirement of the present Clerk and appoint a new Clerk.

2. The last Assembly authorised the General Board to bring, if appropriate, a nomination for Deputy Clerk. In consultation with the Structures Review Panel a Job Description and Personnel Specification was agreed and the position advertised. A panel to interview was appointed with authority to bring a nomination directly to the General Assembly. At the time of writing five applications have been received and interviews are planned. The name of the nominee will be reported in the Supplementary Reports.

3. The Job Description and Personnel Specification agreed by the General Board are outlined below.

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts

The Very Rev Dr RA Patton writes:

1. The General Board wishes to submit this tribute to the outstanding work of the Rev Dr Donald as Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary from 2003 to 2014.

2. Dr Watts was born at Newcastle in 1948 and brought up in connection with Newcastle Presbyterian Church. He studied at Queen's University, Belfast, where he graduated a BSc and having felt the call of God to the ministry he proceeded to New College, Edinburgh. There he gained a BD with First Class honours in New Testament before returning to do a final year at Assembly's College, Belfast.

3. He was assistant minister in Malone Congregation and in 1980 was installed in Ballyholme Congregation. During his early years in this charge, he completed a PhD in New Testament from the University of Edinburgh. After a faithful and fruitful ministry there he was appointed Clerk Designate in 2001. On the retirement of the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson in 2003, Dr Watts was appointed as Clerk of Assembly, a post in which he served the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, along with the wider Church and community, with great faithfulness.

4. Added to this he was Convener of the University Education Committee from 1982-1989, the Presbyterian Residential Trust from 1985-1989, the Peace and Peacemaking Committee from 1996-1999, and various other committees. As Clerk of the Ards Presbytery from 1990-2001, he had an enviable reputation for his great wisdom in handling the often difficult matters that such an appointment frequently involves.

5. Dr Watts is a person of many gifts and breadth of vision which has been recognised beyond the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. He has played a significant and influential role in inter-church bodies at local, national and international level. It is a tribute to the esteem in which he is held in the wider family of Churches, that he was appointed an Ecumenical Canon in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, and has recently been appointed President of the Irish Council of Churches. He

also was a joint secretary to the Four Church Leaders. Following an interest close to his heart he has also served as Chairperson of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board.

6. Dr Watts has served the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with much wisdom and great understanding. The eleven years of service which Dr Watts has given to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as its Clerk have been years when the issues he and the Church have had to face have been far from either straightforward or predictable. Much of the work of the Clerk is carried on behind the scenes and his confidential support, advice and guidance have often been sought. Many complex, challenging and often sensitive issues have often ended up on Dr Watts's desk and on his mind and heart. The often associated heavy work load of the Judicial Commission has increased, involving more responsibility. His knowledge of the Church and his balanced and careful approach to difficult situations has in many instances, helped to steer the Church through choppy waters to a calmer place. Few people understand the pressures that the General Secretary of the denomination has had to endure, and the Church recognises the maturity, patience and composure which Donald has shown in handling tense and challenging circumstances. Many Congregations and individuals are indebted to Dr Watts for his steady, difficult and careful work often behind the scenes. He has been fair minded and always has had the welfare of the Church at heart.

7. The whole Church owes him a debt of gratitude for the selfless service given over the years. His diligence and courage especially in difficult personal circumstances has been an example to others. Throughout these years he has been supported at all times by his wife Fiona. Thanks are due to her for her faithful support to Donald as well her personal warmth and enthusiastic service in the Church. The whole General Assembly will want to wish both Dr and Mrs Watts many years of happy, healthy and busy retirement in the years ahead.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary

Salary Scale: E6 (£38,374 – £46,350)

Responsible to: The Clerk of the General Assembly

Main functions of job:

The Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly & Deputy General Secretary is appointed by the General Assembly to assist and, where appropriate, deputise for the Clerk and General Secretary in the performance of his duties and to carry out designated Executive Secretarial functions.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

To assist and deputise for the Clerk across the range of his duties as required from time to time, and specifically as follows:

1. To assist the Clerk in his support of Clerks of Presbytery, Ministers and others in leadership positions within the Church.
2. To assist with the proofing and indexing of Assembly Reports.
3. To prepare draft Minutes of Assembly, to act as Recording Secretary during the Assembly and to Proof and Index Assembly Minutes.
4. To minute Boards and Committees as required.
5. To deputise for the Clerk during holidays, illness and other absences.
6. To act in place of the Clerk under Par 269(2) (a) (ii) of the Code.
7. To assist the Clerk in representing the Church, as necessary.
8. To carry out any other duties as delegated by the Clerk as appropriate and reasonable within this function of the post.

To assist and deputise for the General Secretary across the range of his duties as required from time to time, and specifically as follows:

1. To oversee the work of two areas in the support services provided within Assembly Buildings. This will involve line-managing two heads of department and reporting to the General Secretary as necessary. (Initially it is envisaged that this will involve the Creative Production and IT Departments.)
2. To act as Authorising Officer for PCI's registration with the UK Border Agency with regard to visas etc.
3. To deputise for the General Secretary during holidays, illness and other absences.
4. To carry out any other duties as delegated by the General Secretary as appropriate and reasonable within this function of the post.

To carry out Executive Secretarial functions as follows:

1. To act as Executive Secretary to the Board of Christian Training (or its successor), supporting its Convener, as appropriate.
2. To line-manage staff within the Board of Christian Training (or its successor), as required.
3. To oversee and coordinate the work of the Conciliation Service.
4. To act as Authorising Officer for UTC's registration with the UK Border Agency with regard to visas etc.
5. To act in a representative role for the Board of Christian Training (or its successor) at meetings and groups, both internal and external to PCI, as appropriate.
6. To carry out deputation work within PCI on behalf of the Board of Christian Training (or its successor) and in a general role, as appropriate.
7. To carry out any other requested duties appropriate and reasonable within this function of the post.

The responsibilities and duties of the post may be revised or developed over time to meet changing needs of PCI and in particular in relation to any structural changes.

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION**CRITERIA****1. Qualifications and knowledge:-****Essential**

1. An ordained Minister or Elder of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (or eligible to transfer from another denomination with a reformed theology - the essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate meet this criterion as provided for under excepted occupations in the Fair Employment Treatment (NI) Order 1998)
2. A degree level qualification
3. Knowledge and understanding of the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
4. Knowledge of the ethos, practice, structure and governance of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
5. Knowledge of the work and programmes of the Boards of the Church
6. A knowledge of the ecumenical, governmental, political and statutory structures in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
7. Good computer skills

Desirable

1. A degree in Theology
2. A broad understanding of all relevant legislation (e.g. Child Protection)
3. Knowledge of the current challenges to the Christian church in Ireland
4. Knowledge of issues relevant to the areas covered by IT
5. Knowledge of issues relevant to the areas covered by Creative Production

2. Relevant Experience**Essential**

1. Experience of leading and managing others
2. Experience of servicing committees and writing reports
3. Experience of change management

Desirable

1. At least 5 years post-ordination experience of congregational ministry
2. Experience of contributing to policy development
3. Experience of strategic development
4. Experience of setting and managing budgets
5. Experience of representing an organisation in the media e.g. TV and radio
6. Experience of interacting with politicians and government bodies
7. Experience of acting within a deputising role.

3. Personal Attributes:-

Essential

1. Demonstrable ability to lead and motivate others through the use of engagement, shared vision and values
2. Demonstrate an ability to understand and empathise with those working in parish ministry.
3. Good written and oral communication skills including public speaking
4. The ability to foster good working relationships at all levels both within and outside of the Church
5. The ability to influence and persuade
6. Strong organisational skills
7. Good conflict resolution and problem solving skills
8. Good team working skills
9. Ability to take initiative and manage own time effectively
10. The ability to manage change effectively
11. Personal resilience in challenging situations

4. Physical Requirements:-

Essential

1. Health – such as to allow for attendance reliability and work proficiency (reasonable adjustments will be made for those with a disability)
2. Appearance – must be acceptable within the working environment

5. Special Circumstances:-

Essential

1. 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”
2. 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
3. Available for irregular working hours, travel throughout Ireland and on occasions in the UK and beyond
4. Access to a car for work purposes

Desirable

1. Full driving licence

GENERAL WORK OF THE BOARD

1. The General Board met on five occasions to carry out its wide remit on behalf of the General Assembly. This includes responsibility for topics which have not been specifically assigned to any other Board or Commission, as well

as a co-ordinating role for all aspects of the Assembly's work. While most of the Board's work will be reported through the Assembly Committees, some more time-limited tasks are carried out by Panels which report to the Board.

2. Since 2009 there has been a **Financial Crisis Panel** to guide the Church through the difficult issues arising from the situation of the Presbyterian Mutual Society and to give guidance for the future. The General Board did not consider it necessary to ask the Panel to meet this year.

3. A Panel to consider the **Commercial Aspects of the Mall** has met and clarified some issues for the Property Management Committee. At the fore front of its thinking is a desire to ensure that Assembly Buildings continues to be used in a manner that sits comfortably with the ethos of the Church, minimises the overall running cost to PCI, maximises potential income and keeps to the fore ministry and missional opportunities. The Panel continues to consider the best arrangements for the ground floor of Assembly Buildings and will report with recommendations to the next Assembly.

4. At the request of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board, the General Board appointed a Panel to consider the **Future Use of Guysmere**. It is in the early stages of its work and will report next year.

5. The Board was also requested by the Board of Finance and Personnel to set up a Panel to consider the implications for the Church of the **Charities Act** and the new Charities Commission. It is clear that Congregations, Presbyteries and the General Assembly, together with some other Church bodies, will all have to register with the Charities Commission, but the Commission has accepted that other issues should be resolved before any registration takes place. This mainly concerns who should act as charity trustees. Discussions continue and specific legal advice is being sought before a definitive report is brought to the General Assembly in 2015. In the meantime the Charities Commission will not be asking the Church for registrations at any level. Presbyteries and Congregations will be informed when action is needed.

6. The **Inter-Church Peacemaking Project**, which was set up by the larger Churches and the Irish Council of Churches, has been running for over a year and is beginning to show results. The six Good Relations Officers are mainly focussed in the North West; Fermanagh and the Border Counties; Tyrone; Craigavon; Newry and Mourne and North Belfast. A report to mark the end of the first year is available and outlines interesting and encouraging projects.

7. The General Board was also asked by the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to consider what action may be appropriate in the light of the new promise being introduced by **Girl Guiding UK**. The Board recorded its appreciation of the committed work of Guide leaders over many years, but the wording of the new promise, replacing to "love my God" with "to be true to myself and develop my beliefs" has caused deep concern. The General Board in October recommended to ministers and Kirk Sessions that this should not be used until further discussion took place.

8. The Presbyterian Church joined with the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland to make strong representation expressing its concerns to Girl Guiding Ulster. The General Board was represented by the Moderator, Clerk and Acting Director of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board. All three Churches had individually been invited to a meeting with the Chief Guide, UK where the reasons for change had been articulated, but there was little evidence

of any sympathy for the concerns of the Churches. Even an alternative promise, which was accepted as a way forward by the Scout Association, was not considered acceptable to Guiding UK.

9. In several meetings the Churches pressed hard for an alternative, explaining their theological opposition to the new promise which is strongly shared by all the Churches. While the compromise of an alternative seemed to be well understood by Girl Guiding Ulster it was adamantly rejected by Girl Guiding UK. However, the alternative of a preface to the promise, acceptable to the girls making the promise and, in the Church context, to the Church, was put forward as an alternative.

10. It should be emphasised that the Presbyterian Church has had a long and valued association with the Girl Guiding movement and many girls have been influenced for good and developed in their faith by it. Many Guide leaders are committed in their own Christian faith and to the Church. Hopefully that will not change. Some leaders explained clearly how they would seek to use the new promise to introduce girls to Christian faith and help them develop their understanding of it. These leaders are to be encouraged and should not think in any way that the Church is opposed to them. Their stance on this issue is to be respected.

