

## FOURTH SESSION

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**7.00pm**

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

### **CSW ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION**

#### *People Matter to God*

Mrs Ruth Sanderson introduced ‘the 7 o’clock News on the Social Witness Channel’ and shared in conversation with Mr Lindsay Conway, OBE, Council Secretary.

She then carried out an ‘as live’ distance interview by recorded video with the Rev Peter Dickinson about the work of the Disability Services Committee and went on to interview the following in person: Mrs Jayne Bellingham, Home Manger, Trinity House, Garvagh and Mrs Fiona Sandford, mother of Claire who has special needs;

Mrs Mamie Brown, resident in Adelaide House and Mrs Norma Picking, Head of Home in Adelaide House took part in a video-recorded conversation.

A further two interviews were conducted by Mrs Sanderson with the Rev Keith Hibbert, a member of the Council and of the Taking Care Committee, and the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, who in his own right is a member of the Council, and of the Disability Services Committee.

Mr Conway and Mrs Judith Gillespie took part in a video-recorded discussion about the recent launch of ‘Taking Care of All’ materials, with specific reference to Domestic Abuse.

The session concluded with a panel discussion involving Mrs Linda Wray (Residential and Supported Services Manager), Ms Joyce McKee (Adult Safeguarding), Mr Hibbert and Mrs Sandford, after which the Moderator expressed thanks and brought the presentation to an end in prayer at 7.52 pm.

The Report of the **LINKAGE COMMISSION** (Reports pp196-227) was submitted by the Rev WJ Henry.

Moved by the Rev WJ Henry, seconded by Mr James Livingstone, and agreed:

1. That the Parish Bounds for the (amalgamated) congregation of Greyabbey be as described in Par 18 of the Linkage Commission report.

2. That Guidelines for Interviews at Vacancies (Appendix A) be adopted.

3. That the updated guidelines for the Prolonged Disability Scheme (Appendix B) be noted.

4. That the congregation of Fortwilliam and Macrory be amalgamated with the congregation of Whitehouse no later than 31st December 2018, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.

5. That the congregation of Boyle be amalgamated with the congregation of Sligo no later than 31st December 2018, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.

6. That the report of the Linkage Commission be received.

The sederunt came to a close at 8.25pm, the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction.

## **FIFTH SESSION**

**Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**9.30am**

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS** (Reports pp228-254) was submitted by the Rev TC Morrison, together with the following Supplementary Report:

### **SPUD YOUTH ASSEMBLY REPORT**

#### **2018 Youth Assembly**

1. In February this year the Youth Assembly gathered over one hundred 15-25 year olds from congregations right across the denomination. This year's theme was 'Re-imagine: Presbyterianism for today's generation'.

2. As part of the event, participants were asked, "What gives you reason to celebrate being part of a PCI congregation?" A common response was being part of a multi-generational family of faith in which relationship and

connection with other generations was valued. Further conversation found that young people desire the input of older, more experienced, influencers as contributors to their faith journey. This needs to be more than an occasional, token gesture. Building genuine relationships within church life is a high priority. The shared example of those who are older in the faith has a crucial part to play.

3. These responses inspired the Youth Assembly Working Group to explore how congregations are already connecting the generations together and creating multi-generational environments of faith. These range from the development of informal spaces, in which relationships can be built in social situations, to more intentional programmes of relational discipleship and mentoring.

4. To highlight and promote this crucial area of congregational life, the Youth Assembly Working Group set about creating a video resource to help share with congregations the need and opportunity to develop connection points and relational opportunities across all ages of their church family. This four minute video is now available for use within congregations and will be launched, shown and made available at the Youth Assembly Fringe Event held in the new downstairs conference space in Assembly Buildings on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June. The event will include stories and discussion around the theme of “Inter-Generational Ministry” and will run from 6.00 – 7.15pm. A light tea will be served. Booking is essential for the event and can be completed online at the PCI website.

5. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness commends this video to congregations and hopes that it will be used throughout the denomination to both inspire and enable the continued development of inter-generational ministry.

