

SIXTH SESSION

Thursday, 8th June 2016

9.30am

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

Miss Helen Johnston (Mission Support Officer for Member Care) presented to the Assembly and the Moderator Council for Global Mission personnel and candidates for overseas service. The Moderator led in prayer.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION** (Reports pp290-314) was submitted by the Rev Dr SE Hughes.

Moved by the Rev Dr SE Hughes, seconded by the Rev WS Marrs, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Global Mission to continue to develop its church-planting strategy, especially in the Western European context, wherever possible working in partnership with like-minded churches and in ongoing collaboration with the Council for Mission in Ireland.
2. That the General Assembly, in the spirit of Hebrews 13:3, urge all ministers and congregations to stand with and learn from persecuted churches through, listening, biblical reflection, prayer, advocacy, visits, finance and special events.
3. That the General Assembly, recognising the divisive and devastating nature of conflict, including the resulting displacement of people, encourage the Council for Global Mission to facilitate prayerful support of PCI's partners dealing with the consequences and collaborate with other Councils to ensure PCI's meaningful engagement with the key issues locally and globally.
4. That the General Assembly receive the Biblical Basis for the Stewardship of Creation Report and commend it to the consideration of the wider church.
5. That the General Assembly give thanks for the remarkable and sustained generosity of the congregations and members of the PCI in supporting both the annual World Development Appeal, and the more short-term but acute needs reflected in each Special Appeal, and commend the World Development Appeal 2017 to all congregations.

6. That the General Assembly acknowledge the dedicated endeavours of PCI's global mission personnel and agree that the official term to be used when referring to such personnel is 'Global Mission Worker', authorising its use until the appropriate changes to the Code are implemented.
7. That the Report of the Council for Global Mission be received.

Intermission

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND** (Reports pp315-340) was submitted by the Rev BD Colvin.

Following a written request signed by ten members of the Assembly, submitted at least one day in advance, the Consolidated Resolution (Reports, page 340, Resolution 3) was separated into three individual resolutions.

Moved by the Rev BD Colvin, seconded by the Rev DJ Bruce, and agreed:

1. That the Home Mission Review Report, with its recommendations be received and sent down to Presbyteries with Home/Urban Mission congregations within their bounds, namely Armagh, Ballymena, East Belfast, South Belfast, North Belfast, Derry and Donegal, Dublin and Munster, Dromore, Monaghan and Omagh for specific comment, and to all other Presbyteries for information and comment if desired, by 31st December 2017, to Very Rev Dr Roy Patton (Review Panel Convener), c/o The Mission Department, Assembly Buildings.
2. That the General Assembly affirm the work of the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee in the development of a pilot scheme for rural chaplaincy.

The Rev Prof. Patton Taylor presented to the Assembly and the Moderator Forces Chaplains present in the House.

Moved by the Rev BD Colvin, seconded by the Rev DJ Bruce, and agreed:

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

Moved by the Rev BD Colvin, seconded by the Rev DJ Bruce:

4. That the General Assembly encourage the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee in its work to develop chaplaincy in the rapidly expanding campus of the Ulster University in Belfast, and in its efforts to develop a chaplaincy presence in the major third level campuses in Dublin.

Moved as an amendment by the Rev EP Gamble, seconded by the Rev WJ Henry:

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

The Proposer and Seconded accepted the amendment.

On being put to the House, the motion in its amended form was passed.

Moved by the Rev BD Colvin, seconded by the Rev DJ Bruce, and agreed:

5. That the General Assembly affirm the work of the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee in the support of Irish Mission Workers and Deaconesses, and their deployment in congregations and mission projects in Ireland.
6. That the Report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be received.

The Assembly engaged in worship conducted by the Moderator and others. The Moderator invited the Rev Canon Vaughan Roberts to address the Assembly.

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

SEVENTH SESSION

Thursday, 9th June 2017

2.00pm

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

CMI ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION

Chaplaincy as Mission

The Rev Brian Colvin, Acting Convener, introduced the presentation, which was in six parts.

- Chaplaincy in Universities and Colleges – Dr Maureen Bennet introduced this part and interviewed Greg, a student at Queen’s University, Belfast. The Rev Cheryl Meban, Chaplain at Ulster University, interviewed Prof. Robin Clarke, recently retired as a member of staff at Ulster University.
- Chaplaincy in Healthcare – the Very Rev Dr Donald Patton interviewed Mrs Joanne Dunlop, a Deaconess.
- Chaplaincy in Prisons – the Rev Rodney Cameron interviewed a man who had served a sentence in HM Prison, Maghaberry, and the Rev Graham Stockdale spoke about the use of the Alpha Course in Prison Chaplaincy.
- Chaplaincy in the Forces – the Rev Prof. Patton Taylor interviewed the Rev Norman McDowell and showed a video featuring the Rev Ivan Linton.
- Chaplaincy in sports – a video featuring the Rev Robert McMullan was shown.
- Chaplaincy in the countryside – the Rev Kenny Hanna spoke on this topic and showed a video clip.

The Rev David Bruce, offered concluding remarks.

The Moderator closed the presentation by leading in prayer at 3.02pm.