11. It is clear that an alternative promise is not going to be offered by Girl Guiding UK. It is for Kirk Sessions to decide whether the organisation, which has so often served the Church in the past, is now suitable for the Christian nurture of girls in their Congregation. An acceptable preface to the promise may satisfy the concerns. While this is intended to be agreed locally, advice on appropriate wording is available from the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

12. The General Board is now responsible for the Creative Production Unit – James McCormick (Head); Sarah Harding (Herald Editor); Lisa Skinner and Ed Connolly. During the year Anne McCully retired after many years service. This unit is making a real impact on the ability of the Church to communicate effectively and further initiatives are being planned. The good news of what the Church is doing needs to be heard by Congregations and individuals. The hard work and creativity of the staff is appreciated.

13. Reception is also an important interaction between the Church as represented in Assembly Buildings, and those outside. Thanks are expressed to Julie-Ann Hall, Joan Cubitt, Sonya McKnight and Barbara McMillan for their work.

14. The work of the General Board and much other work of the Church could not be carried out without the loyal and dedicated work of those in the General Secretary's Office – Joyce Anderson, Jenny McClure, Michelle James and Alicia Cotter. The thanks of the Assembly is due to them and all others who work cheerfully for the Church.

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. The Priorities Committee met four times during the year. It's main work was to review and promote the Fit for Purpose programme.

ASSEMBLY THEMES – FIT FOR PURPOSE

2. A Prophetic Voice (2012-13): It has been difficult to assess the impact of the first year of the “Fit for Purpose” strategy in any quantitative way, but perhaps that is in the nature of the project. Some Presbyteries responded to a request for information as to how the material was used. The theme became the theme of worship at some Presbytery meetings. Congregations used it at mid-weeks, bible studies or home groups. Some ministers used the theme in preaching, perhaps a series of sermons. However it is impossible to put numbers on any of this. BMI reported that 30,000 “God Speaks” packs were distributed. Interestingly, some did not seem to connect “A Prophetic Voice” and “God Speaks”. Perhaps in the first year it is important to note a growing awareness of this work to enable the Church to talk together around central themes of Christian witness and a greater anticipation at the launch of the second theme.

3. A Place of Transformation (2013-14): The Committee considered the launch of this theme at the General Assembly in June to have been very worthwhile. It was integrated into the life of the Assembly and the Wednesday evening, “Christ Transforms Culture”, was innovative and inspiring. The video produced for that evening was not only well received on the night but had many hits on social media sites. The “Threshold” material was also well received in Congregations, with imaginative use being made of the DVDs.

Thanks are due to the Rev David Thompson for managing the “Threshold” production and the Creative Production Team led by James McCormick.

4. A People of Service and Outreach (2014-15): While BMI had again agreed to be the lead Board it was noted that in future themes should be clearly recognised as Assembly themes, with the Priorities Committee taking a central role. A “Think Tank” was appointed, chaired by a Committee member, the Rev Jane Nelson, to consider how best to promote the next year’s theme “A People of Service and Outreach”. The Rev David Thompson again agreed to facilitate the production of resources. They will be sub-titled, “All the difference in the world”. Congregations are encouraged to make good use of this material throughout the year. Again thanks are due to the working group members and Creative Production Unit.

5. A Caring Fellowship (2015-16): A working group has been set up to prepare material for the 2015-16 theme and has begun its initial thinking. It is intended that there should be a focus on caring in a congregational setting, while recognising that some initiatives have to be taken at a denominational level.

6. Residential Conference (Summer 2017): The Priorities Committee was previously asked to consider whether and when another Assembly Residential Conference may be appropriate. It is recommended that this should take place at the end of the five-year Fit for Purpose cycle, i.e. summer 2017, under the title, “A Church Fit for Purpose”. This would review the impact of the programme and reinforce what has been learnt from it. It should emphasise our identity as a Church but also encourage learning from the global Church scene. A resolution is appended to test the mind of the Assembly. Possible names for members of a planning Committee will be printed in the booklet on Board and Committee Membership.

SPONSORSHIP OF STUDENTS

7. The Committee encouraged the Board of Christian Training and Mission Overseas in their thinking of ways in which Congregations may sponsor overseas students to study at Union Theological College.

CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND (CMF) ISSUES

8. The Committee considered a helpful paper drawn up by the Financial Secretary on issues related to CMF. It is content that these issues are being dealt with by the Board of Finance and Personnel and will appear in its report.

9. Out of the work of the Priorities Committee two Panels have been appointed. The one on Structures Review has been working for almost four years and brings its substantial report, having consulted with Presbyteries as required last year. The other on Presbytery Consultations, which was expanded to include Presbytery engagement more generally, having given precedence to the Structures review is now moving forward. The two have always been seen by the Priorities Committee as related elements of an on-going programme of reform. This also includes consideration of the way the General Assembly receives reports and the general communication of the work of Assembly Boards and Committees.

10. The Priorities Committee, as the result of a Board Conference, also encouraged the General Assembly to appoint an ad-hoc Committee on Planned Giving, now with the title “Grace of Giving”. The Committee is appreciative of its important work.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

STRUCTURES REVIEW PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

1. Last year’s Assembly received a detailed report and recommendations from the Structures Review Panel, but passed the resolution:

“That the General Assembly does not adopt the proposed Council structure from 2014 and authorises the General Board to work out the details of legislative change and staffing implications and send this material together with the report of the Structures Panel to Presbyteries for comment by 31st March 2014.”

The work of the Panel this year has been to consider the details of legislative change and staffing implications, on the basis of the proposed changes, and consult with Presbyteries.

2. The Panel recognises that this has caused considerable anxiety among members of staff and hurt to some. It has tried at each stage to keep staff fully informed of the material as it has been developed over the year. Detailed consultation with staff must follow-on from an Assembly decision on the proposals for future structures.

3. Because of the nature of the Panel’s report, some of which is presented in diagrammatic form, it has been decided to publish it in a separate booklet enclosed with these reports.

PRESBYTERY ENGAGEMENT PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

1. At last year's General Assembly the remit of the Presbytery Consultation Panel was reviewed to include Presbyteries' wider engagement with Congregations and the General Assembly's structures. Some of this will be dealt with if the Assembly accepts the new proposals for a nominee to the Councils with direct responsibility for linking into Presbytery and keeping the Presbytery informed of developments within the Assembly structures. The Structures Review has included consideration as to how that two-way reporting may be effective.

2. The Presbytery Engagement Panel is beginning to work, particularly in the area of how Presbytery may creatively and effectively interact with the Congregations under its care. Its membership has been reviewed and it would hope to have a substantial report next year.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON PLANNED GIVING

THE GRACE OF GIVING

1. *"Thank you for all the faith, service and generosity which you have shown over many years as together we have faced many challenges and opportunities in the name of our Lord ... I warmly commend this initiative to the whole church and to you personally."* With these words the Moderator, Dr Rob Craig, began and concluded his letter 'To all who are members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland'.

2. Jesus has high expectations of His followers. He said "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much more has been entrusted, even more will be required" (Luke 12.48) and he warned us that we cannot serve God and money (Matthew 6.24). Paul encouraged the Church at Corinth to "excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8.7-8).

3. **Money is frequently mentioned in the Bible.** Money is dangerous because we can fall in love with it, be seduced by it and wander away from the faith. Love of it is the root of all evil. (1 Timothy 6.10). Money is nevertheless a great resource, for used properly it meets needs, produces an outpouring of thanks, gives proof of our loyalty to the gospel and brings glory to God. (2 Corinthians 9.12-13). Christian Giving is our generous and joyful response to the generosity of God.

4. **The main initiative for 2013-14 was the Grace of Giving leaflet "Be Joyful – Be Generous"** which was completed, printed, circulated for Congregations through the November Presbyteries and placed on the PCI Website. Thanks are expressed to James McCormick, the General Assembly's Head of Creative Production, for the substantial amount of work involved in the design, printing and distribution of this leaflet. The leaflet has been well received and additional copies have been requested by some Congregations.

5. The difficulty faced by the Church on this touchy issue is getting this initiative off the pages of the 'Blue Book' of Assembly Reports and the subsequent Assembly resolutions, into minds, hearts and wallets as part of normal Christian discipleship.

6. The responses to a survey at the General Board in March indicated some reasons to be encouraged but also showed there is some way to go. Many Presbyteries have not addressed the issue. Some ministers have preached on the subject and the responses have been positive. 22 out of 27 who responded have personally determined the level of their Christian generosity as a percentage of their incomes.

7. Presbyteries have a crucial leadership role to play in implementing the following resolutions of the 2013 Assembly. "That the General Assembly direct Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees to address the challenge contained within the "Grace of Giving" initiative. That the General Assembly recommend the Diocese of Liverpool's "Giving in Grace" programme as a comprehensive resource and requests Congregations to consider making use of it or some similar programme. Without the leadership of Presbyteries it is unlikely that this initiative will reach many of the leaders in our Congregations. The Committee is available to assist in organising and resourcing any Presbytery conference anywhere.

8. Constructive Presbytery conferences have been held, developed and modified for leaders in Congregations by the Presbyteries of Dromore, North Belfast and South Belfast. In two of the Presbyteries each minister was given special invitations to distribute to six carefully chosen leaders, which resulted in an almost 100% representation from Congregations. It has been beneficial and stimulating for ministers, elders and key leaders from different Congregations to address this issue openly with one another. It remains important to empower and release leaders to address the issue of giving.

9. Communication with younger Presbyterians. It was decided that it would be most effective for the Planned Giving Committee to work through existing Assembly youth structures. To that end, the Committee has been in contact with the Board of Youth and Children and SPUD (Speaking, Participating, Understanding and Deciding) to develop a creative and effective relationship through which the Assembly's Grace of Giving initiative can be incorporated and harmonised within their projects. *"Children, young people and families need to be encouraged to get into the 'giving' habit, however young they are. Younger children are no less open to the material world and draw of consumerism than teenagers and adults, and can easily develop an unhealthy relationship with money and the need for more. But given the right vision and motivation children and young people have great skills and energy in fundraising, and can learn to be great givers!"* (www.givinginrace.org)

10. The Board of Christian Training's revised edition of 'What should a church member be?' has a succinct but significant section on giving.

11. Ruling Elders' Fellowships. Members of the Committee are willing to speak about the Grace of Giving to Ruling Elders' Fellowships.

12. Instead of posters, which often clutter notice boards, a limited number of self-explanatory Power Point slides will be made available.

13. Information. It is important that people know what is accomplished through their Christian generosity deployed through their local Church and nationally and internationally through the General Assembly and the Assembly's Mission Boards.

14. During 2014-15 the Committee will continue to encourage Presbytery Conferences; seek an input into post-ordination training and encourage articles in the denominational and congregational magazines.

15. The attention of the General Assembly is drawn to the expertise of 'Christians against Poverty' in assisting people to escape from debt and additionally to their material on legacies.

JOHN DUNLOP, Convener

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

THE QUESTION OF BAPTISM

Introduction

1. The Committee was directed by the General Assembly to consider the increasing practice of baptism by immersion within our denomination and the implications for the faith and practice of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI). The Committee reviewed both the subordinate standards of the Church and previous reports of the Doctrine Committee (Reports, 1958; 1959; 1972; 1973; 1974; 1985). It is evident that the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is that '[d]ipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person.'¹

2. In 2013, the General Assembly requested the Doctrine Committee to re-write the report on baptism which was the basis of a resolution of the General Board instructing the Church Architecture Committee not to grant permission for the installation of baptisteries in Presbyterian Churches. The connection between our resolution and our remit was clear: the question of whether Presbyterian churches should install baptisteries was the context in which the question of baptism by immersion was put to the Doctrine Committee.

3. The Doctrine Committee recognizes that baptism by immersion is permissible within PCI. However, there appear to be at least two interpretations of what 'permission' means. One interpretation is that baptism by immersion is on a par with baptism by pouring, sprinkling or dipping in the sense that no one form of baptism (for adults) is more acceptable than another. Another interpretation is that 'permission' means acknowledging that baptism by immersion is a valid form of baptism, not that immersion is as acceptable as other modes in a church standing in a Reformed tradition which has consistently favoured non-immersionist modes of baptism.