### **A change of name**

6. During the past year discussion has taken place within SPUD itself regarding the name ‘SPUD’. A clear consensus has been arrived at for a change of name to ‘The PCI Youth Assembly’. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness is supportive of this name change and an appropriate resolution is appended.

### **Additional Resolution**

- (A) That the General Assembly agree to the change of name from ‘SPUD’ to ‘The PCI Youth Assembly’.

DAVID THOMPSON

Moved by the Very Rev Dr FP Sellar, seconded by the Rev DH Thompson and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly agree to the change of name from 'SPUD' to 'The PCI Youth Assembly'.
2. That the Report of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness be received.

### **Intermission**

#### **RECEPTION OF RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS AND NEW LICENTIATES**

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

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY** (Reports pp255-279), was submitted by the Rev NJ McCullough, together with the following Supplementary Report:

#### **RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE**

As indicated in the reports, Appendix 2 (pages 269-271), 'Recommendations Concerning Licentiates and Ministers without Charge', a recommendation is included here concerning the Rev JD Maxwell as follows:

##### **South Belfast**

Rev JD Maxwell to be retained a Minister without charge but that the Presbytery be informed that, for such a recommendation to be made next year, it will be conditional that Mr Maxwell is reported as playing a meaningful part in the life of the Congregation in which he is a Communicant Member.

The following additions are made to the recommendations concerning Licentiates and Ministers without charge in Appendix 2.

##### **North Belfast**

Rev Samuel Newell to be retained as Minister without charge.

**South Belfast**

Rev Dr PG McDowell to be retained as Minister without charge.

**East Belfast**

Rev Dr MJ Welsh to be retained as Minister without charge.

**Clarification**

In Appendix 3 (pages 272-274), 'Rules to be followed in the reception of ministers and licentiates from other churches', the Assembly is being asked to choose between three different options, outlined in Par 16 of the Appendix:

- EITHER Sub-Par 16 (a) is included
- OR Sub-Pars 16 (b) & (c) are included
- OR Sub-Par 16 (d) is included and subsequently Par 17 not included

The Council for Training in Ministry is recommending the second option, i.e. including Sub-Pars 16 (b) & (c). A revised resolution 3 is appended to this effect.

**Revised Resolution:**

3. That Appendix 3 be approved as Rules to be followed in the reception of ministers and licentiates from other churches, with the inclusion of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) in paragraph 16.

NIGEL McCULLOUGH

Moved by the Rev NJ McCullough, seconded by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson and agreed:

1. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their presbyteries:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Presbytery</b>
Billy Abwa	Second Donegore	Templepatrick
Matthew Horner	Glengormley	North Belfast
Matthew Kelso	Grange	Ballymena
Paul Lutton	Fitzroy	South Belfast

2. That the recommendations concerning those whose retention as Licentiates and Ministers without charge has been sought by presbyteries be adopted.

Moved by the Rev NJ McCullough, seconded by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson:

3. That Appendix 3 be approved as Rules to be followed in the reception of ministers and licentiates from other churches, with the inclusion of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) in paragraph 16.

Moved by the Rev Dr AF Nel, seconded by the Rev CA Meban:

3. That Appendix 3 be approved as Rules to be followed in the reception of ministers and licentiates from other churches, with the inclusion of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) in paragraph 16, and that paragraph 14 be referred back to the Council for further consideration.

The Proposer and Seconder accepted the amendment.

On being put to the House, the substantive motion was declared passed.

Moved by the Rev NJ McCullough, seconded by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson and agreed:

4. That Appendix 4, 'Caring for Manse Families', be sent down to presbyteries for discussion and comment, with report back through the Deputy Clerk by 31st December 2018.

#### CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION

5. (a) That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £125,000.

(b) That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £250,000.

6. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.

The Assembly engaged in worship conducted by the Moderator and others. The Moderator invited the Rev Rico Tice to address the Assembly.

The sederunt came to a close at 1.05pm, the Moderator leading in prayer.

