

# BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Rev JNI McNEELY

Secretary: Rev TD GRIBBEN

## **Executive Summary of the Board's Report**

1. The Board of Christian Training (BCT) continues through Union Theological College and its Committees to provide training for ministers, elders and Church members through a variety of courses and the provision of resources.

2. The **Committee on Ministerial Studies and Development** has been concentrating on the implementation of the revised Application and Assessment process, agreed by the General Assembly in 2013, and the putting in place of arrangements for the introduction of the changes in 2014. The Committee reports on the success of the Pre-Retirement Residential and the support offered to supervising Ministers who mentor student and licentiate assistants.

3. The **Committee on Training and Resources** fulfils its remit primarily through its panels and working groups. The Panel on Pastoral Care plans to organise strategic training for elders and pastoral care teams. The Panel on Leadership reports on training events and the special focus on producing new resources for ministers and Kirk Sessions. The Panel on Auxiliary Ministers reports the launch of the first course for auxiliary ministers and that eleven candidates have started their training. The Committee continues to be encouraged by the response to the Handling the Word course and the Accredited Preacher Scheme and is pleased to report that over 250 people have completed these courses.

4. The **Union Theological College Management Committee** reports a very busy and encouraging year. The new College Principal with executive responsibility, the Very Rev Dr JS Carson, was installed and there were a number of changes in administrative staff. The Curriculum Sub-Committee has been engaged in discussing changes to the curriculum and degree programmes that will subsequently affect the course of study for all ministry students. The Management Committee has been concentrating on the restoration of the stonework of the college and is able to report that Phase One is underway.

## **Board Convener's Introduction**

5. In 2013 the General Assembly approved a revised scheme relating to the Pre-Application Process and Application Process for the Ordained Ministry, the Assessment of Ministry Candidates and the Licentiate Course and the Board has been preparing for the implementation of the proposed changes. The Application Process includes a number of strategic modifications and the plan is to see this take effect from 15 September 2014. The interview process is being radically altered and steps are being taken to form a revised panel of those who will conduct the interviews, with a training programme being introduced for those involved.

6. A Pre-Application Process was introduced in the 2013 report that expressed it was desirable that applicants in years 2014 and 2015 should complete the Accredited Preachers Course (APC) and that it would be normal from 2016 for all potential applicants for training for the ordained ministry to have completed the APC. There has been confirmation that this is being observed by those intending to make an application and prospective candidates are being certified as accredited preachers.

7. In the current year there are 39 students for the ministry being trained at Union Theological College (UTC) and in Resolution 2 at the end of this report there are 12 candidates being nominated to be accepted as students for the ordained ministry. It is pleasing that there continues to be a regular supply of students to be trained. There have been suggestions that there will be an over-supply of ministers in the future and that the number of candidates to be trained should be 'capped'. The Board has during the past year revisited this issue and continues to be very cautious in regard to introducing a 'cap' and the introduction of a form of competitiveness to the process. The Board's intention is to have ongoing discussions with the Union Commission on the wider implications of the issue of over-supply of ministers.

8. The Committee on Training and Resources has continued to produce some very helpful material for the training of elders and Church members. The Board commends these to the General Assembly and encourages ministers and Kirk Sessions to download these excellent courses and guidelines from the PCI website.

9. The Board was encouraged by the number of applicants for the Auxiliary Ministry Course and can report that there are 11 participants currently on the course. At the next Assembly in 2015 the BCT will be reporting on the completion of the first course and will be presenting the successful trainees to the General Assembly as those eligible to apply for auxiliary ministry posts. The first training scheme for auxiliary ministers has got off to a good start and the initial response by the trainees has been very positive. The Board waits with interest to see how the scheme is developed and what response there will be from the Church to the auxiliary ministers who are trained.

10. The 'Church in the Public Square' Conference held in Assembly Buildings in January 2014 was very successful and attracted a large attendance. The Board is grateful to the Panel that organised this symposium and invited such an esteemed team of speakers to participate. It is planned that there will be regular conferences of this form in the future and the BCT is indebted to the Faculty of Union College for their commitment to the promotion of these strategic forums.