4. Our belief is that, whichever interpretation of the meaning of 'permission' is adopted, baptisteries should not be installed in Presbyterian Church buildings. Their installation would encourage a credo-baptist theology

1 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII, iii.

of baptism which would undermine infant baptism. The Committee believes this against the background of widespread uncertainty amongst members of the PCI about the basis of infant baptism. It agrees that, if asked to explain ‘why Presbyterians baptize infants ... many Presbyterians would stumble and blunder the explanation.’² It is against this background that both the question of baptism and baptisteries must be considered. In this context, we need to be clear on our answer to two fundamental questions:

1. Is baptism fundamentally a testimony to conversion?
2. Do the children of believers belong to the people of God?

1. Is baptism fundamentally a testimony to conversion?

5. There are three steps in the credobaptist argument, as it is widely advanced. First, it is held that the word *baptizo* means only full immersion. Secondly, it is argued that the mode of baptism is the essence of the symbolism and meaning of baptism, that is, personal conversion to Christ. The credobaptist exegesis of such passages as Romans 6 and Colossians 2 is taken to establish that baptism involves immersion in water (‘being buried with Christ’) and resurrection (‘being raised with Christ’) out of the water of death. If these first two points are granted then the third follows – that baptism may only be administered to those who demonstrate the necessary signs of conversion, viz., personal repentance and faith.

6. The Reformed paedobaptist response has always been that *baptizo* need not mean immersion and that the meaning of baptism is not found primarily in the symbolism of dying and rising, but in the symbolism of cleansing from sin. Baptism is a covenantal washing.³ This covenantal washing belongs to all whom God calls into his covenant people. The washing points not to what has happened to the individual (the subjective reality) but to what God has done through Jesus Christ (the objective reality). The covenantal backdrop to the paedobaptist position nullifies attempts to lessen the objective meaning of baptism by equating it with individual conversion. Baptism is a covenantal washing for all the people of God (Acts 22:16).

7. This covenantal understanding of baptism is reflected both in the mode of baptism and in the traditional architecture of Irish Presbyterian church buildings. The mode of covenantal washing most frequently spoken of in Scripture is pouring or sprinkling and in Christian baptism sprinkling is ‘lawful ... sufficient, and most expedient.’⁴ The frequency of sprinkling in covenantal washings is clear from Hebrew 9:10 where the author writes of the ‘various baptisms’ (*baptismois*) of the Mosaic covenant. The writer then makes reference to three sprinklings (Heb 9:13 cf. Num 19:17-18; Heb 9:19 cf. Ex 24: 6,8; Heb 9:21 cf. Lev 8:19; 16:14)⁵

8. It is certainly true that conversion may be the occasion of baptism. Inasmuch as this is the case, the baptism of a convert is indirectly or in a

2 Frank A. James III, in his Introduction to Lewis B. Schenck, *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant* (2003), p.xvi. The reference is to American Presbyterians.

3 That Baptism is not by immersion and is a covenantal washing may be seen, for example, in Hebrews 9. See Jay E. Adams, *The Meaning and Mode of Baptism* (1975), pp.1-15. Baptism does not involve any change in the status of the child, a passage from unbelief to belief.

4 *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, ‘Of the Administration of the Sacraments.’

5 Adams, *Baptism*, pp.9-11.

secondary respect a sign of conversion, since it is the occasion of the baptism of the particular individual in question. However, baptism is not in its nature a sign of conversion, but a sign of entry into the covenant community of the people of God, the privilege of infants and converts alike. We have to be aware that baptism by immersion can suggest the necessity of conversion prior to baptism and this, in turn, seems inevitably to undermine the position ‘that the Church consists of all professing believers together with their children.’ (Reports, 1972, p.13)

9. The Committee is concerned that any change to the traditional baptismal practice of the church as reflected in the architecture of our meeting houses must inevitably reflect theological shifts in the denomination in the direction of a credobaptist theology.

2. Do the children of believers belong to the people of God?

10. It is hard to overstate the robustness with which this foundational question has been answered in the Reformed tradition. Calvin writes that ‘immediately from birth God takes and acknowledges them as his children ... for he gives them a place among those of his family and household, that is, the members of the church.’ Bavinck notes that ‘the children of believers are not pagans or children of the devil who still ... have to be exorcized at their baptism, but children of the covenant, for whom the promise is meant as much as for adults. They are included in the covenant and are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the covenant.’⁶

11. The basis of this claim in Reformed theology is the doctrine of the covenant: ‘The basic premise of the argument for infant baptism is that the New Testament economy is the unfolding and fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham and that the necessary implication is the unity and continuity of the church.’⁷ The church of Jews and Gentiles stands in continuity with the people of Israel, Gentile believers having been grafted into the people of God in terms of the covenant of grace. As children were part of the covenant community of Israel, so they are part of the new covenant community. Baptism is initiation into the covenant community of God’s people; therefore, children are the proper subjects of baptism.

12. Baptism functions in the life of the church as a picture, not primarily of the experience or commitment of the individual, but of the covenant salvation of God. This means that the sacrament of baptism points us to God and what he has done for us in the Lord Jesus Christ – as the Westminster Confession states the matter, ‘a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.’⁸

13. This focus in Reformed teaching means that the subjects of baptism are not simply those who can give testimony to a work of grace in their lives. It is too simplistic a reading of Scripture to say that baptism only follows repentance.

6 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Volume Four: Holy Spirit, Church, And the New Creation* (2008) p.530. See John Calvin’s plea at the close of his discussion of infant baptism, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV. xvi. 32. For a full historical treatment see Schenck, *Children in the Covenant*, pp.3-52, who cites (p.46) the Westminster Assembly’s *Directory for the Public Worship of God* which states that children of believers are ‘Christians, and federally holy before Baptism and therefore are they Baptized.’ The issue is not the actual spiritual state of any individual, whether adult or infant, but the fact that membership in the visible Church of God is determined by the covenant declaration of God.

7 John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (1980), p.45.

8 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII, i.

Rather, this covenantal washing is rightly administered to those who belong to the covenant. The conviction of the Reformed tradition is that there is ample evidence in both Testaments to show that the children of believers belong to the people of God (Genesis 17:7; Matthew 19:14; Ephesians 6:1-3). The status of covenant children is not based on any presumed spiritual experience but on the divine covenantal constitution.⁹

14. The Committee affirms without reservation the confessional position that the visible Church consists of those who ‘profess the true religion together with their children.’¹⁰ The immersionist practices which would follow the installation of baptisteries would make it difficult for the Church to maintain unity in this fundamental area.

Conclusion

15. Firstly, the subordinate standards of the church are clear: ‘Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person.’¹¹ The Reformed tradition in which PCI stands is agreed that baptism by pouring or sprinkling is the most appropriate mode of administering the covenantal washing of which Scripture speaks.

16. Secondly, it is the responsibility of Kirk Sessions to ensure that baptisms are administered in the rich assurance of covenantal promises and not on credobaptist assumptions about the connection between the mode of baptism and personal testimony.

17. Thirdly, the covenantal backdrop to the theology of baptism underlines that ‘infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.’¹² This is emphatic in both the Confession and in the traditional practice of the Church. The Code states that ‘A minister shall encourage baptism of the children of all such as may make a credible profession of faith’ (para 83,1). This means that the PCI cannot consider infant baptism as just one more option amongst others.¹³

18. Finally, in light of the fact that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland accepts the Trinitarian baptism of other communities, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Committee is concerned that the confessional position of the denomination should not be undermined and urges Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to ensure that there are no “rebaptisms” of those who received a covenantal washing in infancy: ‘The sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered unto any person.’¹⁴

J STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

9 See Murray, *Christian Baptism*, pp.53-4: ‘It is this fact of the divine institution that constitutes the sufficient ground for administering and receiving this ordinance ... no further judgement respecting the secret purpose of God nor respecting God’s secret operations in the heart of those baptised is required as the proper *ground* upon which the ordinance is administered.’

10 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV, ii.

11 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII, iii.

12 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII, iv.

13 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII, v.

14 Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII, vii. Cf Code 83,3.

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met on six occasions during the year. It appointed assessors to assist Presbyteries on matters of difficulty when invited to do so.

ISSUES OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

2. One major aspect of the Committee's work has been to consider how best to facilitate the denomination in its pastoral response to those who are homosexual. To this end a "Day of discussion" was arranged for 23 November 2013 in the Assembly Hall, with each Presbytery invited to send five people.

3. The round table discussions were introduced by the Rev Prof Stephen Williams (Assembly's Professor of Systematic Theology); the Rev Dr Wolter Rose (Theological University of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) and the Rev Mairisine Stanfield. All participants were provided with a booklet including a paper by Prof Williams on "The Question of Homosexuality", the 1979 General Assembly Report on "The Church and the Homosexual" and Pastoral Guidelines on Homosexuality, welcomed and authorised for publication by the General Assembly in 2007. These were later sent to all ministers and are available, with Prof Williams opening address, on the website at www.presbyterianireland.org/resources

4. The day was well received by those who participated and has initiated a useful, low-key discussion within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI). In his closing comments participants were encouraged by the Clerk to consider ways in which Presbyteries and Congregations might take up the discussion in a similarly open and accepting way. The Committee has been encouraged to hear reports of this happening.

5. The Committee has also been following up the discussion by considering whether and how support groups for those concerned by issues of sexuality, either personally or in their family or Congregation, may be encouraged. This has been particularly taken up by the Board of Social Witness and the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

6. Consideration was given as to whether the 1979 Report needed to be updated but nothing is being proposed at present.

7. A small group was appointed by the Committee to facilitate a meeting between some members of the PCI and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transexual (LGBT) Community, as noted by the General Assembly last year. This meeting has yet to take place.

CONCILIATION

8. The Moderator's Advisory Committee also considered further the Conciliation Report, received at the last Assembly and sent to Presbyteries for comment. It was agreed that the Committee should concentrate on providing an effective Conciliation Service, while recognising that at times an element of mediation may be involved.

9. Additional conciliators are needed and the Committee agreed that training should be reviewed. An updated leaflet is needed if the Conciliation

Service is to be more widely known and accessible. For all of this a realistic budget will have to be considered.

10. Conciliation is becoming more imbedded in the training of ministers and elders, but the Committee believes that this should be continually emphasised. Further thought should be given to the process of filling a vacancy so that there are not unrealistic expectations by any of the parties.

11. Presbytery responses to the conciliation report were largely positive. 16 Presbyteries responded; 12 commending a timely report. One Presbytery questioned the theological moorings of the report and its oversight; one felt that the report will not deliver a means to resolve problems. The Committee has carefully considered the responses.

12. The Committee recognises that conciliation needs to be a natural part of the governance of the Church and welcomes the decision of the last Assembly to seek overtures to change the Code. Suggested overtures are appended.

FREEDOM TO EXPRESS CONTRARY VIEWS

13. The Committee has begun its consideration as to the extent that people in leadership in the Church may express views which are contrary to those decided by the General Assembly. This is a complex area and more time is needed to formulate a considered position.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

PANEL ON PASTORAL CARE OF MANSE FAMILIES

The Rev Gabrielle Farquhar reports:

1. The Panel issued and reviewed a survey to Presbytery Clerks. The responses recognised the importance and necessity for effective pastoral care of Ministers and their families within Presbyteries. Some already have a good system in place either with one person assigned to the role or a team comprised of active and retired ministers, elders, deaconesses. However it is clear that in many of the Presbyteries the role of Chaplain/Pastor Pastorum needs to be more defined and pro-active rather than reactive.

2. The Presbyterian Church has a duty to care spiritually, physically and mentally for those who minister in our Congregations and in other areas of the work. The structure of a Presbytery should enable the care to happen in a more personal and effective way:

- (a) one to one prayer support;
- (b) relationships, assured confidentiality and trust built up;
- (c) new ministers/their families welcomed and integrated into the area and supported by colleagues and friends, not just for the first month!

While all this takes up precious time it is necessary as a way to sustain the work of the gospel to which all ministers have been called.