## SIXTH SESSION

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018

2.00pm

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

### LISTENING TO THE GLOBAL CHURCH

#### *Streams in the Desert*

The Rev WS Marrs introduced the presentation with insights from Isaiah that had been shared with him by a Syrian university student.

Miss Pip McCracken then interviewed the Rt Rev Peter Gai Lual, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan, and Chairperson of the National Council of Churches of South Sudan.

Rev Dr SE Hughes introduced the Rev Manojkumar V. Gohil, a minister of the Church of North India, Gujarat Diocese, Raikhad Congregation in Ahmedabad who spoke about the growing church in Gujarat, after which Dr SE Hughes reflected on her recent visit to India.

Following a video clip, the Rev WS Marrs interviewed Dr Terrence Ascot, Founder and CEO of SAT 7, a Christian Satellite Broadcasting ministry engaged in the Middle East and North Africa.

Subsequent to the first two interviews there was a minute of prayerful reflection. Following the final interview, Rev Dr SE Hughes provided a brief wrap-up and time of open prayer after which the Moderator brought the presentation to an end with Scripture at 2.59pm.

### Intermission

**Section 2** of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp68-78) along with resolutions 16-19 (Reports p144) was submitted by the Rev Trevor Gribben, together with the following Supplementary Report:

### MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### Item of business overlooked

1. It very recently came to light that a task remitted by the 2017 General Assembly to the Moderator's Advisory Committee had been overlooked. This related to the Memorial of the Rev Dr Ivan Neish in connection with

voting membership of a congregation (see 2017 General Assembly Reports page 358) and the resolution of the Assembly on page 56 of the 2017 Minutes, namely:

*That the Memorial be received and its prayer be not granted, but that the Moderator's Advisory Committee appoint a Task Group to consider the qualifications of voting members and report to the 2018 Assembly.*

2. On discovering this recently, the Clerk of Assembly contacted Dr Neish to apologise and brought the matter to the Moderator's Advisory Committee for discussion. To take the matter forward, the Moderator's Advisory Committee appointed a Task Group, made up of members of the Judicial Commission, Linkage Commission and Finance Panel, as follows:

Moderator, Clerk (Convener), Deputy Clerk, General Assembly Solicitor, Rev Dr Derek McKelvey, Mrs Dianne Leckey, Mr James Livingstone, Mr Kenneth Belshaw, Mrs Elizabeth Moffett and Rev David Johnston.

3. The Task Group has been asked to meet with Dr Neish and hear his concerns and suggestions; to consider all relevant direct and related issues; and to report to the General Council with options and a recommendation. The General Council, having considered the matter, will report to the 2019 General Assembly, including tabling any legislative changes that may be necessary.

### **Handling of business in the Private Session**

4. The Clerk of Assembly reported to the Moderator's Advisory Committee on the contents of a 'challenging conversation' he had recently had with a Minister. The issue of concern relates to someone who has had a matter considered by the Judicial Commission (with full Assembly powers) and decided upon. Even though that decision is final and binding, the Minister has however indicated that he intends to speak to that matter during the Private Session, strongly asserting his intention to address the Assembly on various aspects of the matter, from his perspective. When advised that it was not in order to speak about any matter that had already been dealt with by the Judicial Commission and that he should not attempt to do so, the Minister stated quite assertively that he intended to



do so. The Clerk informed the Minister that he would be referring this stated intention to defy the law of the Church to an appropriate body for consideration before the Assembly.

5. Having considered the particular circumstances, the Moderator's Advisory Committee resolved that the General Assembly Business Committee be requested to licence the following two resolutions for consideration by the 2018 General Assembly, at the end of the initial report of the Business Committee on Tuesday morning:

5.(a) That for the 2018 General Assembly, any individual who has had a matter decided by the Judicial Commission on behalf of the Assembly may not address the Assembly on that or any related matter; and that where an individual is asked to give an undertaking to abide by this decision of the Assembly, and refuses to do so, that individual will either not be issued with a Voting Card or have their Voting Card withdrawn.