11. Union Theological College Management Committee has had a demanding year as it has worked to progress the restoration of the College stonework. The initial task was securing the funding to commence the work and the Committee can be commended for its patience and fortitude as it successfully secured a Northern Ireland Environment Agency grant and received a grant of £450,000 from the General Assembly's Trustees. The restoration of the stonework is underway and it is hoped that the first phase will be completed in 2014. The restoration work will cause extensive upheaval at the College and the Board recognises the inconvenience the building work will create for the Faculty, the staff and students for the next few years. Ministers and Church members who

use the College facilities and library are asked to recognise the demands there are on parking space and to accept the disruption there will be for the duration of the restoration programme.

12. The Management Committee is constantly concerned that it provides the Principal, Faculty and students a first class environment to work in and supplies the necessary facilities to run a modern theological college. During the past year there have been new appointments to the ancillary staff and the appointment of a Registrar/Bursar to provide the required administrative support. Information technology is a natural requirement in modern educational institutions and it is necessary that the IT provision in the College is comparable to any other college and particularly is compatible with the provision at Queen's University. The BCT is concerned that the IT provision at UTC continues to be a perennial problem despite the regular support of the Church's IT Department. The current system is not adequate for a theological college and technology in university education will continue to advance while all at UTC will suffer regular frustration. The Board would encourage the General Assembly, through the Board of Finance and Personnel, to provide the resources to sustain a fit for purpose system.

13. The Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson was installed as Principal of UTC and Professor of Ministry in September 2013 and the Board acknowledges how smoothly he has settled into his executive role and is giving positive leadership in UTC. The General Assembly is asked to remember Dr Carson in prayer as he completes his first year as Principal and to pray for the Faculty as its members teach and train candidates for ministry in the Presbyterian Church and Queen's University students for their role in society.

14. The Rev Ronnie Hetherington has indicated that he will be retiring as Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS) at the end of the 2014 and the BCT expresses its gratitude to Ronnie for his dedication to his responsibility as DMS over the past 10 years. He fulfils his role constantly displaying good judgment, demonstrating concern for the students and complete commitment to and concentration on the ministry formation of students. Dr Joan McQuoid is also retiring in 2014 as the Board's Vocational Consultant and the Board conveys to Dr McQuoid its gratitude for the regular assistance she gave and the professional contributions she made to the application process of students for the ministry.

15. The Board congratulates its Executive Secretary for the past 6 years, the Rev Trevor Gribben, on his appointment as Clerk of the General Assembly. Trevor contributed an enormous amount of his time to the development of the Board's work and constantly contributed innovative ideas and radical thinking to many aspects of the Board's vision. His knowledge of ministerial training, his foresight in regard to training of Church members and his gifts in administration have been immensely valuable in the running of the Board.

### QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

16. The Qualifications Committee met to consider requests from Ministers to recognise the degrees that had been awarded to them. The Committee will normally recognise degrees awarded in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Directory of Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and General Assembly Reports, 2006 (pp 223,224). People considering studying for qualifications which may not fit the criteria, if they wish to have their degree

acknowledged in the Directory of Ministers, are advised to consult with the Committee before undertaking their study.

## **COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. The Committee continues to seek to fulfil its broad responsibility which comprises overseeing: the selection process and college years of students for ordained ministry; licentiate training; in-service training for ordained ministers (including sabbaticals); pre-retirement courses for ministers. It met on two occasions since the last General Assembly. Several Panels that have been set up to progress the work of the Committee have been meeting as well and have made good progress in their areas of responsibility.

2. The Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS), the Rev Ronnie Hetherington, continues to act as Secretary to the Committee and also continues to advise prospective candidates and fulfil his duties in relation to students in training according to the Regulations of the General Assembly. Once again the Committee wishes to record its deep appreciation to Ronnie for the measure of expertise and experience he brings to the role of DMS through his pastoral sensitivity, wise counsel and administrative ability.

3. In the academic year 2013-2014 there were 47 students under the care of Presbyteries, as listed in the appended schedule (see Appendix 1).

### **MINISTERIAL STUDIES**

#### **Review of the Application and Assessment Process**

4. In response to the resolution passed by the General Assembly in June 2013 (see 2013 Reports, p 222, res 3, and Appendix 2, pp 214-217) the Review Panel of the Committee has made good progress in considering the content, implications and implementation of the revised Pre-Application Process and the Application Process for the Ordained Ministry, the Assessment of Ministry Candidates and the Licentiate Course. Further work needs to be done by the Panel.