3. In response to this need the Panel has drawn up Guidelines for Presbyteries which the Clerks will receive in May. It is hoped that each Presbytery will nominate their Chaplain/Pastor Pastorum or Team members to come to an area Forum in early Autumn. This will provide an opportunity to share resources, discuss issues that need addressing or training provided. This sort of Forum will happen at least twice a year.

4. All are part of one family, the Church of Christ. How ministers, relate to each other, behave and care for each other should reflect our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! It is a real challenge and opportunity to witness to those looking in, but a real heartbreak to the Church of Christ when it goes wrong.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

1. Much of the work of the Church and Society Committee has been shaped in the past year both by the subject matter of the Haass talks (Dealing with the past/Parading/Flags and emblems) and the Haass processes themselves.

2. Members of the Committee, led by the Moderator, met Dr Hass and Prof O'Sullivan on 18 September 2013 for what was a wide ranging and very gracious conversation. At that meeting the Committee was invited to submit a paper on dealing with the past. The text of that paper is attached as Appendix A.

3. Following the publication of the draft agreement by Dr Haass (which was not corporately accepted by the parties) the Moderator, along with other church leaders, issued a statement on 8 January 2014 in which they said *'Significant work has been completed in recent months and we acknowledge the strenuous and sincere efforts put in by all involved in seeking to find solutions to some of the most contentious issues we face. This is an important time for our society; the momentum for building peace should not be lost. We are aware of the focus and effort that the forthcoming elections will require of our politicians but encourage all within the Executive to keep going with the work that has begun so that an acceptable process may be developed.'*

4. Since then, a considerable amount of work has been done in partnership with the Irish Inter Church Meeting to identify the key values which would find real acceptance in wider society. These include concepts such as working for the common good and a new generosity of spirit in public debate. Over coming months the Committee, with others, expect to be able to develop and articulate these key values in a consistent and coherent fashion, to try to help raise the often impoverished quality of public discussion.

5. The Committee has also identified some key issues on which it would wish to work in partnership with others and to give more focussed attention in the next few years:

- (i) Welfare Reform and Social Justice issues
- (ii) Equality and Human Rights issues
- (iii) Issues affecting loyalist areas
- (iv) Community Relations issues – Together: Building a United Community
- (v) End of life issues.

6. At the time of writing (April 2014) representatives have met with the Minister and DSD officials on Welfare Reform; have started work with a panel on issues affecting loyalist areas; are planning a major conference on Thursday 9 October 2104 in partnership with Union Theological College on Equality, Freedom and Religion, and a further conference with UTC in Jan 2015 on end of life issues.

7. The Committee has been greatly encouraged by the increasing partnership working within our Church, and is grateful for the opportunity to

work with UTC on the very successful Church In the Public Square Conference in January 2014, and with the Good Relations Panel on Dealing with the Past – Shaping the Future conference on 5 April 2014, both of which were held in Assembly Buildings.

8. Alongside this work, the Committee has had quite a heavy on-going workload and schedule of meetings as it seeks to respond to many and varied issues and build good relationships with various parties and groups within our whole community. These have included:

- (a) The two consultations on presumed organ donation;
- (b) The Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill;
- (c) Meeting in Dublin with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement;
- (d) Meeting with representatives of the Innocent Victims' Charter;
- (e) Meeting with Representatives of the Orange Order;
- (f) Meeting with the senior command of the PSNI in Belfast, to assure them and the whole of the PSNI of our active support for a properly accountable police service;
- (g) Meeting with the Head of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and other prison management and officers to assure them of our active appreciation of, and support for their work;
- (h) Inviting representatives of all the parties represented in the Assembly to meet with the Committee with a view to expressing our ongoing support for the peace process both at political and civic level, and to encourage our elected representatives in that work.

9. There remains great pressure for a change in the law to permit same sex marriage. Already this year there have been changes in the law and its implementation in England, Scotland and Wales. In a speech in Belfast on 18 Feb to the Medico-Legal Society in Belfast, Lord Wilson of Culworth, a justice in the Supreme Court since 2011, gave his backing to same sex marriage because, in his view, it would strengthen, rather than weaken, the institution of marriage. The judge, who serves as a Privy Counsellor, said widespread divorce had created what he described as “blended families” made up of “the half-blood”.

He also said that as a “*committed member of the Church of England*” he envied the “*greater strength of traditional family values in Northern Ireland*”.

‘I wonder whether Northern Ireland will for long be able to hold back the tide in favour of same sex marriages which laps against all Western shores.’

10. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland remains fully committed to upholding the historic understanding of marriage as exclusively being between one man and one woman, and the Committee is increasingly concerned at the diminishing lack of understanding of the benefits of this historic view of marriage. The Committee has asked our MLAs to consider what support they and the Executive can give to actively support and encourage family life in this context.

11. The work of the Committee is constantly ‘work in progress’, and it is increasingly challenging to articulate what we are *for* in a society where lobby groups and increasingly secularised thinking dominate public debate and the political arena. Yet this very challenge is a welcome stimulus for the whole church, and indeed the whole of the Christian constituency, to handle Biblical

principles and teaching in a way that honours the Lord and commends the whole Gospel in the realities of the modern world, rather than merely reacting to the agenda of others. The Committee greatly covets your interest, active support and involvement in this work.

NORMAN HAMILTON, Co-Convener

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. The Global Concerns Committee deals with what are essentially overarching and inherently practical issues facing both the church and wider society and seeks to find ways to demonstrate our love for God by our concern for our neighbour.

2. In serving the wider church, the Committee seeks to raise awareness and encourage engagement with issues. Where appropriate it will act as a spokesperson for the Church.

3. The Committee's constituent Panels are Environment, Good Relations and Race Relations. The bulk of this report reflects that.

4. However, there is also a demand for the Committee to engage with other Global issues; particularly relating to justice. At our November meeting Anne Deighan, a member of Fitzroy Congregation, reported on her experiences as an Ecumenical Observer in Palestine. Approaches were also made to the Committee about the situation in Syria and injustice in other parts of the world.

5. As a result it was agreed to recommend the creation of an additional ad-hoc Panel to explore issues relating to the Near East. The General Board approved this request at its March meeting.

ENVIRONMENT PANEL

The Rev Dr Robert Buick reports:

6. The Environmental Panel attempts to highlight issues of environmental concern which have implications for members of our Presbyterian Church as they seek to serve Jesus Christ in a fallen world.

7. The members of the Panel do not claim to be experts in the many fields of science related to the environment but seek to provide a Christian comment on the current issues, encouraging the members of Congregations to have a responsible attitude to the use of the earthly resources God has made available (stewardship of Creation - Gen.2,v15) and to see how the use of these resources has an impact upon others (at home and abroad) for whom they must demonstrate a concern as our neighbours (the second great commandment, cf.Lk.10,v27).

8. Surely one of the main motives behind an interest in environmental matters is expressed in the opening of Psalm 24, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

9. Although there are some who would dispute the impact of mankind's activities upon climate, it is almost universally accepted that the earth's climate has changed in the past and is continuing to undergo change today.

10. These changes may be linked to some of the extreme weather events seen in various parts of the world in recent years, not least the storms and flooding experienced by southern areas of the British Isles last winter, though no single climatic event, no matter how severe, is in itself an indicator of climatic change. However, the body of evidence for global warming and the associated increase in extreme climatic events is growing and many well researched and accepted scientific reports warn that man's activities have and are contributing to the factors influencing that change.

11. It is surely an appropriate response for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as part of the worldwide Christian church, to express concern over our society's excessive use of the earth's limited resources, often associated with pollution of the environment and destruction of natural habitat, frequently driven by greed and the desire for a quick profit, without concern for those who must live with the aftermath. In doing so, the Church speaks out of concern not only for our own people, but for the peoples of all nations, for this is indeed an issue with global dimensions.

12. Ireland, though only a small island on the western fringe of the continent of Europe, with few natural mineral resources, is not immune from the effects of pollution and environmental destruction and the threat of development of those resources we do possess.

13. Fracking in the South West border regions, open cast mining of lignite in North Antrim, offshore gas fields in the South and West of Ireland, widespread growth throughout the island of "wind farms" are only the most recent instances of such developments. It is important that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is seen to stand up for often small, rural communities against the might of usually multi-national interests.

14. Excessive over-production from both natural and farmed animal and fish stocks, while leading to lower prices for consumers in the short term, has often led to destruction of environment, communities and livelihoods dependent upon smaller scale sustainable production and ultimately leads to higher prices, reduced quality and choice and growing "food miles".

15. The destruction of the local fishing industry around our coasts, though blamed upon the actions of "Eurocrats" in reducing fish quotas, actually has its genesis in the overfishing of the multi-national fishing industry. The horse meat scandal of last year demonstrates the danger of allowing the food industry to be driven by the need to combine lower prices and higher profits, without regard to quality of source and supply.

16. Presbyterian consumers must be more demanding of those who provide the food for our families – supplier, processor and retailer – while encouraging our politicians to see that it is in their interests to have a concern for wider environmental issues that affect the local people who are their electorate.

17. The Panel will continue to encourage individual members and local congregations to take small steps to reduce our impact upon the environment and use of resources, which has a cumulative effect, while at the same time seeking to provide informed comment upon wider environmental issues of importance.

GOOD RELATIONS PANEL

The Rev Stephen Johnston reports:

18. Our society is fractured in all sorts of ways. The last few months have once again revealed the depth of these fractures. In the midst of this disheartening picture, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland continues to believe that Building Good Relations is a Biblical and Gospel thing to do. It is a key aspect of our discipleship in a divided society. The Panel encourages Churches and individuals to be intentionally involved in this important Kingdom work.

19. At the time of writing plans are well underway for the annual Good Relations Conference on 5 April in Assembly Buildings, Belfast. Jointly sponsored by Good Relations and the Church and Society Committee, this Conference seeks to explore from a Biblical and Theological perspective issues surrounding the past, how to face the future; and how the other issues raised in the Haass discussion affect our ability to reach a solution. The Panel is grateful to the Rev David Cupples and the Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton (along with others) for their contributions.

20. Good Relations continues to commend the work of the Irish Churches Peace Project and sees it as a project which is to complement the work of Good Relations within our Church and society.

21. It has become increasingly apparent in recent years of the **GREAT NEED FOR PRAYER** in this whole matter of peacebuilding. Two quotations about prayer are striking and pertinent. Firstly, the words of the Wesleyan Methodist Samuel Chadwick -- *“The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.”* The same thing could be said for prayerless peacemaking! Secondly, the words of Professor Richard F. Lovelace – *“Most American Christians would probably assume that prayer, ... has little to do with social action. This is because most of those who are praying are not praying about social issues, and most of those who are active in social issues are not praying very much. No wonder little social or cultural impact is made either by “liberals” or “evangelicals”!*” (Dynamics of spiritual Life – An Evangelical Theology of Renewal p392).

22. Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions are urged to follow the example of the denomination in prayerfully mainstreaming this matter of Building Good Relations. In particular, ministers and elders are encouraged to give a lead within their congregations about the strategic importance of this Gospel and discipleship work.

23. If anyone has a particular query about the work of Building Good Relations within PCI, they are encouraged to contact the Convener, the Rev Stephen Johnston via email sjohnston@presbyterianireland.org or phone 028 4176 2321.

RACE RELATIONS PANEL

The Rev Richard Kerr reports:

24. The Race Relations Panel believes that every person created in the image of God is entitled to dignity and respect, to welcome and acceptance. As once “aliens and strangers” from Christ, so those who are accepted and established in Christ should reach out in Jesus’ name to those who are excluded and vulnerable.

25. The aim of the Panel is to encourage and resource our congregations across this Island to be havens of sanctuary which reflect the Biblical ideal as described by the Apostle John; “from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9). Its vision is to see people from every background worshipping the Saviour together.

26. To do this the Panel works with organisations locally and further afield. It continues our long-standing relationship with those working for Racial Justice in South Africa; Diakonia Council of Churches and Vuleka Trust. The inspirational and embracing actions of Nelson Mandela following his release from prison, his role as President and his relinquishing of power are a challenge to all. The Committee prays for stability, cohesion and a commitment to the same values from the New South African government elected on 7 May.

