

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS



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ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Notes:**
- (i) Business commences at 9.45 a.m. on Tuesday and at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday.
 - (ii) An “Introduction to Assembly Business” will be given in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday at 9.15 a.m.
 - (iii) Communion will be held on Tuesday at 11.45 a.m. and Worship on Wednesday and Thursday at 12.15 p.m. The break for lunch will be at 1p.m. each day.
 - (iv) Figures in brackets refer to page numbers in the Annual Reports.

Tuesday

Business

United Appeal

Christian Training

Presbyterian Women

Union Commission

Mission in Ireland

Trustees

Trusts

Wednesday

Mission Overseas

Social Witness

General

Thursday

Education

SPUD

Youth and Children

Finance and Personnel

Judicial Commission

NOTES

MONDAY, MAY 28

Assembly Buildings

7.00 p.m. –

Service of Worship
Constitution of Assembly
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, MAY 29

9.45 a.m. –

1. BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (1-6).
Arrangements Committee.
2. Reports of Presbyteries (7-13).
3. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.
Church of Scotland: Rt Rev Albert Bogle, Rev Iain Cunningham and Mrs Ann Mitchell
United Reformed Church: Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe and Rev Martin Smith
Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev. Robert Owen Roberts
Church of Ireland: Rt Rev Patrick Rooke and Rev Canon David Crooks
The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev Paul Kingston and Miss Rosemary Rainey
Irish Council of Churches: Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell
Presbyterian Church USA: Rev Doug Baker
The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan: Rev Maqsood Kamil
The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Synod of Livingstonia: Rev Levi Nyondo, General Secretary
The Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia: Rev. Alvis Sauka and Rev Ungars Gulbis
The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon: Rev Mikhael Sbait
The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands: Rev Norbert Stephens, General Secretary

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

4. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (252-257).
- (11.30) Intermission.
- 11.45 a.m. Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
 Memorial Roll.**
- 2.00 p.m. –**
5. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING: Report and Resolutions (185-196).
Training and Resources; Ministerial Studies and Development;
UTC Management.
6. Overture anent Par 209 of the Code (197).
7. PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN: Report and Resolution (149-153).
8. UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (88-107).
9. Overtures anent Pars 128(1); 193(1)(c); 195(11) (d); Appendix 5A; Appendix 5D of the Code (107-108).
- (4.00) Intermission.
- (4.15) 10. BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (130-147).
Strategy for Mission; Research and Resources; Church Architecture.
11. Overtures anent Pars 204; 210(1); 212(1) of the Code (147-148).
- (5.30) 12. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (259-263).
13. APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEES (264).
14. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (258).

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

Lapsed Business (if any).

(6.00) Close of Business.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

9.30 a.m. –

15. BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS: Report and Resolutions (109-129).

Outreach Ministries; Leadership Development; World Development; Mission Involvement.

16. BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (154-171).

Specialist Ministries; Older People Services; Family Services; Adult Services.

(11.00) Intermission.

(11.15) 17. GENERAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (14-73).

Memorial Record; Priorities; Doctrine; Moderator's Advisory; Church Relations; Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees; Church and Society; Global Concerns; Planned Giving; Fixed Terms.

12.15 p.m. – Worship.

2.00 p.m. –

18. GENERAL BOARD (cont'd): Report and Resolutions (14-73).

(3.45) Intermission.

(4.00) 19. GENERAL BOARD (cont'd): Report and Resolutions (14-73).

20. Overtures anet Pars 76(e); 235; 313(1); 318(B)(2); 320(2); 325(2) of the Code (73-74).

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

Lapsed Business (if any).

(6.00) Close of Business.

7.45 p.m. – Evening Rally.

THURSDAY, MAY 31

9.30 a.m. –

21. BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and Resolutions (198-206).

22. SPUD YOUTH ASSEMBLY: Report and Resolutions (265-270).

(10.45) Intermission.

(11.00) 23. BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Report and Resolutions (172-184).
Ministry Opportunities; Research and Education; Ministry Resources; Ministry Events.

Lapsed Business (if any).

12.15 p.m. – Worship

2.00 p.m. –

24. BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL: Report and Resolutions (207-251).
Pensions and Assessments; Personnel; Property and Management; Finance, Legal and IT.

24. Overture anent Par 315 of the Code (251).

(3.15) Intermission.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

In Private

- (3.30) 25. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolution (75-85).
26. SPECIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolution (86-87).

In Public

Lapsed Business.

BUSINESS BOARD: Final Report.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

BUSINESS BOARD

A Guide to Assembly Procedure

1. **Members of Assembly** consist of all ministers in active duty or retired and some elders, ex officio, together with a representative elder from each established congregation plus other elders commissioned by Presbyteries to correspond with the number of ministers serving in special appointments. Deaconesses, representatives of the Women's and Youth Movements and some others have now been invited to "sit and deliberate" as associates – i.e., to take part with members freely in debate but without voting. The Assembly quorum is fifty members.

2. While members should bear in mind any opinions or concerns of their Congregations, Kirk Sessions or Presbyteries, neither ministers nor elders attend as "delegates", obliged to vote as instructed by any of these. The Assembly should be a gathering of fully responsible, free Christian men and women, always open to spiritual guidance and information on a Church-wide basis, not a device for counting up decisions already made elsewhere.

3. **The Moderator** is chairman of the Assembly, in charge of proceedings, but he should not take sides in debates. Former Moderators may deputise from time to time at his request, should he wish to take part in debate or to withdraw from the House. When the Moderator rises to speak at any point all other members must yield to the Chair. Members should stand when the Moderator enters or leaves at the beginning or end of proceedings. Members may enter or leave at any time during proceedings, but should do so with as little disturbance as possible. It is a courtesy in so doing to give a slight bow to the Chair.

4. The recommended form of address to the House is simply "Moderator" (not "Mr." Moderator, etc). Speakers should face towards the House and the microphones, not towards the Moderator.

5. **Committees:** Work for which the Assembly is responsible is generally entrusted to various permanent or temporary ("ad hoc") Committees. These must each present a report to the

Assembly. Working Committees concerned with related matters are grouped under a supervising Board. A Commission of Assembly is a Committee entrusted with the executive powers of the Assembly, within the terms of its appointment. Members of Committees, etc., are appointed by the Assembly on the nomination of various bodies and have a Convener in charge.

6. **Reports.** While the Assembly is obliged to “receive” the report of each Committee, etc., it does not “adopt” or accept responsibility for the contents of any report. Reports carry only the authority of the Committee concerned and not of the Assembly. If found too unsatisfactory the report or a section of it, may be received and referred back. This is done by an amendment to resolution 1. Any matter to which the Assembly is to be committed must be stated in a specific resolution. Resolutions should be kept to conclusions, rather than include arguments in support such as are appropriate to speeches. Similarly, speeches in the Assembly carry the authority only of the speaker.

7. Reports, together with any appended resolutions, are first of all “presented”, usually by a Board or Committee Convener. There is then an opportunity for questions to be asked. These should quite strictly be asked only for further information or explanation, whether of something in the report or not in the report but for which the Board, etc., carries responsibility; they should not be rhetorical or debating “questions”, to score a point.

8. **Questions**, which should be written out and placed in the box provided in good time, will normally be limited to two per person and ten minutes in all, unless the Moderator judge that a particular subject merits an extension of these limits.

9. After Questions, the presenter of the report formally proposes the appended resolutions in block and another person seconds, with a speech taking up any other aspects requiring treatment. Where it is considered helpful the seconder may speak before questions to clarify issues which may arise during questions.

10. **The Resolutions** are then taken in succession. The first of these is always “that the report be received”. This is the point where members may discuss (not ask questions about) any

matters in the report or for which the Board, etc., should bear responsibility, but which do not arise under any subsequent resolution.

11. Unless otherwise arranged, speeches are limited as follows:-

Presenting a group of reports and resolutions	10 minutes
Seconding a group of reports and resolutions	7 minutes
All other speeches	5 minutes

If lapsed business accumulates, the normal abbreviated timings are as follows:-

Proposing a group of Reports	10 minutes reduced to 7
Seconding a group of Reports	7 minutes reduced to 5
Other speeches	5 minutes reduced to 3

A flickering light is given 1 minute before the end, a steady light for 30 seconds and a buzz when the time is up. Before commencing, speakers should announce their name and congregation or for Women's and Youth representatives, their name and Presbytery. Apart from the proposer (or alternatively the seconder) having the right to speak again in closing the debate, no one may speak twice in debating any one resolution or amendment, except to clarify some misunderstanding.

12. Resolutions are called by number. Those wishing to speak should at once come forward, or otherwise indicate their desire to speak.

13. **Amendments** may be moved without prior notice by any member so as to change the terms of a resolution within its general scope but not so as to introduce another subject. Before debating proceeds the amendment should be given in writing to the Clerk's desk. Any amendments previously received and licensed by the Business Board, however, have precedence. At least one day's notice must be given of an amendment which would substantially affect the scope of a motion or overture. A plea for the outright rejection of a resolution is not an amendment.

14. An amendment, if seconded, must be dealt with before further debate on the original resolution or consideration of

any further amendment. If passed, the amendment is then put as a substantive motion, when one more amendment may be considered. If the first two amendments are rejected, one more amendment may be considered before reverting to the original resolution.

15. **Additional resolutions**, concerning some matters not covered by an existing resolution, may be submitted by any member or associate as notice of motion for license. Unless there are exceptional circumstances these should be received by the Clerk at least one week before the Assembly. Resolutions rescinding or reversing a previous decision of the Assembly require notice of motion to be first given and accepted at the preceding annual meeting. Those invited to sit and deliberate may “present” resolutions or amendments in the usual way, but these must be formally proposed and seconded by a member of Assembly before being debated.

16. In the “**Alternative**” format each Board is given 35 minutes for a “Presentation”, including not only the proposing and seconding of the Report but the introduction of guests, the showing of videos, etc as may be desired. Outside speakers require the permission of the Business Board. Assembly questions for clarification then follow, and finally the resolutions. The speeches of the proposer and seconder, and any comments from Committee Conveners, should all be included in the allotted period of time, and these officebearers not speak again (except on a point of clarification or to close the debate on a resolution) otherwise the report is liable to overrun and cause business to lapse. No speech should be longer than ten minutes, unless by specific permission of the Business Board.

17. **Voting** may be by voice, when the Moderator calls for those in favour to say “Aye” and those against to say “No”, or by a standing vote to be counted by tellers; or by ballot, asked for by not fewer than twenty-five members or, at the discretion of the Moderator, by the showing of voting tickets, to be counted by tellers. Proxy voting for an absent member is not allowed. A member who has spoken or voted against any decision may intimate his personal dissent or protest immediately after the

decision has been pronounced, but does not thereby free himself from obligation loyally to implement the decision taken.

18. An “**Overture**” is a proposal for a change in the “Code”, or law of the Church’s Constitution and Government. Changes in rules, of which notice has been given in the printed Reports, may be adopted forthwith if approved by a two-thirds majority, or without such notice if approved *nem.con.* If approved by a lesser majority it is “placed on the books”, to be decided at the following Assembly. This applies also to rules governing the Central Ministry Fund and other Ministry Funds. In the Basic Code, where immediate operation is desirable, the change may be adopted temporarily during the intervening year as an “interim act”. If an overture contemplates a constitutional change it must also be sent down to Presbyteries to be voted on during the intervening year.

19. A “**Memorial**” is a petition to the Assembly, usually from some person or body who is not a member of Assembly, such as a subordinate court of the Church, a Church member or group of members, or persons unconnected with the Church. Procedures and forms are laid down by which the circumstances of the Memorial are outlined and a definite request or “prayer” is stated. A Memorial is also the procedure by which someone, whether member of the Assembly or not, asks for exemption from some Church rule on the plea of special circumstances.

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BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

Summary

1. The Business Board met on three occasions during the year. It reviewed the changes made at the last Assembly, particularly to Opening Night and the Communion Service. It agreed to invite representatives to visit from the Presbyterian Church in Canada and appointed delegates to other Churches. It discussed whether politicians should be invited to the Opening Night and continued to make arrangements for the General Assembly to meet in Londonderry in 2013. Delegates who attended the Welsh Assembly and Methodist Conference also bring reports, as does the Arrangements Committee.

Opening Night

2. The Board reviewed the new arrangements for Opening Night. Overall the response was fairly positive, but as with any new arrangement there were some details needing further thought. The overall length, and the balance between the contribution of the out-going and incoming Moderators will be carefully considered.

Communion Service

3. The change to reading the Memorial Roll at the Tuesday Communion Service provided the opportunity to invite the widows and families of those who were being remembered to coffee before worship and this was greatly appreciated by those who attended.

Invitations to other Churches

4. Over recent years individuals have had contact with the Presbyterian Church in Canada for a number of reasons, but no official invitations have been exchanged to the respective General Assemblies. As the two Assemblies do not both meet at the same time in 2012 it was agreed this would be an opportune year to issue an invitation. The contact was enthusiastically received by the Canadian Church who would like to explore possibilities, but it has not proved feasible for anyone to visit Belfast this year. The Canadian Church, however, did invite the Clerk of the General Assembly to attend their Assembly at Oshawa in June and follow up discussions with the Principal Clerk of the Canadian Assembly. With the approval of the General Board this invitation has been accepted.

5. Delegates were appointed to other Church meetings as follows:
- Presbyterian Church of Wales 2012 : Rt Rev Dr Roy Patton
 - General Synod of the Church of Ireland 2012 : Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton and Mrs Cherry Poynton
 - Methodist Conference 2012 : Very Rev Dr John Dunlop and Miss Kate Doherty

Invitations to Opening Night

6. The Board considered whether political representatives should be invited to the Opening Night of the General Assembly. While wishing to encourage mutually supportive relationships between the Church and political representatives, the Board did not believe this was the best way to achieve that purpose.

General Assembly, 2013

7. The General Assembly 2011 accepted an invitation from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal to meet in Londonderry during its year as City of Culture, 2013. Detailed arrangements are being discussed with a very helpful and enthusiastic Working Group of the Presbytery. A further report will be included in the Supplementary Reports.

Thanks

8. The Board is very aware of the enormous amount of work which is carried out in the General Secretary's Office in preparing, editing and proofing reports for the General Assembly. This year the pressure was accentuated by the unfortunate closure of the usual printer. Much of this responsibility rests with the Clerk's Secretary, Mrs Joyce Anderson, assisted this year by Mr Ed Connolly and the Board expresses its thanks.

Business Board

10. The Business Board is appointed in accordance with the provisions of Par 275 of the Code to take office on the 15 March preceding the Assembly. The Board for the year 2012-2013, together with the associated Arrangements Committee is as follows:-

The Clerk, Convener

- (a) The Moderator, Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly, Moderator-Designate, former Clerks, preceding three Moderators, Conveners and Secretaries of Commissions and Boards.
- (b) Rev WT Cordner; Mrs Jean Mann – Rev CUR Bradley; WK Belshaw – Rev Desmond Knowles; John Sutters – Rev GF McKeown; George Crooks – Rev MS Gault; David McCleery – Rev PP Campbell; DC Cowan – Rev AE Tolland; Roy Kennedy – Rev JA McCaughan; Joseph Cassells – Rev RL Craig; William Watson – Rev SA Woodburn; William Reid – Rev DB Knox; Gordon Lindsay – Rev SJ Lockington; S Ferguson – Rev MG McClelland; J Barton – Rev GJ Mackarel; Ronnie Gillanders – Rev DB Murphy; J Copeland – Rev RN Orr; Isaac Crilly – Rev RW Gaston; Bryce Gilmore – Rev WJ Murdock; JH McClurg – Rev Dr AR Rodgers; EM Carroll.

A. ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE (6)

Rev GE Best, Convener

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Head of Press and Media, Hospitality Secretary, Buildings Manager; Committee Convener.

- (x) Gary Nesbitt, _____, _____, Mrs Joyce Anderson.
- (y) Revs WT Cordner, AE Tolland, RN Orr, WJ Murdock, JA McCaughan, MG McClelland; _____, DC Cowan, David McCleery.

The Welsh Assembly 2011

The Rt Rev Dr Ivan Patterson reports:

1. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales met from 4 to 6 September at Lampeter University. The Assembly focused on the theme from Colossians 4:5 “Make the most of every opportunity”, which reflected the importance of looking forward as the Church celebrated the bicentenary of the ordination of its first Ministers in 1811.

2. The Rev Ian Hodgins, the out-going Moderator, in his Valedictory address challenged the denomination to take seriously the need to reach out and to be active in ‘opening doors’ for gospel opportunities as they prayerfully look to the future.

3. The Assembly installed their new Moderator for 2011-12 the Rev Robert Roberts. As well as being Minister of five Churches, he is active with several local organisations. The Rev Dafydd Andrew Jones was elected Moderator for 2012-13.

4. PCW, like many denominations, has seen a dramatic decrease in membership over the past years and in the number of people training for ministry. Many Ministers have to serve pastorates that have multiple charges. A number of Ministers from India were seeking to come to the Welsh Church but the denomination had fallen prey to the Borders Agency, so for the time being there was no immigration capacity to allow them to come. There was an understanding that those coming from India would learn the Welsh language.

5. The business of the Assembly included the presentation of the various reports and while there was little debate there were questions and comments. One item that raised some interaction was Ministers’ employment rights particularly around the issue of ‘TOIL – time off in lieu’. If a Minister works/preaches on a public holiday then legally they should have the option to take time off on another occasion. While this was agreed, one or two voices queried the necessity for it. Their Ministers are contracted to work a 42 hour week. Other business matters included the training of new leaders and a new scheme to equip women. Concern for those in the farming community was raised and Ministers were encouraged to give appropriate pastoral support; it was also suggested that the needs of the rural community should be included as part of a pastor’s training.

6. As part of their bicentenary celebrations the Assembly held a premier of a new drama – *Cadwyni yn y Cof* meaning *Chains in the Memory* which was commissioned specially for the occasion. The Rev Dr Iffion Evans, who at one time ministered in PCI, gave the Davis Lecture entitled ‘In pursuit of the Ideal: the Ordination of 1811’.

7. For some years the Assembly has met in Lampeter in September but from next year they will move to Aberystwyth and to their preferred date in July (16 – 18).

The Methodist Conference 2011

The Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton reports:

1. Having been raised in a Methodist Congregation and come to faith in Christ there, it was a particular delight to be able to visit the 2011 Conference of the Methodist Church in Newtownards last June. A trip back to my Christian roots, and into fairly familiar territory!

2. In 1933 Methodism famously said that it ‘was born in song’, and that same strong tradition continues to this day. Nowhere was this more evident than in the installation of the new President – the Rev Ian Henderson – who composed a number of the hymns used at the service on the opening night held in First Presbyterian Church in the town. Indeed he is a prolific writer having published no less than three volumes of hymns as well as number of histories of Methodism in Ireland!

3. The business of Conference has so many similarities to our own General Assembly, since we share the same culture and share so many of the same dilemmas. They, like us, face big challenges in terms of mission and evangelism, and the balance between mission and maintenance can often be quite acute. Again the President put it well when he said of Charles Wesley’s arriving in Ireland in 1748 that he found ‘*a poor neglected (Congregation) because the preachers there had abandoned it for the more encouraging work in Cork. What would happen if we all decided to do that today – to concentrate all our resources on a few places where it is all happening, and write off those places and people where some committee decides it isn’t?*’

4. Yet there was no suggestion whatsoever at Conference that ‘maintenance’ should take precedence over ‘mission’, but the challenge remains a very pressing one. Our own Boards and Committees know that only too well. Methodism has committed itself to ‘*explore and support opportunities for outreach and service, by enabling, facilitating and encouraging Societies to fulfil their calling in the community. This includes entirely new schemes where no Church buildings already exist, innovative schemes offering opportunity for outreach within existing Congregations and schemes that can serve to revitalize and focus an existing Congregation.*’

5. Once again, I couldn’t help but wonder why we all find it so difficult to share our understanding, hopes, dreams, needs and resources with each other. Of course, our denominational structures are very different, but that of itself does not seem sufficient reason to do Christ’s work and mission so separately.

6. Conference concluded with the service of Ordination (again held in First Presbyterian) – and, as always, the opportunity given for ordinands to witness to their faith in Christ to the whole Church as they embark on their ministry.

7. It was a pleasure to be at Conference, and I was glad to be reminded again that we share the same Gospel and seek to witness to the same Saviour the length and breadth of Ireland.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

1. During the past twelve months there has been further refurbishment of the Assembly Buildings. The Committee is grateful for the greater comfort and practical benefits afforded by the extra ancillary rooms on the first floor. During Assembly Week members of the Arrangements Committee are situated at the Carrickfergus Window desk to help members with general arrangements and information.

Guidelines to New Members

2. It has been agreed again to provide an opportunity for Elders and Ministers who are attending the General Assembly for the first time to be given an introduction to Assembly procedures. This will take place on Tuesday, 29 May, immediately prior to the first Business Session of the Assembly.

Communion and Worship Services

3. The Communion Service will commence at 11.45am on Tuesday. There will be a coffee break immediately prior to this service, but members of Assembly are asked to be in their seats not later than 11.35am. There will also be worship on Wednesday and Thursday at 12.15pm, which will be open to the public.

First Aid

4. St John's Ambulance personnel are in attendance on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Others trained in First Aid will be in the building at all other times. Please notify the Convener or any of the stewards if First Aid is required.

Exhibition

5. Various exhibition stands will be displayed this year in the foyer area adjacent to the Reception desk. These will feature the work of Boards and other agencies within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Please take a few moments to browse around these during the Assembly.

Web Streaming and Twitter

6. The public sessions of the General Assembly will be streamed again through the PCI Website, and the proceedings can be followed on 'Twitter'. The Private Session and certain other items of business will not be streamed.

Tea/Coffee Breaks

7. Tea and coffee will be served this year in the Minor Hall and on the Concourse. As many people as possible are positively encouraged to make their way to the relatively spacious surroundings of the Minor Hall to minimise the usual congestion on the Concourse. Members are also asked to move away from the serving areas once they have been served, to allow others following you to be attended to efficiently.

Queuing to Speak

8. The row of seats directly in front of the rostrum is reserved for those queuing to speak in debates. In the interests of efficiency and courtesy, members are asked to respect this. To encourage debate, there will be two alternative speaking points on the floor of the main Hall, with reserved seating adjacent to them, clearly visible to the Moderator.

Voting Cards

9. These should be obtained as soon as possible from the desk located in the Foyer where they are available on Monday evening/Tuesday morning, after which members should contact the Financial Secretary's Office. Ministers please note that when obtaining their voting cards they are asked to produce the Registration Card enclosed with the General Assembly Reports.

Admission

10. Admission to the Private Session is by voting card only. In any vote the Moderator may call for voting cards to be shown and only those displaying their own voting card are eligible to vote. Entrance to and exit from the Private Session is not normally permitted during an item of business.

Expenses

11. All members may claim a daily allowance but travel expenses cover the cost of only one return journey in the week. Claims should be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Reception. Full details of rates are printed on the form.

Evacuation Procedures

12. Please listen carefully to all announcements regarding the evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency.

Thanks

13. Sincere thanks are expressed to Assembly Buildings administrative staff, stewards, time-keepers, musicians, and many others, who work very hard behind the scenes to ensure that everything runs smoothly throughout the Assembly.

GORDON BEST, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That a grant of £17,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
3. That the Business Board, with its associated working Committee, be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code for the ensuing year beginning 15 March, 2012.