#### **Assessment of Ministry Candidates and Review Facility**

5. The Committee agreed that the Standing Panel for Ministerial Formation (see 2013 Reports, p 215) should be given authority to add specific requirements to a candidate's pathway, such as additional courses or an extra year, if it is deemed necessary. While recognising that only the General Assembly can terminate a Ministry Candidate's pathway, it was agreed that in the exceptional case of such action being necessary the Standing Panel is given authority to suspend a Ministry Candidate's studies in the meantime, pending a formal recommendation to the next General Assembly. The Committee recognised that Ministry candidates should have the facility of requesting a review of any

decision of the Standing Panel, especially when suspension or termination of their pathway is the issue. It was, therefore, agreed that the Standing Panel should consist of the Convener of the Committee on Ministerial Studies and Development (Convener), Director of Ministerial Studies, Principal of Union Theological College, Professor of Practical Theology, and one other person appointed by the BCT to provide further ‘breadth and balance’. In the event of a Standing Panel decision being formally challenged, the BCT Convener and the Board Secretary will constitute the nucleus of a subsequent Review Panel, with further members being added by the BCT as appropriate.

#### **‘Cap’ on Ministry Candidate Numbers**

6. The Committee continued to discuss at length the concept of setting a ‘cap’ on student numbers where the Church would stipulate the maximum number of applicants for ordained ministry to be nominated each year with the selection procedure approving no more than this number. The DMS produced an excellent paper comparing and contrasting arguments that favour such a policy together with drawbacks associated with such a policy. The paper has been forwarded to the Union Commission for its information and consideration. In the meantime, the BCT is not persuaded that it should recommend such a ‘cap’ to the General Assembly.

#### **Remuneration of Summer Assistants**

7. The Committee agreed that the remuneration for summer assistants should be increased from £240 per week to £260 per week. (€330 to €360).

#### **Interviews**

8. The interviews of 18 candidates were held in Union Theological College on Tuesday 15 April 2014. The Interviewing Panel comprised: Ministers – Robert Beggs, Amanda Best, Gordon Best, Robin Brown, Mervyn Burnside, Jim Campbell, Karen Campbell, John Coulter, Kenneth Crowe, Sam Finlay, Mark Goudy, William Henry, John Hutchinson, Philip McCrea, Nigel McCullough, Adrian McLernon, Ian McNie, Adrian Moffett, Colin Morrison, Ivan Patterson, James Rogers, William Sinclair, Alan Thompson, David Thompson; Elders – Joe Campbell, Isobel McAuley, Lena Morrow, Anne Taylor, Roy Thompson, Jayne Wright. Dr Joan McQuoid acted as Vocational Consultant, the Rev Noble McNeely as Chairman, the Rev Dr Bill Parker as Secretary, and the Rev Ronnie Hetherington as Co-ordinator. The Rev Trevor Gribben, Secretary to the Board, was also present.

Having completed the interviewing process, 12 candidates are being nominated to the General Assembly by the Board of Christian Training.

### **MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Conference for Supervising Ministers**

9. A mini-conference for supervising ministers was held in October 2013 at Union Theological College. The conference was facilitated by the Rev

Ronnie Hetherington (DMS), the Rev Prof Drew Gibson (Professor of Practical Theology), the Rev Noble McNeely (Board Convener), the Rev Dr Bill Parker (Committee Convener), and Mr Mark Johnston (licensed assistant at Abbot's Cross Presbyterian Church). Supervising ministers were guided through the *Handbook for Supervising Ministers*, Prof Gibson spoke on the subject of *A Reflective Assistantship* and elaborated on the Pastoral Cycle of *Experience, Analysis, Theological Reflection, Response*. The Rev Noble McNeely and the Rev Dr Bill Parker spoke from the perspective of supervising ministers while Mr Mark Johnston spoke from the perspective of a licensed assistant. A Question and Answer time followed.

### **Pre-Retirement Residentials**

10. The Committee again wishes to recognise the continued success of the Pre-Retirement Residentials, which is open to ordained ministers and their spouses (including ordained ministers who are directly employed by Boards and Agencies of the Church), from the year in which the minister reaches the age of 63. The Very Rev Dr John and Mrs Rosemary Dunlop, the Rev Bill and Mrs Margaret Sanderson, and the Very Rev Dr David and Mrs Hazel Clarke facilitated another residential conference, with 20 attendees, from 12-14 November 2013. The success of the conferences is in no small part due to the efforts of those who facilitate in such a helpful and pastoral manner, and the Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the facilitators. The next residential is planned for November 2014.