27. It also works closely with the Churches Asylum Network in ROI and Embrace in NI. Both organisations bring together expertise and resources which the Panel seeks to make available.

28. The DVD and accompanying resource “**and you welcomed Me**” has been well received. Congregations are reporting that they have found it useful in fostering discussion around creating a culture of welcome in Presbyterian Churches. Sadly, anecdotal evidence suggests that Congregations are frequently reticent about welcoming people who don’t readily fit into our mould. Difference need not be a negative but PCI has much to learn from those who have diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

29. The DVD resource dovetails well with the “a place of transformation” theme. Copies of the DVD are available from the Convener, the Rev Richard Kerr rkerr@presbyterianireland.org or for download on the PCI website Good Relations resources section.

30. The Panel has been inspired by Congregations who are grappling with the challenge of facilitating multi-ethnic centres of worship while remaining true to our reformed heritage. Members of the Panel have had the privilege of coming alongside ministers and elders to explore how that might be best done. They have found this to be a deeply enriching experience.

31. In conjunction with the Church and Society Committee the Panel made written and oral submissions regarding **Lord Morrow’s Private Member’s Bill on Human Trafficking**. While very supportive of the Bill’s emphasis on the protection of the victims of trafficking and on addressing the ‘demand’ for trafficking, the Panel is concerned that the criminalising of payment for sexual services has become the primary focus of the Bill. It has suggested that there should be a separate Bill dealing more comprehensively with prostitution.

32. The Panel is deeply concerned about the **Direct Provision System** for those seeking asylum in the ROI. The indefinite duration of time that people spend in direct provision awaiting their decision – 15% of applicants have been in the system for more than seven years – is extremely damaging to their mental health. This is compounded by the fact that they are not allowed to work and earn money, cook for themselves or make basic decisions about their future. Some of those members of the Panel have met are totally ‘broken’ by their experience. The Panel is particularly concerned about children growing up in this system. It is exploring how to best highlight this issue and persuade the Minister for Justice to reform the asylum system in the ROI as a matter of urgency.

33. The Convener continues to coordinate chaplaincy services for Larne House Immigration Detention Unit. The Rev George Lane, Chaplain to Pennine House, a similar short-term holding unit in Manchester, provided training for the team in March.

RICHARD KERR, Acting Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Church Relations Committee continues to review the work of various inter-church bodies of which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a member.

IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

2. The Irish Council of Churches (ICC) was founded in 1923, in the aftermath of the Civil War, and is the formal national body through which the member Churches formally engage, dialogue and act on a wide variety of issues. It was established by the member Churches and funded by them.

3. The ICC Executive meets four times a year and is made up of nominated representatives from across the range of Protestant, Orthodox, Reformed and Independent traditions. The Presbyterian Church sends three representatives. The Presidency rotates every two years. From 2012 it has been the Rev Fr Godfrey O’Donnell, chair of the Orthodox Network of Churches. From the AGM, held in Arklow on 10 April 2014, it is the Rev Dr Donald Watts, Clerk of the General Assembly. The Vice-President is the Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher.

4. At the AGM a report was received from the Executive Officer, Mervyn McCullagh, outlining a transition to new ways of working. He writes:

“Over the past year our boards, forums and working groups have engaged in a wide variety of activities. As part of our efforts to ensure appropriate and relevant ways of working in our present context, the work of these standing bodies has consistently pointed towards the real value of appointing working groups to perform specific tasks and liaison groups which bring together key personnel across the churches with responsibility for particular issues. This transition reached its culmination at the end of this year, with both the Inter-Church Committee and the ICC Executive taking on a greater role in policy and strategic direction to enable these dynamic groups to work more productively. The report shows some of the highlights of the standing groups and the new work that the dynamic groups have begun.”

The full report is available on-line at www.irishchurches.org

5. The AGM also noted with pleasure a small surplus on the operating budget of the Council, following some years in deficit. It was pleased to receive into full membership the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING

6. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) arose out of the Ballymascanlon talks which began in 1973, at the height of the “Troubles”. The meeting is made up of the Irish Council of Churches and the Catholic Church, with a 50/50 membership from the Irish Episcopal Conference and the Irish Council of Churches. It is co-chaired by the two Presidents.

7. The Inter-Church Meeting happens about once a year, the latest against the backdrop of the recent fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council reflected on the effect it has had on the Irish Church scene. The main speakers were the Rev James Corkery, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy and Dr Patrick Mitchel, a Presbyterian and Director of Studies at the Irish Bible Institute. Those who participated found it an interesting and engaging day.

8. An Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC) meets between the Meetings to plan ahead and co-ordinate some of the Churches work. To mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement a working group was established to reflect on ways to advance an agreed basis for an inter-church discussion which would promote an agenda of renewal and positive change. It suggested that any inter-Church engagement on this issue should be embedded in a framework of Christian principles and respond to current questions with voices, concepts and proposals that give practical life to mutual respect. The principles should have application throughout the island of Ireland, with specific recommendations for positive application both North and South. That report is also available on the web-site above.

9. The IICM also provides the context for two useful Liaison Groups of the Churches Finance Officers and Communications Officers to meet.

WORLD COMMUNITY OF REFORMED CHURCHES

10. The Rev Cheryl Meban serves on the Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). She has reported on:

11. **Consultation to Assess the State of the Communion:** A Consultation on Communion, drawing together fifty church leaders from around the world met in wintry West Michigan, from 4-7 February, 2014. It produced the first draft of a report on the state of the communion that will be presented to the World Communion of Reformed Churches’ (WCRC) Executive Committee at its annual meeting in May. Bridget Ben-Naimah summed up the consultation’s work in her message at the event’s closing worship service: “Sisters and brothers in Christ, halfway through the first phase of the life journey of the WCRC, we have gathered here in Grand Rapids trying to identify the various dimensions of our understanding of communion and assessing how we have fared on this journey both collectively and as individual churches. As we engaged in discussions together, quite a number of revelations were received,” she continued. “I believe that these findings are not to discourage us or to divide us; but rather to remind

us that in spite of the fact that communion is a gift from God to us, we who are called to participate in the communion have a responsibility to work at it.”

Setri Nyomi, WCRC general secretary, emphasized that the “communion is more than the leadership and staff of the institution of the WCRC; it is you, the churches that are spread in the countries where we find ourselves. Our evaluation of how we are doing as a communion should include whether or not the action of churches in each context demonstrates our understanding that communion and justice go hand in hand.”

12. Consultation on “Faith Declarations” Opens Future Possibilities:

A consultation on “Ecumenical Faith Declarations”, which took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 2-4 February, 2014 demonstrated a desire for continuing dialogue and action on issues that pertain to the role, purpose, and function of statements of faith, including creeds and confessions, in the context of the church’s life and witness. The consultation arose after the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) decided to adopt the Belhar Confession and designate it as a document in a new category called “Ecumenical Faith Declaration.” The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee of the CRCNA, in conjunction with the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), invited approximately 50 representatives from WCRC member churches to consider whether this new category could serve a broader purpose within the Reformed family. In the course of the discussions, it became evident that the majority of the participants did not embrace the concept of a new category entitled “Ecumenical Faith Declarations.” However, additional dialogue explored alternative ways to address the identified complexities, challenges and opportunities regarding creeds, confessions, declarations, and other statements of faith. Despite the shift or perhaps because of it, participants expressed confidence that the present consultation fulfilled a significant role in highlighting the need to seek further clarity and creative engagement on confessional issues.

13. Human Trafficking Focus of Workshop in Argentina: “Broken for You,” a campaign against human trafficking which is being developed by the World Communion of Reformed Churches’ Justice Network took another step forward at a meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 29-31, 2014. A small group of Justice Network members met with CAREF (Comisión de Apoyo a Refugiados y Migrantes), an ecumenical organization that works with migrants, refugees, and exiles. Officials of CAREF shared their 15 years of experience on diverse aspects of human trafficking (including sensitizing, prevention, and victim assistance) and its links with international migration, and sexual and labour exploitation.

14. WCRC Supports V-Day’s One Billion Rising: On 14 February 2013, one billion people in 207 countries rose and danced to demand an end to violence against women and girls. On 14 February 2014, the efforts are escalating, with the V-Day movement calling on women and men everywhere to rise, release, dance, and demand justice. The World Communion of Reformed Churches is calling on its members to join in this movement. “To speak out against gender violence is a matter of justice, and justice is at the heart of Jesus’s Gospel,” says Dora Arce-Valentin, the WCRC’s executive secretary for justice and partnership. “So, raising up our voices together with millions around the world is a way to witness our faith and proclaim good news to the ones God loves the most, the victims of injustice.”

15. The headquarters of the work has moved, largely for financial reasons, from Geneva to Hanover. More detailed reports are available at <http://wrcr.ch/news>

16. **The European Area of WCRC** also meets annually and the PCI has been represented by the Clerk, the Rev Dr Donald Watts. The Rev Cheryl Meban also attends as an Executive member. This year the meeting was in Warsaw. It was an opportunity not only to discuss the business of the Council but to encourage a small but active minority reformed Church. The legacy of the Second World War was clearly evident, most of the city and especially the Jewish ghetto having been destroyed. The European Council will next meet in Belfast.

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

17. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) met last July in Budapest. The PCI was representative by the Clerk, the Rev Dr Donald Watts; the Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie and Mervyn McCullagh. The main work was to agree a new Constitution. The Rev Alison McDonald, from the Church of Scotland, was elected to the Governing Board with the Rev Dr Donald Watts as a proxy member. She reports:

18. The first meeting of the new Governing Board (GB) of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) took place in Geneva at the Ecumenical Centre from 25-29 November 2013. The smaller size GB worked well in a constructive, positive, harmonious manner, setting an encouraging working model for the future. The business focussed on beginning the work of transition, putting procedures with timetables in place and starting to implement the new Constitution.

19. Included in the transition will be the closer integration of **the Church and Society Commission (CSC)** into the main structures as the headquarters of CEC moves to Brussels. There are also on-going discussions with the **Churches Commission on Migrants in Europe (CCME)**. Both these bodies have proved useful contacts for PCI's work in the past.

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe

20. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) has been encouraged by events last year to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Leuenberg Agreement. It is involved in a study into the "Plurality of Religions" and a consultation on "Diversity of Worship and Christian Unity".

CPCE is also involved in planning for the Jubilee of the Reformation including a project to link cities of Europe with a significant reformation history.

Other Business

21. Members of the Church Relations Committee met with the Methodist Inter-Church Relations Committee when subjects of mutual interest were openly and freely discussed. The Rev Donald Ker chaired conversations on our joint work, including common chaplaincy work and areas of mission.

LORRAINE KENNEDY-RITCHIE, Convener

COMMITTEE FOR THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The Committee met once during the year.
2. Various queries were received but most were not pursued by formal application.

3. The Committee revisited the “55 year rule” (Minutes 2013) which **stated** that no candidate from outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would be received as a minister or licentiate unless they would be eligible to receive a call by the age of 55. In practice this meant that, as a two year assistantship was mandatory, candidates would have to be received by their 53 birthday at the latest. However, for candidates who had been initially licensed or ordained within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, it was agreed that they would be eligible to be received up to the age of 55, if it was deemed that no assistantship was necessary.

On further consideration of the “55 year rule” it was agreed to delete from the above paragraph the words ‘*would be eligible to be received up to the age of 55 if it was deemed that no assistantship was necessary*’ and add the words ‘*would be considered on their own merit if it was deemed that no assistantship was necessary*’.

4 Two initial inquiries were processed and after interviews were held the Committee agreed that both candidates could make formal application to the Committee if they so desired. One formal application could not be furthered as the candidate would be over 55 years by the time of eligibility for receiving a call.