5.(b) That the Judicial Commission considers the matter for subsequent General Assemblies and report, with appropriate overture(s) if necessary, to the 2019 General Assembly.

### **Visit of Pope Francis**

6. Invitations have not yet been issued to other Churches regarding the visit of Pope Francis, as the official programme is only being announced later in June. However, an indication has been given that the Moderator will most likely be invited to be present at a State reception for Pope Francis and would briefly meet with him on that occasion. The Moderator will also most likely be invited to be present as a distinguished guest at the 'Festival of Families' being held on the Saturday evening in Croke Park. When a formal invitation is received the General Council will be called to agree a response (see 2018 Reports, page 72, paragraph 18).

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

Moved by the Rev DJ Bruce, seconded by the Rev AJ Thompson, and agreed:

18. That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Alexander Shaw Thompson be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation of First Dromara.

Moved by the Rev Dr CD McClure, seconded by the Rev FMA Forbes, and agreed:

19. That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Robert James McCullough be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregations of Woodburn and Loughmorne

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

20. That the General Assembly agree that Licentiates should be permitted to be called to a part-time ministry and instruct the Linkage Commission to change its guidelines accordingly.

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

**The Memorial of the Presbytery of Tyrone** (Reports p158) was submitted by the Rev JB Mullan.

Moved by the Rev JB Mullan, seconded by the Rev Dr JA Curry, and agreed:

1. That the prayer of the memorial be granted and that the Rev Tom Conway, on his resignation from his charge, shall continue as a member of the Presbytery of Tyrone under Code Par 61(j) of the Code, so long as he remains in post as Clerk of the Presbytery of Tyrone.

**The Memorial of the Presbytery of Templepatrick** (Reports pp159-160) was submitted by the Rev PR Dickinson.

Moved by the Rev PE Dickinson, seconded by the Rev DJ Paul, and agreed:

1. That the prayer of the memorial be granted and that the names of deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and missionaries under its care who, since its last report, have died, retired, resigned, or have been commissioned and/or appointed by Presbytery, with respective dates, be included, henceforth, in the annual report of Presbytery; and that the Clerk of the Assembly present overture(s) to the 2019 General Assembly to amend Par 260 of The Code, accordingly and to mirror additionally the requirements of Par 260(d).

**Section 3** of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp79-101) along with resolutions 20-28 (Reports pp144-145) was submitted by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson, along with the following Supplementary Report.

**Licensed Amendment to Resolution 28 (page 145)**

That Section 3 of the Report of the General Council be received, with the exception of Appendix 2 of the Doctrine Committee Report, pages 84-89.

CHERYL MEBAN

Moved by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson, seconded by the Rev TD Gribben, and agreed:

22. That appropriate training be offered to Kirk Sessions on the theology and practice of the Church's understanding of 'a credible profession of faith' and the pastoral guidelines on homosexuality.

23. That in light of the rapid change in society, both north and south of the border, the following statement be issued by the Press Officer on behalf of the General Council at appropriate times relating to civic events in either jurisdiction:

(a) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a witness to Christ, affirms the God-given dignity of all people, from all faiths and none, on account of their bearing God's image. Furthermore, we affirm our solidarity with all our neighbours in our common life together. However, as a Church committed to the Lordship of Christ, we decline to participate in interfaith worship or to acknowledge the ultimate claim of any state to control religious worship.

(b) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland recognises that her leaders and members will consider participation in sequential multi-faith civic events where there may be opportunities to read the Bible, speak about God's grace in Christ or pray for people in need. However, out of concern for God's glory and the good of our neighbour, we decline to participate in non-trinitarian interfaith worship.

24. That the Council for Public Affairs be encouraged to develop a formal relationship with Evangelical Alliance NI, possibly in a similar manner to the formal relationship that once existed between the former Board of Mission in Ireland and Evangelical Alliance (NI).

25. That the Church Relations Committee be asked to keep the issue of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's possible membership of World Reformed Fellowship on its agenda.

26. That during the ensuing year the Church Relations Committee consider further the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's continued membership of the Council of European Churches and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, having received reports from PCI delegates to both General Assemblies, and report with recommendations to the 2019 General Assembly.