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr Allen Sleith is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr David Burke, Minister Emeritus of Hamilton Road, died on 8 March 2011; that the Rev Robert Gilmore, Minister Emeritus of Helen's Bay, died on 5 July 2011; that the Rev John (Jack) Stewart McAdam, Minister Emeritus of Ballyblack, died on 5 March 2012; that the Rev Helen Boyd, Minister of Millisle and Ballycopeland, retired on 10 April 2011; that Mr Aaron Ditty was licensed on 29 May 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Mr Andrew Galbraith was licensed on 5 June 2011; that Mr Paul Orr was licensed on 5 June 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Mr David Conkey was licensed on 12 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that Mr Owen Patterson was licensed on 19 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that Mr Andrew Conway was licensed on 26 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr Jonathan William Frazer having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady and Mr John Boyd Mullan having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route were received as Licentiates; that Mr Graeme Fowles was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast and Mr Colin Millar was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge the Revs Dr Ian Dennis, Craig Mawhinney and David McKee (retired); as Licentiates Mr MWJ McKeown, Mr Ivan Steen, Mr Peter Douglas, Mr Colin Millar, Mr Jonny Frazer, Mr Andrew Galbraith and Mr JB Mullan; as students Ms Fiona Forbes, Mr Robert Hamilton, Mr Edward Kirwan, Mr Stuart McCrea, Mr Keith Ward, Mr Gary McDowell and Mr Jeff McWatters; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that under the Barrier Act, 43 members voted for and 0 voted against the Overture anent Par 204 of the Code, while 43 members voted for and 0 voted against the Overture anent Par 210(1) of the Code.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev CUR Bradley is their Moderator; that Dr Michael McClenahan, having presented credentials from the Ards Presbytery, was ordained and installed to the charge of Lislooney and Knappagh on 6 May 2011; that the Rev PD Thompson presented credentials from the Iveagh Presbytery and was installed to the charge of Waringstown on 4 November 2011; that Mr Seamus Burke was licensed on 29 May 2011 and given credentials to the Iveagh Presbytery; that Mr Ashley Graham was licensed on 29 May 2011 and given credentials to the Dromore Presbytery; that Mr Trevor Boyd having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone was received as a Licentiate; that Mr Mark Wilson, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was presented with credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that they have under their care: as a Minister without Charge the Rev JWP McConnell; as Licentiates Mr Andrew Faulkner, Mr Trevor Boyd; as students for the ministry Mr Philip McClelland, Mr Russell Edgar and Mr Simon Hamilton; that during the year they held consultations at Cladymore and 1st Armagh; that under the Barrier Act, the voting on the Overtures anent Pars 204 and 210(1) of the Code was 25 in

agreement and 0 against; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev CK McDowell is their Moderator; that the Rev David Alderdice, Minister Emeritus of Wellington Street, Ballymena, died on 23 April 2011; that the Very Rev Dr REH Uprichard retired from the duties of the active Ministry in Trinity Ahoghill on 2 September 2011; that the Rev Desmond Knowles retired from the duties of active Ministry in Grange with Craigmore on 31 October 2011; that the Rev KWJ Hanna resigned his charge as Minister of Glenwherry on 15 April 2011, having received and accepted a Call from Second Dromara and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr WE Chestnutt, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained to the office of the Christian Ministry and installed to the charge of Harryville, Ballymena on 10 June 2011; that Mr SW Moore was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 12 June 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that Mr RH Houston, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery; that Mr TJ McConaghie, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route, Mr SW Hibbert, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady and Mr NDH Stewart, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady, were received as Licentiates under the care of Presbytery; that they have under their care as Licentiates: Mr SW Hibbert, Mr RH Houston, Mr TJ McConaghie, Mr RM Moody, Mr NG Mulholland and Mr N Stewart; as Students for the ministry: Mr AR Adger, Mr MJO Currie, Mr WN Kennedy, Mr JR Kernohan, Mr PA Kerr, Mr PWA McClelland, Mr DA McMillan, Mr SW Orr and Mr RMP Simpson; that they held a Consultation at Churchtown; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 204: for: 30, against: 0; anent Code Par 210(1): for 30, against 0.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev PG McCrea is their Moderator; that the Rev HD McKillen, Minister Emeritus of Whitehouse, died on 20 November 2011, the Rev Dr JC Buick, OBE, Prison Chaplain Emeritus, died on 9 December 2011; that the Rev Samuel Newell, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed in Alexandra on 3 June 2011, the Rev Dave Clawson was installed in West Kirk on 29 June 2011, the Rev Colin Gamble presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was installed in Immanuel on 10 September 2011; that Mr Lachlan Webster was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 3 July 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that Mr Tommy Bruce, a Licentiate, upon receiving the call to the Congregations of Letterkenny and Trenta, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that they have under their care as Ministers without charge: the Revs LH Eagleson, CI McKnight, WA Shaw, WM Smyth (retired) and FW Vincent; that Mr Rory McClure, having been received by the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee, was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery; that they have under their care as Licentiates: Mr Peter Bovill, Mr Ivan Ferris, Mr Stewart Glendinning, Mr David McCarthy and Mr Rory McClure; as students for the

ministry: Mr Gareth Simpson and Mr Michael Wylie; that Consultations were held with the Congregations of Eglinton, Ballyhenry and Rosemary; that voting on the Overture anent Par 204 was: for 35, against 0, anent Par 210(1) for 19, against 18; that the Financial Reports are being printed separately.

The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that Rev AR Bill is their Moderator; that the Rev WPH Erskine retired as Minister of Windsor Congregation on 31 August 2011; that Mr Ross Collins was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 5 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that Mr David Conkey presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery; that they have under their care as Ministers without charge: the Revs KA Drury and JD Maxwell; as Licentiates Mrs Kathryn Viner, Miss P Jane Nelson and Mr David Conkey; as students for the ministry Mrs Corrina Heron, Mr Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley, Mr David Cromie and Mr Chris Barron; that a Consultation is being held with Saintfield Road Congregation; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Code Par 204 was 30 for and 0 against; and that voting on the Overture anent Code Par 201(1) was 30 for and 0 against.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Mervyn Gibson is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr Albert Sleith, Minister Emeritus of Cregagh Congregation died on 7 November 2011; that the Rev Rex Pedlow, Minister without charge, died on 26 December 2011; that the Rev John McVeigh, Minister Emeritus of Gilnahirk Congregation, died on 31 January 2012; that the Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop retired as Minister of Knock Congregation on 30 April 2011; that the Rev Hastings McIntyre, Minister of Cregagh Congregation, retired on 31 July 2011; that the Rev Paul Linkens resigned as Minister of Tullycarnet Congregation on 30 April 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that Mr Edward McKenzie was licensed as a probationer for the Christian Ministry in Castlereagh on 26 June 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that Mr Graeme Fowles, Licentiate, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the Congregation of Ravenhill on 17 June 2011; that Mr Aaron Ditty and Mr Paul Orr from the Presbytery of Ards were received as Licentiates under the care of Presbytery; that Mr Nick Cooper was given credentials as a Licentiate to the Presbytery of Omagh; that they have under the care of Presbytery as Ministers without charge: the Revs Doug Baker, RA Crooks (retired), William Harshaw and Dr Elizabeth Jamison (retired); as Licentiates Mr Jonathan Boyd, Mr David McCullagh Mr Aaron Ditty and Mr Paul Orr; as students for the ministry Mr Andrew Boreland, Mr Stephen Cowan, Mr David Currie, Mr Mark McMaw and Mr Trevor McNeill; that Consultations were held in the Congregations of Belmont and St Andrews; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures, sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 204: for: 35, against: 0, anent Code Par 210(1): for: 34, against: 1.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev James Rogers is their Moderator; that Mr Ross Collins and Mr Lachlan Webster

presented credentials and were received as Licentiate; that under their care are: as Minister without charge the Rev Desmond Paul; as Licentiate Mr Ross Collins, Ms Linda Keys, Mr Graeme McConville, Mr Norman Smyth and Mr Lachlan Webster; as students for the ministry Mr Mark Dodds, Mr Alan Moore and Mr James Warburton; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed individually; that voting on the Overture anent Code Par 204 was 23 for and 0 against, and on the Overture anent Code Par 210(1) was 23 for and 0 against.

The **COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Alan Johnston is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr David Clarke retired from the duties of the active Ministry on 31 January 2012; that the Rev Ian Harbinson, Minister of Moneydig, resigned his charge on 31 December 2011 and was received as a Minister without charge; that Mr Keith Hibbert was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 29 May 2011 and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that Mr Alan Buick was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 5 June 2011; that Mr Stephen Hibbert was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 12 June 2011 and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that Mr Jonathan Frazer was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 12 June 2011 and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mr Neil Stewart was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 24 June 2011 and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that they have under their care as a Minister without charge the Rev Ian Harbinson; as Licentiate Mr A Buick and Mr John Stanbridge; as students for the ministry Mr Chris Cordner, Mr Alan Linton and Mr Gordon McCracken; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 204: for 48, against 0, anent Code Par 210(1): for 48, against 0.

The **DERRY AND DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr SR Jones is their Moderator; that the Rev Maurice Bolton, Minister Emeritus of Second Derry (Strand and Buncrana), died on 8 March 2011; that the Rev Samuel Malcolm McSparran, Minister Emeritus of Monreagh, died on 13 May 2011; that the Rev Paul Ernest Linkens presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregation of Ebrington on 12 March 2011; that Mr Thomas John Bruce presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was ordained and installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregations of Letterkenny and Treanta on 24 June 2011; that Mr Brian Smyth was licensed on 19 June 2011; that the Presbytery have under its care as Ministers without charge the Revs JC Teeney and KG Patterson; as Licentiate Assistants Mr Jonathan Cowan and Mr Brian Smyth; that Consultations were held in the Congregations of Gortnessy, Kilmacrennan and Ramelton; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately; the voting on the overtures anent Code Par 204 : for 45, against 0, anent Par 210(1): for 45, against 0.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev MM Stewart is their Moderator; that the Rev AA Cole, Minister of Kilmore, retired on 28 February

2011; that the Rev TI Harte, Minister of Trinity Boardmills, retired on 31 May 2011; that the Rev Samuel Armstrong, Minister without charge, retired on 7 December 2011; that the Rev RJ Hyndman, Minister of First Saintfield, resigned his charge on 28 August 2011 and was retained under the care of Presbytery; that Miss Lesley-Ann Wilson was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister in the Congregation of First Comber on 18 March 2011; that Mr Daryl Edwards, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh, Mr Gareth Maclean having presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast, Mr Edward McKenzie having presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast, Mr Scott Moore having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and Mr Owen Patterson having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards were received as Licentiates; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge the Revs JM Casement, RJ Hyndman, RN Stewart, GR Stockdale; as Licentiates Mr Daryl Edwards, Mr Gareth Maclean, Mr Edward McKenzie, Mr Scott Moore and Mr Owen Patterson; as Licentiate without charge Mr MC Cowan; as a student for the ministry Mr G Ball; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 204: for 14, against 3, anent Code Par 210(1): for 14, against 3.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AJ Thompson is their Moderator; that the Rev KWJ Hanna presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was installed to the charge of Second Dromara on 16 April 2011; that Mr TA Conway presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr Ashley Graham presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was received as a Licentiate; that under their care as Ministers without charge are: the Revs JD Mark and K Young Wimberly; as Licentiates Mr Mark Proctor, Mrs HM Freeburn, Mr TA Conway and Mr Ashley Graham; as a student for the ministry Mr Nathan Duddy; that they held Consultations at Loughaghery and Drumbo; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 204: for 29, against 0, anent Code Par 210(1): for 30, against 0.

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev William Hayes is their Moderator; that the Rev Colin Gamble, Minister in Naas, resigned his charge on 9 September 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev Dr Gary Millar, Minister in Howth and Malahide, resigned his charge on 1 January 2012 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Brisbane; that under their care as students for the ministry are: Mr Damien Burke, Mr Kevin Hargaden and Mr Reuben McCormick; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev PA McBride is their Moderator; that the Rev JA Todd, Minister Emeritus of Garvaghy and Anaghlonne died on 1 February 2012; that the Rev Samuel Newell, Minister of Tullylish and Gilford, resigned his charge on 2 June 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev HSW Cubitt, Minister of Second and Third Rathfriland resigned his charge on 15 September 2011 and was given

credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that the Rev PD Thompson, Minister of First Rathfriland resigned his charge on 3 November 2011, and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that the Rev Kenneth Nelson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh and was installed to the charge of Castlewellan and Leitrim on 2 September 2011; that Mr Seamus Burke presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was received as a Licentiate; that under their care as a Minister without charge is the Rev EG McAuley (retired); as a Licentiate Mr Seamus Burke; as a student for the ministry Mr Mark Dodds; that they held Consultations at Donacloney and Magherally; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code: Par 204, for 21, against 0; anent Code Par 210(1), for 20 against 0.

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev William Buchanan is their Moderator; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on the overtures anent Code Pars 204 and 210(1) was in each case for 25, against 0.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev RK Graham is their Moderator; that the Rev MC McCullough, Minister Emeritus of Ryans and Brookvale, died on 21 October 2011; that Mr MB Wilson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was installed to the charge of Cremore, Fourtowns and Poyntzpass on 27 May 2011; that the Rev AD Mullan was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister of Mourne on 27 March 2011; that under their care are: as a student for the ministry Mr JT Blue; that they held Consultations at Jerretspass, Kingsmills and Rostrevor; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately; and that the voting anent Code Pars 204 and 210(1) was in each case 30 for and 0 against.

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Colin Ian Dickson is their Moderator; that the Rev Kenneth Nelson, Minister of Mountjoy and Drumlegagh, resigned his charge on 1 September 2011 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that Mr Nicholas Robert Alexander Cooper presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ballygawley and Ballyreagh on 8 April 2011; that the Rev Ian Thomas McKee presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was installed to the charge of Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane on 24 February 2012; that Mr Jonathan Andrew Dunn was licensed on 17 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that Mr Rodney Samuel George Beacom was licensed on 26 June 2011; that under their care is the Licentiate Mr Rodney Samuel George Beacom; that Mr Jonathan Andrew Dunn was licensed on 17 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on the Overtures anent Code Par 204 and 210(1) was in each case 41 for and 0 against.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev RW Gaston is their Moderator; that the Rev WS Smart, Minister of First Ballymoney, died on 4 December 2011; that the Rev ST Carson, Minister of Dunluce, retired on 2 October 2011, that the Rev Denis Bannerman, Minister of Toberkeigh retired

on 13 November 2011; that the Rev HSW Cubitt presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed to the charge of St James's on 16 September 2011; that Mr SD McNie was licensed on 29 May 2011 and given credential to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that Mr TJ McConaghie was licensed on 5 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that Mr JB Mullan was licensed on 26 June 2011 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge Rev Dr V Dobbin (retired) and the Rev William Brown (retired); that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on overtures anent Par 204 of the Code resulted as follows: for 24, against 0 and voting on Par 210(1) of the Code resulted as follows: for 24, against 0.

The **TEMPLEPATICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JP Moxen is their Moderator; that the Rev George Moore, Minister of Kilbride, retired on 16 July 2011; that the Rev IT McKee, Minister of High Street, Antrim, resigned his charge on 1 March 2011 and was placed under the care of the Presbytery as a Minister without charge; that Mr SA Morrow was licensed on 5 June 2011 and placed under the care of the Presbytery; that Mr SD McNie presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was received as a Licentiate; that Rev IT McKee was given credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh on 9 February 2012 having received a Call to the charge of Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane; that under their care are: as Licentiates Mr JA Spence, Mr SD McNie and Mr SA Morrow, and as a student for the ministry Mr M Johnston; that they held Consultations at Killead and Second Donegore; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Gareth Stewart is their Moderator; that Mr Trevor Boyd was licensed on 3 June 2011 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh and that Mr Graeme Orr was licensed on 12 June 2011; that Mr Jonathan Dunn and Mr Keith Hibbert presented credentials respectively from the Presbytery of Omagh, and the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady and were received as Licentiates; that under their care are: as Licentiates: Mr Jonathan Dunn, Mr Keith Hibbert and Mr Graeme Orr; as students for the ministry: Mr Nigel Kane, Mr Philip Leonard, Mr Ben Preston and Mr Roland Watt; that they are in the process of holding Consultations at Bellaghy, Knockloughrim, Newmills and Carland; that voting on overtures anent the Code Pars 204 and 210(1) were approved, voting being respectively 35-0 and 36-0; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The General Board covers a huge spectrum of work and this report may be considered in six sections:

- (a) **General Introduction** – this summarises the on-going work of the Board which is not specific to Committees or Panels. This year it includes the merging of the General Assembly communications function, the potential development of an Inter-Church Peacemaking Project and arrangement for the appointment of the next Clerk of the General Assembly.
- (b) **Memorial** – the **Memorial Record** records the life and work of those who faithfully served the Church and died since the last Assembly.
- (c) **Priorities** – the **Priorities Committee** has become important in focussing attention on central emphases for the life and witness of PCI. Associated with it are two panels which emanate from its thinking – **Structures and Consultations**.
- (d) **Doctrine and Practice** – the **Doctrine Committee** has completed its work on spiritual compatibility in marriage. The **Moderator's Advisory Committee**, in addition to its normal role, was asked to advise Clerks and others who may need to consider issues of homosexuality in the leadership of the Church. The **Church Relations Committee** continues to encourage inter-Church work, while the **Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee** also reports.
- (e) **Involvement in Society** – the **Church and Society Committee** continues its important work, including a consideration of the decade of centenaries. The **Global Concerns Committee** includes reports from the **Building Good Relations, Environment and the Race Relations Panels**.
- (f) **Ad-hoc Working Groups** – the Board also supervises a number of ad-hoc Committees and Panels. Reports are included from the Committees on **Planned Giving** and **Fixed Terms on Kirk Sessions**, and Panels on the **Financial Crisis, Pensions and Assessments, Judicial Appeals** and **Pastoral Care of Manse Families**. The **Presbyterian Historical Society** also reports, but for information only. It is not accountable to the General Assembly.

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Board has had another interesting but demanding year, meeting six times to receive reports from its varied Committees and Panels.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY REMITS

2. The 2011 General Assembly passed a number of resolutions which related to the work of the General Board:

- (a) The monitorium on all new posts during the 2011-12 year (G A Mins 2011, p 64, res 4) requires the General Board to agree any exceptions due to special circumstances. The General Board allowed an arrangement to staff the Café at the Elmwood Avenue Chaplaincy and the appointment of a Head of Creative Production to work in the General Secretary's Office (see Communication Report below).
- (b) A resolution referred a section of the Board of Finance and Personnel Report dealing with the Tyrone Memorial Review to a Panel appointed by the General Board for consideration on Biblical grounds (G A Mins 2011, p 37, res 1). The General Board in fact referred this to the Doctrine Committee.
- (c) A resolution requested the General Board to set up a Panel to examine the wider issues connected with the commercial property aspect of the Assembly Buildings complex and report in 2012. (G A Mins 2011, p 66, res 12). This is a complex area and the Board asks the General Assembly to accept a report in 2013, with the arrangement for advice by the General Board to remain.
- (d) Consideration of holding a Residential Conference in 2015 (G A Mins 2011, p 25, res 2) was referred to the Priorities Committee.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

3. A query had been received from an individual in the Presbyterian Church (USA) asking if the General Assembly (PCI) could receive a congregation from outside Ireland. Information had also been requested from a Church of Scotland minister regarding transfer. In case there should be further requests of this nature the appointment of a small group to advise was discussed. In fact this has not been necessary.

THE ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS

4. Following the renovations it was recognised that the signage on the building used at least three names – “Assembly Buildings”, “Church House” and “The Spires”. Following consultation, it was agreed that the building should be known by its historic title – “Assembly Buildings”, recognising that it is the home of the General Assembly. The Shopping Mall may still use the term “The Spires” but that should not refer to the whole building.

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

5. The Faculty of Union Theological College asked the General Board, acting under the power conferred on it by the Code Par 272(2), to appoint the Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop to the Faculty of the College (see Code Par 121(1)), so that he might chair meetings of the Faculty. The Board agreed to the request.

LEGAL DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

6. The Board of Social Witness requested the General Board to write on behalf of the General Assembly to the Prime Minister protesting over any proposal to change the existing legal definition of marriage. This was agreed and a letter sent.

COMMUNICATIONS MERGER

7. The decision taken by the 2011 General Assembly to merge the work of the former Communications Board with the General Board provided a welcome opportunity to review the way in which the Church communicates. It was recognised that this needs to be effective at three levels – a) press and broadcast media; b) targeted interest groups; c) within the Church itself.

8. The Panel appointed by the Board first identified the tasks needing to be done in order to provide a coherent strategy and then set up three working groups to consider – a) press and broadcast media; b) publications and corporate identity; c) website development.

9. Each of these groups reported on how it would wish to see their aspect of the communication work develop, with possible staffing needs.

(A) PRESS AND MEDIA:

(a) **Introduction:** Today the ‘official’ press has vast space to fill with increased airtime, newspaper and magazine space together with the online media which is also home to the ‘unofficial’ media. However it is worth noting that despite more space the competition for that space is more intense. Also the press is more aggressive and questioning than ever and it is the place where much of the public square debate and discussion takes place. There is opportunity for the church to engage with the press and broadcasters and it is essential that we contribute to the debates and issues of the day.

(b) **Functions of a Press Office:** In the Presbyterian Church context the Press Office should be aware of all stories both good and bad emanating from the Presbyterian Church and its areas of activity and be seeking to handle these appropriately through the secular media or communications internal to the church, ie web pages, denomination magazines etc. It will not be responsible for production of these materials but will use its resources to ensure appropriate coverage of these stories.

As well as disseminating Presbyterian stories to the external press the press office also has a role of ensuring these stories are told through the internal means of the Church to its members. The Press Office should also be monitoring press output to be aware of those stories in the news directly involving the Presbyterian Church or concerning subject areas in which the Church has an interest, and then passing this information on to the relevant staff and taking appropriate action.

(c) **Responsibilities:**

- The interface between the Church and the Press, particularly at General Assembly level with officers, individuals and Boards but also at Presbytery and Congregational level.
- Developing overall press strategy and tactics specific to particular stories including crisis management.
- Drafting and publishing press releases/Managing crises and negative stories.
- Proactively promoting official stories and views through appropriate media including social networking.

- Reacting to news stories or published comment/Making spokespeople available for interview.
 - Dealing with press enquiries.
 - Writing briefing sheets.
 - Proactively maintaining good relations with all media.
 - Monitoring all media and providing a cutting service to key people.
 - Keeping constantly up to date with information on Church stories through regular briefings with key people.
 - Training key spokespeople.
 - Generally the Press Secretary would handle enquiries only from press sources.
- (d) **Structural relationships:** While press handling is one of several specialist areas of professional expertise within senior management, a culture of sharing information among senior officers needs to be developed. This is best done by structured one to one meetings between the Press Secretary and Board Secretaries and other appropriate representatives. Additional meetings should take place as the need arises. Any of the parties involved would initiate these. This is to ensure a number of things. Firstly that a positive and newsworthy story is not overlooked and secondly that neither a senior staff member or the Press Secretary is caught out by a story appearing in the media or their receiving a direct enquiry about something in their area of expertise of which they had no knowledge. Particular attention should be given to significant regular events in the Church's calendar and major ad hoc issues that arise from time to time in the life of the church.

(B) PUBLICATIONS AND CORPORATE IDENTITY:

- (a) **Present Publications:** The Communications Department presently produces – the Presbyterian Herald; United Appeal Briefing; World Development materials; points for Prayer and Board Leaflets as requested.
- (b) **Relationship to Assembly Boards:**
- The Communications Department is a resource to service Boards, but it is for Boards to decide how much to use it. The more effective and efficient it becomes the more attractive Boards will find it in providing published materials. There needs to be some agreement as to how much of the material is written by the commissioning Board and how much is the responsibility of Communications. The recommendation of the Working Group is that the basic information should be written up by the commissioning Board, but Communications have the responsibility of discussing style and final editing. This needs to be done collaboratively.
 - Some basic designs can be done in-house but normally graphic design should continue to be outsourced. There needs to be discussion with the commissioning Board about this. Printing will normally be outsourced except for very basic publications.
 - There needs to be an agreed time-line between the commissioning Board and Communications at the start of any piece of work. It would be helpful to have one person co-ordinating the work.

- There needs to be some agreed protocols for Boards who outsource their publications to ensure a sense of corporate identity and to quality assure the outcome. This will need detailed discussion with the Boards concerned. When the logo has been “refreshed” letter-heads etc can be agreed and finalised.
- (c) **Presbyterian Herald:** While the Presbyterian Herald needs a degree of independence it is seen as the magazine of the Presbyterian Church. A new editor is needed and the Working Group would also recommend the appointment of an Editorial Group made up largely of people with gifting/experience in the magazine field. There are questions to be asked like “who is it designed to reach?” and “does it reach its intended audience?” There is also the question of the Herald online. The Working Group recommends these are best left for the new Editorial Group.
- (d) **Points for Prayer:** A group drawn from various Boards is looking at a revamp of “Points for Prayer” and the Working Group encourage this, which recognising its value in the life of the denomination.
- (e) **New Publications:** The Working Group recommends that initially some work should be done on providing a) An up-to-date leaflet on Presbyterianism b) A more popular/informative version of an Annual Report.

(C) WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT:

- The development of a new central website for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) is part of a wider exercise of reshaping PCI’s central communications. PCI’s web presence is currently made up of four main components:
 - (a) A PCI central website – now needing replaced.
 - (b) Individual Board websites – all recently developed by different companies and with ongoing service contracts.
 - (c) A conferencing website for Assembly Buildings – currently under development.
 - (d) Websites of individual congregations and their associated organisations.
- The envisaged task is to develop a new PCI central website to replace 1(a) above. It should:
 - (a) be a relevant and accessible means of communicating PCI and its message to the public at large
 - (b) Provide information and resources to key users from across the full spectrum of Boards
 - (c) Serve as an umbrella site that will link to Board and Congregations websites.
 - (d) Unifying the PCI brand image but without compromising the design integrity or upset service agreements of existing Board sites.
 - (e) Be flexible enough to accommodate ‘a year in the life’ of PCI.
 - (f) Be intuitive enough to be easily navigable to one unfamiliar with PCI Structures

- (g) Provide a database of congregations and Boards
- There are some parallel issues that should be considered:
 - (a) Ideally this site should be up and running by next year's Assembly. This is an aggressive timescale and would require a significant commitment of resources to realise.
 - (b) While an ideal future scenario may be that all sites would be physically hosted within the Assembly Buildings, there is actually no pressing need for this to take place at this time.
 - (c) All stakeholders within Assembly Buildings need to have confidence in what is being developed. They should thus be involved in consultation from the outset.
 - (d) There is another panel discussing the possible rebranding of PCI. The results of the rebrand would need to be 'fed into' the web design by Christmas of this year.
- Given the complexity of the task the Website Development Sub-Panel felt it was appropriate to seek the advice of Gareth Dunlop (former CEO of iON and TIBUS) who is a specialist in this area and has extensive contacts within the web industry in Northern Ireland. Gareth produced a paper for consideration and it has been agreed that this represents the best strategic approach for PCI. It will bring us through the design stages and produce a tender document for a professional web-design firm to take on the development phase.
- The Website Development Working Group recommended and the Communications Merger Panel agreed:
 - (a) That the methodology as presented be accepted and implemented
 - (b) That the Website Development Working Group should be tasked with overseeing the design, development and delivery phases of the process and that Gareth Dunlop should also be retained in a professional consultancy capacity to oversee the design stage and produce the tender document referred to above.
 - (c) That serious consideration needs to be given to future staffing needs in order to ensure appropriate communication between design and development and to enable senior level monitoring of the site's message and purpose.