<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Ards	Rev Dr SI Dennis	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev CD Mawhinney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Graeme McConville	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev DM Spratt	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Dr MJ Welsh	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Armagh	Rev JWP McConnell	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Ballymena	Rev JD McGaughey	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
North Belfast	Rev LH Eagleson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev CI McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev JN Seawright	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

	Rev WA Shaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev WM Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev FW Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Mr David McCarthy	To be retained as Licentiate without Charge.
South Belfast	Rev KA Drury	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev RJ Greer	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev JD Maxwell	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Belfast East	Rev DR Baker	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev WJ Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev PG McDowell	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Dr DJ Montgomery	To be retained as Minister Without Charge.
Coleraine and Limavady	Rev JD Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Derry/Donegal	Rev KG Patterson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev JC Teeney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Down	Rev S Armstrong	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev JM Casement	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev RN Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev GR Stockdale	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Mr MC Cowan	To be retained as Licentiate without Charge.
Dromore	Rev BJ McCroskery	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Iveagh	Rev EG McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev WA Watson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Omagh	Rev CI Dickson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Route	Rev William Brown	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

	Rev Dr Victor Dobbin	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Tyrone	Mr KH Hibbert	To be retained as Licentiate without Charge.

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

The Rev Dr Ruth Patterson reports:

1. Restoration Ministries continues to work quietly and largely in the background for peace, healing and reconciliation, all needed perhaps even more in the present moment than when the conflict was at its height. Spiritual Direction, prayer ministry and reflection days are part of our daily rhythm. We have been encouraged greatly by the increasing interest in contemplative prayer, especially centering prayer, a huge gift to today's busy, anxious, fearful world. We are blessed to have an enthusiastic and supportive Board of Directors. The requests for me to facilitate and speak at conferences and retreats in Ireland and other countries continue to occupy a large part of my time. I am now one of four church representatives for L'Arche International. I am also an Ecumenical Canon in St Anne's Cathedral. In July/August 1914 I will be teaching some on-line sessions for Richard Rohr's Living School.

The Rev Dr Paul Bailie reports:

1. Mission Africa (The Qua Iboe Fellowship) is one of Ireland's oldest mission agencies. We look forward with humble yet confident expectation to the years ahead, praying that God might continue to be pleased to use the mission for His sovereign purposes.

2. The mission concentrates on four areas of ministry: evangelism and church planting; the strengthening of existing church bodies through theological education; medical mission, with particular emphasis upon HIV/ AIDS work; and compassionate ministry amongst disadvantaged and abused children. These ministries are carried out in partnership with various evangelical African denominations, and often with like-minded western mission agencies.

3. We give thanks that there has been a slow but steady rise in missionary personnel over the past number of years, many of whom are from Presbyterian congregations. We continue to operate a successful short-term programme of teams and medium term placements. We also continue to operate branches in Scotland and England. Mission Africa is a member of Global Connections (Evangelical Missionary Alliance) and Mission Agencies Partnership. I am particularly pleased to report a close working relationship with the Board of Mission Overseas.

4. As Chief Executive I have responsibility for strategic planning, pastoral care and administration of personnel, finance and partner relations. I am particularly involved in promoting theological education in Africa through colleges and conferences.

5. I am also grateful to be able to record that my status as a minister in recognised service permits me to play an active role within my Presbytery (Ards) and the Boards/Committees of the Board of Mission Overseas and Christian Training. I am particularly glad to serve the Church through part-time teaching

at Union Theological College and participation in the Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Ministry Schemes.

IVAN J PATTERSON, Convener

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ELDERS' TERMS

1. The General Assembly of 2010 decided to “appoint an ad-hoc Committee to consider the possibility of ruling elders serving on a Kirk Session for a set period of time” (Minutes 2010, p44, resolution 8). When the Committee began its work it soon became clear that having all ruling elders serving on Kirk Session for a set period across the whole Church was not a practical possibility but the Committee did believe that there were some Congregations where such a scheme would enhance the leadership which Kirk Sessions give and so it set about devising a scheme to permit this to happen. It was envisaged that this would run alongside the present system of appointing ruling elders. It was the Committee’s intention that Congregations might opt to adopt the principle of appointing ruling elders to Kirk Session for a set term (while remaining free to opt out again if it proved not to be useful to them). It designed its proposals believing that having elders who serve on Kirk Session for a fixed term is consistent with a form of Church government which is founded on and agreeable to the Word of God and that its proposals would make a helpful contribution to enhance this government. The Committee’s view was that, even if only a few Congregations adopted set term eldership initially, they would act as a pilot and provide useful practical lessons which could be used to improve and widen the practice.

2. The Committee has reported regularly to the General Board but has failed to win the support of the Board. Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions have been consulted, and while there were criticisms of some of the details of the proposals it was also clear that the majority were not only not prepared to consider such proposals for themselves but were opposed to giving other congregations permission to appoint ruling elders for a set term. In the light of this the Committee has ceased to work on the details of the proposals and believes that the General Assembly should go no further with the idea for the present.

R BRIAN SAVAGE, Convener

FOR INFORMATION

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Presbyterian Historical Society is not under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly. This report is for information only.

The Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown reports:

1. The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland reports that it has had a full and busy year, with a steady number of people using the facilities at 26 College Green for reading and research. The programme of lectures included two given in Londonderry to mark the Year of Culture in that city. The Society hopes

to include a further lecture there in this year's programme. The Annual Field Trip for 2013 also took place in Derry, and this year's trip is planned for Belfast. Full details of all its activities are available on its Programme Card which can be obtained from our Librarian, Valerie Adams, at 26 College Green.

2. Last year a substantial grant from the Ministerial Advisory Group – Ulster-Scots Academy (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure) (MAGUS) enabled the Society, in conjunction with Union Theological College and the Assembly buildings to have a professional survey undertaken of its Archive holdings. A number of important issues were highlighted, some of which will require action sooner rather than later. During this year a further MAGUS grant was obtained to enable some preliminary work to be done scanning some of the earlier Presbyterian magazines held by the Society.

3. The decision of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to conduct a major programme of digitising Church records raises again important issues regarding access. It is the Society's intention to circulate revised guidelines on this to Presbyteries and Congregations.

4. The Society is most anxious to encourage Presbyteries to entrust their historic records which are no longer in current use to its custody. It is also grateful to a number of generous donors who have given books, papers and other artefacts for its collection. One item of particular interest was a medal, awarded to the Very Rev Dr FWS O'Neill by the Chinese Government in recognition of his work with Chinese labourers in France during the First World War. The medal was generously donated by his grandson, Mark O'Neill, who has recently completed a life of his grandfather in Chinese and English.

5. The Society is most grateful to all those who do voluntary work for the society, those who deliver lectures and write booklets, articles and reviews, and most of all to our Librarian and Archivist, Valerie Adams, whose work on its behalf is indefatigable.

6. The Society would appeal for new members, and for the steady personal support of all members in attending lectures and events, in buying publications, and in introducing the Society to others. It would encourage every Presbytery to appoint a Historical Agent, and to promote events and publications whenever and however they can.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

General

2. That the General Assembly accept the retirement of the Rev Dr Donald J Watts from the position of Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with effect from 31 August 2014, and that he be thanked for his services.

3. That the Rev Trevor D Gribben be appointed Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with effect from 1 September 2014.

4. That _____ be appointed Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

5. That an Assembly Residential Conference be held in the summer of 2017 with the theme “A Church Fit for Purpose” and the following planning Committee be appointed: Moderator, Clerk, Revs David Cupples, John Hanna, Daryl Edwards; Tom Finnegan, Graeme Thompson, James McCormick, Helen Kyle, Stephanie Windrum, Laura McGee, Kathryn Kirk, Muriel Cromie,

Priorities

6. That the General Assembly encourage the whole Church to promote the theme for 2014-15: A People of Service and Outreach.

7. That a budget for up to £12,000 be made available to the Priorities Committee from the Incidental Fund.

Structures Review

8. That the General Assembly approve the proposals of the Structures Review Panel for new Councils and their remits.

9. That the General Assembly approve the membership structure of the new Councils and the proposed method of nomination.

10. That the General Assembly appoint a Finance and Staffing Commission as outlined in the report, as follows: Moderator and Clerk Designate (Secretary); the Very Rev Drs Rob Craig (Convener), Roy Patton, Ivan Patterson; the Revs Colin Morrison, Tom Conway; John Hunter, Dr Rosemary Hamilton, Edgar Jardine, Mrs Sadie Somerville. (The Financial Secretary, Head of Personnel and Convener of the General Assembly’s Personnel Committee will sit and deliberate.)

11. That Presbyteries are instructed to send nominations for a Nominations Committee as agreed in resolution 7, to the Clerk of the General Assembly by 30 June 2014 and other nominations by 15 September, 2014.

12. That, for this year, the Nominations Committee be instructed to bring nominations for membership of the Assembly Councils and Committees for ratification by the Finance and Staffing Commission and to take effect from 1 January 2015.

Grace of Giving

13. That the General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to exercise leadership in facilitating and encouraging the implementation of the 2013 Assembly resolutions “That the General Assembly direct Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees to address the challenge contained within the “Grace of Giving” initiative.; “That the General Assembly recommend the Diocese of Liverpool’s “Giving in Grace” programme as a comprehensive resource and request congregations to consider making use of it or some similar programme.”

14. That the “Grace of Giving” Committee be reappointed for a further year as follows: Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk; Revs Dr John Dunlop, RIA Allely, NAL Cameron, David Stanfield, Gareth McFadden; Alan Ince, Colin Neill, Mrs D Marshall, Mrs Averil Heenan, Mrs Hilary Campbell.

Doctrine Committee

15. That the General Assembly instruct the Church Architecture Committee that baptisteries should not be installed in Presbyterian Church buildings.

16. That the General Assembly request the Board of Christian Training to consider implementing a programme of training on the doctrine of baptism.

Moderator's Advisory

17. That the General Assembly thank those who organised and took part in the "Day of discussion" and note the on-going conversations on human sexuality.

18. That the General Assembly welcome plans to make the Conciliation Service better known and more effective.

19. That a budget of £6,000 be made available for the Conciliation Service from the General Board.

20. That the General Assembly commend all efforts to bring support and pastoral care to ministers and their families.

Church and Society

21. That the General Assembly reaffirm their active support for a properly accountable police service through the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, and thank the outgoing Chief Constable and recently retired Deputy Chief Constable for their service.

22. That the General Assembly reaffirm active support for the Prison Service and other criminal justice agencies, given the difficult and demanding circumstances in which the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland operates.

23. That a budget of £2,000 be made available for the work of the Committee from the Incidental Fund.

Global Concerns

24. That the General Assembly encourage the General Board in setting up a Panel to consider issues of the Near-East.

25. That the General Assembly call upon the Minister for Justice in the Republic of Ireland to sign up to the European directive on reception conditions, expedite the resolution of asylum claims and allow those awaiting asylum decisions to work after twelve months in the jurisdiction.

26. That the General Assembly appoint the following to:

ICC Executive - Revs John Brackenridge, Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie, Trevor Gribben.

Irish Inter-Church Committee - Revs Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie, Trevor Gribben.

27. That the General Assembly approve the following grants from the Incidental Fund:

Vuleka Trust (South Africa)	£750
Diakonia Council of Churches (South Africa)	£750
Embrace (NI)	£1,000
Churches' Asylum Network (RoI)	£500
Eco-Congregation Ireland	£500
Environment Panel expenses	£1,300
Good Relations Panel expenses	£2,000

28. That the General Assembly recognise the Gospel imperative of working for a shared and better society and appeals to Presbyterian ministers and elders to give a greater lead in calling their congregations both to pray about these matters and to work for the welfare of our divided communities.

Church Relations

29. That the following grants (approx.) be made:	
Irish Council of Churches	£20,150
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£11,180
World Communion of Reformed Churches	£13,000
Conference of European Churches	£5,500
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	£1,250

Reception of Ministers and Licentiates

30. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee regarding ministers and licentiates.