Intermission

Section 4 of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp72-119) along with resolutions 19-28 (Reports p181) was submitted by the Rev TD Gribben, along with the following Supplementary Reports:

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS TASK GROUP

Since the report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group was finalised, the formal notice has arrived from the Conference of European Churches regarding its 15th General Assembly, which will be held from 31st May – 6th June 2018 in Novi Sad, Serbia. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland will be entitled to send one delegate, with the formal registration process anticipated during the next few months. Therefore, having consulted, the name of the Rev John Brackenridge (Convener of the General Assembly's Church Relations Committee) is proposed for appointment as PCI's delegate. An appropriate resolution is appended.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

Additional Resolution:

- 24a. That the Rev John Brackenridge be appointed to represent the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at the 15th General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, from 31st May – 6th June 2018 in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Moved by the Rev TD Gribben, seconded by the Very Rev Prof Stafford Carson, and agreed:

22. That the recommendations regarding the categories of inter-church relationship used by PCI (see Par 10 of the Report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group) be adopted.
23. That the framework and principles contained in the report drafted by the Council for Global Mission (see Appendix 2 of the Report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group) be adopted.

24. That the recommendations regarding the inter-church bodies to which PCI should belong (see Par 17 of the Report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group) be adopted.

Moved by the Rev TD Gribben, seconded by the Very Rev Prof JS Carson:

25. That the recommendations regarding the Church of Scotland (see Par 18 of the Report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group), with the exception of recommendation (b), be adopted.

Moved as an amendment by the Very Rev Dr TWJ Morrow, seconded by the Rev Jonathan Boyd:

25. That the recommendations regarding the Church of Scotland (see Par 18 of the Report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group), be adopted.

A card vote was taken, 139 votes were cast for and 221 votes were cast against. The amendment was declared lost.

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

The following signified dissent to the above decision
JOAN SCOTT

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

26. That the recommendations regarding the Free Church of Scotland (see Par 19 of the Report of the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group) be adopted.

Moved by the Rev TD Gribben, seconded by the Very Rev Prof JS Carson:

27. That the delegates to the United Reformed Church 2018 and the Presbyterian Church of Wales 2018 be recommended by the General Council to the 2018 General Assembly; and that the General Council be permitted to appoint delegates to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland 2018 and the Methodist Conference 2018, along with other delegates as required.

Moved as an amendment by the Rev JA Beattie, seconded by the Rev MJR Neilly:

27. That the delegates to the Presbyterian Church of Wales 2018 be recommended by the General Council to the 2018 General Assembly; and that the General Council be permitted to appoint delegates to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland 2018 and the Methodist Conference 2018, along with other delegates as required.

With the leave of the House, the amendment was withdrawn.

On being put to the House, the original resolution was declared passed.

28. That the Rev John Brackenridge be appointed to represent the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at the 15th General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, from 31st May – 6th June 2018 in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Moved by the Rev TD Gribben, seconded by the Very Rev Prof Stafford Carson, and agreed:

[The following resolution was submitted in altered form.]

29. That a Theological Engagement Task Group be appointed to approach the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland for ecumenical discussions on the contemporary understanding of the grace of God in Christ; and that the membership of the group be as follows:
Principal JS Carson (Acting Convener), Rev Dr Martyn Cowan, Prof John Gillespie, Rev John Faris, Ms Zoe Hollinger, Rev Dr Michael McClenahan, Dr Patrick Mitchel, Very Rev Dr TWJ Morrow, Rev John Seawright, Rev Joanne Smith.
30. That the General Assembly agree that the 2007 guidelines for multi-faith events continue to be followed, but that further substantial reflection on the theological basis for involvement in multi-faith events be carried out by the Doctrine Committee, through the appointment of a dedicated Task Group of the Committee, with the group including a representative from each of the Councils for Public Affairs and Global Mission.
31. That Section 4 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Business lapsed on Standing Orders (see page)

The sederunt came to a close at 5.57pm, the Moderator leading members in saying 'The Grace'.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS LICENSED**ITEM 24: THE TRUSTESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND (Friday morning)****ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

Rule 7(1) of the General Investment Fund provides that;

“The Trustees may transfer to the Fund by way of appropriation or otherwise any property immediately prior to the commencement date vested in the Trustees upon the various trusts upon which the same may be held except the property so held by them in trust for or for the purposes of the Commutation Fund, the Fire Insurance Fund, the Belfast Presbyterian College and the Magee Theological College.”

At present the Trustees therefore maintain separate Investment Portfolios for the General Investment Fund, The Commutation Fund and the Magee Fund with Newton Investment Management Limited.

It is unclear whether Rule 7 restricts the aforementioned Funds from investing in the General Investment Fund or whether it was only the original capital of those funds that cannot be invested. To clarify the position and to simplify the administration of the Funds the Trustees wish to remove Rule 7(1). This would permit the Commutation Fund, Fire Insurance and Magee Fund to invest in the General Investment Fund rather than having separate investment portfolios. These Funds would then have separately identifiable shares in the General Investment Fund. The Rules of the General Investment Fund provides that any changes to the Rules must be approved by resolution of the General Assembly.

ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION:

- 1(a) That Rule 7(1) of the General Investment Fund be removed and that Rules 7(2), 7(3), 7(4), 7(5) and 7(6) be re-numbered accordingly.

DOUGLAS CROWE