10. Following detailed discussion, the Panel recommended to the Board that work should progress in the areas outlined above and in order to do so effectively, the communications responsibilities should be divided between a Head of Press and Media and a Head of Creative Production, both to be responsible directly to the Clerk of the General Assembly. The Creative Production Unit would include a Communications Administrator (4 days/week); Editor of the Presbyterian Herald and Staff Writer (3 days/week) and Creative Production Technician. This would involve one new post – Head of Creative Production – and the reassigning of some responsibilities. The Board accepted the report and approved the new appointment.

11. It is also recommended that from 2013 the cost of the Head of Press and Media should be met by the Incidental Fund, the expense of the Creative Production Unit remaining with the United Appeal.

INTER-CHURCH PEACEBUILDING PROJECT

12. In 2010 it was reported to the General Assembly that the General Board had approved the submission of an application to the Special EU Programmes Body for an inter-Church Peacebuilding Project. The five partners are the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches and the Irish Council of Churches. The Presbyterian Church has been designated the lead partner.

13. While progress of this application has been very slow, it now seems that a positive response on funding may be imminent. The General Board has re-activated the Future of Peacemaking Panel to consider any letter of offer. If there are further developments they will be reported in the Supplementary Reports.

CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14. The Clerk of the General Assembly intimated that the job description agreed for his appointment indicated a retirement date of 31 August 2014. In order to meet that date, and in line with the prospective progress of the Structures Review, it would be helpful to appoint a Clerk Designate in 2013 so that appointments to other senior positions may be agreed in 2013-14. It is hoped that whatever new structure emerges may become active from the 2014 General Assembly.

15. If this is to be achieved, the General Assembly would need to authorise the General Board to a) draw up a Job Description and b) bring a nomination to the General Assembly 2013. An appropriate resolution is appended.

THANKS

16. The General Secretary's Office is involved with an immense range of business, much of it reflected in these reports but also dealing with callers and e-mails on a variety of topics. These are dealt with quietly and courteously by Joyce Anderson, Jenny McClure, Michelle James and Alicia Cotter, now joined by Anne McCully, Rebecca McConnell, Ed Connolly and Stephen Lynas from Communications. The office staff also includes Julie-Ann Hall, Barbara McMillan and Sonia McKnight who welcome people at reception, or on the phone. Thanks are due to all who provide this service to the Church.

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Very Rev Dr Donald Patton reports:

The Rev Robert Samuel George Gilmore, BA, Minister Emeritus of Helen's Bay Congregation in the Presbytery of Ards, Co Down, died on 5 July 2011 in the 92nd year of his age and the 65th year of his ministry. He was born on 19 June 1920 to William Gilmore, and his wife Maria Jane Gilmore, née Waddell. His father was an Agent for Inglis & Co, Ltd. Brought up in connection with the Congregation of Newcastle, he was educated at Newcastle Public Elementary School, then RBAI 1931-1933, following by Down High School, Downpatrick, 1933-1938. Encouraged by his Minister in Newcastle, the Rev Dr AC Anderson, he prepared himself for the ordained ministry by study at Trinity College, Dublin, 1938-1942, graduating BA, and then at the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1942-1945. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Rathfriland on 13

May 1945 and assisted the Rev WJ Thompson in College Square Congregation 1945-1947. Feeling a call to service overseas and following ordination on 5 January 1945, he went to South Africa under the auspices of the Colonial and Commonwealth Mission to the Orange Free State, where he ministered to three mining Congregations in the vicinity of Bethlehem, involving a round trip of some three hundred miles. He returned to Northern Ireland in 1949 and served as Assistant in the Congregation of Townsend Street alongside the 'Parachute Padre' the Rev Jack Johnston who was then ill. He was ordained and installed in the Congregation of third Portglenone by the Presbytery of Magherahoghill on 28 May 1952 and ministered there until he took up the appointment as Warden to the Boy's Residential Trust in July 1962, being formally inducted to the post by the Presbytery of Belfast on 29 October 1961. He had been encouraged in this by the Rev WJ Thompson after whom Thompson House was named. The Trust had moved from Windsor Avenue to new premises on Black's Road, Dunmurry. As Warden he sought to encourage a positive mindset in boys who had been referred by the Belfast magistrates as an alternative to prison. During his time in Portglenone he acted as Clerk of that Presbytery 1954-1961. In 1964 he was called to the Congregation of Helen's bay in the Presbytery Ards and installed there on 8 January 1964. Mr Gilmore's care for and interest in people was further utilised in his work for the North Down branch of the Samaritan's of which he was a founder member and his work as a Chaplain to the Belfast Area Army Cadet Force is testimony to his continued interest in the welfare of young people. Within the wider Church Mr Gilmore served as Moderator of the Ards Presbytery 1974-1975. His experience abroad was utilised in his appointment as Convener of the Colonial and Commonwealth Mission, 1959-1966. He married Mary Doreen Kennedy on 5 August 1952 and they rejoiced in the births of their children Richard and Julie in the ensuing few years. Mr Gilmore retired from Helen's Bay on 30 June 1985 and died on 5 July 2011. Away from his ministerial duties, he enjoyed golf and gardening and in his later years was an encourager of younger Ministers in the Presbytery. 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 Matthew Carson McCullough, BA, Minister Emeritus of Brookvale and Ryans Congregations in the Presbytery of Iveagh, Co Down, died on 20 October 2011 in the 92nd year of his age and the 65th year of his ministry. He was born on 4 January 1920 to Andrew McCullough, a farmer in the district of Fenagh, Cullybackey, and his wife Ellen Jane. The family worshipped in the Congregation of Cuningham Memorial, Cullybackey, and home and Church together shaped the spiritual character of the growing boy. He attended Teesham Public Elementary School (1925-1934), moving to Ballymena Academy (1934-1939). At secondary school he developed a love for the game of rugby which he retained all his life. It was during a service at a local mission hall that the singing of Charles Wesley's hymn 'O for a closer walk with God' prompted him to respond personally to the claims of Christ. Hearing the call of God to the ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church, he entered Magee College, Londonderry, in 1939, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1943. He went on to the Assembly's College to study theology and completed his training in

1945. Following his licensing by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 3 July 1945, he was appointed Assistant to the Rev Graham Smith, Minister of Ravenhill Congregation, Belfast, who later became the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. This was a period of strong numerical growth for the Congregation and Dr Smith later commended his Assistant's part in this through '...his untiring labours, especially in the areas of visitation and young people's work...' In 1947 he received a call from the Congregation of Buckna in his home Presbytery of Ballymena where he was ordained and installed on 26 September. Now settled in his first charge, the following year he married Rhoda Hamilton, whom he met at the Portstewart Convention, on 30 March 1948, in Hillhall Presbyterian Church, Lisburn. They later became the proud parents of a daughter, Moyna, who in 1975 was commissioned as a short term missionary to Malawi with the Overseas Board of the Presbyterian Church, thus realising her father's earlier unfulfilled desire to serve overseas. In later years Mr McCullough was to recall with pleasure, times of mission, a Christian stewardship campaign and the building of a new Church hall opened in 1961, as highlights of his time in Buckna. Having given 23 years faithful service there, he moved to the Congregations of Ryans and Brookvale near Rathfriland where he was installed by the Presbytery of Iveagh on 31 July 1970. These were happy and fulfilling years moving among his people and speaking of Jesus, encouraging the young, arranging two missions and leading property improvements, until his retirement in 1985. During the years of his long ministry many entered the kingdom of God by the gateway of his devoted and loving witness to Christ as Lord and Saviour, and were supported and encouraged in their Christian walk from the pulpit and by the fireside. With these and his family we give thanks to God for this good and faithful servant.

The Rev Albert Allen Sleith, MA, BEd, DipEd, DMin, Minister Emeritus of the Congregation of Cregagh in the Presbytery of East Belfast, died on 7 November 2011 in the 79th year of his age and the 51st year of his ministry. He was born on 30 May 1933 the eldest of four children to Cecil Sleith, an Inspector with the Belfast Corporation, and his wife Annie, who lived in Dundee Street off the Shankill Road. He was raised within the Church of Ireland but in his teens he joined the Shankill Road Mission Congregation through his membership of the Boy's Club there. Educated at St Luke's Parish Primary School and Argyll Primary School, at the age of fourteen he left school and served his time as an apprentice joiner in Harland and Wolff's shipyard, but on feeling called to the full time ministry of the Church, he showed his commitment by attending evening classes at Renshaw's College to prepare himself for tertiary education. He went to the Magee University, Londonderry, graduated MA from Trinity College, Dublin, and completed his theological studies at the Assembly's College, Belfast. On completion of his studies, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 31 May 1960 and served as Assistant to the Rev Arthur J Barbour in the Congregation of Cregagh, Belfast, where he was ordained on 5 July 1961. Eager to equip himself with wider experiences he went to Australia in 1963 under the auspices of the Colonial and Commonwealth Mission and ministered in West MacKay, Queensland, and then in St Andrews, Fairfield, Melbourne. Returning to Ireland he assisted the Rev John Thompson in Fortwilliam Park Congregation, Antrim Road, Belfast, for one year, then moved on to service as a Chaplain in the Royal

Navy Fleet Air Arm from 24 November 1967 to 7 December 1971, stationed at Lossiemouth, Scotland, and Portsmouth, successively. Returning again to Ireland he accepted a call from Westbourne Congregation, Newtownards Road, Belfast, and was installed as Minister on 6 January 1972. These were troubled and difficult days on the lower Newtownards Road as the tensions engendered by the 'Troubles' frequently spilled over into riots. With neighbouring Ministers he worked hard to calm the situation often patrolling the streets surrounding the Church. The Congregation of Cregagh called him to be their Minister in 1976 and he was installed as Minister of the Congregation on 14 May 1976 remaining until his retirement on 31 January 2001. He gave himself to pulpit and pastoral ministry unstintingly, challenging mindsets with down to earth speaking and exercising a spirit of compassion. He was deeply interested in educational matters as evidenced by his completion of a DipEd course with the Queen's University, Belfast, and continued his personal studies graduating with a Doctorate of Ministry in narrative preaching from McCormack Theological Seminary, Chicago, in 1996. In the work of the wider Church he served as Convener of the War Memorial Hostel Committee 1977-1984 and Moderator of the Synod of Belfast 1992. He married Elizabeth Florence Williamson in August 1961 and three children were born to them – Allen, Stephanie and Gillian. Both his son Allen, and his brother James, are Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As well as travelling widely, he had a life-long interest in sport and physical fitness, enjoying, football, rugby, golf and cricket. While with the Navy in Portsmouth he completed a Commando Course and was awarded a green beret. 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 Hugh Denis McKillen, BA, Minister Emeritus of the Congregation of Whitehouse in the Presbytery of North Belfast, died on 20 November 2011 in the 86th year of his age and the 59th year of his ministry. He was born in Ballymena on 15 June 1926 to Hugh McKillen and his wife Myrtle, née Robb. High Kirk Congregation was their spiritual home and here Denis was taught the Christian gospel and learned to follow Christ as Lord and Saviour, although he attended the Boys' Brigade in the Congregation of Harryville. He was educated at Ballymena Academy, and proceeded to Magee College, Londonderry, followed by Trinity College Dublin from which he graduated BA. Following theological training at the Assembly's College, Belfast, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 2 July 1950 and served as Assistant in the Congregation of Alexandra with the Rev Rupert Gibson. During these younger years he was a keen rugby player and played for the Ulster Junior team as well as Ballymena and Queens. He was ordained and installed in the Congregation of Gilford on 7 May 1953 by the Presbytery of Banbridge. On a trip to Australia he met Myrtle Todd who was from Fintona. They fell in love, married, and started life together in the manse at Gilford where their two children, Timothy Robb, and Denise Patricia, were born. During these years the Congregation took over a disused cinema in the town and converted it into a church hall where various weekday activities were accommodated. In 1966 he accepted a call as Minister to the Congregation of Clontarf, Dublin, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster on 12 May of that year. The manse family became closely involved with

the life of the closely knit Congregation through various events and programmes which Mr McKillen initiated. During the year 1970-1971 he fulfilled the duties of Moderator of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster. The family moved to the village of Crumlin in 1972 where Mr McKillen was installed as Minister by the Presbytery of Templepatrick on 11 May 1972. A few years later he accepted a call to the Congregation of Whitehouse where he was installed on 16 June 1976 by the Presbytery of North Belfast. A member of the Congregation in those days recalls 'his great sense of humour and real interest in developing and encouraging youth in the congregation...' These were troubled years in the civil life of the city of Belfast which affected the Congregation, for in 1986 the Church property was subject to an arson attack and the halls badly damaged. Mr McKillen's readiness to roll up his sleeves and to put his shoulder to the task of rebuilding, gave a strong lead to his people to believe in and to invest in future life and witness. As well as attending to his congregational duties he acted as a Chaplain to the Throne Hospital seeing it as an extension to his pastoral work. We assure Mrs McKillen, son Timothy, daughter Denise, and wider family circle of the Church's prayers and appreciation of their loved ones years of service to Christ and his Church.

The Rev Warwick Smart, BA, BTh, MA, DMin, Minister of First Ballymoney Congregation in the Presbytery of Route, Co Antrim, died suddenly on 4 December 2011 in the 39th year of his age and the 11th of his ministry. He was born in Zimbabwe on 10 November 1973 to Alex Robert Smart and his wife, Ann Isobel, the youngest of four boys. When he was eight years of age the family moved to Plettenberg Bay, South Africa, where his father was employed as Town Clerk for eleven years. He attended Plett Primary School, then Grey High School, Port Elizabeth. Being gifted with a good mind he went on to the University of Pretoria (UPE) to study law. Coming from a non-religious background at UPE he became interested in Christianity, was converted to Christ and baptised at the age of nineteen. This persuaded him to study for the Christian ministry. He gained a BA from the Christian Institute, graduated BTh from Rhodes University, Grahamstown, gained an MA from UPE, and completed a DMin with Union College, Belfast, shortly before his death. He was licensed on 17 March 2001 and ordained on 1 February 2002. Meanwhile he married Andrea Lumbs, known as Andy, a student teacher, on 15 December 2001. Two children were born to the marriage, Nicholas who was born in South Africa in 2006, and Daniel who was born in Ireland in 2009. His first charge was Pinewood United Church, Durban which was Congregational and Presbyterian. Under his enthusiastic leadership the Congregation was re-energised. He persuaded the Congregation to renovate their rundown property themselves and started a Crisis Centre for victims of crime and rape in the locality. There followed a move to St Columba's adjacent to the University of Pretoria in the diplomatic and parliamentary district. By 2006 he and Andy had begun to explore the possibility of ministry in Northern Ireland – he had Irish roots on his father's side. He was received by the General Assembly and assigned as Assistant to the Rev Dr Ronald Savage in the Congregation of Stormont, Belfast, in 2006. Ecumenical in spirit he reached across divides and his lively out-going personality and innovative approach to worship quickly won him a place in the affections of the people. In 2009 he received a call from the Congregation of First Ballymoney and was installed there on 30 June, quickly

establishing himself as a larger than life and well-known figure in the town and wider area. However, he did not forget his Zimbabwean roots, establishing a feeding programme in connection with a Zimbabwean school, which his Congregation supported. His sudden death in December 2011 came as a great shock to all his friends, and especially to the people of First Ballymoney. We sympathise with his wife and children and wider family circle as they grieve a life so soon and so suddenly cut off and assure them of our prayers.

The Rev Jackson Crawford Buick, DD, MBE, died on 9 December 2011 in the 92nd year of his age and the 49th year of his ministry. He was born at Creavery, near Antrim, on 6 October 1921, the youngest of three children, to George Buick and his wife Margaret. His father, a farm labourer, moved the family to Scotland where he worked for a time as a miner before returning to live at Carngranny, Randalstown. In early years he suffered the loss of his older brother, James, and of his father who died in 1928. He attended Shane's Castle Elementary School and was brought up in connection with the Congregation of First Antrim. At the age of fourteen he started his working life in the Old Bleach Linen Company, Randalstown. Later he moved to the Flax Processing Factory, Muckamore, where there were better employment prospects. The Christian Endeavour organisation at First Antrim had an important influence on his spiritual development and he gave his life to Christ as Lord and Saviour after a conversation with one of the leaders. A few years later he fell in love with Margaret Jane McDowell, known to all as Daisy, and they were married on 9 July 1943. Over the following months the call of God to full-time Christian service strengthened within him and he was accepted as a worker with the Belfast City Mission, beginning his service on 1 March 1944 in the Ballysillan and Ligoniel district. For twelve and a half years Jackson walked the streets and wrapped the doors witnessing to Jesus Christ. His warm heart, straight talking and boundless energy won him the respect of all and many souls were won for Christ during those years. Feeling called to the ordained ministry he was accepted on a shortened arts course at Magee College, Londonderry, and the Assembly's College. A people person, academic study was not his natural bent, and financial sacrifices had to be made. His commitment was rewarded with successful completion of the course and he was licensed on 29 May 1962, serving his assistantship in the Congregation of Richview, Donegall Road, Belfast. There followed ministry in two Congregations, in Second Newtownards where he was ordained and installed on 20 May 1963 and then in Craigy Hill, Larne, where he was installed on 17 December 1970. He brought the same sense of call, energy, and dedication which he had shown in the City Mission and his work was blessed with growth, both numerical and spiritual. Then in 1982 his life took a different turn when he was installed as the Prison Chaplain for Crumlin Road Gaol and the young Offenders Centre at Hydebank, serving until his retirement on 31 October 1988. He was widely respected within the prison service for his work and Christian witness which was recognised with the award of an MBE on 15 June 2002. He continued his links with the Belfast City Mission as a Governor, and Superintendent of Ballyduff and Ballysillan, and was appointed Honorary Secretary. His gift for evangelism was fully utilised in the many evangelistic missions he was invited to conduct around the country, bearing fruit in the conversion of souls. He never forgot the pivotal

influence of the Christian Endeavour serving on the Council and for a spell as President. He was Joint Convener with the Rev GA Mitchell of the Irish Mission 1985 to 1990, Convener of the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training 1991 to 1997, a member of the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee of the Board of Social Witness, Chairman of Thompson House Management Committee for many years, and Moderator of the Presbytery of North Belfast 1987 to 1988. An Honorary Doctorate of Divinity was conferred on him by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland on 14 May 2004 in recognition of his service to the Presbyterian Church.

His wife, Daisy, predeceased him and we extend our sympathy to their son, Raymond George, and their wider family circle as together we give thanks to God for his servant and his example to us all.

The Rev Laurence Reginald (Rex) Pedlow, BA, MA, died on 26 December 2011 in the 91st year of his age and the 65th year of his ministry. One of two sons he was born on 22 March 1921 to William John Pedlow, a clerk, and his wife Anetta Pedlow, née Hilditch. He was brought up in connection with the Congregation of First Bangor and attended Bangor Central Primary School and Bangor Grammar School. Having decided to train for the Christian ministry he attended Magee University College, Londonderry, 1939-1941, Trinity College, Dublin, 1941-1943 graduating BA, and the Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 3 June 1945 and served as Assistant Minister in the Congregation of McQuiston in East Belfast. The following year the Congregation of Raffrey called him to be their new Minister and he was ordained and installed there by the Presbytery of Down on 17 September 1946. For four years he pastored this rural people until 1950 when he was called to the Congregation of St John's, Newtownbreda, Belfast, and installed on 22 November 1950. He established himself as a hard working and caring pastor to this growing Congregation. A second morning service was introduced in 1957 to cope with the numbers attending worship. Recognising the developing opportunity to Minister to the burgeoning suburban population in the wider area, he was instrumental in the planting of a church extension cause on the Saintfield Road which was erected into a Congregation on 10 January 1965. After nineteen years service in this busy city Congregation he and his family emigrated to the United States, where he became the Minister of First United Presbyterian Church, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, on 30 April 1969. This was followed by a call to the Congregation of Riverside Presbyterian Church, Cocoa Beach, Florida, where he was installed on 7 November 1976. Located near the NASA Space Centre the Church was the spiritual home of many of the scientific and technical staff engaged in the American space programme. Mr Pedlow had a variety of interests including music and was a competent organist and pianist. In younger days he enjoyed rugby and played Senior League Cricket for Downpatrick as a batsman and wicket keeper. He married Rita McDonald on 15 January 1947 who was a faithful helpmeet throughout the years of his ministry. They had two sons, John (Jack) and Paul. We extend to them and their wider family circle our sincere sympathy and the appreciation of the Church for the ministry of their loved one at home and abroad.

The Rev John McVeigh, BA, MDiv, Minister Emeritus of Gilnahirk Congregation in the Presbytery of East Belfast, Co Down, died on 31 January 2012 in the 67th year of his age and the 40th year of his ministry. He was born on 6 February 1945 to Samuel McVeigh, Company Director, and his wife Margaret Agnew McVeigh, née McIlroy. Raised in the Congregation of Belmont, he was educated at Belmont Primary School 1950-1954, Strandtown Primary School 1954-1956, and Sullivan Upper 1956 -1963. He went on to Magee College, Londonderry, 1963-1965 and Trinity College, Dublin, 1965-1967 graduating BA. He received his theological education at the Assembly's College, Belfast 1967-1968 completing at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, 1968-1971 achieving his Master of Divinity degree in 1971. During these years he gained practical experience of ministry as a summer assistant in Wattsburg Presbyterian Church, Wattsburgh, Pennsylvania, and as a student assistant in First Presbyterian Church, Merchantville, New Jersey. He also worked for one season as part of the summer staff at the PCUSA's National Conference Centre , Ghost Ranch, New Mexico.

Following theological training he returned to Northern Ireland and was licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 13 February 1972 and served as Assistant in the Congregation of Fisherwick, Belfast, where he was ordained on 3 September 1972 by the Presbytery of South Belfast. Called by the Congregations of Carnone and Convooy, County Donegal, he was installed there on 14 September 1975. He and his wife Meriel, née Craig, whom he married in that same year, settled to ministry in the beautiful surroundings of Donegal, and were blessed with the arrival of their two children, Patricia and Brian, during these years. In 1982 they moved to Gilnahirk on receiving a call from the Congregation there, being installed by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 29 September 1982.

These were troubled years in Northern Ireland and sectarian tension was high in the City of Belfast. Having had experience of cross-community ministry in Fisherwick with the Minister, the Rev Dr David Lapsley, John exercised a ministry of peacemaking and reconciliation, fostering links with St Colmcilles, Ballyhackamore, and Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock. He continued to maintain his friendships in America and in 1981 was invited to take part in a week of discussion on conflict and resolution in Minneapolis at the Church of his long-term friend the Rev Vivian Jones.

He served the wider Church on the Youth Board, as Convener of the Retired Minister's Fund Committee 1990-1995 and the Central Ministry Fund Committee 1995-2002, and as Clerk to the Presbytery of Donegal 1976-1982 and then the Presbytery of East Belfast 1995-2005. The Rev Dr David Lapsley described him as 'a man with great sensitivity to people...who loved parish visiting and who had a keen brain and was articulate.' His ministry was cut short by illness and he retired in 2005. We extend our sympathy to his wife Meriel, children Patricia and Brian and the wider family circle as we give thanks to God for our colleague's service and ministry.

The Rev John Andrew Todd, BA, Minister Emeritus of Garvaghy and Annaclone Congregations in the Presbytery of Down, died on 1 February 2012 in the 94th year of his age and the 66th year of his ministry. He was born in Belfast on 21 February 1918, the eldest of three children, to John Todd a drapery and boot merchant and his wife Edith. On moving to Boardmills he was raised in the

family Church of Killaney and 2nd Boardmills. He was educated at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, 1929-1936, and went on to study for the Christian ministry at Magee University College, Londonderry, 1937-1941, Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1941, New College, Edinburgh 1941-1942, and the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1942-1943. Licensed by the Presbytery of Dromore on 21 November 1943 he served as Assistant in the Congregation of Broadway, Belfast, 1943-1946. This was followed by ordination in the Congregation of Garvaghy where he was installed as Minister on 25 September 1946. There he remained for the whole of his full-time ministry also pastoring the Congregation of Annaclone which was added to this charge in 1963. A true pastor, he loved to be with people, taking a genuine interest in their joys and sorrows, walking with them through difficult times, and through both word and Christian example sharing the message of Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The publication of his history of the Congregation, Garvaghy Presbyterian Church 1800 to 1954, is testimony to his love for the place and its people. He was appointed Convener of the Youth Committee of the central Church in 1961 continuing until 1965, and for many years took a keen interest in the Guysmere Youth Centre, Castlerock, a venue for many happy times leading Boys' Auxiliary camps there. He served as Convener of the Boys' Auxiliary Committee, 1955-1965, and was Moderator of the Presbytery of Iveagh 1972-1973. In the wider community he chaired the Banbridge and Dromore Hospitals Management Committee for some years and taught English and RE part-time at Banbridge Technical College. For relaxation he enjoyed fly fishing and rugby, having played for Inst and the Ulster Junior and Senior Inter Provincial XV's 1942-1947 as a wing threequarter. In 1945 he played for his team against the All Blacks. He also played soccer for Cliftonville Olympic and had been an Ulster Schools champion Hurdler. He married Philippa McQuoid in April 1947 and two children were born to the marriage, a son, John David Marshall, and a daughter, Margaret Denise. He retired on 28 February 1983. We pay tribute to his life and service to Christ and the Church and remember his family circle in our prayers.