### **Leadership**

11. The Panel on Leadership, as a joint panel of the Committee for Ministerial Studies and Development, and the Committee for Training and Resources, continues to address leadership issues concerning ministers, ruling elders and Church members. The Committee approved an excellent resource for ministers presented to it by the Panel on Leadership called "Leading the Team as 'First Among Equals'". It is the prayer of the Committee that this resource will prove to be of great help to all serving ministers as they embrace their role of facilitating their Kirk Sessions to work together effectively as a leadership team, and, as they fulfil their leadership role in equipping their Kirk Sessions for Christ-centred team leadership.

### **Inter-Board Conference**

12. A day conference for ministers addressing the important issue of whole-life discipleship is planned for October 2014. It will be a joint conference under the auspices of the Board of Christian Training and the Board of Mission in Ireland.

### **Students' Bursary Fund**

*The Rev David Irvine, Convener of the Students' Bursary Fund writes:*

13. The Students' Bursary Fund (SBF) exists to make financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families, during their time of study.

14. In the academic year Sept 2013 – June 2014 there are 42 students in receipt of grants. The cost to the Fund of grants, fees and other expenses for this period is £520,801. This is being met through offerings at services of licensing, ordination and installation of ministers and elders, personal and congregational donations, and by congregational assessment. Thanks are due to all members of the Church who generously support the Students' Bursary Fund.

15. All those who have responsibility for planning services of licensing, ordination and installation are asked to ensure that full use is made of the SBF literature available from reception in Assembly Buildings, especially the Gift Aid envelope. Past experience has shown that where literature is handed out at an earlier service, those attending the special service are more likely to use a Gift Aid envelope.

WJM PARKER, Convener

## **COMMITTEE FOR TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

1. The Committee continues to fulfil its remit through the work of its Panels which have met regularly. The significant progress that has been made in the various areas of its work is testimony to the hard work of those involved and the diligence of the Christian Training Development Officer, Tom Finnegan.

### **Panel on Pastoral Care**

2. In 2011 the General Assembly endorsed three models of pastoral care in Congregations prepared by the Panel and requested Kirk Sessions to review their pastoral care in light of these three models by September 2013. The Panel has been encouraged by the extent to which this has been done, although would urge Kirk Sessions who have not carried out such an assessment to do so.

3. The model offered for medium sized Congregations is the one which a considerable number of Kirk Sessions have adopted. This model suggested the formation of pastoral care teams in Congregations to share with the Elders this important ministry. This model also suggested that pastoral care might be best carried out through small groups. This has been adopted helpfully by some Congregations. One other factor which has become clear is that the role of a Pastoral Care Coordinator is vital in the provision of the most effective pastoral care. A number of Congregations have availed themselves of the materials produced by the Panel for the training of pastoral care teams.

4. Recently the Panel has been considering the direction pastoral care should take. The issues of care being both proactive and reactive together with a consumer versus body ministry model are being examined by the Panel, and, at a later date, the Panel may produce or recommend materials on these issues.

5. Over the past couple of years the Panel on Leadership has held roadshows which have been very useful to elders and others involved in leadership. Along similar lines the Panel on Pastoral Care plans to organise a pilot training event for elders and pastoral care teams most likely in the autumn and on a Saturday. The event would begin with a keynote address giving a biblical rationale for pastoral care followed by seminars on specific aspects of pastoral care.

**Panel on Leadership**

6. The Panel's work is seen in three areas; resources, training and roadshows. This has mainly been a year of consolidation, but with some new resources and training.

7. Two new resources have been made available to download from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland website. 'Navigating to New Places' is a resource that aims to provide a set of tools rooted in biblical theology to help the leadership team of the Congregation, i.e. the Kirk Session, navigate and lead the way to successful change for the building up of the Church. In addition to the more lengthy and detailed main resource, a 'Quick Start' version is also available. This resource can be used in two ways. It can be used as a training resource (normally facilitated by the Moderator of Kirk Session) or it can be used to help the Kirk Session consider and plan a change that impacts the Congregation. 'Leading a Larger Congregation' is a resource designed to help ministers and Kirk Sessions understand some of the differences in structure and approach to leading a larger Congregations.

8. A further resource, 'Leading as First among Equals' giving guidelines to ministers about the particular dynamics of leading as 'first among equals', as Moderator of Kirk Session is also now available.