27. That the Presbyterian Church in Ireland [**one option to be selected**]:

(a) should no longer accept invitations to the Moderator of the General Assembly, or any other formal delegation, to attend the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church and no longer issue invitations to those two denominations to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

(b) should resume accepting invitations for the Moderator of the General Assembly to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and should continue to accept such invitations from the United Reformed Church.

The two options given for Resolution 27 were put to the House.

The majority of votes were in favour of Option (a)

On being put to the House, the substantive motion was declared passed.

**DISSENT**

Dissent to the decision on Resolution 27 was recorded by the following:

ALAN BOAL	WILLIAM HARKNESS	SUSAN MOORE
STEPHEN BOYLE	BRIAN HENDERSON	TREVOR MORROW
JOHN BRACKENRIDGE	PHILIP HENDERSON	ANNES NEL
CHRISTINA U BRADLEY	RICHARD HOUSTON	KEN NEWELL
DAVID BRUCE	LIZ HUGHES	WILFRED J ORR
DENIS CAMPBELL	JOHN HUNTER	ROY PATTON
MABEL CAMPBELL	MARY HUNTER	ROGER PURCE
PURVIS CAMPBELL	DAVID BRIAN KNOX	ALASTAIR J RANKIN
S JIM CAMPBELL	DARIO LEAL	J RONALD SAVAGE
BRIAN COMPSTON	ROBERT A LIDDLE	D CYRIL SCOTT
LINDSAY CONWAY	LINDA LITTLE	JOHN SEAWRIGHT
MONICA CRAWFORD	DENNISON MAHOOD	ALAN SLEITH
MURIEL CROMIE	E JEAN MANN	W SLOAN
KENNETH CROWE	WILLIAM SAMUEL	STEVEN SMYRL
TONY DAVIDSON	MARRS	JOHN STANBRIDGE
MOLLY DEATHERAGE	PATRICIA McBRIDE	D STANFIELD
AARON DITTY	S McCAHON	MAIRISINE STANFIELD
JOHN DUNLOP	ROSEMARY McCALL	ANGUS STEWART
ANNIE ERWIN	COLIN D McCLURE	JAMES PATTON
J FRAZER	BARRY McCROSKERY	TAYLOR
HELEN FREEBURN	COLIN McDOWELL	ANNE TOLLAND
JUNE PAT GAMBLE	GARETH McFADDEN	KATHRYN VINER
MORRIS GAULT	DEREK J McKELVEY	DONALD J WATTS
JANICE GLENN	JEFF McWATTERS	W DEREK WEIR
LYNDA GOULD	CHERYL MEBAN	FRANK WHALE
CECIL W L GRAHAM	COLIN MEGAW	JT WILLIAMSON
TR GRAHAM	KATHERINE P MEYER	JANET WILSON
MARK GRAY	BEVERLEY MOORE	

Moved by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson, seconded by the Rev TD Gribben, and agreed:

28. That where there are areas in which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Church of Scotland could collaborate together for the mutual benefit of both (through their respective Councils, Committees and Departments), then such collaboration should continue or could be considered.

29. That future natural areas of collaboration with the United Reformed Church (through respective Councils, Committees and Departments), which would be for the mutual benefit of both denominations, could be considered.

**Business lapsed on Standing Orders (see page       )**

The sederunt came to a close at 6.10pm, the Moderator leading in prayer.

On Wednesday evening, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, at 7.45pm, an evening Celebration with the theme ‘Building Relationships’ was led by the Moderator.

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**LAPSED BUSINESS**

**ITEM 14: GENERAL COUNCIL SECTION 3 Resolution 28** (Reports p145) and the associated Licenced Amendment (Daily Minutes p21) lapsed and will be taken as item 23a, that is as the first item in Public Session on Friday morning. It is timed for 10.00am *but may be taken earlier*. The Assembly Hall, including the Gallery, will be opened to non-voting members and to the public at the conclusion of the Private Session, but not before.