The Rev John (Jack) Stewart McAdam, BA, Minister Emeritus of the Congregation of Ballyblack in the Presbytery of Ards died on 5 March 2012 in the 96th of his age and the 66th of his ministry. He was born 6 June 1916, to James McAdam a Probation Officer and Police Court Missionary, and his wife Elizabeth Grace, née Thompson. Megain Memorial Congregation, in East Belfast, was the family's spiritual home, where his father, and his father before him, were leading elders, his father serving as Clerk of Session for twenty-three years. Both forebears were commemorated in the dedication of the McAdam Halls in the Church premises, and both were instrumental in forming the Mersey Street Mission in 1930. Jack was educated at Mountpottinger Primary School 1922-1929, then RBAI 1929-1933. Like his brother James who later followed in his footsteps, he decided to train for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and entered Magee University College, Londonderry, followed by Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1939. He studied theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast, from 1939-1942. Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 26 November 1942 he assisted in the Congregations of New Row, Coleraine, Sinclair Seaman's, Belfast, and Dunmurry. He was ordained to his own charge on 27

August 1946 in the united Congregations of McKelvey's Grove and Garmany's Grove in the Presbytery of Monaghan. Here he shepherded his flock until his call to the Congregation of Ballyblack where he was installed by the Presbytery of Ards on 2 March 1950, remaining there until his retirement on 1 September 1981. He served as Moderator of the Presbytery of Ards 1950 to 1951. Mr McAdam was faithfully supported in his ministry by his wife Elizabeth Irene (Renee) née McCourt, who in later years became the Principal of Loughries Primary School. Mrs McAdam died on 14 September 1987. Both were closely involved with the life of Church and community, in service and ministry to the glory of God, and are remembered by them with affection and respect.

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

FIT FOR PURPOSE – BECOMING THE CHURCH CHRIST WANTS US TO BE

1. At the last General Assembly it was agreed that the five aspirations agreed for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should become five Assembly themes and the Church encouraged at all levels to concentrate on one theme each year. This was developed by the Committee under the title "Fit for Purpose, Becoming the church Christ wants us to be".

2. The last Assembly agreed themes for 2012 and 2013, and the Committee is now recommending:

2012 – A prophetic voice, confidently proclaiming where it stands and who it stands beside, in a society which is increasingly secular and often opposed to Christian values and lifestyle.

2013 – A place of transformation, where people do not leave as they have entered but are challenged and changed, having encountered the living God present in the worship and the lives of his people.

2014 – A people of service and outreach, with each congregation seeking to identify the needs of the community where it is placed and encouraging its members to act as Christ's representatives in the place where they live and work.

2015 – A caring fellowship, welcoming the stranger and learning from one another, valuing the gifts of each individual, while offering prayer and pastoral support to all in need.

2016 – A community of global concern, learning from and sharing with our brothers and sisters in the world Church, while recognising with them those issues of concern for our stewardship of the world's resources where together we must challenge injustice, poverty and oppression in Jesus' name.

3. Recognising that if "Fit for Purpose" is to be owned and used by the whole Church Presbyteries will have a vital role to play, representatives of all Presbyteries were invited to a consultation on 16 November, 2011. Most Presbyteries attended and the Committee were very encouraged by the response.

4. "Fit for Purpose" then was launched in the Assembly Hall on 24 January, 2012. The Keynote Speaker at the event was the Rev James Burnett. As with any project of this kind it takes time for people to realise it is happening and become

involved. There might have been a better and more representative attendance on the evening, but many of those who were present went away enthused by the idea of “becoming the Church Christ wants us to be”. The Committee has also learnt from the views of some who were critical. For those who were not able to be present the introductory leaflet is reproduced as an appendix.

5. If this “Fit for Purpose” idea is to be really effective it will need the support of the leadership at all levels in the Church. The Priorities Committee is convinced this is a time when the Holy Spirit is leading the Presbyterian Church forward, with a greater sense of togetherness and enthusiasm in its mission. If this is to continue the whole enterprise needs to be bathed in prayer and so a “Fit for Purpose” Prayer Evening was held in the Assembly Hall on 17 April, 2012. Again the numbers attending might have been greater, but the atmosphere of enthusiasm and unity of purpose was clear. It is hoped that prayer for this initiative will continue throughout the Church and a Prayer Card is available.

6. The first theme, which is to be launched at the 2012 General Assembly, is “A Prophetic Voice”. The Board of Mission in Ireland has produced “Awake” materials on the theme and it is hoped that these will be widely used throughout the Church. Other Boards plan to issue publications or hold conferences during the year and these will be publicised under the “Fit for Purpose” theme, but perhaps more important will be the initiatives taken by Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to ask how the Church can speak prophetically into its local context. The Priorities Committee is praying that this initiative will really be taken up throughout the Church and if there are ways it can help in particular situations it will be very willing to do so.

STAFFING REVIEW

7. The last Assembly “instructed the Priorities Committee to initiate an independent review by an outside consultant of the core costs, including staffing, of each Board and report to the 2012 Assembly”. This was considered by a working group in consultation with the Board of Finance and Personnel.

8. The Committee accepted the advice that the employment of an outside consultant would be prohibitively expensive, but a way forward may be for a review to be carried out by the Personnel Department with agreed external validation. The review would be informed and follow on from the present job-evaluation process. It was also agreed that a staffing review would best follow on from any restructuring of Boards and Committees.

PRIORITISING RESOURCES

9. The Priorities Committee was not consulted this year by the United Appeal Board, but is aware of important decisions having to be made in balancing the distribution of United Appeal resources.

2015 SPECIAL ASSEMBLY

10. The General Board referred to the Priorities Committee the question of holding a PCI Residential Conference in 2015. A report will be brought in the Supplementary Reports.

APPENDIX

FIT FOR PURPOSE – BECOMING THE CHURCH
CHRIST WANTS US TO BE

SETTING THE SCENE

Priorities Committee

The Priorities Committee was formed in 2004 as an Assembly Committee under the General Board. It was tasked with providing co-ordination to the work of the various Boards and helping the General Assembly to identify priorities for the work of the Church at any given time.

It began its work by consulting with Presbyteries and in 2005 presented a report which identified a vision for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and a number of aspirations for what our Church may become, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To help achieve this, five key themes were identified to concentrate our thinking and inform our discussions. These were adopted by the General Assembly in 2011 as Assembly themes for 2012-2016, but it is hoped that they will also be taken up in appropriate ways and owned at all levels in the Church.

Coleraine Declaration, 1990

No work undertaken in the Church is ever entirely new. In looking back over previous statements the Committee recognised the vision already offered to the Church by past discussions. In particular, the prayer of the Coleraine Declaration is as relevant today as ever:

“God make us a joyful and expectant Church, confident in Him who has made us His people, and given us a heavenly destiny.

God make us no longer a Church of yesterday, but a Church of today and tomorrow.

God make us mindful of Christ’s living presence in our midst, leading us where He wants us to go, no longer conformed to this world, its mind-set and lifestyle, but transformed by the Spirit’s renewing power. To God be glory in the Church, now and ever.”

Our Vision Today

As the Presbyterian Church in Ireland we seek to be obedient to the crucified and risen Christ and to present His gospel in a meaningful way to our “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth”. Our vision is of a Church whose heart is in radical obedience to the word of God, which calls us both to proclaim the word of the gospel and manifest the works of the gospel. This is the calling of the Church in every age and location. It is a costly vocation, since it is the crucified Jesus who commissions us saying, “As the Father has sent me so I send you.” Our acceptance of that vocation will inevitably involve pain, loss and rejection, as well as joy, resurrection and great gain as we represent Christ and the gospel

in a fragmenting society. Our mission is to the whole world, but we particularly witness to a world that is intolerant of the uniqueness which is at the core of the Christian message.

Our Reformed Identity

Our reformed and reforming identity does not consist of merely understanding accurately the liberating truths that distinguish us, or of resting comfortably within the expressions and forms they have been given over the centuries, but in a continued and courageous outworking of our vocation to be a biblical Church in the generation in which God has placed us. This will involve renewed and dedicated study of the Scriptures, so that as a Reformed Church we will be committed to a view of Christian faith and presence which is not only personal and private but which is vibrantly public and engaged with the world for Christ's sake.

Central to our reformed faith is the challenge to call the world to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ and a new obedience empowered by His Spirit. By prayer we release that Spirit into our lives and into the Church so that it may teach, encourage, inform and correct us. We are called in prayer to open our lives and structures to the leading of His Spirit.

Our Aspirations

While only the Holy Spirit knows what the Church will be like in the future, the following characteristics have been identified to which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should aspire if it is to have a strong witness in the present time.

- A Church that is secure and confident in its Christian identity, so that all other identities (national, cultural, social and political) are secondary;
- A Church where the leadership shares a common vision, experiences growing unity and enjoys fresh clarity of purpose, while celebrating and making room for genuine Christian diversity;
- A Church that is balanced in its commitment to the great commission and the great commandment, placing emphasis not simply on mission to the world but on mission in the world.
- A Church which, rooted in the Bible, proclaims the gospel of grace with clarity in its preaching and demonstrates in its living Christ's power to forgive and bring new life;
- A Church that at every level opens her heart to those who are different from us, warmly welcoming the stranger, the immigrant, the vulnerable, the prisoner, the poor and marginalised;
- A Church in reciprocal relationship with the worldwide Church, in a way that displays a fresh humility to listen to and learn, and a confidence to share and serve that takes us from the end of the pew to the end of the earth.

Assembly Themes 2012-2016

The aim of providing these themes is to encourage the Church to think together in creative ways of how we may focus on some important aspects of our

Church's witness. It is not intended that everyone will do so in the same way, but rather by thinking around these key themes we may demonstrate our strength in diversity.

2012

A prophetic voice, confidently proclaiming where it stands and who it stands beside, in a society which is increasingly secular and often opposed to Christian values and lifestyle.

The prophetic voice offers a critique of life today and comments on where life appears to be going. It is a reflective voice which invites a response, an alternative voice which is critical of the status quo and a stimulating voice which challenges complacency. It is also an authentic voice where word is reflected in lifestyle.

In the history of the church there are many examples of prophetic voices where individuals or the church as a body have brought "a word in season". Sometimes the voice has been accompanied by action and other times the action has embodied the word.

Having a voice is essentially about communication. There is a need for a co-ordinated strategy in which the Church is prepared to set the agenda rather than respond to it. Church leadership must also be prepared to listen and to be challenged by a prophetic critique of what we are offering the world.

2013

A place of transformation, where people do not leave as they have entered but are challenged and changed, having encountered the living God present in the worship and the lives of his people.

Congregations should be places where people find their lives and faith challenged and transformed by worship, study and fellowship together. At times they should be places of comfort, but at other times the Spirit takes us out of our comfort zone in order to renew us.

If congregations are going to be places of transformation they must provide training, support and encouragement for members to make a difference. The challenge is not only to bring people to faith but to disciple them for work and service in today's world. Perhaps it is too easy for congregations to adopt a "convert and retain" policy rather than a "train and release" policy.

For this attitude to change, new thinking is taking place on the role and leadership function of Kirk Session. This may involve issues such as the length of service of elders and their pastoral/district responsibilities. The role and training of those involved in youth leadership, Sunday Schools and christian education also regularly need to be re-examined.

2014

A people of service and outreach, with each congregation seeking to identify the needs of the community where it is placed and encouraging its members to act as Christ's representatives in the place where they live and work.

In previous generations the church was often embedded in the community and acted as a community centre. Ministers had a high profile in the community.

Attending church was a norm that required no justification. Today the local church is largely marginalised and is widely considered to be, at best, an irrelevance and, at worst, a negative influence, keeping alive old enmities, highlighting division and contributing to community strife. This can encourage the local church to become primarily a place of shelter for the faithful, providing an oasis of comfortable certainties and fellowship. However, yielding to this temptation will inevitably lead to the local congregation's demise, as its membership grows older, dwindles and departs.

In recent years there has been a helpful emphasis on congregations serving the community in which they are set. This is reflected in many of the mission plans which have been drawn up in congregations. There is a growing recognition that before people are invited in to worship, the church must first go out in service to the community so as to show in action the love of God.

2015

A caring fellowship, welcoming the stranger and learning from one another, valuing the gifts of each individual, while offering prayer and pastoral support to all in need.

It is recognised that our congregations are not always as welcoming and caring as they should be. This is especially relevant at a time when visitors and strangers both from within Irish culture and beyond are coming to live and worship in our communities. There is a need to re-examine the ways in which we include outsiders and become enriched by them.

In the congregational family, while the role of the minister is pivotal, pastoral care should not be seen to be the responsibility of one person alone. The leadership should be jointly responsible not least for their own fellowship and support. Pastoral care teams should be developed, recognising the varied gifting of church members who need to be trained and recognised.

It is also noted that one weakness can often arise in the particular care of a minister and manse family at times of stress or illness. The role of the Presbytery, as well as the Kirk Session, needs to be more clearly understood so that appropriate help may be given.

2016

A community of global concern, learning from and sharing with our brothers and sisters in the world Church, while recognising with them those issues of concern for our stewardship of the world's resources where together we must challenge injustice, poverty and oppression in Jesus' name.

Much has been said about globalisation and the "global village". There is much greater ease in communication. Not only can we travel the world, but the world is coming to us. We are coming to see that we are very much part of the global community, and do not need to leave the shores of Ireland to engage with a broad range of people from cultural backgrounds quite different from our own.

So far as mission is concerned, living in an increasingly multicultural community it has been said that "geography is history". The emphasis on a home and overseas distinction is diminishing, and instead of talking of mission as being local or global, we may recognise a new word that has crept into mission vocabulary, "glocal".

Our concern for global issues should result in engagement with the world in its broadest sense. We must surely consider the economic, social, political and environmental issues as well as those which are more specifically spiritual. The gospel needs to be lived out relationally and incarnationally today, both at home and overseas. The Church must be a community which is globally engaged.

Over To You

The Priorities Committee is offering this programme to enable the Church to unite and think its way around common themes. None of this is prescriptive, indeed it will really only be successful if different groups at different levels of responsibility in the Church use it in their own way. It is the prayer of the Committee that as each theme is considered, in its rich diversity, so the whole Church will be enriched and renewed, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

To Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

PANEL ON ASSEMBLY STRUCTURES

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

1. The remit of the Structures Panel is:

To consider the structures and processes that are needed to ensure:

- *That the General Assembly is able to formulate policy effectively and in relation to its identified priorities at any given time;*
- *That the structures are sufficiently flexible and adaptable;*
- *That the structures allow for both representation and effectiveness;*
- *That there are agreed lines of leadership responsibility;*
- *That a positive relationship is established and maintained among the Boards, Presbyteries and Congregations;*
- *That the process of decision-making in Boards will encourage the wide engagement of congregational members;*
- *That the wider talents of congregational members are identified and utilised.*

In order to carry this out the Panel had consultations with the existing Board leaderships and with Presbyteries. The latter included three Focus Group meetings held in the Autumn.

2. Several responses refer to the Ad-hoc Committee on Priorities Report, 2003 – *“the central work of PCI primarily exists to resource and support the work of the local congregations in mission and ministry, and to enable the co-ordination and delivery of mission and ministry which would be beyond the ability of the local congregation.”* That has been recognised as an agreed principle by the panel from the beginning of its work.

3. Out of the discussions have come certain concepts which seem to be key to any re-structuring. The word ACCOUNTABILITY frequently appears, especially in the Presbytery responses. However, it is understandably used in a number of different contexts meaning slightly different things. The primary accountability must be to the General Assembly which appoints the Boards (and some Committees), receives reports from them and must approve their work. Yet it is clear that Presbyteries also feel that Boards should have an accountable

relationship to them and indeed to Congregations. The Panel has considered further the nature of the relationship between the Boards and the Courts of the Church – Congregation (Kirk Session), Presbytery, General Assembly – which must always be one of openness, trust and transparency.

4. Some Presbyteries have been realistic in recognising that there is not only a relationship gap between the Boards and Courts of the Church, but also between Presbyteries and Congregations. This may be increasing and often leaves Congregations feeling isolated and without support.

All Congregations, of course, are represented at the General Assembly where Boards, in theory, are called to account. But it is clear that something more is needed. It is equally clear that what is not needed, or welcomed, is direction. The Panel suggests that the key concept here is COMMUNICATION. There needs to be a regular flow of communication in both directions. Congregations need to make the central structures aware of their needs, hopes and achievements. Boards need to provide fresh thinking, information and guidance. There needs to be a creative interchange of ideas and in this internet age work needs to be done to find ways to provide a regular and helpful flow of communication around the Church. This may well include people going out from the centre, by invitation, to encourage local leadership in specific areas of their work.

5. There also clearly needs to be a greater sense of ownership of the work of the Boards by Presbyteries and perhaps here the key concept is ENGAGEMENT. In the past there has been a heavy emphasis on representation, but many Presbyteries acknowledge that this can be nominal and ineffective. There is a growing realisation that what is needed is genuine engagement with Presbyteries. At the very least there needs to be regular reporting at Presbyteries, by Presbytery nominees, of the work of the Board to which they have been appointed. Consultations with Presbyteries by Boards on areas of their work are useful at times, but Presbyteries need to find realistic ways of dealing with them and the central administration needs to ensure that the workload for Presbyteries is reasonable. Recently area focus groups have been helpful to Boards in gathering opinion.

6. It is actually at the General Assembly that Boards become accountable, yet most recognise that the present arrangements are at best inadequate and at worst confusing. There is an urgent need to look at the reporting mechanisms and method of debate to ensure that the vital issues are presented, debated and decided in a way that provides genuine ACCOUNTABILITY and OWNERSHIP. Perhaps not every Board should report to every Assembly; or Boards may only report verbally on the issues which need Assembly decisions with the rest of their work covered in the written reports. There are many things to be considered in order to improve accountability, not least whether the work of the Board adds value to the mission of the Church.

Part of the accountability of Boards to the General Assembly should also be to ensure that decisions made by the Assembly are implemented. For example, when the General Assembly sets priorities are these reflected in the work programmes of its Boards?

7. It is suggested that three groups be formed, drawn mainly from the Presbyteries but with representation also from the present Boards, to further explore the three key concepts above:

- (a) **COMMUNICATION:** How the Boards may communicate effectively throughout the Church, but especially with Congregations.
- (b) **ENGAGEMENT:** How Presbyteries (also representing Congregations) may be more engaged in the development of the work of the Boards.
- (c) **ACCOUNTABILITY:** How the accountability of the Boards to the General Assembly (representing Congregations) may be made realistic.

8. There have been other issues identified which require further consideration. The Panel would intend in future reports to comment on the following matters –

- (a) The structure of the Boards need not necessarily be the same as the structuring of offices, although each Board will need its own core staff. There may also be a case for creating “Departments” which support specific work in a number of Boards.
- (b) Key roles need to be clearly set out and delineated, particularly the distinction between the responsibilities and authority of a Convener and an Executive Secretary.
- (c) The size of Boards is a key consideration but must to some extent depend on the remits given to each one. Boards may not always be the same size.
- (d) Assembly Committees are part of the present structures but thought needs to be given as to how they are distinguished from a Board Committee or Working Group.
- (e) The balance on the Boards and Committees of age/gender/ geography/ skills needs to be considered.

9. Having held further meetings with (a) Presbytery Clerks and Moderators and (b) Board Conveners and Secretaries, the Panel now feels in a position to recommend five areas of General Assembly work requiring further consideration. These may, but will not necessarily, form the basis for future “Councils” – the word is used to indicate change from the present boards but is not the firm choice of the Panel. These are:- (a) General Assembly (its organisation and central responsibilities); (b) Ministry; (c) Mission; (d) External Affairs; (e) Facilities (Support functions e.g. Finance, IT, Personnel, etc.)

10. The General Board agreed to the setting up of the three “Concept” groups and five “Area” groups as outlined. It is recognised that the “Concept” group will need to have considered their remit in some detail before the “Area” groups begin their work.

11. The Panel has also considered a Timeline for the agreement and implementation of any changes to the present Board structures. If this Assembly agrees, the intention of the Panel would be to bring a definitive report to the 2013 General Assembly, with a recommendation that key staff be appointed to the new “Councils” during 2013-14 and the “Councils” appointed by the 2014 General Assembly.

PANEL ON CONSULTATIONS

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

The work of the Panel considering the Presbytery Consultation Process has not progressed as quickly as first hoped. This was partly so that its thinking might

be informed by the consultation with Presbyteries carried out by the Structures Panel. That confirmed the need for careful thought to be given to building a close and supportive relationship between Presbytery and Congregation. The consultation process should be part of that relationship-building. The Panel will have met to progress its work by the time of the General Assembly.

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. The terms of the 2009 General Assembly remit to the Doctrine Committee were as follows: ‘That the Westminster Confession, chapter 24, paragraph 3, states: “It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgement to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord”. Within the Church, there is a variety of interpretations held concerning what is meant by “to marry only in the Lord”. Such confusion arising from a variety of interpretations is unhelpful and is giving rise to pastoral difficulties and clarification is therefore required’.

2. The Committee produced a report which was discussed at the General Assembly in 2010. It was subsequently sent down for comment by the Presbyteries. Originally, the Committee had expected to re-submit a report, on the basis of these comments, to the 2011 Assembly. However, the substance and detail of Presbytery responses were such that we could not possibly consider them seriously as a Committee and do justice to them in time to present a fresh report in 2011. We have delayed until 2012 to allow the time needed.

3. Our first word is a word of gratitude to the Presbyteries which responded. Many went into considerable detail and a number of important substantive points were made. While Presbytery responses were mixed, there was a sufficiently large number of negative responses to warrant considerable concern on our part. Many were extremely critical of the report and regarded it as not only mistaken, but damaging. Two concerns were persistently expressed. One was that we had, quite generally, failed to clarify what we had been asked to clarify, in terms of the remit. The other was that, more specifically, where we were clear, we had departed from both biblical and Confessional teaching. We judge it right to draw attention to this reaction both because it was quite widespread and because it signalled the need for us to give plenty of time to examine these responses rather than produced a rushed revision for the 2011 Assembly.

4. As a preliminary to submitting this revised report to the Assembly, the Committee wishes to make two observations in connection with this reaction. Firstly, we acknowledge that it was, to a considerable extent, justified. The original report was flawed and we trust that the present one is a significant improvement. Marriage is a vital area of concern for the Church and we need both to get things clear and to get things right, as far as we possibly can. To the extent that Presbytery responses pulled no punches in pointing out shortcomings, we reaffirm our gratitude.

5. Secondly, in seeking to follow closely the terms of the 2009 General Assembly remit, we felt bound to ask three questions, when we produced the

2010 report: (a) What is the teaching of the Confession? (b) What is the teaching of Scripture? (c) What guidance should be given to the Church in light of (a), (b) and the terms of the remit? We could not start our work simply assuming from the outset that (a) it was clear what the Confession was teaching; (b) it was clear what Scripture was teaching; (c) Scripture and the Confession must clearly be teaching the same thing; (d) no variety of interpretation in the Church was theologically permissible. Obviously, we could not simply assume the contrary either. We mention this because some responses alerted us to the fact that the very terms of the remit could be understood in some quarters as assuming (a) to (d) above. Yet, we could only fulfil the task given to us if we started with an open mind on this question.

6. In the present report, we have altered the order in which we present the material. The report presented in 2009 was divided into three sections: (a) the Confession; (b) Scripture and (c) pastoral issues. It began with the Confession not because we regarded it as having priority over Scripture, but because the remit referred specifically to the Confession. However, Presbytery responses revealed that perceived deviation from the Confession was a cause of concern only to the extent and on the assumption that this was also a deviation from Scripture, a principle which, we assume, is shared by both the Doctrine Committee and the General Assembly. We have therefore judged it advisable to begin this revised report with biblical materials and proceed to make brief remarks on the Confession after that.

7. Amongst responses to the original report, we occasionally encountered differing views as to whether we had interpreted the remit too narrowly or too widely. On the one hand, it was felt that we had been too confined – that what was really called for was the adumbration of a theology of marriage, which would provide a context within which to discuss ‘marrying in the Lord’. On the other hand, it was felt that we had been too broad – that we had not been charged with the task of commenting on pastoral difficulties, only on the exegesis of the Confession and of Scripture. While we can see the force of both these reactions, we have judged that the remit remains best interpreted along the lines which we originally followed.

The teaching of the Old Testament

8. A number of Presbyteries expressed regret that the Report did not cite or consider passages from the Old Testament. It was pointed out that specific passages (a) were cited in the Westminster Confession, (b) underlay Paul’s teaching on marriage and unequal yoking in the Corinthian epistles and (c) were generally relevant in addressing the issue before us. Deuteronomy 7:3f and Nehemiah 13:25-7 were particularly prominent in this connection.

9. We certainly honour the Old Testament as Scripture. However, we need to exercise caution in the use of these passages in the context of our enquiry. The meaning of these passages, and others which make a similar point, may be clear enough in their Old Testament context. The question is: what exact application do they have today for the question of marriage between believers and unbelievers? In the OT, the choice that Israel had to make was between God and following his holy laws, on the one hand, and foreign gods or idols and following the detestable ways of the nations, on the other hand. Doubtless,

where a parallel situation applies today, the OT prohibition on 'inter-marriage' also applies. However, the context in which we consider marriage today cannot be described simply in the terms that obtain in the case of OT Israel. Two illustrations of this point may be given.

10. Firstly, in Churches today, including Presbyterian Churches, there is a mixture of what are sometimes called true and nominal believers. This reminds us of Paul's distinction between being a Jew inwardly and outwardly (Romans 2:29). But no such distinction applies in OT passages like Deuteronomy 7 and Nehemiah 13. If we applied such OT passages as these directly to the contemporary church, we could make no distinction at all between true and nominal believers within the church, for the only distinction made in the relevant OT texts is between Jews and outsiders; no distinction is being made within the community of the people of God. The point that we are making here concerns the citation of OT texts and their direct application to the situation which we face today. Obviously, we do not deny the significance of these texts, but we also accept that it is right for us to keep in mind the distinction between true and nominal believers in the churches, as we consider the broad question of marriage.