9. Attention is drawn to the list of many resources available to ministers and elders for the development of leadership within the Church which was published in the General Assembly Report 2013, Appendix 3 (pp 217-220). Work on the Elders' Training Scheme (outlined in GA Reports 2013, App 4, pp 220-1) is progressing.

10. The Panel is also not just concerned to produce resource materials; training is also delivered to ministers, elders and other leaders at various levels and in various situations. In early March 2014 a week's SYIS (Sharpening Your Inter-Personal Skills) training was held at Lorne House, Holywood for ministers and some spouses. This course aims to develop the softer skills of leadership and has been widely used, especially in cross-cultural situations. While the course was largely facilitated by International Training Partners the Panel would hope to train some in PCI to act as facilitators in the future.

11. Following several leadership roadshows held in 2012/2013, during autumn 2013 and early 2014 further roadshows were held for elders within the Belfast Presbyteries, Ards Presbytery, Ballymena Presbytery and Tyrone Presbytery. These aim to develop leadership and work by way of seminars, e.g. 'Rethinking the Kirk Session Meeting'; 'Leading Well from the Middle'; 'Encouraging Young Leaders'; 'Leading your Congregation in Mission to the Ends of the Earth'. The Panel is grateful to those who lead the seminars, especially those members of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry and the Board of Mission Overseas who assisted with these evenings. Other Presbyteries are invited to host a roadshow. For possible dates and available topics please contact Tom Finnegan, Christian Training Development Officer.

**Working Group on Accredited Preacher Scheme and Handling the Word**

12. There are now over 100 accredited preachers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with numbers of about 20 course participants per year being typical for 2013 and 2014. In 2014 the course was modified to include a substantial

module on biblical theology along with extra teaching on biblical genres. 2014 was also the first year that the Handling the Word course became a normal prerequisite for applying to the Accredited Preacher Scheme. The effect of this has been noticeable on the course with participants already having a well-grounded understanding of how to prepare a biblical talk.

13. Over 150 people have completed Handling the Word courses which have been run either over six evenings or two Saturdays. A course has been delivered centrally in Belfast organised by the Board of Christian Training and other courses have been delivered in 2013 and the first half of 2014 by Armagh, Coleraine and Limavady, Down, Derry and Donegal, Dublin and Munster, Omagh, Templepatrick and Tyrone Presbyteries. As originally envisaged by the Board of Christian Training, most people who attend Handling the Word see it as a way to develop in their area of service in their local Congregation with a small number progressing on to the Accredited Preacher Scheme. In turn, a small number of those who complete the Accredited Preacher Scheme progress on to the ordained ministry or to the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme.

14. Accredited preachers are required to submit annual reports of where and when they have preached. Ministers with Congregations receive an updated list of accredited preachers annually with contact details (accredited preachers have the option to be included or not included on this list). From the annual reports of accredited preachers, it is apparent that many are being used often especially in regions where there are more vacancies or two or three point charges. Not all accredited preachers are used equally and this may be partly to do with the importance of developing relationships and ministers getting to know accredited preachers better so that they can call upon them more readily to take services in their absence.

15. A new process for a final 'exit' interview for the Accredited Preacher Scheme has been agreed where areas of further development are explored with candidates and assurance of their confessional orthodoxy regarding the subordinate standards of the Church sought. This brings greater uniformity for all who have a recognised preaching ministry within our Church.

### **Panel on Auxiliary Ministers**

16. There are now 11 participants on the first Auxiliary Ministry Course which commenced in January this year. The course runs for a year and a half and includes training, mentoring and reflective practice in the key aspects of the role of the auxiliary minister including preaching, biblical theology, doctrine, pastoral care, Church life and leadership. On successful completion of the course, these trainees will be eligible to apply to auxiliary ministry posts later in 2015. The Union Commission and Presbyteries have responsibility for the oversight of the creation of auxiliary ministry posts at the request of Congregations. The Panel has engaged in discussion with the Union Commission regarding the practical details of creating such posts.

17. When planning ahead to late 2015 ministers and Kirk Sessions of Congregations considering the various options for additional paid or unpaid staff are encouraged to consider the auxiliary ministry. In such planning, it should be noted that the role is flexible in terms of defining the number of hours worked a week (normally part time) and whether it is paid or unpaid. Also, it is emphasised

that auxiliary ministry is a ministry of the Word and regular preaching would therefore be a key part of that role as well as other responsibilities such as pastoral care, discipleship or outreach.