Elders' Term

31. That the report be received and the ad-hoc Committee on Term Eldership be thanked and discharged.

General

32. That a budget of £5,000 be made available from the Incidental Fund for the general work of the Board.

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 75(a) of the Code

that in Par 75(a) of the Code the words “in cases of difficulty;” be deleted and the words “in cases of difficulty and seek conciliation where it is appropriate;”

Anent Par 132 of the Code

that in Par 132 of the Code the following paragraph be added: “(4) A court shall always consider the possibility of conciliation before entering into a formal process of discipline.” and the subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

Anent Par 161(1)(b) of the Code

that in Par 161(1) of the Code the following sub-paragraph (b) be added: “invite conciliators appointed by the General Assembly’s Conciliation Service to seek a way forward” and the subsequent sub-paragraphs renumbered.

Anent Par 162(2) of the Code

that in Par 162(2) of the Code the words “thinks fit.” be deleted and the words “thinks fit and, if appropriate, invite conciliators to be appointed by the General Assembly’s Conciliation Service.”

DONALD J WATTS

Anent Par 128(1) and (2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that, from 1st January 2015, paragraphs 128(1) and 128(2) of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in their place:

128. (1) **The Linkage Commission** shall consist of:
- (a) The Moderator, and Clerk of the General Assembly; Commission Convener and Secretary; the Deputy Clerk; three representatives of the Council for Mission in Ireland; Conveners of the Commission Panels;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery;
 - (c) Nine nominees of the Nominations Committee.
- (2) Ten members shall form a quorum for the Commission.

DONALD J WATTS

Anent Par 268 to 288 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that, from 1st January 2015, paragraphs 268 to 288 of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in their place:

268. (1) **Commissions, Councils and Committees** of the General Assembly may be either standing or occasional.
- (2) Councils, each having supervisory responsibilities over a broad field of work for which they are answerable to the General Assembly, may
- (a) include a number of official working Committees or specialist agents or directors appointed by the Assembly to promote particular aspects of work under the supervision of the Council, and
 - (b) from time to time appoint Panels, Task Groups, or agents, answerable to the Council for work remitted to them. A Panel will have on-going responsibility; a Task Group is appointed for a specific purpose and time.
- (3) Occasional Commissions and Committees may be appointed by the General Assembly for specific purposes, subject to annual renewal. Committees so appointed shall report to the General Assembly through the General Council.
269. (1) The **membership of an Assembly Council** shall be appointed, in accordance with a scheme approved by the General Assembly from time to time, from representatives of the Church, nominated by Presbyteries, together with ex-officio members and others on the nomination of the Nominations Committee.
- (2) (a) (i) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly shall be members of all Commissions, Councils, Committees, Panels and Task Groups, ex-officio.
- (ii) Where the Clerk of Assembly is ex-officio, the Deputy Clerk shall be permitted to attend in his place, if necessary.
- (b) The Convener and Secretary shall be a member ex-officio of their respective Commission, Council or Committee, and the Convener

- and Secretary of a Council shall similarly be a member of all its working Committees, Panels and Task Groups.
- (c) Any other members, ex-officio, not specified in rules, shall be appointed only after recommendation by the Nominations Committee.
 - (d) The Committees in connection with any Council shall be appointed after report and recommendation by the Nominations Committee.
 - (e) Full-time Council Secretaries shall be members of the General Assembly, where rules permit.
- (3) In addition to their ex-officio members, a working Committee shall normally consist of not more than twelve members, at least one half of whom shall be drawn from the Council and the others nominated by the Nominations Committee.
- (4) Presbyteries and the Nominations Committee should ensure that their nominations provide, so far as is reasonably practical, that
- (a) there is an equal number of ministers and other members of the Church;
 - (b) men, women and younger members are represented;
 - (c) no one is nominated a member of more than two Councils, unless specified above.
- (5) Presbyteries should make adequate arrangements for their representative to report back from Assembly Councils and Committees.
- (6) Annual nominations by Presbyteries shall be forwarded to the Clerk of Assembly before 31 March each year. The Presbytery should first confirm the willingness of individuals to serve.
- (7) In case any nominations are neglected, the retiring members shall be deemed re-nominated.
- (8) The Financial Secretary may act in an advisory capacity to all Councils and Committees.

270. (1)(a) **The Assembly shall appoint** its Commissions, Councils, and Committees, with their Conveners, after a report from the Nominations Committee.

- (b) In the appointment of Conveners of Commissions, Councils and Committees the Nominations Committee shall make the vacancy known on the Presbyterian Church in Ireland website before considering the appointment
- (2) In the event of an oversight in the appointment of an Assembly Commission, Council or Committee which has not been discharged, it shall be deemed reappointed with its previous membership.
- (3) The period of appointment:
- (a) for members shall generally be for four years, but for the Nominations Committee five years. No member shall serve for more than two terms, unless ex-officio. A member directly nominated to the Council by a Presbytery shall be a member of that Presbytery. Where a Presbytery nominee to a Council is not reappointed as a Congregation's representative elder to Presbytery they should be invited to sit and deliberate on Presbytery, enabling

them to complete the appointed term. A Minister shall only remain on a Council while a member of the Presbytery.

- (b) for Conveners of a Council, Committee or Panel shall normally be for five years. The Convener of a Council Task-Group shall serve for the life of the Task-Group, which shall normally be for not more than three years. No-one shall normally hold more than two consecutive Committee Convenerships on the same Council. A retiring Council Convener should not normally be appointed to another Council Convenership within three years.
- (4) Any member who, without giving due reason, has failed to attend any of the meetings of his Commission, Council etc., for a year or for three successive meetings, whichever be the longer period, shall be deemed to have retired from membership.
- (5) Where the quorum of any Commission, Council etc., has not been fixed by the Assembly it shall be one quarter of the total membership, or the number nearest one quarter, though in no case shall the quorum be less than three.

271. Expenses shall be paid to members attending the Assembly, Commissions, Councils etc. according to a scheme approved by the Assembly from time to time.

272. General Council of the Assembly

- (1) **The membership of the General Council** shall be:
- (a) The Moderator, Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly; Council Convener; Conveners of the Council Committees; Financial Secretary; preceding two Moderators; preceding Clerk of Assembly (for one year); Conveners of other Councils and Commissions.
 - (b) Clerks of Presbytery; one direct nominee from each Presbytery.
 - (c) Nine nominees of the Nominations Committee
- (2) The membership of the Council Committees shall be as agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.
- (3) The Council shall on behalf of the Assembly deal with such exceptional matters affecting public interest or the general work of the Church as may arise and require action between meetings of the General Assembly; and may either directly or through its authorised committees issue statements on such matters on behalf of the Church.
- (4) The Council shall co-ordinate the work of all Councils including:
- co-ordination of work not in the remit of other Councils;
 - co-ordination of work which overlaps two or more Councils and which is not the responsibility of another Council.
- (5) The Council shall provide for effective communication of the Assembly's views both within and beyond the Church.
- (6) The Council shall, through an appropriate Committee:
- (a) facilitate the process of nominations to Councils etc. by:
 - allocating the 'general nominations' from Presbyteries to Councils (i.e. allocating those people not nominated to specific Councils by Presbyteries);

- nominating Conveners of Assembly Councils (with appropriate co-operation with the Council involved);
 - the oversight of general matters relating to nomination of Councils and Committees to the General Assembly.
- (b) order the business of the General Assembly:
- dealing with and where appropriate licensing of all business to the Assembly;
 - recommending an order of business to the Assembly;
 - making all arrangements for the accommodation and discharge of the Assembly business;
 - nominating corresponding members and delegates to other Churches;
 - examining the records of all the Presbyteries and Assembly Councils.
- (c) draw up priorities for the work of the General Assembly:
- in discussion with the Presbyteries and other Councils, recommend priorities to the General Assembly.
 - through a suitable reference group independent of other Councils:
 - report that the work of the Councils is consistent with the priorities agreed by the Assembly;
 - report that the United Appeal allocations are consistent with the priorities agreed by the Assembly;
 - report whether each Council is focussed on the work allocated to it by the General Assembly.
- (d) recommend to the General Assembly each year a United Appeal for mission:
- allocating each year a proportion of that Appeal to each Presbytery;
 - setting budgets for each Council receiving support from the United Appeal;
 - approving payments to the Councils;
 - providing publicity materials for the United Appeal for mission.
- (e) prepare general Church policy or statements on Doctrine for submission to the General Assembly.
- (f) advise the Moderator and Clerk on matters of sensitivity for the Church:
- providing assessors to sit with a lower Court if it invites help in cases of difficulty;
- (g) develop relationships with other Churches:
- monitor those inter-church bodies of which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a member.
- (h) ensure that support services are being provided to the Councils efficiently and effectively and dealing with any related policy issues.
- (7) The Council itself, or through its appropriate Committee, is authorised

- (a) to be the recognised medium of communication between the Church and Governments;
 - (b) to submit nominations for the offices of Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Theological Professors and College Principal.
- (8) The Council shall provide representation of the Church's interest in the Presbyterian Historical Society according to the following provisions:
- (a) The custody of various manuscripts and published records of the past of the Church together with relics of historical value may be entrusted to this Society, in terms of its constitution.
 - (b) The Society is also charged with promoting historical study and appreciation and with compiling accounts of Church life and of those who have played any significant part in its work.

273. Linkage Commission - see Code Par 128.

The Commission shall operate in accordance with the following rules:

- (1) Upon knowledge of a vacancy arising in a congregation it shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of Presbytery forthwith to notify this in writing to the Convener of the Commission and to inform the congregation of the rules governing vacant pastorates and preliminaries to any call.
- (2) Where there is not a vacancy in a congregation, but a Presbytery following the visitation of a congregation, or a congregation of their own initiative, refer a case to the Commission, or the Commission itself deem it appropriate, the Commission shall have power to examine the circumstances and take appropriate action.
- (3) A candidate for a vacant pastorate shall be deemed to have satisfied themselves before accepting a call as to whether the Commission has dealt with the congregation under these rules (and is advised to confirm the matter with the Convener of the Commission).
- (4) Where a congregation or linkage of congregations which has become vacant should, in the opinion of the Commission, be continued and agreement has been reached on the terms for a new ministry and the Commission is satisfied that the Manse (if any) is being put into suitable condition for the use of the Minister:
 - (a) leave to call shall be issued by the Commission on behalf of the Assembly, but
 - (b) this leave shall be operative for 12 months only, after which, should the vacancy not have been filled, it shall be referred back to the Commission for the whole arrangement to be reconsidered.
- (5) Where it is not expedient formally to link a congregation, in the opinion of the Commission, and yet such congregation in itself does not provide sufficient work for a normal appointment, or where a linkage, either existing or new, does not provide sufficient work for a normal appointment, or where a congregation or linkage is otherwise in special circumstances, the Commission shall have power to:-
 - (a) classify such congregation or linkage as a Restricted List charge upon the following terms:

- (i) when a vacancy arises, the Commission shall have power to limit the list of candidates to those who, in its opinion, may reasonably be suited to such work, or may become available for service under subsequent rules;
 - (ii) where a congregation or linkage so designated receives no application from eligible candidates within twelve months of classification, the whole arrangement shall be reconsidered by the commission.
- (b) arrange for the appointment of a Stated Supply to provide for the work of the ministry in the congregation or linkage upon the following terms:
- (i) appointments shall be made by Presbytery on the nomination of, and on terms settled by, the Commission;
 - (ii) appointment shall not of itself qualify for membership in the courts of the Church;
 - (iii) the appointment shall be terminable on two months' notice given, after consultation among them, by the supply, the Presbytery or the Commission, or otherwise by mutual arrangement.
- (c) issue leave to call to Part-Time Ministry in the congregation or linkage, under the Commissions scheme for Part-Time Ministry.
- (d) arrange for a Reviewable Tenure appointment upon the following terms:
- (i) the form of Leave to Call shall provide for the appointment to be reviewed and/or terminated after a specified time or in specified circumstances;
 - (ii) If the congregation concerned is subsequently linked with another congregation, and the minister is accepted by that congregation also as its settled minister, the Reviewable Tenure provisions shall be deemed to have lapsed;
 - (iii) except as provided for in sub-paragraph (5)(c)(ii) above, the outgoing minister shall not be eligible to apply for the linked charge;
 - (iv) the appointment shall not be terminated without six months' notice in writing given by the Commission to the minister, the congregation and the Presbytery;
 - (v) after termination of the appointment the minister shall be eligible for salary and pension contributions at the rate of the appropriate ministerial minimum as a charge upon the Central Ministry Fund until the minister receives another Call, or for a period not exceeding twelve months, whichever is the sooner. During such period suitable work may be offered to the minister by the Commission. Should such minister at any time refuse to perform the duties thus assigned, without giving reasons deemed satisfactory by the Commission, this financial arrangement shall cease;
 - (vi) the provisions of Code Par. 274(8)(b)(ii) shall not apply;