11. Secondly, the New Testament reckons with forms of unbelief which are not idolatrous. Jews who do not believe in Jesus as the Christ are regarded in the NT as mistaken and unbelieving, but they are not for that reason judged to be idolaters and their moral standards of conduct (in practice, not just by profession) might be as distant from that of the pagan nations abhorred in the OT as those of any Christian. They do not, therefore, fall under the ban prescribed in the OT in relation to intermarriage. Again, the only point that we are making here is that the passages as they stand do not allow us to derive comprehensive and straightforward conclusions in our present context. Non-idolatrous unbelief is obviously an important matter when we consider the question of appropriate partners in marriage.

12. These are the reasons why we do not begin our discussion of the issue of marriage under the terms remitted to us by referring to the OT texts. We shall be alluding to them in relation to the passage from 2 Corinthians shortly to be discussed.

The teaching of the New Testament: (a) 1 Corinthians

13. The biblical phrase which our Confession of Faith uses, and whose interpretation lies at the heart of our discussion, is found in 1 Corinthians 7:39, where Paul says that the widow should be 'at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord' (AV). These concluding words have been interpreted in different ways, including, e.g., 'only to someone belonging to the Lord' and 'only it must be a decision responsibly made in the Lord'. Are they, in point of fact, open to more than one valid interpretation? If so, which should be adopted? The main issue is whether Paul's phrase should be interpreted as meaning something along the lines of (a) 'with God's blessing; making a conscientious decision before the Lord' or whether it is more concrete: (b) 'you should only marry someone who is in the Lord'. An interpretation such as that of Calvin, namely, that (b) is meant, but that Paul also intends to say more than this, does not really affect the issue, since the question is whether (b) is clearly at the heart

of Paul's teaching, not whether Paul intends to say more than just that.¹ As a Committee, we are inclined to support this second interpretation: Paul is telling widows to marry those who are in the Lord. Two matters must be addressed in this connection:

- (i) Paul is speaking only to one group in the church, namely to widows. Is he simply applying to widows a wider principle that all Christians should only marry those who are in the Lord? To many, it may seem obvious that he is. Before we come to a conclusion on this, we need to do proper justice to the text and observe the wider context. Paul is making a concession; he actually encourages widows to remain single. We must not be misled here by a modern picture. Women at that time were routinely married at the age of twelve, at an age when we should normally call them 'girls' and not women in the contemporary West. They could be widowed by the time that they were thirteen. Possibly, Paul was resisting pressures for early remarriage.² But advocacy of singleness is consistent with his plea to other groups throughout the chapter. In it, Paul expresses the view that male and female singleness, whether for the unmarried or for widows, is preferable to the marital state, without demeaning that state.³ This of itself, of course, calls out for interpretation. What is the exact context and cause of Paul's teaching in this chapter and nature of the 'present distress' (ESV) which steers his pastoral direction (7:26)? Is it, e.g., imminent eschatological expectation or economic hardship or impending persecution? Whatever it is, the point is this: if we believe that Paul's advocacy of singleness in relation to marriage is not designed to provide us with a permanent biblical norm that we should apply today (and people will doubtless differ on this), we have to proceed with methodological caution as we determine the scope and the application of his teaching in 7:39. When we read what is specifically said about widows in a context where Paul expresses the conviction that singleness is preferable to marriage, we have to ask carefully what we can conclude about marriage in general from this particular text. Our contemporary Western situation is one where singleness for unmarried women (as for unmarried men) is not regarded as a social anomaly, but is judged to be a viable way of life, inasmuch as women, like men, are able to adopt a socially and economically viable lifestyle. Such was not the case in Paul's day. Male singleness was exceptional, but at least a man could be expected to support himself. Paul's teaching on widows in 1 Timothy 5 (which, in PCI, we do not follow) apparently assumes this

1 Calvin 'acknowledges the truth' of the interpretation that Paul is warning 'that they must not enter on the yoke of marriage with unbelievers, or be eager for their companionship' but he thinks 'that these words include more than that, viz., that they should enter on this second marriage reverently and in the fear of the Lord', *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1960) 168. Calvin thus strengthens (b) rather than supports (a).

2 On this, see particularly Anthony C. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2006), accompanying his more detailed commentary on *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans/Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000).

3 Possibly, the unmarried in 7:8 includes widowers.

discrepancy between the situation of women and of men. It may be that we should interpret Paul along some such lines as the following. It was generally assumed in the cultural contexts in which HE operated that marriage was inseparable from having children – childlessness was the cause and occasion of sorrow and shame within a marriage. We might presume that most of the widows mentioned in 1 Corinthians would have had children. Since Paul regarded child-bearing as a woman's responsibility in the created and fallen order (and perhaps that is how we should understand 1 Timothy 2:15, however interpreted in detail), it would have been easier for Paul, in normal social circumstances, to counsel singleness for widows than for unmarried women, for they would already have fulfilled their calling in the bearing of children. In summoning to singleness those who were unmarried, without repudiating marriage, Paul does not have his eye on a society that will continue and develop over a number of centuries. In such a situation, would he not have envisaged marriage more as a norm, in accordance with Genesis 1-2 and 9 (Ephesians 5:31-32), than as a concession, as he does in 1 Corinthians 7?

With these comments, we have not attempted to be dogmatic in our exegesis. So why have we engaged in this exercise in the course of this report? What bearing does any of it have on the issue before us? The significance of our discussion is that the possibility that our interpretation of Paul is on track means that we cannot draw firm conclusions simply on the basis of 1 Corinthians 7:39 about biblical norms for marriage partnership today. Supposing, for example, Paul were faced with a situation where he was envisaging the continuation of the generations over the centuries and there was a consistent shortage of unmarried Christian men, over those generations, in proportion to unmarried, unwidowed Christian women. Would he have instructed a Christian woman not to marry a God-fearing Jew? Would he have said that it was actually the *responsibility* of a Christian woman to marry such a man in this situation, given that child-bearing is part of the created order (though obviously it is not the vocation of all women). From 1 Corinthians 7:39, we simply cannot tell. *We are not at this stage of our report deriving any conclusions for our own time as we raise these questions.* The questions are hypothetical in the sense that they are not explicitly raised in the New Testament, but they are entirely realistic as we try to understand Pauline teaching against its social background. The only point that we are making here is that we are unable, just from Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7:39, to determine the exact scope and normative quality of his injunction to marry only in the Lord.

- (ii) How are we to interpret being 'in the Lord'? For many, the simplest and the obvious answer is: 'It means being a Christian'. 'Christian' is a word rarely used in the NT. Aside from Luke's mention in Acts of the fact that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians (11:26) and of Agrippa's question to Paul (26:28), the only use of the word in the NT is by Peter in his first letter (4:16). Peter strongly emphasizes, as does Paul, the continuity of the NT people of God

with the OT people of God: they are addressed, from the beginning of his letter, as ‘the elect’ (1:1). ‘Christian’ designates membership of a body.⁴ The elect, in the Old Testament, included the obedient and the disobedient, those true to Yahweh and wayward members of Israel alike. The NT characteristically continues the OT way of speaking, which is why those who are described as the elect, members of the new people of God, made up of Jew and Gentile, are a mixed bunch of people, including the faithful and the faithless. Paul addresses as ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus’ the whole Corinthian church (1:2), but this church included a whole range of people, as far as true faith and moral attitudes are concerned. Paul thinks of the church as sanctified exactly as Old Testament Israel was sanctified. Similarly, the letter to the Hebrews regards sanctification as no evidence of final salvation; on the contrary, like the OT people of God sanctified in the wilderness, the sanctified NT congregation is a group which contains both people obedient from the heart and those who are disobedient, what we earlier called ‘nominal’ and ‘true’ believers. One of the great doctors of the Reformed Church, Abraham Kuyper, was right to say that ‘the saints’ – the sanctified, set aside to be holy – ‘was provisionally the technical name [in the NT] for those who subsequently were called “the Christians”’.⁵

Jewish divorce contracts in Paul’s day used the phrase which Paul uses here: the divorced wife ‘is free to be married to whomever she wishes, only in the Lord’.⁶ Paul is applying to Christian widows a phrase which would have been familiar at least to Jewish Christians, a phrase more widely familiar because a part of it could be used in Graeco-Roman divorce certificates. When a standardised formula of this kind is used, we must be cautious when we explore the exact range of its application. Certainly, it seems clear that, when he uses this phrase, Paul is not making a distinction between true believers and nominal members of the people of God, i.e., the church, but, rather, making a distinction between the church and the spheres outside the church. He is thinking of a social issue (marriage) in community terms (church). We must not project our distinctions between true and nominal believers onto the Pauline phrase, ‘in the Lord’. That does not for a moment mean that such distinctions are unimportant; as in the case of our first point, we are *not* drawing comprehensive conclusions from this for our own time; we are *not* saying that it is a matter of indifference whether or not an individual in the church is a true believer, when it comes to approaching marriage. We are remarking strictly on the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:39, the text at the heart of our remit.

4 Compare, perhaps, the ‘Herodians’ = ‘members of Herod’s party’ (Mark 3:6; 12:13).

5 Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: its Principles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899) 335.

6 See David Instone-Brewer, ‘1 Corinthians 7 in the light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri’, *Tyndale Bulletin* (52) 2001, 225-44. For a more popular (and important) account of how our views of Jesus’ teaching on marriage and divorce are illuminated when we understand its background, see David Instone-Brewer, ‘What God has joined: what does the Bible really teach about divorce?’, *Christianity Today*, October, 2007, available on the web.

14. We trust that we have set out our position on this text clearly. We believe that the phrase ‘in the Lord’, which is the Scriptural and Confessional phrase at issue, is to be interpreted more specifically than just ‘making our decisions in the Lord’ and interpreted in terms of ‘marrying in the Lord’. At the same time, the whole of chapter 7 underscores the importance of the point made in our earlier report, namely, that the call to responsible decision-making, taking situation and context into account, is unmistakably issued by Paul to the Corinthians. As our first task is a correct and responsible exegesis of a biblical text in the context in which it was written, we have given reasons why appeal to a phrase in 1 Corinthians 7:39 alone does not settle the issue of who is to marry whom when that issue arises in a wider and often in a different context. We cannot make ready assumptions about the scope of the text without examining its exact context. We now turn to the other text treated in the earlier report: 2 Corinthians 6:14.

The teaching of the New Testament (b): 2 Corinthians 6:14

15. Because it is a text so often cited in discussions of marriage between those commonly described in our churches as ‘believers’ and ‘unbelievers’, we turn also to 2 Corinthians 6:14. Certainly, this is not a text specifically about marriage, as the context makes clear. But does it contain a principle which should be applied to marriage (along with many other issues)? Although Paul does not specify what kind of associations and practices the Corinthians are to avoid, idolatry appears to be at the heart of his concern, as 6:16 and the subsequent quotations from the Old Testament indicate. That is the danger against which he warns in this text. Two questions confront us. Firstly, who are the ‘unbelievers’? Secondly, what does it mean to be ‘unequally yoked’, to use a familiar, but not the only, translation of these words?

16. ‘Unbelievers’ is a Pauline word and it appears to have both a narrower and broader reference. Paul was involved in a struggle at Corinth and in the Corinthian epistles, as his gospel provoked opposition. ‘Unbelievers’ are actively hostile to the gospel; they are its opponents. That is the narrower sense of the word. But Paul’s use of the word in 1 Corinthians, where there is a high concentration in chapter 7, more widely applies to the heathen or the pagans, whether or not they are direct, up-front, active and aggressive opponents. What the term ‘unbeliever’ certainly does not cover in this particular context is every person who is not a committed Christian, including all traditional, god-fearing Jews and nominal adherents within the Christian fellowship, although we often use it today in this very inclusive sense. We agree with Charles Hodge’s comment on this verse, as far as it goes: ‘The distinction here was between Christians and heathens. People born within the pale of the Christian church, baptized in the name of Christ, and religiously educated do not belong to the same category as the heathen.’⁷ Again, let it be remembered that all that we are doing here is specifying the meaning and scope of the actual terms that Paul uses in their Corinthian context.

17. What does it actually mean to be unequally yoked; what idolatrous practices are involved? Calvin, observing that ‘here Paul attacks outward

⁷ Charles Hodge, *2 Corinthians* (Nottingham: Crossway, 1995) 133. Obviously, we are not aiming to reproduce all Hodge’s exegesis of this text.

idolatry and commands Christians to break all connection with it', bidding the Corinthians avoid 'defil[ing] themselves with ungodly superstitions', specifies the habit of 'frequenting the banquets of unbelievers', whereby 'they were sharing in their profane and unclean rites.'⁸ We agree with this line of interpretation, but we also agree that the principle which Paul states should be applied to a wider range of activities. Applying it will involve discernment, for we should need to work out what would and would not be a compromising association with unbelievers and Paul is eager, in both his epistles, to train the Corinthians in the habit of discernment. Still, it is clear to us that marriage counts as a case of being unequally yoked. We affirm, then, that Paul's principle embraces situations where a member of the Christian community is considering marriage to an 'unbeliever', as Paul uses the term in this verse.⁹ This is the appropriate context in which to refer to the OT prohibitions on marriage to idolaters. These teachings inevitably form part of the wide background to Paul's teaching here.

18. In remarking on this passage, we wish to prevent misunderstanding by clarifying our aim yet again. We are not, at this stage, drawing all the conclusions that may be drawn from the Corinthian correspondence (still less from the NT more widely) about Christian marriage today. We are confining ourselves to the interpretation of particular texts and not probing questions of wider, contemporary application. On the one hand, we seek to avoid reading into Paul's texts things which are simply not there. On the other hand, we seek to understand the full significance of those texts in light of the situations which face us today. However, before we move on to a consideration of this, we turn to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Westminster Confession of Faith

19. Our discussion of the Confession (from now on WCF) is brief, because, in this report, we have begun by attending to the biblical passages and there is not much to add at this juncture. Readers of this report may wish to compare the way in which WCF, explicitly or implicitly, uses biblical texts with the way in which we have interpreted them. WCF extends the scope of the verse in 1 Corinthians (7:39), which refers to marriage in the Lord, to include all Christians and not only widows. Our discussion of that text did not oppose such a theological extension in principle; we merely indicated limits on what could be inferred immediately from it. We interpreted 2 Corinthians 6:14, also cited in WCF, as applicable to marriage.

20. These, and the OT passages cited in WCF, are applied to 'professors of the reformed religion' – those who adhere nominally to the Reformed faith and who are thus called to live as Christians in the sense of committed discipleship. Those who make this profession are morally obligated to avoid marriage with three types of people: (a) idolaters, (b) those who are wicked in life; (c) those who maintain 'damnable heresies'. With one qualification, we judge that these are valid applications of the principles of Christian marriage. The one qualification is this. While we note that what counts as a 'damnable heresy' is not specified

⁸ Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1964) 89.

⁹ This is also Calvin's position: while the 'unequal yoke' does not refer specifically to marriage, the principle which Paul enunciates embraces marriage.

and we affirm the categories deployed in the WCF, we must exercise caution in relation to ‘Papists’, identified in 24.3 of the Confession. It is a word which has to be understood in its seventeenth century context, at which time the Roman Catholic Church was not a legal body in England and ‘Papist’ connoted political sympathy with foreign powers, as well as religious allegiance.¹⁰ Independent questions arise in relation to the Protestant interpretation of Catholicism, of course, and the question of whether or not the Roman Catholic Church today should be regarded as ‘idolatrous’ is obviously not for us to discuss in this report. However, we want to make clear that we uphold the general principle stated in WCF in relation to marriage in the Lord, as far as the actual ‘prohibited categories’ themselves are concerned.

Implications

21. What should we conclude? We have interpreted the phrase ‘marry in the Lord’ in Scripture and, briefly, in the Westminster Confession, but what are the practical implications of our interpretation?

22. In principle, there are two sorts of implications. One is in the area of pastoral guidance; the other, in relation to the conduct of marriage ceremonies. *It does not lie within our remit to address the second of these areas.* Questions may arise here both about the relationship between minister, Kirk Session and Presbytery and about premises and the use of buildings. Of course, we acknowledge the importance of these matters, but the Assembly has not asked the DC to address them. The question of pastoral guidance, however, is different. While the terms of the remit do not mention pastoral guidance, our discussion so far has been restricted to considering the texts both of Scripture and the Westminster Confession and we have not examined the bearing that these have on our situation and practice. By ‘pastoral guidance’, we mean an attempt to draw out the implications of our reading of Scripture (and the Confession).

23. The sharp end of the question, as we understand it, concerns the marriage of believers to unbelievers, to use common parlance. The word ‘unbeliever’ is widely applied in our churches both to those who are also called ‘nominal Christians’ – members or adherents of churches who have not exercised personal faith in Christ – and to those who do not profess Christian faith at all and have no connection with any church. Although biblical terminology and popular terminology do not always coincide, and our use of ‘unbelievers’ may be much broader than that of Scripture at certain points, we do accept that, within the church, there is both faith and unbelief, although it is impossible for us to assign everyone to the one class or the other and undesirable to think in terms of two watertight categories since, for all that we can judge, there is a whole spectrum of commitment or lack of commitment in the churches, as far as lively faith is concerned.

24. We have tried to set out carefully the context and the scope of Paul’s words. Should his teaching be appropriated today as a comprehensive instruction that forbids believers to marry ‘unbelievers’, including *both* nominal Christians *and* those who make no profession of faith at all? As soon as we ask this question, we realize how different our situation is from that of Paul. Our ministers have

10 See Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: reading its theology in historical context* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 2009) 315-7.

an official status in relation to state and society, one that authorizes them to officiate at weddings. Our question in relation to Paul is about the application of his teaching today, but his question to us might be: on what apostolic basis do ordained leaders undertake weddings as a matter of civic responsibility and obligation? This is not a red herring; we mention it to indicate the difficulty of moving easily from the Pauline to the present world when it comes to the range of questions surrounding marriage that face a minister. However, given (a) Paul's single-minded commitment to gain and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ and (b) his conviction that the church is a body set apart, as was Israel under the old dispensation, it seems to us that applying his teaching today means stating a clear general principle: *those who truly seek to follow Jesus Christ should marry only those who also truly seek to follow Jesus Christ or, to use our common terminology, Christians should only marry Christians.* While it is clear that there is a strong distinction in Paul's mind between members of the Christian community – whether they are nominal or true Christians – and those outside it, we believe that in a society where (a) there is a possibility of choice in the matter, on the part of those who are contemplating marriage and (b) singleness is socially and financially viable for the unmarried, the most obvious application of his teaching on marriage is the one that we have stated.

25. In calling this a 'general principle', do we allow for any exceptions? It is tempting to embark directly on an answer to this question, but we first have to ask a wider question about the use of the Bible in the church. In 1 Corinthians, we have a good example of the way in which Paul applies theological and moral principles in a new situation, the situation where a member of the Christian community is married to someone who is not (7:12-16). We find him consistently faced with new situations of various kinds, the matter of foods being a prominent example (Romans 14:1-23). He has no rule book by which to make decisions; guided by 'the Lord, who is the Spirit' (2 Corinthians 3:17) in his apostolic ministry, he brings to bear on the life of the Christian community the principles of the new order inaugurated through Jesus Christ. But (literally) millions of situations in different spheres of life have arisen since the founding of the new covenant church at Pentecost and Scripture does not explicitly address many of these. It is not difficult to see why this is so: we should need a Bible thousands of times larger than our present one in order to cover all the contingencies, using a vocabulary that would not have been understood by anyone in the times when it was written, in order to address situations that would not have been recognized by anyone.

26. It may appear that none of this applies to the question of marriage, about which there is explicit teaching in Scripture. To the extent that we have set out what we take to be the application of this teaching today, we obviously agree with this. However, it is impossible to go beyond a general application. Consider, just to give one example, a situation where a couple is co-habiting and where neither person professes Christian faith. They have their own child or children. One of them becomes a Christian. The minister has a decision to take: should he or she advise the couple to enter into marriage, although one of the couple makes no profession of faith? Allowing that there can be many complex variants in such cases, in our judgement, the minister would, generally speaking, be well advised to do so. (We trust that the reasons for this are evident.) This would not be in breach of Pauline teaching. On the contrary, it would be gravely

mistaken and irresponsible to use Scripture if we took pieces of Paul's teaching, e.g., from the Corinthian epistles, without attending to their scope or context and applied them indiscriminately in a different situation, without taking into account any specific factor involved in it.

27. When Jesus was asked about divorce, he told his audience how to interpret Mosaic legislation (Matthew 19:8; Mark 10:5). Given hardness of heart, provisions had to be made for the life of the Israelite community, ones which regulated that life, as far as possible, although they fell short of God's ideal. Although the new covenant dispensation marks a different epoch from that of the old, it remains the case that the church finds itself in 'messy' situations arising both from her own imperfection and from the wider sins and confusions of the age. Indeed, Paul's ministry takes place in such situations. God has meant his Church to be led by the Spirit, which means that we (a) always set before people what we discern to be God's will for his church and the world and (b) seek to move them in the direction of embracing that will, but also (c) find ourselves seeking to regulate, as best we can, situations where God's ideal is compromised and (d) wrestle to make judgements in situations peculiar to our own times, communities or circumstances.

28. Our conclusions about marriage in the Lord and Christians marrying Christians do not entail one single set of policies in relation to this question, when it comes to the performance of wedding services by ministers. We have stated what we believe is right for those who profess Christian faith to do. It is not part of our remit to suggest what ministers should do if there are some who profess faith but, nonetheless, propose to embark on a different course of action. The Church finds itself in a variety of situations, often messy. Its guidance, as the New Testament makes clear, comes from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit and the Word are not opposed, but wisdom and discernment are needed in understanding how to apply biblical principles in particular situations and to understand how biblical principles are to be inter-related in those situations. Ministers (and Kirk Sessions) have to take into account a number of factors, including the nature of ministerial authority and the quality of pastoral care, as they come to terms with the detailed exigencies of particular situations. We are certainly not saying that our decisions are simply situational, with no respect for theological principles; on the contrary, we have written this report because we think that such principles are crucial. What we are saying is that, once we have got hold of biblical and theological principles, questions arise about how they should be applied and that we are not trying to answer those questions.

Conclusion

29. In conclusion, we want to emphasise three things:

- (i) It is important to uphold marriage, understood as a relationship between man and woman, in the third millennium. Marriage is a lifelong covenant commitment made by one man and one woman under God, to each other, for intimate companionship and mutual support. It is the normative context for raising children and thus provides the basis for a stable human society. When people declare that they want to get married, we need to explore with them the nature of marriage. In Scripture, marriage is a creation ordinance: although

it signifies redemption (Ephesians 5) it is established as part of the order of creation and, in upholding it, we play our part in supporting God's order of (what is sometimes called in the Reformed tradition) 'common grace'.

- (ii) It follows that teaching about marriage and relationships is important in the churches. When this is done to the exclusion of wider teaching on a range of social issues, ministry becomes unbalanced, but we believe that it cannot be neglected in any congregation. Doctrinal, pastoral and missional concerns are inseparably interwoven as we seek the well-being both of the church and of the wider society. So the teaching provided in the churches should be public teaching, provided for all, in so far as we have the power to provide it.
- (iii) The imperfection of the church, like that of the people of Israel, for all the differences between them, results in a situation with which we are bound to wrestle: God's requirement, on the one hand, that we should be holy and blameless; the reality, on the other, that we are not like that. We find Paul, in particular, wrestling with this in his epistles and instructing the churches with both things in mind – the need to be holy and the necessity of being realistic. Holding these together can be difficult. If we neglect the realism, we neglect the very realities of the Church of Jesus Christ on this earth, to which he has called us to belong; if we neglect the holiness, we neglect the very things to which that Church is summoned. Discernment about what should be done in particular situations comes about when we take into account both these things, but we trust that we have set out clearly, in this document, what we understand to be God's will for believers in regard to marriage.

J PATTON TAYLOR, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met on four occasions since the last General Assembly. At the request of Presbyteries it appointed assessors to assist in eight situations of difficulty. The Committee is also responsible for the work of the Conciliation Working Group and is reviewing that work.

2. The Committee gave advice on a number of letters which had been received by the Moderator and/or Clerk of Assembly. These were replied to accordingly.

3. The General Board referred two letters received. The first, from the Co-Convener of the Church and Society Committee, the Rev Dr Lesley Carroll, requested that thought be given ahead of time to the response which should be given to invitations received during the "decade of centenaries". The Committee appreciated the concern and concluded that each situation would need to be considered in the situation of the time.

4. The Board of Social Witness Convener, the Rev Bobby Liddle, wrote to ask that the Church should have a well thought out position in advance of any possible scenarios where a minister or elder may be reported to be in a same-gender relationship. The Committee asked a working group, convened by

the Very Rev Dr Donald Patton, to prepare a report to give guidance to those who would be acting on behalf of the Church in such circumstances. It was recognised that such guidance would need to be considered with the General Assembly Report, 1979 and the Pastoral Guidelines agreed in 2006.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the year to consider matters and to work through matters of common concern. At the Committee's opening meeting time was taken to see how best the Committee can serve the members of PCI, with information as well as encouraging relationships, locally, nationally and inter-nationally, with others that journey with PCI in the Gospel.

Churches in Ireland Connecting in Christ

2. A great deal of work and time, thought and prayer went into the re-branding of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC).

3. At the April AGM Bishop Richard Clark, who with humour and wisdom has held the Presidency has passed the baton on to the Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It is of strategic importance at this time in the Churches journey together that one of the 'smaller' voices holds the Presidency. There is no better man for the job than Fr Godfrey with his wide experience of Church life here in Ireland, and wider, and he will with great humility remind us to listen well to each other. The Rev Dr Donald Watts was appointed as Vice-President.