### **Updated Version of the Prepared to Serve Course**

18. An updated version of 'Prepared to Serve' is planned for release in autumn 2014. The previous version of this resource was produced a number of years ago and has been used by more than 2,000 participants across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It is designed to help Church members discover the particular gifts they have been given by the Holy Spirit to serve God in the Church and in the world. The resource also provides a number of Bible studies giving the biblical framework for the use of these gifts in loving service as well as practical guidance on how to use the gifts and develop in them. This updated resource complements the resource being produced for this year's Fit for Purpose theme 'A People of Service and Outreach'. It is suggested that the best way to use the 'Prepared to Serve' resource by Congregations is following on from their use of the Fit for Purpose resource. 'Prepared to Serve' can also be used on its own.

NIGEL McCULLOUGH, Convener

## **UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

1. It has been an encouraging year for the College. At the beginning of September, the Very Rev Dr JS Carson was installed as Principal of UTC and Professor of Ministry. It is gratifying that the decision to appoint a Principal with executive responsibility, first agreed at the 2009 General Assembly, has been implemented at last. The Management Committee wishes to put on record its delight at this appointment and assures Principal Carson of its prayerful support in his leadership of the College. It also expresses its thanks to Prof JP Taylor for his service as Principal during the lengthy intervening period and his assistance to Dr Carson in the settling in period.

2. It has also been a challenging year, due to a number of significant changes in administrative staff. Mrs Sandra McKinney (Registrar/Administrator) and Mrs Linda Cameron (Senior Secretary and Secretary to the Principal) retired at the end of June, while Mr Donald Garvie (Deputy Librarian) resigned in the summer to serve with Mission Africa. Looking ahead, Mrs Norah Scott (Library Assistant) has indicated her desire to retire at the end of the current academic year. Mr Tony Holmes was appointed Registrar/Bursar, Miss Renee McCracken Senior Secretary and Secretary to the Principal, and Miss Joy Conkey full-time temporary Deputy Librarian pending a review of the Library staffing structure. The Management Committee is grateful to all the staff for their willingness to undertake additional duties during these changes.

3. The total student enrolment for the 2013/14 academic year is 248, of whom 39 are ministry students (15 first year students). The presence in the College of a member of the PCI IT support team during the registration and enrolment period was very valuable and much appreciated.

**Curriculum Sub-Committee**

4. As reported last year, the Sub-Committee has been considering issues connected with the delivery of the current curriculum. Following a review of the curriculum and the various degree programmes on offer, it was agreed to ask the Committee for Ministerial Studies and Development to give serious consideration to a 4-year programme of study for all ministry students that includes 3 years of full-time study (incorporating the BD degree programme) and a fourth year which incorporates a part-time assistantship along with continuing study that requires a dissertation. The advantage of this proposed pattern is that all ministry students would pursue the same course of study together and would have the opportunity for a significant learning experience in the preparation of a dissertation. However, it is recognised that the proposal may have financial implications which have yet to be investigated.

5. Discussion took place about issues surrounding the MDiv programme and how, in its current format, it is not fitting the needs of the denomination in its preparation of students for pastoral ministry. In the light of this it was decided that from September 2014 no new students will be admitted to the MDiv degree programme. However, the Sub-Committee affirms its desire to have a suitable Master's level degree programme which conforms to QAA standards and which meets the needs of PCI. The Sub-Committee believes that the MTh degree is an important step in nurturing and recruiting doctoral students, as well as overseas students, while it also encourages continuing education for ministers in the Church. There are significant changes taking place within Master's degree programmes at QUB which impinge on the MTh degree, and some possible module options within the new structures were considered. The Sub-Committee will continue to pursue these developments and consider the tuition fees structure for this degree. It will also bear in mind the implications of these developments for the MMin and DMin degrees.

6. Following last year's QAA visit, a follow-up visit of the QAA team took place in October 2013, leading again to a satisfactory outcome. Such visits are now regular events, with a further one scheduled for October 2014. UTC must continue to be diligent in the implementation of good practice in all areas of its work.

7. During the first semester of the 2013/14 academic year Dr DT Alexander was on sabbatical leave, with Prof JP Taylor on sabbatical leave during the second semester. Prof SN Williams is due to go on sabbatical leave during the first semester of the 2014/15 academic year. All of these require adjustments and flexibility within the curriculum.