- (vii) where a congregation granted a Reviewable Tenure appointment receives no application within twelve months the whole arrangement shall be reconsidered by the Commission.
- (6) (a) Where in the opinion of the Commission the pastorate of two or more congregations may be linked the Commission shall consult with the Kirk Sessions and Congregations involved (either directly or through the Presbytery), with the Presbytery itself and, in the case of Home Mission Congregations, with the Council for Mission in Ireland. The Commission shall endeavour to agree the terms with the Kirk Sessions involved. Where it proves impossible to obtain the agreement of one or more Kirk Sessions, but the Presbytery consents and in the case of Home Mission congregations the Council for Mission in Ireland consents, terms of linkage shall be fixed by the Commission, a date for its commencement set and such action reported in due course to the Assembly. These terms shall be binding on all the parties concerned. The same action may be taken to facilitate a porting. The Commission shall be the final authority as to the area of porting to be effected.
- (b) No congregation shall be dissolved or amalgamated, with loss of its identity, except by authorisation from the Assembly. Where the Commission has been instructed by the General Assembly to agree terms, where one or more congregations are being amalgamated or dissolved by resolution of the Assembly, the Commission shall endeavour to agree the terms with the Kirk Sessions involved. Where it proves impossible to obtain the agreement of one or more Kirk Sessions, but the Presbytery consents, and in the case of Home Mission congregations the Council for Mission in Ireland consents, the terms shall be set by the Commission and shall be binding on all the parties concerned.
- (c) When any congregation is considering a proposal for dissolution, amalgamation or linkage with another congregation, no arrangements regarding the sale of its properties and distribution of the proceeds or the income therefrom shall be made without first obtaining the agreement of the Commission.
- (d) Where it is decided that within five years from the date of the leave to call the vacant congregation or congregations shall be linked with another congregation or congregations where there is still a minister in active duty (hereafter referred to as “the other congregation or congregations”), the Commission may issue leave to call to the vacant congregation or congregations on deferred linkage terms.
- (i) The Commission will have power to direct that in the choice of a Minister the vacant congregation or congregations and the other congregation or congregations shall act as one congregation and the Kirk Session as one Kirk Session.

- (ii) The rights and entitlements of the active minister or ministers in the other congregation or congregations shall not be adversely affected by this arrangement.
 - (iii) When the minister or ministers in active duty retire or cease to be minister or ministers of the other congregation or congregations in the deferred linkage the Commission shall agree final terms of linkage and the Presbytery arrange a service of installation in the other congregation or congregations.
 - (iv) If the minister called to the original vacant congregation in the deferred linkage resigns their charge, the same procedure as above will be followed.
- (7) When congregations belonging to different Presbyteries are being linked or a congregation is ported to a new area the Commission shall have power to remove congregations and ministers from one Presbytery to another.
- (8) For the purpose of effecting a linkage of congregations, or a porting or dissolution, where there is still a minister in active duty involved and except when Par 274(5)(c)(v) or Par 318(3)(d) is applicable,
- (a) the minister may be retired by the Commission on such terms as may be agreed, or
 - (b) where prepared voluntarily to resign, the minister shall, notwithstanding, continue to remain a member of the Assembly and subject to its jurisdiction on the following terms.
 - (i) Suitable work shall be offered by the Commission, or by the Council for Mission in Ireland on application of the Commission, and if appointed as Stated Supply the minister shall be a member of the Presbytery concerned.
 - (ii) Provision shall be made, in conjunction with the Central Ministry Fund, that until eligible to retire official income (including any payment in lieu of manse) shall be at least equal to that which is surrendered, from and after which time the minister shall be in the same financial position as an ordinary retired minister of a congregation.
 - (iii) Should such minister at any time refuse to perform the duties thus assigned, without giving reasons which shall be deemed satisfactory by the Commission, the above financial arrangement shall become null and void.
- (9) When in the opinion of the Commission and of the Presbytery or the Council for Mission in Ireland, the work of a congregation whose minister receives a grant from the Home Mission, or from any other Assembly fund for the augmentation of ministerial income, can be adequately performed by the minister of a neighbouring congregation, or can be adequately arranged for otherwise:
- (a) the grant to such minister shall cease;
 - (b) the Commission is empowered to direct Presbytery to release them from their charge;

- (c) upon such release other work shall be offered and financial provision made as set out under sub-paragraph (8)(b) above.
- (10) When a congregation is opposed to dissolution, or linkage, or porting, on the terms fixed by the Commission, but a minister is nevertheless allowed to be appointed,
- (a) the minister shall not receive from the Central Ministry Fund in any year any sum greater than the amount paid into the Fund by the congregation for that year, and
 - (b) the minister shall not receive any grant from any other fund of the Assembly.
- (11) When any congregation which has been dealt with by the Commission shall make default in carrying out the terms and conditions which the Commission has fixed for it, the minister of such congregation, while such default continues,
- (a) shall not receive from the Central Ministry Fund in any year any sum greater than the amount paid into the Fund by the congregation for that year, and
 - (b) shall not receive any grant from any other fund of the Assembly, and the Assembly shall have the powers to determine the future status of the congregation.
- (12) The Commission shall have power to dissolve a linkage between two congregations where, in its opinion, it would be better to link each or either of the congregations with another congregation, or where other developments render such action desirable.
- (13) When the Minister of a congregation, which becomes linked with another congregation, is accepted by that congregation also as its settled minister, the Presbytery shall arrange for an installation service in this second congregation.
- (14) Any request to vary the application of the rules about the provision of a Manse and residence therein (as set out in Par. 195 (11)(c) and Appendix 5A of the Code) shall be referred to the Commission, which shall have power to issue after consultation with the Presbytery, congregation and minister (if any).

274. Council for Church in Society

- (1) The membership of the Council for Church in Society shall be:
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly; Public Affairs and Press Officers; Council Convener; Committee and Panel Conveners; preceding Moderator; Convener and Secretary of Council for Social Witness;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery;
 - (c) Six nominees of the Nominations Committee.
- (2) The membership of Council Committees shall be as the General Assembly may agree from time to time.
- (3) The remit of the Council shall be to:
 - (a) identify current issues which the Church needs to address; helping to develop the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's thinking in these areas and communicating the General Assembly's views in the

public square (for clarity this will include all aspects of public policy including education, youth, children's, social and ethical issues);

- (b) develop relationships with the Westminster and Dublin Governments and Parliaments and the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, making representations to them on behalf of the Church and responding to consultations from them (for clarity this will include all aspects of public policy including education, youth, children's, social and ethical issues);
- (c) develop relationships with civic society;
- (d) provide nominations to education and other state bodies where the Church is a stakeholder;
- (e) work with the press and media office to ensure the Church's view is heard in the public square.

275. Council for Training in Ministry

- (1) **The membership of the Council for Training in Ministry** shall be:
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Council Convener and Secretary; Committee and Panel Conveners; Principal of Union Theological College; Director of Ministerial Studies;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery
 - (c) The membership of Council Committees shall be as agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.
- (3) The Council shall consider all aspects of leadership training for ministers including responsibility for:
 - (a) selection, training and on-going development of full-time ministers;
 - (b) pastoral care of ministers and manse families;
 - (c) selection, training and on-going development of auxiliary ministers and accredited preachers;
 - (d) selection and initial training of deaconesses, including probationary period;
 - (e) reception of ministers and licentiates from other Churches, subject to rules approved from time to time by the General Assembly;
 - (f) management of Union Theological College and the Magee Fund Scheme;
 - (g) provision of a conciliation service.

276. Council for Congregational Life and Witness

- (1) **The membership of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness** shall be:
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly; Council Convener and Secretary; Committee and Panel Conveners; Presbyterian Women President;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery;
 - (c) Fifteen nominees of the Nominations Committee.
- (2) The membership of Council Committees shall be as the General Assembly may agree from time to time.

- (3) The Council shall:
- (a) seek to support the on-going life, mission and witness of congregations in their work with all age-groups, through casting vision; assisting in development; offering training; providing and signposting models of good practice and resourcing in key areas including:
 - (i) worship;
 - (ii) discipleship, nurture and teaching;
 - (iii) pastoral care;
 - (iv) evangelism and outreach in the community, including social outreach;
 - (v) co-operative working with others;
 - (vi) involvement in global mission;
 - (vii) leadership, including elder training.
 - (b) take specific responsibility for ensuring the strategic development within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland of:
 - (i) youth and children's ministry;
 - (ii) Presbyterian Women and ministry among women generally;
 - (iii) young adults' ministry;
 - (iv) support for the family (including PCI Family Holiday);
 - (v) marriage and counselling services.
 - (c) have responsibility for encouraging and resourcing congregations in:
 - (i) building supportive links with local schools;
 - (ii) supporting Christians in the workplace;
 - (iii) being proactive in the work of good relations.
 - (d) be responsible, in co-operation with other Councils, for providing congregations with support and training in specific areas, such as:
 - (i) finance, health & safety and personnel issues;
 - (i) disability awareness;
 - (iii) Taking Care.

277. Council for Mission in Ireland:

- (1) **The membership of the Council for Mission in Ireland** shall be:
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly; Council Convener and Secretary; Linkage Commission representative; two Presbyterian Women representatives; Committee and Panel Conveners;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery;
 - (c) Ten nominees of the Nominations Committee.
- (2) The membership of Council Committees shall be as agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.
- (3) The Council shall:
 - (a) develop strategic priorities in all-age mission in Ireland, planning initiatives at a General Assembly level where appropriate;
 - (b) consider new church development and church planting;
 - (c) oversee all aspects of the work of the Home and Irish Mission, including the Irish Mission Fund;
 - (d) oversee the deployment and on-going support of deaconesses;

- (e) support a chaplaincy service in the Forces, Hospitals, Hospices and Prisons;
- (f) support mission and ministry in Universities and Colleges through chaplaincy services;
- (g) oversee the funds of the Presbyterian War Memorial, ensuring that its terms of trust are fulfilled.

278. Council for Global Mission

- (1) **The membership of the Council for Global Mission** shall be:
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly; Council Convener and Secretary; two Presbyterian Women representatives; Committee and Panel Conveners;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery.
 - (c) Ten nominees of the Nominations Committee.
- (2) The membership of Council Committees shall be as agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.
- (3) The Council shall:
 - (a) supervise the Overseas Mission of the General Assembly, including the interests of the individual missions listed in Par. 115 of the Code;
 - (b) develop a strategy on mission overseas, including partnership with overseas Churches and sending personnel;
 - (c) promote world development issues, including providing for an annual appeal;
 - (d) lead thinking on issues of global concern such as the environment, race relations, international relations.

279. Council for Social Witness

- (1) **The membership of the Council for Social Witness** shall be:
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly; Council Convener and Secretary; one Presbyterian Women representative; Committee and Panel Conveners;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery
 - (c) Nine nominees of the Nominations Committee
- (2) The membership of Council Committees shall be as agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.
- (3) The Council shall:
 - (a) deliver an effective social witness service on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and to the wider community in partnership with appropriate organisations, in the areas of:
 - (i) older people services including residential care, nursing care, day care, respite care, supported housing and care in the community;
 - (ii) disability services; including residential care, day care, respite care, supported housing and care in the community;
 - (iii) criminal justice; including the management and professional oversight of Thompson House;

- substance abuse; including the management and professional oversight of Carlisle House and Gray's Court.
- (b) oversee policy development and administration of Taking Care.
- (c) support the ministry of the Kinghan Church;
- (d) relate the work of the Presbyterian Old Age Fund and similar funds to the witness of the Church.

DONALD J WATTS