4. The financial structures have undertaken a major overall making matters much clearer and making considerable progress in arresting the decline in reserves.

5. This is a personal point for me and in no way takes from the hard work done by those who have worked from Belfast but the two members of staff in Dublin have been very helpful for the work of church relations, mainly in Dublin but also for others in the Republic. The staff of ICC is to be congratulated for their wonderful use of social networking technology for getting information out. In so doing they have gone a long way to meet the challenge in developing and providing a voice for Ireland's Churches to connect with each other.

6. The Theological forum spent a lot of time over the past year, reflecting on and preparing for the Irish Inter-Church Meeting held in October. It was held in Edgill Theological College with an evening service in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church. The theme was 'Hope?' which was very ably undertaken by Professor N.T. Wright. The staff are to be deeply congratulated on a wonderful day. A blessing to all who were able to attend.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

7. Many reformed churches worldwide exist in situations where they are treated with hostility or the rights of their people disregarded as marginal, irrelevant, or even dangerous. The World Communion of Reformed Churches

(WCRC - www.wcrc.ch) offers an opportunity for churches such as PCI (a founder member) to stand in solidarity with reformed churches, including those in much less favourable circumstances than those facing PCI, to learn from and with them (e.g. through consultations on economic injustice, or the Global Institute of Theology) and to speak to governments and the United Nations with a united and prophetic voice alongside churches and peoples without a voice.

8. WCRC Europe holds an annual meeting of church leaders who discuss theological and societal issues they are facing. In March 2012 the Rev Dr Donald Watts as General Secretary of PCI and the Rev Cheryl Meban as a member of the WCRC Executive Committee, attended the WCRC Europe meeting in Vienna, which addressed the challenge of being both chaplains to forces, caring for their families and congregations, and at the same time speaking prophetically to those who send forces to serve. It also addressed matters of concern about WCRC as a whole.

9. The WCRC Executive Committee meeting in 2011 agreed a strategic plan which highlighted Mission as the first of its priorities, along with communion, justice, theology and ecumenical engagement, and including leadership development and regional empowerment among its key strategies. WCRC's Mission priority has contributed towards a constructive engagement between the Council for World Mission (www.cwmission.org) and WCRC which may go some way to helping refocus and empower WCRC in stimulating and energising the mission of the reformed churches in the world, both in reaching out to the poor and most marginalised peoples, and working for justice and peace for them. This comes at an important time, when WCRC has been undergoing particular financial difficulties, due in large part to the global financial difficulties, but particularly accentuated by the strength of the Swiss Franc (WCRC's offices are in Geneva, and the bulk of outgoings are therefore in salaries paid in Swiss francs) while the majority of monies come in in Euros and US dollars. Attempts to address the financial issues include the possibility of removing the offices and staff to a less expensive city. The Rev Cheryl Meban was part of a task team which met in Hannover to formulate some proposals concerning finance to bring to the Executive Committee meeting in May.

10. The Rev Cheryl Meban is one of four European representatives on the WCRC Executive, and will attend the Executive Committee meeting in Berastagi, Sumatra, Indonesia, from 7-17 May.

Conference of European Churches (CEC)

11. Following its Assembly at Lyon in 2009 the CEC set up a review group to consider how it might work more effectively. That group is now ready to report and consulting with member Churches prior to an Assembly at Budapest from 3-8 July 2013.

12. One of the Commissions of CEC, the Church and Society Commission based in Brussels, represents the member Churches interests at the European Commission and Parliament. This is an important and effective service.

LORRAINE KENNEDY-RITCHIE, Convener

COMMITTEE FOR THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The Committee met on one occasion this year, in December. It did not proceed to interview anyone this year.

2. Enquiries were received during the course of the year from six persons, two from within the UK and 4 from overseas. Three decided not to proceed; one is seeking a ministry opportunity elsewhere; one plans to make application in 2012/13; the Committee decided that one candidate was not in a position to be interviewed by them and suggested another route to follow.

3. The List of Ministers and Licentiates without charge was reported by Presbyteries as follows:-

<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 David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
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.
	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.
South Belfast	Rev KA Drury	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 RA Crooks	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev W J Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Dr Eliz Jamison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Carrickfergus	Rev DJ Paul	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

Derry/Donegal	Rev KG Patterson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev JC Teeney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Down	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.
	Rev S Armstrong	To be retained as Minister Without Charge (retired).
Dromore	Rev JD Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Kiran Wimberly	To be retained as Minister without Charge
Iveagh	Rev EG McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Route	Rev William Brown	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Dr Victor Dobbin	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

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

The Rev Dr Ruth Patterson reports:

During this past year, due to the recession, we have had to sell Restoration House which has been our base since we started in 1988. We are currently in the process of downsizing, looking for a much smaller property. However, we choose to look at this positively, believing that God is opening other doors. In the interim we are based in St Brigid's, Derryvolgie, and have been overwhelmed by the generosity of welcome and the hospitality shown to us. Our work of prayer and spiritual direction continues. I have become much more peripatetic, largely around Ireland, but also in Canada, the United States and France. The invitations and opportunities to speak at conferences and facilitate retreats are immense and very humbling. In Restoration Ministries we believe that we are called to be image bearers of hope, and continue to affirm that the best is yet to be.

The Rev Dr Paul Bailie reports:

Mission Africa (The Qua Iboe Fellowship) is one of Ireland's oldest mission agencies. In 2012 we celebrate our 125th anniversary, which, we believe, makes us the oldest independent evangelical Mission agency originating in Ireland. We have a series of celebrations planned for the year, emphasising God's mighty deeds in Africa down through the years, but also looking to the future with expectation that the Lord will continue to extend His kingdom in Africa. Our main event to celebrate our 125th anniversary will be held in Carnmoney Presbyterian Church on Saturday 29 September 2012 at 7pm, and all members of the General Assembly are most welcome to this service.

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 Africa evangelical denominations, and often with like minded western mission agencies.

The Mission has, at the time of writing, 24 full time missionaries currently deployed, with a further 8 new personnel preparing to depart for Nigeria within the next year. We give thanks that there has been a slow but steady rise in missionary personnel over the past number of years. We continue to operate a successful short-term programme of teams and gap placements. We also continue to operate branches in Scotland and England. As Chief Executive I have responsibility for strategic planning, administration of personnel, finance and partner relations, and I am particularly involved in promoting theological education in Africa through colleges and conferences.

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 and the Boards of the Church; I am particularly glad to have been able to serve the Church through some part-time teaching at Union Theological College.

COLIN HARRIS, Acting Convener

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

FROM THE REPUBLIC

Continuing Economic Crisis

1. The economic crisis continues to dominate concerns in the South. The Irish Government has continued to work with the troika to deliver national obligations largely in line with those negotiated by FF prior to the general election. The indications are that Ireland's reputation has improved somewhat internationally but this has been overshadowed by the growing crisis in the Euro zone, not least Greece, Spain and Italy. As one commentator put it, a year ago Ireland was Europe's problem now Europe is Ireland's problem. The latest watermark is the pending referendum at a date to be decided in respect of the European Financial Compact that will bind member states into greater fiscal discipline under a Franco-German initiative. Ratification only requires the agreement of twelve member states, but it will be interesting to see the reaction should Ireland register a no vote.

2. Meanwhile Irish families continue to suffer the exodus of emigration. Whereas this used to be confined to younger family members seeking job prospects in America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, now older people and whole families are following suit. In some cases families are literally cutting their losses and attempting a new start without heavy debts, negative equity and/or escalating taxes and cuts. For their part, banks and lending agencies are increasing pressure on clients for repayment and NAMA is putting more pressure on businesses to close and release equity. Several high profile cases have been

pursued through national and international courts but without a final judicial resolution.

Programme for Government

3. Last year we reported on the Programme for Government as stated by the incoming coalition. Several points were highlighted then which would be worth commenting on.

4. **Social:** Gay Lesbian Bi-Sexual Transgender issues are never far from the news these days, nor from government policy and legislation. Labour came into government promising to press for further gay rights and entitlements leading ultimately to a referendum on gay marriage. If a recent poll is to be believed some 73% of respondents have no problem with gay marriages being introduced to the Constitution. This, with the similar trends in the UK, would suggest further measures that will challenge Christian Churches in the years ahead.

5. **Crime and Justice:** little appears to have been done on the abolition of automatic entitlement to remission for prisoners. Under a new system, violent criminals and sex offenders will have to “earn” remission. More reports have been published in regard to Irish prisons with few surprises in their content. However, budget constraints will challenge the Government’s ability to deliver even on the measures that meet with proposals in the Programme for Government.

Presidential Election

6. After a much publicised and rather eventful campaign Mr Michael D Higgins was inaugurated on 11 November 2011 as ninth President of Ireland. Mr Higgins is something of an institution in Irish politics with his staunch socialist views and independent mind. He has promised an unashamedly academic approach to the Office and to his agenda for Ireland’s recovery. PCI was represented on this occasion by the Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow. Members of the Presbyterian Church might be interested to know that Sinn Fein continues to enjoy growing support in the country, not least amongst the new immigrants who neither know nor care much about their historical role. FF, by contrast, continues to struggle in their attempts to rebuild the party and restore its reputation. In early 2012 the President received an honorary doctorate from UCD in recognition of his contribution to academia, culture and the arts.

National Day of Commemoration

7. Each year PCI is represented at the National Day of Commemoration as the nation remembers all those who have served and died overseas with the Irish armed forces. The event last year took place as usual at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham on July 10 and was attended by the Moderator and the Rev Dr Robert Buick.

State Visits

8. Amidst all the doom and gloom the visits of Queen Elizabeth and President Obama lifted the spirits and improved the profile of the nation as a whole. The logistical challenges were significant but these were more than matched by the appropriate offices. It seems inconceivable given Ireland’s love for all things American, but the President’s visit was something of an anti-climax

such was the resounding success and impact of the Queen. This served as a fitting climax to Mary McAleese's presidency and her years of constructive work behind the scenes. When it came to the bit even hardened journalists were moved by the Queen's presence, decorum and bow at the Garden of Remembrance. This, and the Queen's few words in Gaelic, made a deep impression that symbolised for many the end of one chapter in Anglo-Irish relations and the opening of a new and more positive chapter in the years to come. Again, PCI was variously represented by the Rt Rev Dr Norman Hamilton (Moderator General Assembly), the Rev Alan Mitchell and the Rev Alan Boal (Co-Convener Church and Society). In February 2012 Ireland also hosted a three day visit by Vice President Xi Jinping of China. Ireland was the only European country on his itinerary and the authorities used the opportunity to promote commercial relations and goodwill. Investment from such an economic powerhouse could prove a boon in the coming years.

Dr Garrett Fitzgerald Funeral

9. On a sadder note the country observed a state funeral for Dr Garrett Fitzgerald between the visit of the Queen and the President. Dr Fitzgerald had enjoyed an academic and political career of some note and remained much in demand as a columnist and commentator right up until his death. Given his wife's Presbyterian roots and his own conciliatory stance it is unfortunate that the Church was not formally represented at his funeral. However, it is understood that no official invitations are issued on these occasions.

Closure of Irish Embassy in the Vatican

10. In a year of great symbolism the closure of the Irish Embassy in the Vatican should not go without comment. Opinions are divided as to the motives of such a move by an Irish Government, but few can doubt the impact. Feelings were certainly running high over the Vatican's perceived attitude in respect of the child abuse reports and enquiries; feelings that were strongly expressed by Taoiseach Enda Kenny at the time. Economic constraints have been cited for the closure but many see the move as a further expression of anger and an indication of Ireland's official independence from the Roman Catholic Church.

FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

Dealing with the Past

11. The Committee has been very aware that in all things Northern Ireland has still not managed to come to any agreement as to what to do with the past. While there remains a strong desire to 'get on with it' there is also the ever haunting reminder of things as they used to be. These reminders come in the form of dissident activity, in supergrass trials, in the continuing coroner's courts which we anticipate will run for decades and in the voices of victims who continue to seek truth and justice. So while the past is another country it is one which we visit and not only from time to time.

Decade of Centenaries

12. The Committee planned a conference Citizenship Covenant and Christ

for April 2012 at Belfast City Hall. At the time of writing invitations have been issued and the Committee is waiting in anticipation for the conference day to arrive.

Human Rights Commission

13. A new Chief Commissioner, Michael O’Flaherty, was appointed and took up post in September 2011. The challenges of the particular context of Northern Ireland have had to be faced and it is heartening to see the Commission addressing issues beyond what we normally dubb as ‘Troubles related issues’. There is much work that needs to be done and while there remains some suspicion of the Commission the Committee believe this can improve if the Commission works collaboratively and broadly. The work of the previous Commission is to be commended as they faced they very difficult task of gaining respect for the work of a Human Rights Commission. While it is the case that the Church is not always content to accept the work that the Human Rights Commission has to do or chooses to do there is an understanding of the failures of human societies to hold everyone in equal esteem and to provide for the needs of the weakest among them.

Welfare Reform

14. The economic situation is as challenging North of the border as it is to the South. Poverty issues continue to raise their heads and the experience of many Congregations is that their income has decreased. All around households are discovering that their money doesn’t go as far as it used to. Even social services find themselves facing challenges that they have not seen for some time.

15. The Welfare Reform debate has, therefore, been of interest and from Northern Ireland we have listened carefully to the debate in GB. Stormont will have its own decisions to make but clearly there is not enough to go around. The challenge is before us regarding those who are in poverty and the gaps across society become glaring not only in the tone of the debate about Welfare Reform but also in terms of opinions about work, those on benefits, tax etc. Opinions are broad and the purse is limited but there are few who are raising the deeper questions of priority in spending in the broader aspect of governance generally. There seems to be little time, space or will to have a debate about the morality of spending, for example, on weaponry as was raised at the debate in the Assembly Hall in February or on caring for those in need.

16. Clearly there are moral challenges which are concealed behind the immediacy of the debate about welfare reform.

17. As ever the Church is concerned to have a voice in the debate. Often the Church and Society Committee makes written response, sometimes with the backing of the General Board if there is time. This is useful and valuable and persists in keeping PCI on the record. The Committee has also identified the need for Christian people to be close to the debate and part of it. It is acknowledged that the Church regularly finds itself in places where debates are happening as people go to their weekday jobs and become the Church in the world. So the Committee is especially glad that Mr Lindsay Conway is close to the debate about Welfare Reform, along with the Board of Social Witness. The Committee commends him and all Christian people who are part of the delivery of governance to God and

assure them of our prayers as they face the cut and thrust of debate and decision-making.

Sectarianism

18. Last year the Committee brought a report regarding sectarianism. Much of that work has now passed on to the Good Relations Panel and the Committee wishes them well as they face these issues which so identify us and our conflict.

19. Last year the General Assembly encouraged the Committee to meet with representatives of the Catholic Church to discuss issues related to sectarianism. It is hoped to be able to include a report in the Supplementary Reports.

Prisons

20. Care for prisoners has long been part of the agenda of the Church given the Biblical mandate. It has, therefore, been with interest that Dame Anne Owers Report dealing with reform has been received. The Social Justice Panel, a formal body between the Social Witness Board and the Church and Society Committee, is in the process of looking at this document. More information will be included in the Supplementary Reports.

21. The resignation of Colin McConnell as Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service is noted at this challenging time of change for the whole Prison Service.

EUROPE

22. The Clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev Dr Donald Watts, continues to monitor the work of the Conference of European Churches' Church and Society Commission and serves on its Human Rights Working Group. This has almost completed a Human Rights Handbook. Its work can be found at www.ceceurope.org

FUTURE PLANS

23. Looking ahead the Committee realises that there is a very significant challenge to the Church to continue to make its voice heard in the public square. The Committee notes the lack of confidence that is often felt in this area and the consequent impression that many across the Church are disinterested. The Committee does not believe there is general disinterest, but rather believes that the Church understands the necessity for the Christian voice in debates across society and particularly as society continues to be restructured, North and South, post conflict and post economic collapse.

24. The Committee therefore reminds the General Assembly of the challenges the Church faces and encourages any way possible that thought may be given to release and support those who have competence in this area and to skill others who feel a vocation but lack confidence.

25. Plans continue for a conference focussing on economics and what learning there is for the Church from the crisis and collapse that has been experienced across the world. This conference will be held in February 2013 and by the time the Supplementary Reports are written there should be more information for members of Assembly.

LESLEY CARROLL, ALAN BOAL, Co-Conveners

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

1. This report will focus on four areas of the work of the Committee:
 - Building Good Relations
 - Environment Panel
 - Race Relations' Panel
 - Abrahamic Faiths

Introduction

2. Since there are many overlapping areas between Committees and Boards on the issues discussed and act upon by the Global Concerns Committee, an on-going discussion took place during the past year on how the voice of the different Panels will be best heard. For example, the work of the Environmental Panel may be included in the area of the Church and Society Committee or the Board of Social Witness. The Building Good Relations Panel's work overlaps with the work of the Church and Society Committee in some areas. The Panel for Race Relations could be included within the Mission Boards – and in particular BMI.

GOOD RELATIONS PANEL

The Rev Stephen Johnston reports:

1. Within PCI, Peacemaking has morphed in Building Good Relations and is increasingly recognised as an important aspect of our discipleship in a divided society.
2. The Good Relations Conference took place on 18 February 2012 in Carrmoney Presbyterian Church. There was a pleasing attendance, but also a sense that more Ministers might have attended.
3. The keynote speaker at the Conference was the PSNI Chief Constable, Mr Matt Baggott, who spoke on the theme of “Redeeming our Communities”. This personable and inspiring address was well received by all. A variety of seminars on the theme of building good relations with various groups was also well received. Overall, the feedback from the Conference was very good and will be followed through.
4. Five thousand bookmarks on the theme of “Presbyterians Building Good Relations – Making a Difference in a divided society” have been printed. It is hoped to get these distributed throughout our denomination as much as possible.
5. The Good Relations website is in the process of being updated.
6. Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions are urged to follow the example of the denomination in mainstreaming this matter of Building Good Relations. In particular, Ministers are encouraged to give a lead in ways that are appropriate and not compromising to the faith.
7. Feedback is welcomed at goodrelations@presbyterianireland.org.

ENVIRONMENT PANEL

The Rev Dr Robert Buick reports:

1. The Environmental Panel continues to monitor and respond to local, national and international environmental issues on behalf of the Church.

2. Young people tend to be more aware of such environmental issues, than previous generations and we have been delighted to welcome on to the membership of the Panel Mr A Downey, chairperson of SPUD.

3. Fitzroy Congregation's Caring for Creation Group has recently received an award from Eco-Congregation Ireland for their environmental concern, and they are to be congratulated for their efforts (see article on the web at ecocongregationireland.com).

4. The Panel hopes to write to Presbytery Clerks in the near future, encouraging them to ask Congregations to examine their energy usage and costs and the Panel hopes to provide information on how this might be reduced.

5. The Panel submitted a response to a Consultation document from DOE Environmental Policy Division on enabling legislation regarding National Parks. This has been under discussion for many years. However, the outcry following the decision to give planning approval for the development of a golfing resort at Runkerry near the Giants Causeway demonstrates the urgent need for such legislation. The Panel was hoping to arrange a visit to the Causeway area during autumn 2012 to meet with representatives of the National Trust and local residents even before this announcement had been made.

6. A visit to the Loughs Agency centre at Prehen, Londonderry has been arranged for 29 March, and it is hoped that members of the Panel will be joined by Presbytery Environmental representatives. Again this is a particularly relevant visit with recent confirmation of a drastic fall in Salmon stocks in the Foyle river catchment area over the past 5 years (BBC news 27/2/12).

7. The next European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) assembly has been announced for Amsterdam in September 2012, and we hope to send two representatives from the Panel to attend this and report.

RACE RELATIONS PANEL

The Rev Richard Kerr reports:

1. At last year's General Assembly, the Race Relations Panel was encouraged to continue resourcing the strategic mission of the Church as it engages with immigrants and minority ethnic people. This the Panel has sought to do in collaboration with internal and external agencies.

2. Strategic partnerships with other agencies of PCI have enabled the sharing of information and expertise which have been of benefit to the wider Church family.

3. This year the Panel's focus has been on creating a greater awareness of the opportunities and challenges to welcoming, accepting and integrating immigrants and other Ethnic Minorities into the life of Congregations.

4. To this end, the Panel has developed a resource, which will be made available to all Congregations, and through which local Presbyterians are encouraged to be more aware of, better understand and actively engage with the issues facing those whom they may encounter from other national, cultural and language backgrounds.

5. The Larne Immigration Detention Unit, mentioned in last years' report, is now operational, having opened in July 2011. Eight voluntary chaplains from

six different denominations in the greater Larne area provide a basic yet much appreciated “religious advice service” to the Unit. The Chaplains’ Committee of the Board of Social Witness have provided recognition and support for the project.

6. Grants from the Incidental Fund to Embrace (NI) and the Churches Asylum Network (ROI) have contributed to the excellent work of both organisations. The Panel would encourage all Congregations to avail of the resources provided by both. Of particular note is the very comprehensive Embrace website: www.embraceeni.org.

7. The All Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR), recognising that its work was done or had been taken up by a number of other bodies, decided to discontinue. The Panel would want to pay tribute to the pioneering work of the group and thank God for all they have achieved in highlighting issues facing immigrants to this Island.

8. The Panel is conscious of the wider and ever changing context of immigration legislation and enforcement. Sadly, the emphasis in politics and in the media rarely reflects the human dimension. Where possible the Panel has sought to provide a voice on behalf of those who could be easily ignored.

9. Immigration is significantly influenced by the turbulent economic times. The sheer vulnerability of immigrants to losing their livelihoods and for many, the lack of recourse to public funds, is of great concern. The Panel continues to monitor the situation.

10. Aware that such challenges are not in isolation, the Panel commends the important work being done towards building relationships in South Africa by the Vuleka Trust and Diakonia Council of Churches.

Abrahamic Faiths

3. The Committee expressed discomfort about attempts to build commonality between faiths. Since interfaith worship is not an option, the Committee felt that it should focus on two areas: (a) informing PCI and (b) dialogue about issues of mutual interest or concern – without getting into anything which suggests there is anything significant in common in terms of faith. Where this can be accommodated in the future, is an open question.

ANNES NEL, Convener

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON PLANNED GIVING

THE GRACE OF GIVING

FIT FOR PURPOSE

“The Grace of Giving” says, “be like God, be joyful, be generous”

A prophetic voice carries a challenge to society in the name of the Lord

“The Grace of Giving” lends credibility to the prophetic voice of the church.

A prophetic voice is one which runs counter to the widely accepted culture

“The Grace of Giving” challenges us to “give” instead of “get” in a covetous culture.

A prophetic voice calls us to joyful service

“The Grace of Giving” turns reluctance into freedom

A prophetic voice calls us to dream of what is possible

“The Grace of Giving” gladly releases the necessary financial resources

A prophetic voice calls for sharing the world’s resources

“The Grace of Giving” helps to turn words into action.

A. THUS FAR

A1. The Planned Giving Committee had its origin in discussions in the United Appeal Board. Two years ago the 2010 General Assembly passed the following resolution **“That the General Assembly support a Church-wide policy to encourage Presbyterians to plan their Christian generosity as a percentage of their income and appoint an ad-hoc Committee to plan how this policy may be encouraged throughout the Church”**.

A2. The 2011 General Assembly appointed a Committee to carry this forward and consequently the Committee came under the General Board.

A3. Since the 2011 Assembly the Committee has reported on two occasions to the General Board and this is our first report to the General Assembly. We envisage this initiative being continued over a number of years so that over that period of time the level of Christian generosity and the credibility of our profession of the Christian faith can be sustained and enhanced for the future.

A4. In October 2011 the General Board affirmed the Committee’s Strategic Aim document, which is reproduced as a part of this report, and asked the Committee to devise a plan which will enable “Planned Giving” to be promoted and taught through the General Assembly and the General Board, through Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Committees and Congregations so that people understand that this is how Presbyterians approach the challenge of Christian generosity.

A5. The Committee reported to the March 2012 General Board that the initiative should be called **“The Grace of Giving”** to reflect the fact that our faith, discipleship and associated generosity is a response to the Grace of God. When Paul encouraged the Church in Corinth to be generous he wrote “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; rich as he was, he made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of his poverty (2 Corinthians 8.9).

A6. This report gladly acknowledges that many Presbyterians are significantly generous in their sacrificial support in time and finance for the various organisations, programmes, projects and funds of their Congregations and of the General Assembly. This “Grace of Giving” initiative encourages a widespread and renewed commitment for the future.

B. THE CHALLENGE AND THE OPPORTUNITY

B1. Since the financial crisis in 2008, the national and international upheavals have been right at the top of our news bulletins every single day. The crisis was largely created by greed and now governments stumble on from month

to month hoping that one solution after another may solve the problem. It is not a far-away event. It is affecting us here in Ireland. Many innocent individuals and families have been adversely affected by it as people have lost their houses and jobs and some are trapped in debt and many young people cannot find work.

B2. However, not everyone has been seriously affected. It remains true that we live in one of the richest parts of the world and benefit immensely from it. Many of us enjoy remarkable levels of comfort and security undreamed of by previous generations. To this we may have become accustomed as if it is a right. That provides us with the opportunity and challenge to do much that is good. We recall that Jesus said “Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given”. (Luke 12.48).

B3. Money is dangerous for 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).

B4. Money is nevertheless a great resource, for used properly it meets needs, produces an out pouring of thanks, gives proof of our loyalty to the gospel and brings glory to God. (2 Corinthians 9.12-13). Money matters to God.