8. A well-attended "Church in the Public Square" Conference was held in January in Assembly Buildings. The speakers were the Rev Prof Donald McLeod, Dr Jonathan Chaplin, and John Larkin QC. Thanks were expressed to the College administrative staff for their efficient organisation of the Conference. The Church and Society Committee are planning a CIPS 2 Conference in the autumn on the theme of equality, and consideration is being given to a CIPS 3 Conference in January 2015 on "end of life" issues.

9. A successful Religious Studies Forum was held in January for sixth formers and their teachers, with approximately 600 in attendance. It is planned to expand this forum next year and to give particular support to teachers of RE.

**Finance, Property and Administration Sub-Committee**

10. Stonework restoration began on 20 January following the offer on 25 November of a NIEA grant on Phase 1 of £403,610 and the award of the contract (Phase 1) to TAL Ltd. The completion date for Phase 1 is 21 November 2014, and the total Phase 1 cost is £1,051,650, some £122,850 more than anticipated. This is due largely to substantial structural support required around the 4 front pillars, work which had not initially been thought necessary, and it should also be noted that the original budget costs were based on 2011 estimates. The Architect has been asked to begin the application process for Phase 2 grant aid and to proceed with Phase 2 design work. Following the resolution of the 2013 General Assembly requesting the General Assembly's Trustees "to consider positively the request for a significant grant towards the schemes of repair of stonework at Union Theological College", the Trustees agreed a grant of £450,000.

11. The 2013 General Assembly decision to transfer pension commitment of the Board of Christian Training in respect of retired ministers who served as Assembly Professors to the Retired Ministers' Fund will result in a current saving to UTC of approximately £37,000 per year. This is intended to offset the loss of on-going annual income when shares are sold to fund the Stonework Project.

12. At the beginning of October, library staff discovered water seepage into the basement book store. Steps were taken to remove the effects of the water, to clear the basement for inspection, to identify books that need to be available for regular access and remove them to storage within the College, and to remove other books to off-site storage. Despite investigations, the cause of the flooding remains uncertain. The basement was constructed as a book store in 2008/9 and is a reinforced concrete box on top of which the Common Room is built. It has been dried out and has remained dry despite the heavy rainfall of January and February. A formal insurance claim was lodged, although it is not clear how much, if any, of the repair work will be covered by the insurance policy, as this will depend on the cause of the water ingress. The College is indebted to all staff who responded speedily and efficiently to the situation, and also to Harry Orr of Assembly Buildings and to Desmond Fulton of the Management Committee.

13. Routine maintenance continues to be carried out, e.g. replacement of the front barrier, repairs to the accommodation, painting of the Principal's office ceiling and third floor accommodation. Dry rot was discovered in a small area on the ground floor of 26 College Green and has been attended to.

14. There continue to be issues of concern relating to the IT systems. The support given to the College by the IT Department is very much appreciated, but it is apparent that demands will continue to grow and to outstrip capacity. More resources will be required if both PCI and the College are to function effectively and to be fit for purpose.

15. In consultation with College faculty and administration, significant progress has been made in the construction of a new College website. The process of construction is expected to be completed by June 2014.

16. All College staff are now on PCI contracts.

17. Agreement had been reached with Fitzroy Presbyterian Church on rent for the use of 26 College Green.

HA DUNLOP, Convener

## APPENDIX 1

## SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Robert Hamilton	Union
	Stephen Lowry	Union
	Craig Lynn	Union
	Alan Marsh	Union
	Jeffrey McWatters	Union
ARMAGH	Edwin Frazer	Union
	Craig Jackson	Union
BALLYMENA	Jonathan Boyd	Union
	Matthew Boyd	-
	Ross Kernohan	Union
	Norman Kennedy	-
	David McMillan	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Richard Patton	Union
	Jonathan Newell	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	John Martin	Union
	Susan Moore	Union
EAST BELFAST	Brent van der Linde	Union
	Seth Wright	-
	Alan Dickey	Union
	David Gray	Union
	Ben Johnston	WTS
	David Kelly	Union
	Alistair McCracken	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Mark McMaw	Union
	Alan McQuade	Union
	Ian Cahoon	Union
	Stuart Hawthorne	Union
	Robert Orr	Union
COLERAINE & LIMAVADY	James Warburton	Union
	Alan Burke	Union
	Robert McClure	Union
	John Torrens	-
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Gerard Clinton	Union
	Richard Cronin	Union
	Andrew Gill	Union
	Marty Gray	Union
	Kevin Hargaden	-
	John O'Donnell	Union
IVEAGH	Joanne Smith	Union
	Graham Mullan	Union
	Michael Rutledge	WTS
MONAGHAN	Jonathan Porter	-
NEWRY	Jeffrey Blue	Union
	Stephen Kennedy	Union

TYRONE	David Clarke	Union
	Bryan Kee	Union
	Philip Leonard	Union

### RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the following candidates, their nomination having been sustained by the Board of Christian Training, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Presbytery</b>
Robin Aiken	Railway Street	Dromore
Andre Alves-Areias	Saintfield Road	South Belfast
John Brogan	Drogheda	Dublin & Munster
David Curran	Wexford	Dublin & Munster
Andrew Downey	Knock	East Belfast
Steve Kennedy	Orangefield	East Belfast
James Maguire	Banbridge Road	Dromore
Hanneke Marshall	1 <sup>st</sup> Broughshane	Ballymena
Michael McCormick	Clough	Down
Jonny McKane	Kilfennan	Derry & Donegal
Keith Parke	Gilford	Iveagh
Richard Tregaskis	Hamilton Road	Ards

3. That the General Assembly ask Presbyteries to encourage ministers to engage in leadership training, at a level appropriate to their stage in ministry, and ask the Panel reviewing the Consultation Process to consider how this matter might be best dealt with.

4. That the General Assembly welcome the commencement of training for the first candidates for the Auxiliary Ministry and commend the scheme to the Church and especially to those ministers and Kirk Sessions considering whether this role could enhance the ministry in their Congregation.

5. That the General Assembly commend the updated Prepared to Serve course to the Church and encourages its use by all church members in order to identify or affirm the gifts they have been given by the Holy Spirit to serve God in the Church and in the world.

6. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £25,000.

7. That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £400,000.

**OVERTURES TRANSMITTED****Anent Par 30(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 30(1) of the Code the following words be added at the end of the paragraph:

“In exercising this leadership the Kirk Session shall oversee and work along with other members who have leadership roles in the congregation.”

**Anent Par 30(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 30(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“(3) In the discharge of their duties each elder should be assigned by the Kirk Session pastoral responsibilities and/or other leadership roles in the congregation.”

**Anent Par 30 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 30(3) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

“(4) The Kirk Session, along with the Minister, should seek to ensure that all elders are equipped to fulfil their duties.”

**Anent Par 35 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 35 of the Code the following new paragraph be added and subsequent paragraphs be renumbered accordingly:

“(b) ensure a scheme for pastoral care is in place in the congregation, in line with current General Assembly guidelines.”

**Anent Par 73(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 73(b) of the Code the word “discharged;” be deleted and the words “discharged and that elders are suitably equipped;” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 177(2) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 177(2) of the Code the words “in the matter” be deleted and the words “in line with current General Assembly guidelines in the matter” be substituted in their place.

**Anent Par 180(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 180(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“The name of every ruling elder elect shall be reported to the appointed Presbytery commission, who, in line with General Assembly guidelines, shall confer with the elder elect respecting their acquaintance with divine truth, their personal faith and character, their sense of the responsibilities and duties of the office and their gifting and availability for the exercise of that office.”

**Anent Par 201(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 201(1) of the Code the word “deaconesses” be deleted and the words “deaconesses, auxiliary ministers” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 202(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 202(3) of the Code the word “deaconesses” be deleted and the words “deaconesses, auxiliary ministers” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 202(7) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 202(7) of the Code the word “deaconess” be deleted and the words “deaconess, auxiliary minister” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 72(e) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 72(e) of the Code the word “deaconesses” be deleted and the words “deaconesses, auxiliary ministers” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 285 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 285 of the Code the following new paragraph be added and the subsequent paragraph be renumbered accordingly:

“(2)(f) oversee the selection process, training course and on-going accreditation for the Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Ministry Schemes;”

**Anent Par 217(1)(b)(iii) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 217(1)(b)(iii) of the Code the word “Elocution” be deleted and the words “Public Speaking” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 217(2)(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 217(2)(b) of the Code the word “Elocution” be deleted and the words “Public Speaking” be substituted in its place.

**Anent Par 217(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 217(3) of the Code the word “Elocution” be deleted and the words “Public Speaking” be substituted in its place.

JNI McNEELY