B5. It was Jesus who warned us that no one can serve two masters. We cannot serve God and money. (Matthew 6.24). He told his disciples not to lay up treasure on earth or be worried about food, drink and fashion (Matthew 6.25) but rather to lay up treasure in heaven and be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and what he requires of you and he will provide you with all these other things. (Matthew 6.33).

B6. We love God, and we trust God in so many areas of our life, but do we really trust Him with our money and our financial affairs? Are we really able or willing to trust God with our purses and wallets, savings and investments, mortgages and debts? God does keep his promises and if we follow his guidance we will be able to rejoice in His faithfulness.

B7. Christian giving is a part of our commitment, discipleship and worship and is a generous and joyful aspect of our response to God.

B8. The importance and priority of giving to God is evident in both OT and NT and is a matter of commitment, faith and compassion. While the obligation to be generous and to discharge one’s responsibilities to God and others is clear in both Testaments, there is a distinct difference of emphasis on tithing in the Old Testament and Christian generosity in the New Testament.

B9. The Old Testament contains examples of various tithing and offering practices, as well as examples of organised compassionate care. Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils of battle (Genesis 14.20) and Jacob conditionally promised to give God a tenth of all that he would receive (Genesis 28.22). It is recorded in Deuteronomy (12.5-7) that the people were to bring their burnt offerings and sacrifices, their tithes and special gifts, what they had vowed to give and their freewill offerings, and the firstborn of their herds and flocks and, in the presence of the Lord, they were to eat and rejoice because the Lord had blessed them. Every third year special provision was made through their tithes for the Levites, the aliens, the orphans, and the widows, so that they could eat and be satisfied. (Deuteronomy 26.12)

B10. Jesus, while not removing the obligation to tithe, warns the scribes and Pharisees that in their obsession with the minutiae of tithing they had neglected the weightier matters of judgment, mercy, and faith. (Matthew 23. 22-24)

B11. Following the Council in Jerusalem, tithing is not mentioned among those obligations to be fulfilled by Gentile Christians (Acts 15.28-29). Nor, apart from the references to the significance of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7, is tithing mentioned in the letters of the New Testament. Some, however, believe that the obligation to tithe automatically transferred to the Christian Church. Others hold that even if that is not the case, a tithe of our income is a challenge which can be freely and gladly embraced. The absence of stated obligation does not necessarily remove what may be an even greater financial responsibility and opportunity in the matter of Christian generosity.

B12. Malachi declared in God's name, "Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, 'How are we robbing you?' In your tithes and offerings!" (Malachi 3.8). Paul wrote "I am not commanding you, (I am not laying down any rules [Good News Bible]), but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others ... Each one should give then, not with regret or out of a sense of duty, for God loves the one who gives gladly" (2 Corinthians 9.7).

B13. Both Malachi and Paul see generosity resulting in widespread blessing from God, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. (Malachi 3.9). "... God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause" (2 Corinthians 9.8).

B14. Financial generosity may yield rich harvests, while poor giving results in poor harvests (2 Corinthians 9.6). We give generously to make a difference in the lives of many people. Having received the grace of God, we give gladly and generously so that others will know about the grace of God.

C. IMPLEMENTATION

C1. How can the "**Grace of Giving**" initiative be effective? Given the considerable amount of material that currently comes to Presbyteries and Congregations from Boards and the General Assembly, the Committee is reluctant to ask Congregations to be involved in a complex campaign this year.

We aim to keep it simple.

C2. We will propose that this General Assembly requests Ministers to preach and teach regularly and specifically about the importance of Christian generosity in the matter of how we use the money which we receive from salaries, stipends, pensions, benefits, investments and savings or from whatever sources our income may come. Preaching and teaching by Ministers is the key to the delivery of "**The Grace of Giving**" initiative in the year 2012-13.

C3. Money is a touchy subject and many Ministers may be reluctant to speak about it, so encouragement from the Assembly is important. People do not want in their best moments to live narrow selfish lives. There is blessedness and joy in giving.

We aim to keep it to simple choices

C4. Let us consider, in the first instance, what percentage of our weekly/

monthly/annual income we should give away. “Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what you have earned” (1 Corinthians 16.2).

C5. Many people find personal targets useful in the matter of Christian generosity. A target is a beneficial guide and challenge. Unless there is some good reason why not, we could freely decide to consider 10% of our take home income as a starting target. For some that might be too much, for some not nearly enough, as incomes vary widely as do circumstances. “If you are eager to give God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have to give, not on what you haven’t” (2 Corinthians 8. 11). Whatever the target, it should be serious and be the first charge on our loyalty. Challenges often bring out the best in us.

C6. We will then have to decide how that amount is to be distributed among many causes. Not all our giving will go through the Presbyterian Church in Ireland but the work of this Church requires the generous support of all its members so that, together, we can accomplish the many things which God wishes us to do and thus cause thanksgiving and bring glory to his name. (2 Corinthians 9. 12). We give to make a difference.

C8. Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth that he was not giving a command. However, he went on to write about the need to help one another. “Since you have plenty at this time, it is only fair that you help those who are in need. Then, when you are in need, and they have plenty, they will help you. In this way both are treated equally”. (2 Corinthians 8. 13-14). Paul is putting the affluence of some alongside the needs of others and is calling for an adjustment. (John Stott in the Grace of Giving)

C9. This will involve us in lifestyle choices. It may well be that we will choose to live more modestly so that we can be as generous as Christ would expect. In steady resistance to persistent advertising, we will choose between what we might want and what we actually need.

D. RESOURCES FOR MINISTERS

D1. Ministers may find some of the material in this report useful.

D2. In addition, the Committee proposes to send some resource material to Ministers in time for them to avail of it, should they wish to do so, in their preaching/teaching schedules for the months which follow the summer, Christmas and Easter. The Committee is well aware that the country is in a recession and that many of our members may be adversely affected and may need advice and practical assistance, so the resources bear that in mind. Kirk Sessions and Ministers might consider organising courses in financial planning.

D3. The pack will include:

- An explanatory letter
- Three booklets “The Grace of Giving”, “Giving for Life” and “Stewards in a Slump” References will be provided to numerous web sites which provide a wealth of material
- Resources on money management (Christians against Poverty)
- The Board of Christian Training leaflet on “Giving”

APPENDIX

STRATEGIC AIM - (Affirmed by the General Board October 2011)

The aim of the Planned Giving Committee is to encourage Presbyterians to move from ad hoc giving to generous **planned proportionate giving**, bearing in mind:

- (A) **THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
- (B) **THE LEVEL OF THE INCOME WHICH THE PERSON RECEIVES FROM SALARY, PENSIONS OR BENEFITS**
- (C) **THE IMPORTANCE AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROJECTS WHICH REQUIRE SUPPORT**
- (D) **THE NECESSITY OF PROMOTING THIS RIGHT ACROSS THE CHURCH.**

The stewardship of our time, talents and resources is a Christian responsibility and it is gladly acknowledged that while many people contribute generously to the work of their Congregation in time and kind, including regularly providing food etc. for functions, this Committee's limited strategic responsibility concerns financial generosity.

Immediate Context: Individuals and Congregations have generously deferred receiving some of their savings from the Presbyterian Mutual Society in order to assist others. The current national and international economic crisis has resulted in some people being in difficult financial circumstances. We need to be sensitive to this. Nevertheless we live in the economically privileged part of the world. The underlying principles of Christian generosity do not change.

A. THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

A1. "Rich as he was, he made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of his poverty (2 Corinthians 8.9)

A2. God so loved the world that he gave his only son (John 3.16)

A3. Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son (Ephesians 1.6)

A4. Each one should give, then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty, for God loves the one who gives gladly (2 Corinthians 9.7)

A5. Generous enthusiastic giving is a response to the generous grace of God and is one part of worship.

B. THE LEVEL OF THE INCOME WHICH THE PERSON RECEIVES FROM SALARY, PENSIONS OR BENEFITS

B1. "The General Assembly support a Church-wide policy to encourage Presbyterians to plan their Christian generosity as a percentage of their income" (2010 General Assembly).

B2. Our aim is to encourage Presbyterians to give proportionately to what they receive. It is not helpful to speak of average targets for each family as the levels of income vary so widely. We can speak about the need for people/families to give a percentage of what they receive. Within that overall percentage, decisions will be made about which funds and projects will be supported.

B3. We will encourage people, as part of their response to God's grace, to engage in an intentional/planned process which involves:

- (i) Determining the likely annual, monthly or weekly level of their income. People may choose to use nett income as a base figure i.e. income, less tax.
- (ii) Deciding on the percentage of that income which will be gladly given away and calculating that amount
- (iii) Deciding which causes will be supported, bearing in mind the needs of the local congregation and the mission and charitable work of the General Assembly. The church is central in God's purpose of worship, mission, witness and service.

B4. We will encourage people to consider first setting aside a percentage of their income (nett in the first instance) as a base level of generosity below which they will seek not to fall. In 2 Corinthians 8. 8 Paul wrote "I am not laying down any rules". While the New Testament instruction to Gentile Christians is not definitive in the matter of tithing as the Old Testament was to the Jewish people, the call to regular, systematic, liberal, cheerful, generous and exuberant giving in proportion to income, is a proof of the gospel (2 Corinthians 9.13) and could hardly be less than the law required.

C. THE IMPORTANCE AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROJECTS WHICH REQUIRE SUPPORT

C1. Giving helps to make mission possible.

C2. It is understood that projects/charities/emergency appeals should be supported which are additional to the funds of the Presbyterian Church especially when many mission agencies are struggling through lack of funds. Nevertheless, it is important that Presbyterians give generously to the Presbyterian Church. The local Congregation and the wider Presbyterian Church is that part of the Body of Christ to which we belong.

C3. It is incumbent on the leadership of General Assembly Boards, Presbyteries and Congregational Committees to provide the members of our Congregations with easily understood information about the funds which people are being asked to support and how these serve the overall mission of Christ.

C4. Information is important. People are glad to support what they understand and value. People often give generously to specific projects because they are easily understood. Do people know what their FWO is used for? Do Congregational Committees and Congregations understand the importance of the work supported by Assessments? Do members of our Congregations know of the work done through the United Appeal? Do members of the Congregation understand their Congregation's plans and priorities; what is routine but crucially important, and what is planned for the immediate or long term future?

C5. If people do not know how their money is used, why should they be generous?

D. THE NECESSITY OF PROMOTING THIS RIGHT ACROSS THE CHURCH

D1. A strategy/plan needs to be devised which will enable this to be promoted and taught through the General Assembly and the General Board,

through Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Committees and Congregations so that it becomes appreciated that this is how Presbyterians approach this issue of Christian generosity.

D2. We need to be careful that we remain focussed on this sensitive issue. It may be understood as part of our overall Stewardship of time, talents and resources, but if we try to cover everything, we will be in danger of covering nothing.

JOHN DUNLOP, Convener

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ELDERS' TERMS

The Ad-Hoc Committee considering the possibility of elders serving on Kirk Session for a fixed term has met twice during the year and hopes to bring a preliminary report in the Supplementary Reports, setting out the main issues which it is considering. It will also suggest some additional membership.

JOHN M FINLAY, Convener

PANEL ON FINANCIAL CRISIS

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

1. The Panel is relieved that after a very long time of uncertainty for Presbyterian Mutual Society savers the scheme of arrangement was finally agreed and a distribution made. Thanks are due to the many savers who waited so patiently and to those who worked diligently to bring about this result. They were thanked at the last General Assembly but the Panel still notes the contribution of many people with gratitude.

2. The General Assembly should also note that the distribution to smaller savers was only possible because many larger savers, both individuals and congregations, were willing to allow an additional voluntary amount to remain with the PMS supervisors. Indeed there was a greater response to this request than was needed. It was a welcome demonstration of the mutuality and concern which is shared widely within the Church.

3. It was intended that this might be the final report of the Panel, but as reported to the last Assembly it is hoped to reflect on lessons to be learned. One outstanding concern for the Panel, however, is the situation of those directors who face Court proceedings to disbar them from holding any future directorships. While pastoral care is being offered on a number of levels, it is the individuals and their families who face the daily stress of this unresolved action. Until it has been settled the Panel do not feel it appropriate to bring a final report. In the meantime the Panel makes two recommendations for immediate action:

- (i) that all reports and resolutions to the General Assembly should be carefully considered so that only work fully owned and approved by the Board is included;
- (ii) that the General Assembly should consider its relationship with any organisations over which it has no control and which is not responsible to the Assembly, but in common perception is considered to be "Presbyterian".

PANEL ON PENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

The Pensions and Assessments Panel was continued in case there were any matters referred to it, but it has not been necessary for it to meet. There is one outstanding item on its agenda, namely the possibility of establishing a “Remuneration Commission”. The issue is also of concern to the Structures Review Panel and the Pensions and Assessments Panel has referred it to the Structures Review. As the Panel’s work is now complete it will be thanked and discharged by the General Board but the General Assembly may also express its thanks.

PANEL ON JUDICIAL APPEALS

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

The Panel considering Judicial Appeals has made some suggestions to the Judicial Commission which is responding. A more detailed up-date will be included in the Supplementary Reports.

PANEL ON PASTORAL CARE OF MANSE FAMILIES

The Rev Gabrielle Farquhar reports:

1. The Panel continues to offer pastoral support to members of Manse families. They can phone and request to meet or talk with someone in complete confidence. When a person phones, the names of those experienced in Pastoral Care from the Panel are disclosed and a choice can be made. This service is not used as often as it could or should be. We all need someone to share with, knowing that what we share will be held in confidence. It is important, as Christians involved in ministry that we ‘care for ourselves’ properly. In order to give good Pastoral Care to others, we need to give attention to the physical, spiritual, social and emotional areas of our own lives.

2. The Panel acknowledges that there are still unresolved Pastoral Care issues to be faced within the Church. The issues which need to be addressed are more complex than finding someone to talk with. These issues are often not down to ‘stress’, as is commonly thought. They are multifaceted and have to be approached from many angles. The Panel is tackling this by, for example, communication with the Board of Christian Training – highlighting the frequent issues that materialise when a Minister is new to a Congregation. Some of this could be helped by more training in Management and Leadership skills.

3. PCI, at present, is conducting more Presbytery and Judicial Commissions than ever before. To cast blame on any one person or group within a Congregation is not the answer, nor is blaming the system. Sometimes it would appear that issues are left to fester, rather than being discussed, until it is too late. (*Mark 3 v25 ‘A constantly squabbling family disintegrates’*)

4. Alternatively issues are spoken of freely everywhere else except where they should be, giving rise to unnecessary hurt or misunderstanding. Problems

also seem to arise from unreal expectations on the part of Minister or member/s of the Congregation. Most of the work of the Pastoral Care Panel has come from these kinds of issues.

5. Have we as a Church forgotten that Jesus said ‘This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you’? (John 15 v12).

FOR INFORMATION

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

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Rev Ivor Smith reports:

1. The Historical Society has completed its first year in its new home at 26 College Green, Belfast, BT7 1LN; Tel. (028) 90727330. At the time of writing some major refitting work still needs to be completed, but our Librarian, Miss Valerie Adams, has well settled in and has been kept very busy answering queries of all kinds and helping callers engaged in very varied research. The opening hours are Tuesday and Wednesday 9.30am-1pm; 1.30pm-4.30pm; Thursday 9.30am-1pm.

2. In addition to the usual varied programme of lectures and the production of the annual Bulletin, the Society has published two booklets, including one on Dr James Morgan (first Minister of Fisherwick Place) by Dr Joseph Thompson; and another, Presbyterian Origins in Ulster, consisting of four reprinted articles on that theme from the pen of the late Professor AF Scott Pearson. Both sell for £3.

3. To mark the centenary of the signing of the Ulster Covenant the Society is hosting a Symposium on Thursday 20 September 2012 at 7.30pm in Malone Presbyterian Church Hall, chaired by Dr John Dunlop. Speakers are Gordon Lucy, Dr Trevor Morrow and Dr William Roulston. Everyone is welcome.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly authorise the General Board to agree a job description for Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary; to advertise the post and to bring a nomination in 2013 for appointment as Clerk Designate 2013-14 and Clerk of the General Assembly from September 2014.
3. That the General Assembly agree from 2013 that the cost of the Head of Press and Media post be met by the Incidental Fund.

Priorities

4. That the General Assembly approve the order of the five “Fit for Purpose” themes and commend the theme “A Prophetic Voice” as a focus for the whole Presbyterian family in 2012-13.

5. That the General Assembly note the work of the Structures Review Panel and ask for a definitive report in 2013.

6. That the General Assembly encourage the on-going work of the Consultations review.

Doctrine

7. That the General Assembly note the conclusions of the report on marriage of the Doctrine Committee.

Moderator's Advisory

8. That the General Assembly encourage the Moderator's Advisory Committee to consider ways to strengthen conciliation throughout the Church.

Church Relations

9. That the General Assembly appoint the following to:
 the Irish Council of Churches Executive: Revs John Brackenridge,
 Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie, Dr. Donald Watts.
 the Irish Inter-Church Committee: Revs Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie,
 Dr. Donald Watts.
 The Conference of European Churches Assembly (2013):
 _____, _____, _____.

10. That the following budgets be made available from the Incidental Fund:

Irish Council of Churches	£18,000
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£9,000
Conference of European Churches	£5,500
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	£1,500
Church and Society Commission, Brussels	£2,000
World Communion of Reformed Churches	£15,000

Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees

11. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees Committee on Ministers and Licentiatees without charge.

Church and Society

12. That the General Assembly encourage the Committee in their preparations for a conference focussing on economics in February 2013.

Global Concerns

13. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to engage with the opportunities and challenges of welcoming, accepting and integrating immigrant and minority ethnic people.

14. That the General Assembly commend the resources produced and provided by the Race Relations Panel and encourage congregations to make use of these.

15. That the General Assembly encourage the work of the Building Good Relations Panel and ask Ministers to promote this important aspect of the gospel message.

16. That the General Assembly approve the following budgets from the Incidental Fund:

To the Building Good Relations Panel	£3,000
To the Environment Panel	£2,400
To the Race Relations Panel	£7,000

Planned Giving

17. That the General Assembly commend the “Grace of Giving” initiative to the whole Church.

18. That the General Assembly, conscious of the difficulties in which people may find themselves in the current recession, call congregations to be aware that there may be individuals and families with whose basic needs local congregations may be able to assist.

19. That the General Assembly request ministers to preach and teach regularly and specifically about the importance of Christian generosity as a percentage of what is received.

20. That the General Assembly, while bearing in mind that circumstances vary widely, encourage Presbyterians, in the exercise of their joyful freedom and responsibilities, to consider setting aside in the region of at least 10% of their income (after tax) as a target for their Christian generosity.

Financial Crisis Panel

21. That the General Assembly thank those Congregations and individuals who generously left an additional voluntary contribution with the Presbyterian Mutual Society so that smaller savers might be repaid in full.

Pastoral Care of Manse Families

22. That the General Assembly continue to pray for the work of the Panel and encourage all Christian people to support and encourage one another so that the work of proclaiming the gospel can once again be given priority.

Incidental Fund

23. That the General Assembly approve the following budgets from the Incidental Fund:

Work of the General Board	£6,000
Fit for Purpose – Prophetic Voice	£5,000
Church and Society	£5,000
Planned Giving Committee	£1,000
Pastoral Care of Manse Families	£1,000
Conciliation Panel	£1,500
Churches’ Legislation Advisory Service	£2,300
Church Architecture Committee	£1,000

Presbyterian Historical Society

24. That a grant of £17,750 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

General

25. That the General Board with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 272 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS**Anent Par 76(e) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 76(e) of the Code the words “proportional to the amount of stipend paid,” be deleted.

Anent Par 235 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 235 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

235. (1) **Within the total income of a congregation** certain items are designated as Assessable Income and include –

- (a) Weekly Freewill Offering;
- (b) Income for Stipend;
- (c) Income for the Central Ministry Fund;
- (d) Sunday and other collections for general congregational purposes;
- (e) Rental income retained for general purposes less related expenditure including financing costs on related loans;
- (f) Income on general bequests;
- (g) Any other general income on which no restriction has been applied by the donor.

(2) Money received by way of repayment of Income Tax on a contribution shall be treated as part of that contribution.

(3) Assessable Income does not include collections for building and repairs, repayment of debts and other designated objects approved by the Presbytery with reference, if necessary, to the Board of Finance and Personnel, monies raised in Sunday School or Church organisations (other than for general congregational purposes), collections for the United Appeal, World Development or other religious and charitable objects, bequests, grants and restricted endowment income.

Where a congregation adopts the Weekly Freewill Offering method, the Congregational Committee shall provide envelopes and appoint a WFO Secretary to supervise their distribution and return.

Anent Par 313(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 313(1) of the Code the words “on the stipend paid to the minister in the preceding year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted and the words “on Assessable Income,” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 318(B)(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 318(B)(2) of the Code the words “in the preceding financial year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted.

Anent Par 320(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 320(2) of the Code the words “assessed on the stipend paid to the minister in the preceding financial year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted and the words “on Assessable Income,” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 325(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 325(2) of the Code the words “on the stipend to the minister in the preceding year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted and the words “on Assessable Income,” be substituted in their place.

DONALD J WATTS

SPECIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. **The Commission appointed to consider any appeal against a Presbytery decision not to nominate an applicant for the Accredited Preacher Course** met on Monday, 27 June, 2011 to hear the Appeal of Mrs Hanneke Marshall against a decision of the Ballymena Presbytery not to endorse her nomination to the Board of Christian Training for interview as a candidate for the Accredited Preacher Scheme.

Mr Mervyn Morrow QC was appointed chairperson.

It was agreed that the Appeal should not simply be a technical Appeal but decided on its merits.

2. FINDING

Appeal of Mrs Hanneke Marshall against the decision of the Presbytery of Ballymena, made on 3 May, 2011, not to endorse the nomination of Mrs Marshall to the Board of Christian Training for interview as a candidate for the Accredited Preacher Scheme.

(a) The Special Commission appointed by the General Assembly met on Monday, 27 June, 2011 to hear the appeal of Mrs Hanneke Marshall against the above decision of the Ballymena Presbytery.

(b) The decision appealed against was noted from the Presbytery minute of 3 May, 2011.

The reasons for the appeal, as stated on the Notice of Appeal dated 14 May, 2011, were also noted.

The relevant minute of the Presbytery Students Committee, dated 29 March, 2011, was also tabled. It stated:

“Based on the interview, Committee observed that Mrs Marshall’s comments on personal faith were vague, and that her understanding of Scripture appears not to be Reformed.”

(c) Having heard the oral submissions of the appellant and respondents and having considered the written records submitted, the Commission finds as follows:

- (i) The Commission accepts the assurances of the Presbytery representatives that they had never questioned Mrs Marshall’s personal salvation or her present Christian faith. The Presbytery Students Committee found that she was vague in her verbal explanation of her salvation experience and that this inability to articulate disqualified her from becoming an Accredited Preacher, who in preaching would be required to present spiritual truth clearly. This defect was so serious that the Presbytery Committee did not believe it could be remedied by the training provided for Accredited Preachers.
- (ii) The Presbytery Students Committee also understood that Mrs Marshall held the view that not all of Paul’s teaching was to be regarded as Scripture.

- (iii) During the hearing the Commission, and the representatives of Presbytery, heard Mrs Marshall give a clear account of her faith. It took note that this stage of the process is a nomination for training at the end of which there will be an assessment to determine if accreditation is to be given or withheld.
- (iv) In her initial presentation to the Commission and in the discussion which followed, Mrs Marshall stated her belief that, “All Scripture is inspired” and, in response to a direct question, declared that she accepts the doctrine of Scripture as set down in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Holding, as Mrs Marshall does, that the apostles applied the Gospel to new situations in the early Church and that while all Scripture is inspired it is not all equally useful, is fully in line with Reformed theology.
- (d) For these reasons the Special Commission allows the appeal and directs that the Board of Christian Training interview Mrs Hanneke Marshall as a candidate for the Accredited Preacher Scheme.

3. The Commission noted that it is also to consider how such Appeals should be dealt with in the future. The Rev Noble McNeely indicated that the Board of Christian Training is giving this some thought and the Commission agreed to await the result of the Board’s deliberations. A further report will be brought in the Supplementary Reports.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev Dr S A MATTHEWS
Secretary: Rev W J HENRY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report summarises the work of the Commission from March 2011-February 2012. Matters dealt with include: the terms of the leaves to call granted to eighteen charges, the reviews of the financial terms in various leaves to call, the terms of a linkage created by the Commission, and reports on the work of the internal Committees of the Commission.

2. These decisions, which in the past might have been regarded as “routine”, now reflect the fact that the Church must respond to a rapidly changing situation. Sometimes there are new opportunities opening up for mission and ministry which should be grasped, but also sometimes Congregations with a long and proud history find that they are faced with declining numbers and an uncertain future. Leave to Call under Reviewable tenure is now being used more frequently. One part-time leave to call has been issued. Leave to call under the Deferred Linkage legislation is being considered in two cases.

3. The report shows that the Commission not only has to wrestle with the dilemmas this new situation presents, it also has to plan for the future. The Commission has reflected on new models for the provision of ministry which will meet the needs of the new future into which God has called us. The report sets out the options which have to be considered where leave to call using the existing configuration of ministry is not given. The Commission is in the early stages of considering how a group of mainly small Churches might share ordained ministry with the support of structures like the Accredited Preacher scheme. The Commission has also engaged with the Structures Panel.

LEAVE TO CALL A MINISTER

4. It should be noted that this is only a summary; there may well be conditions attached to the Leave to Call which are not recorded here (e.g. Reviewable Tenure, Restricted List, Part-time, additional income for the Minister). Expenses are “Initial Ministerial Expenses” and are to be kept under review and paid in accordance with the procedures agreed by the Board of Finance and Personnel.

Congregation	Stipend		Expenses
Upper Clonaneese	£20,586	[2011]	£5,700
and Lower Clonaneese	£5,196	[2011]	£1,850
1st Killyleagh	£16,000	[2011]	£3,750
and 2nd Killyleagh	£16,000	[2011]	£3,750
Caledon	£7,800	[2011]	£2,500
and Minterburn	£15,700	[2011]	£5,000
Knock	£41,000	[2011]	£7,000
Sloan Street, Lisburn	£28,000	[2011]	£7,500
First Omagh	£25,782	[2011]	£7,500

Millisle and Ballycopeland	£25,782	[2011]	£7,500
Tullylish	£15,471	[2011]	£4,875
and Gilford	£10,311	[2011]	£2,625
Kilbride	£34,000	[2011]	£7,500
Crumlin (Part-time Leave to Call)	50% of AMM		£3,750
Glenwherry	£26,000	[2011]	£7,500
Trinity, Ahoghill	£28,000	[2011]	£7,500
Trinity, Boardmills	£AMM		£7,500
Wexford	€4,180	[2011]	€880
and Enniscorthy	€5,320	[2011]	€1,120
Windsor	£30,000	[2011]	£7,200
Grange with Craigmore	£AMM		£7,500
First Saintfield	£35,000	[2011]	£7,500
Cregagh	£31,000	[2011]	£7,875

(Note AMM = Appropriate Ministerial minimum)

CONGREGATIONS LINKED

5. During the year one linkage was agreed:

1st and 2nd Killyleagh

The Union Commission linked these Congregations on the following terms:

i. That the Congregations of First Killyleagh and Second Killyleagh be linked on 31 May 2011.

ii. Each Congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finances.

iii. Each Congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church.

iv. In the choice of a Minister the two Congregations shall act as one Congregation and the two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.

v. The Presbytery shall initiate a consultation on the development of the linkage no later than five years from the date of the Installation of the new Minister involving the two Kirk Sessions, with input from the full-time Minister of the linkage. The Presbytery shall report the commencement of the process to the Union Commission and shall forward its final report and recommendations to the Union Commission no later than six months after that date.

vi. Stated Service times and venues:

(a) that normally the Morning Services will take place jointly on alternate months in the respective meeting houses;

(b) that normally the Evening Services will take place jointly alternating between the two meeting houses (i.e. Morning Worship in First Killyleagh and evening worship in Second Killyleagh and vice versa);

(c) that times and venues of these services may be varied as the two Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine, allowing for the sharing of services on appropriate occasions;

(d) if agreement cannot be reached on the venues and times and frequency of services the final decision shall be made by the Presbytery or by a Presbytery Commission appointed for that purpose.

vii. That the Stipends be £16,000 (2011) for each Congregation and initial ministerial expenses £3,750 for each Congregation.

viii. That the Minister shall reside in a Manse provided by Second Killyleagh.

ix. That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of this Manse be borne in the proportions 50%/50%.

x. That Holiday Supplies, and other shared expenses not included in 9 be borne in the proportions 50%/50%.

xi. That the directions of the Union Commission be observed in respect of First Killyleagh Manse and Manse property.

AMALGAMATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF NELSON MEMORIAL

6. The Commission has continued the on-going consultation with the Kirk Session of Nelson Memorial Congregation and the North Belfast Presbytery. The Commission is pleased to be able to bring to the Assembly by resolution a proposal for the amalgamation of the Congregation with another Congregation.

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES

7. The Deputy Clerk informed the Commission that, with the high number of students for the ministry entering training, projections indicate that the number of vacant charges was likely to reduce significantly over the next few years. The Commission noted that this alleviated some of the concern originally expressed about the large number of vacancies. However it also noted that there continued to be a need to address the other issues involved in considering leave to call in marginal situations. These included the financial implications for the CMF assessment in giving leave to call where a large amount of on-going support from central funds would be involved, the need to ensure that the talents and abilities of our Ministers are fully developed and employed and the need to make available some Ministers for new missional projects and team ministries in large Congregations.

OPTIONS WHEN LEAVE TO CALL IS NOT GRANTED

8. The Commission recognises the disappointment that results when it feels unable to grant leave to call to a particular charge. To assist in the consideration of the various options open when such an eventuality arises the chart in Appendix 1 was drawn up and is made available for information to all members of the General Assembly.

MEDIUM TERM STATED SUPPLY

9. In 2007 the Commission reported to the General Assembly its policy that, except in cases where the installed Minister of a neighbouring Congregation is appointed Stated Supply, the position is not intended as permanent and will normally be terminated by the Commission after two years. In view of the need for greater flexibility in ways of providing ministry which has been expressed in the debate concerning "Ministry, Finance and Mission", following consultation with Presbyteries, the Union Commission reports to the Assembly a change of policy in which the Commission is now open to ministry being provided in the

medium term on the basis of Stated Supply. The Commission would now like to be able to use this mechanism to enable a retired Minister to take up medium-term part-time ministry in situations where there is no expectation of imminent further developments. It is understood that there is a clear distinction between this medium-term provision and other situations where stated supply ministry is to give a breathing space so that the Congregation may prepare for another long term solution and where limits will continue to be placed on the appointment.

STATED SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS

10. During the past year the Commission, in co-operation with the appropriate Presbytery, has renewed a number of previous nominations for a further period.

RESTRICTED LIST

11. During the year the Union Commission considered its use of the provisions in the Code for declaring charges to be 'Restricted List Charge' and for declaring Ministers eligible for such charges. The Commission recognised that the main reason for the use of this legislation falling into abeyance was financial – Restricted List Charges are augmented and those eligible for them are normally at the top of the appropriate ministerial minimum scale.

12. However, it was further recognised that there was another significant problem with using the current legislation, namely that while Par 274(5) adequately describes the process whereby a charge becomes a Restricted List Charge, Par 193(1)(c) is simply too open (i.e. not restricted enough) in declaring who is eligible for such charges.

13. The Commission agreed to maintain its policy of not currently granting leave to call by way of Restricted List, but also agreed that an overture be presented to the 2012 General Assembly amending Par 193(1)(c) of the Code to a more acceptable form for any potential future use.

DEFAULTING CONGREGATIONS

14. In 2011 the General Assembly revised Par 318 of the Code. This revision established a procedure whereby Congregations defaulting on their quarterly payments to stipend and or assessments are first referred to the Presbytery for support and action. If the Presbytery cannot resolve the matter the Finance and Personnel Board then refers the case to the Union Commission which has been given appropriate powers. The Commission has established guidelines to be of assistance in dealing with these difficult situations.

PAR 57 IN AUGMENTED CONGREGATIONS

15. The Commission has consulted with two Presbyteries concerning property projects in Congregations in receipt of augmentation to pay for their ordained ministry. The 2011 Assembly amended the Code so that the Commission has a role in such situations. This enables the Commission to look at all the circumstances including the question of whether the funds to be used come from restricted or unrestricted income; but it also empowers the Commission to deal with the anomaly that a Congregation which can afford to fund an extensive property project may still be claiming augmentation to pay for its ordained ministry.

PAR 57(3) AND HOME MISSION PROPERTY

16. Following consultation with the Clerk of Assembly the Commission concluded that no additional overture was necessary to amend Par 57(3) of the Code to protect the rights of the Board of Mission in Ireland regarding benefiting from the assets of a Home Mission Congregation at the point of closure of that Congregation, as outlined in Par 300(4). Par 57(3) will be interpreted in the light of Par 300(4) in such situations.

CONSULTATION WITH THE STRUCTURES PANEL

17. The Commission has engaged with the Structures Panel in its important review of the structures of our Church. Commission representatives set out the present position which is that the Commission deals with some matters where the decision may only be taken by the Assembly itself or by a Commission acting on its behalf. Each vacant Congregation has a right to present its case for leave to call to this representative body which includes Ministers and Elders from each Presbytery. The Commission seeks to take into account the various factors which should be considered in making the decision. Presbytery representatives sit together with representatives from the Finance and Personnel Board, and representatives from BMI. The Commission is very conscious that Congregations now raise the money to pay the CMF assessment in very challenging circumstances where the very financial viability of some Congregations may be at stake. Congregations with a very strong commitment to local mission sometimes struggle to find the finance to fund the projects they wish to operate. Commission members therefore feel a real sense of stewardship in taking decisions which mean that money must be allocated from the Central Ministry fund to support ordained ministry. In recognition of this the Commission brings an overture to the Assembly which would add the Convener of the Pensions and Assessments Committee to the ex-officio membership of the Union Commission. The same overture also updates the Code by substituting the term "Strategy for Mission Convener" for the term "the Convener of the Home and Irish Mission Committee" which reflects the membership of the Commission already reported in the Directory. The Commission also benefits from the change of mindset with regard to the importance of the mission of the Church which has been created by the work of BMI, and the insights which the BMI representatives bring to debates within the Commission. The Commission has before it the vacancy forms completed by the Congregation, and the Presbytery Comment Form in which the Presbytery has an opportunity to present its view of the situation. In the case of Home Mission Congregations it also has a report from BMI. The verbal presentation made by the congregational representatives is listened to carefully, as is the opinion of the Presbytery. Hopefully a consensus emerges about the way into the future, but in the end, particularly where there are divergent views, the Commission bears the responsibility of making final decisions on behalf of the General Assembly.

REVIEWS COMMITTEE

The Rev Dr Michael Barry reports:

18. In accordance with Par 236(2) of the Code and arising out of other circumstances the Reviews Committee reviewed the stipend of the following Congregations.

Congregation	Stipend
Drumbo	£31,008
Ballyholme	£32,160
Drumminis	N/C
Redrock	N/C
Rathcoole	N/C
Seaview	N/C
Mountpottinge	N/C
Ballysally	N/C
Burnside	N/C
Donegal	€10,000
Maze	N/C
Abbey Dublin	€18,500
2/3 Rathfriland	N/C
Trinity Omagh	N/C
Gillygooley	N/C
Castledawson	N/C
Curran	N/C

Kirkpatrick Memorial requested expenses reduced from £6,300 to £3,300 and stipend increased by £3,000 to £38,000

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Rev Peter Gamble reports:

19. Additional Pastoral Personnel are employed by Kirk Sessions in a variety of roles. Some carry out work amongst children and young people, others work with families and still others are tasked with outreach and evangelism. Even in these times of financial difficulty investing in staff is still seen as a good use of resources and in the past year twenty Congregations were given approval to create new posts and four others were given approval to extend the contracts of existing staff.

20. If Kirk Sessions or Presbyteries are investigating the possibility of appointing an APP it is advisable to contact the Convener of the APP Committee as soon as possible in order to avoid any pitfalls. When it comes time to make an application to create or extend an APP post then the route for approval is Peninsula, Presbytery, Union Commission.

21. This year guidance was given to one Presbytery regarding extra-parochial work undertaken by a Minister. It is essential that Ministers seek approval in advance of any paid work to be undertaken if it is more than six hours in any week.

EXPENSES AND FEES SUB-COMMITTEE

The Rev Robert Bell reports:

Travel Expenses

22. The Commission, through its Expenses and Fees Sub-Committee, gives guidance to Congregational Committees about Travel Expenses and bases its recommendations on information available from the motoring organisations, on an average of 14,400 business miles per year. For 2012, in the context of significant increases in motoring costs, the recommended figures are as follows:

Northern Ireland: £6,300 Republic of Ireland: €9,500

23. Ministers recording a higher business mileage should be paid more, while a lower amount may be appropriate to those who do not record as many business miles.

Supply Fee

24. The level of the Supply Fee is determined by the Code, Par 238, and for 2012 this remains at £60 (€100) single, and £90 (€150) full.

25. Travelling expenses should be paid in accordance with the rate set for attendance at Assembly Boards, currently 14p (22 cents) per mile.

Household Charge on Manses in the Republic of Ireland

26. Following an undertaking given to the General Assembly in 2011, the Committee sought clarification on this issue. It is the understanding of the Committee that a residential property is exempt from the Household Charge if, on the liability date, the residential property is owned by an Approved Charity. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is listed as such an approved charity.

MANSES COMMITTEE

Mr Alastair Giffen reports:

27. Through its Manses Committee, the Commission dealt with a wide variety of manse issues of which the following are the most significant.

28. The Congregation of Banagher was given permission to demolish its vacant manse, as it was deemed to be in a poor state of repair and liable to be vandalised.

29. The Ministers of Dervock and Kilbride were each given permission to vacate their respective manses and to move to their own homes, both being within twelve months of their proposed retirement dates.

30. The Congregations of Dervock, Kilmore, Mountjoy and Urney and Sion were given permission to lease their manses during their respective vacancies.

31. The Congregations of Ballygowan, Clogherney and Sixmilecross and Waringstown have continued to keep the Commission advised of progress as they seek to provide replacement manses.

32. The Congregations of Ahorey, Anahilt and Kirkubbin were each given permission to draw funds from their respective manse investment accounts to use for other designated Church purposes.

33. The Congregation of Knock designated an existing property owned by the Congregation as its new manse.

34. The Commission also issued further clarification relating to the inspection and testing of both Electrical and Domestic Gas installations in the manses of vacant Congregations.

35. Other Congregations, particularly in linkages where the use of one manse is shared, were given advice regarding which costs could be deemed to be on-going maintenance and therefore shared among the Congregations involved, and those which could be classified as being alteration or improvement and should therefore more fairly be borne by the manse-owning Congregation alone.

36. In addition the Manses Convener gave advice on a variety of other matters relating to manses or manse land.

37. In view of difficulties caused in the past by a lack of certainty among some vacant Congregations regarding the future of their manse, the Commission would remind all concerned that Leave to Call will generally be delayed until firm decisions on this matter have been agreed.

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT FOR MINISTERS IN PASTORAL CHARGES

38. During the past year the Union Commission considered the issue of holiday entitlement for Ministers in pastoral charges.

A. The current formal position is arrived at by a combination of both a paragraph in the Code and a decision of the 1979 General Assembly, namely:

(a) Par 195(11)(d) of the Code states:

- (i) *(11) call by a Congregation to a Minister shall include –*
- (ii) *(d) a promise also that the cost for a holiday pulpit supply for one month annually during vacation will be met as a congregational expense.*

(b) The General Assembly Minutes of 1979, p 99, res 17 states:

- (i) That Congregations should consider granting their Minister holidays, which would include a Sunday, following Christmas and Easter.

B. Over the years the understanding of annual holiday entitlement has 'evolved' to range between the following two extremes:

- (a) Ministers who take four weeks annual holiday plus simply a Sunday after Christmas and after Easter.
- (b) Ministers who take six weeks annual holidays (4 weeks plus one full week in lieu of Christmas and one full week in lieu of Easter) plus, in some instances, a significant additional number of Bank/Public holidays.

C. This variance in interpretation has raised a variety of issues:

- (a) Many Ministers and Congregations seek to know exactly what holidays Ministers are entitled to, because they genuinely desire to do what is right.
- (b) In certain situations (often where relationships are strained) the lack of clarity regarding holiday entitlement has caused difficulty.
- (c) Those dealing with these issues in College, and especially in Licentiate training, need clarity so that they can be consistent in what they say.

- (d) It would be useful for the Clerk's Office to have a clearer statement of holiday entitlement when dealing with queries.
- D. In considering the best way forward, the Commission agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that the annual holiday entitlement for Ministers in Pastoral Charges be set at six weeks annually, including a maximum of six Sundays and inclusive of all statutory holiday entitlement. (This brings clarity to the situation and also gives flexibility to Ministers i.e. not requiring leave to be taken on the actual day of public holidays but, if desired, enabling it to be taken out of the total annual holiday entitlement.)
- E. The Union Commission therefore invites the 2012 General Assembly to agree this recommendation by way of the appended resolution and also make the necessary changes to the Code (Par 195(11) (d) and Appendix 5) by way of the overture. (The overture also includes a clause to amend what the Code currently states regarding in-service training entitlement for Ministers in Pastoral Charges. The current Code has not been updated in line with the General Assembly's policy on In-Service Training and Sabbatical Leave.)

REVISION OF PROTRACTED ILLNESS GUIDELINES

39. The Commission revised and up-dated the Protracted Illness Guidelines for Ministers, Licentiates and Ordained Assistants which were last revised and reported to the Assembly in 2002. These guidelines are concerned with the payments to Ministers who would not qualify to enter the prolonged disability scheme but who are absent from work because of certified illness. This includes those who may have a series of such periods of absence from work. Attention is drawn to the fact that in Guideline A the following sentence has been added. "No payments under the scheme shall be made to any Minister for more than 12 months in any 24 month period." In Guideline G the wording concerning the certification of illness used in the original 1992 guidelines has replaced the wording in the 2002 guidelines.

40. The following are the revised Guidelines (approved by the Union Commission in March 2012):

PROTRACTED ILLNESS GUIDELINES

(Revised March 2012)

A. As a result of protracted illness, a Minister, Associate Minister, Ordained Assistant or Licentiate (hereafter referred to as 'Ministers') shall be paid in respect of the first twelve months an amount equivalent to the full salary due to them. No payments under the scheme shall be made to any Minister for more than 12 months in any 24 month period.

B. Each case of protracted illness shall be reviewed so that a decision can be made at the end of twelve months absence from duties provided that (a) absence has been continuous, or (b) absence or absences have been of significant duration or recurring over the twelve-month period, as interpreted by the Union Commission, after consultation with Presbytery.

C. In the case of continuous absence the Convener of the Commission shall, in consultation with Presbytery, have the authority to initiate review procedures previous to the end of the twelve-month period.

D. Persons under review may be required to attend for medical examination by independent medical practitioners appointed by the Commission.

E. The Commission, in consultation with Presbytery and the Board of Finance and Personnel, shall have the authority to advise Presbytery to loose from his/her charge any Minister on the grounds of medical incapacity, after consultation with the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee.

F. Application may be made for a grant to meet the cost of pulpit supplies in accordance with the rules for the time being of the Sick Supply Fund.

G. Medical evidence must be supplied to the Financial Secretary in all cases of illness of more than seven days duration. Failure to submit such evidence could mean loss of benefit.

H. Any invalidity or other state benefit reclaimed by a Minister should be paid over to the Financial Secretary to be forwarded to the Congregation to be applied towards meeting expenses of the period of illness.

(a) A Minister serving more than one Congregation will be asked to nominate the Treasurer to whom payment is to be made.

I. Presbytery may make arrangements for reasonable deductions in ministerial expenses during the period of illness to assist with pulpit supplies or other additional expenditure occasioned by a Minister's incapacity; the amount of the reduction to be determined by Presbytery with the approval of the Union Commission.

J. Specifically, with regard to Licentiates and Ordained Assistants, during medically certified illness:

- (i) Licentiates and Ordained Assistants shall be entitled to the full appropriate salary due to them for up to 12 months (see section (a) above).
- (ii) The costs shall be met as follows:
 - 1-3 months: no change in the arrangements in place.
 - 4-12 months: salary, full housing allowance and employer's national insurance contributions to be paid by C.M.F. Expenses, paid by C.M.F., may be reduced by the Union Commission.
- (iii) Each case of absence from work shall be reviewed at the end of 12 months, or at the date of eligibility for Call, in consultation with the Board of Christian Training, as appropriate, provided that:
 - absence from work has been continuous;
 - absence or absences have been of significant duration, or recurring, as interpreted by the Commission.
- (iv) In cases of significant absence from work the Convener of the Commission shall have authority to institute consultation, and may require a medical examination by a practitioner appointed by the Commission before the end of 12 months or before the date of eligibility for Call.
- (v) The Commission shall have authority to recommend the termination of a Licentiates Assistantship in accordance with the terms of the Guideline E above relating to Ministers.

UNION COMMISSION PERSONNEL

41. The Commission recognises the service given by the Conveners of its internal Committees. A special word of thanks is due to the Rev Dr Ian Hart who retired as Secretary of the Commission during the period covered by this report. Dr Hart brought his wide experience of ministry and his deep concern for the good of the Church to this important task.

THE REV DR SA MATTHEWS

The Rev William Henry writes:

42. The Union Commission records its deep indebtedness to the Rev Dr Uel Matthews, who has served as Convener for the past five years.

43. Prior to his appointment as Convener, Dr Matthews was already highly regarded throughout the Church having served several Convenerships and as Secretary of the Commission. During his tenure he has further gained the respect and gratitude of those who have served on the Commission, but also from those who have had dealings with the Commission during that time.

44. He has consistently displayed a deep knowledge of the workings of the Church in the local setting allied with an awareness of the needs and indeed the challenges faced by the entire denomination. Always gracious and with a warmth of personality, he has led the Commission actively to seek to achieve the best resolution in each situation, demonstrating a real concern for the individual Congregation or Minister involved.

45. The period of Dr Matthew's Convenership has coincided with many changes and challenges on the economic and spiritual landscape of Ireland; this has had profound implications for the work of the Union Commission. Not shying away from the issues he has been involved fully with the Board of Finance and Personnel and the Board of Mission in Ireland to bring about a coherent strategy for ministry in PCI.

46. During Dr Matthew's tenure the dual realities of a shortage of ministerial resources and a strain on CMF via augmentation, has brought the Church to a very different place. Through the paper, "Ministry, Finance and Mission" Dr Matthews has alerted the wider Church to the challenges before it. It has been rewarding to note the manner in which local Congregations and Presbyteries have been facing, and addressing these issues with the perspective of a bigger picture. Also during his Convenership the Part-time Ministry Leave to Call has been implemented. The whole Church is in his debt.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION
CHARGES – 2012**

Under Par 234 (3) (a) of the Code

<i>Church</i>	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2012 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income* £</i>
Movilla	2001	232 (181)	272	70,899	136,515
New Mossley	2005	115 (95)	142	36,151	120,860
Ballysally	2007	165 (68)	102	39,243	139,845

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

* As from 2012 Income includes all Organisational Income

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES – 2012

<i>Church</i>	<i>Building £</i>	<i>Spec. Srs. £</i>	<i>Stip. £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>	<i>Ch. Ext. £</i>	<i>H.M. £</i>	<i>Total £</i>
Taughmonagh	—	14,508	4,352 (30%)	2,176 (15%)	1,451 (10%)	870 (6%)	8,849 (61%)

LICENTIATES — 2012

Licentiates are paid 75% of the Ministerial Minimum = £16,812 plus House Allowance pa (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and CMF

FIRST YEAR — From 1 January, 2012

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Enniskillen	* R Beacom	26.06.11	24,187 (25%)	6,047	10,765
The Mall, Armagh	* T Boyd	03.06.11	34,280 (30%)	10,284	6,528
Portstewart	* A Buick	05.06.11	31,904 (s/a)	6,600	10,212
Scarva St., Banbridge	* S Burke	29.05.11	35,918 (s/a)	6,600	10,212
Joymount	† R Collins	05.06.11	36,308 (30%)	10,892	5,920
Malone	† D Conkey	12.06.11	37,150 (30%)	11,145	5,667
Hillsborough	* A Conway	26.06.11	38,079 (30%)	11,424	5,388
1st Holywood	* A Ditty	29.05.11	36,500 (30%)	10,950	5,862
Dungannon	* J Dunn	17.06.11	35,622 (30%)	10,687	6,125
Regent Street	* J Frazer	12.06.11	34,280 (30%)	10,284	6,528
West Church, Bangor	* A Galbraith	06.06.11	39,000 (30%)	11,700	5,112
Maze	* A Graham	29.05.11	26,500 (30%)	7,950	8,862
1st Magherafelt	* K Hibbert	29.05.11	31,858 (s/a)	6,600	10,212
1st Ballymena	* S Hibbert	13.05.11	36,000 (30%)	10,800	6,012
Ballee	* J McConaghie	05.06.11	22,416 (25%)	5,604	11,208
Killinchy	* E McKenzie	26.06.11	36,137 (25%)	9,034	7,778
Killead	† S McNie	29.05.11	16,961 (25%)	4,240	4,166
Loanends	† S McNie	29.05.11	16,961 (25%)	4,240	4,166
Carryduff	* S Moore	12.06.11	33,000 (30%)	9,900	6,912

Templepatrick	* S Morrow	05.06.11	35,850	(25%)	8,963	7,849
Greenwell Street	* J Mullan	26.06.11	36,251	(30%)	10,875	5,937
Molesworth	* G Orr	12.06.11	29,524	(s/a)	6,600	10,212
St Andrew's	* P Orr	05.06.11	29,198	(s/a)	6,600	10,212
1st Saintfield	* O Patterson	19.06.11	35,105	(30%)	10,532	6,280
Glendermott	* B Smyth	19.06.11	33,032	(25%)	8,258	8,554
Wellington	* N Stewart	24.06.11	39,999	(30%)	12,000	4,812
Gardenmore	* L Webster	03.07.11	36,000	(30%)	10,800	6,012
Carrmoney	* R McClure		40,020	(30%)	12,006	4,806

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance - House provided by Congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES – 2012

Licentiates are paid 80% of the Ministerial Minimum = £17,932.80 plus House Allowance pa (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and CMF

SECOND YEAR – From 1 January, 2012

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Whiteabbey	* P Bovill	30.05.10	36,137 (32%)	11,564	6,369
Stormont	* J Boyd	15.05.10	40,974 (32%)	13,112	4,821
Kilfennan	* J Cowan	20.06.10	31,526 (32%)	10,088	7,845
Bangor – West	* P Douglas	20.06.10	39,000 (32%)	12,480	5,453
Ballygowan	† D Edwards	25.06.10	36,750 (32%)	11,760	6,173
Abbots Cross	* I Ferris	27.06.10	29,452 (32%)	9,425	8,508
Harmony Hill	* H Freeburn	06.06.10	36,198 (32%)	11,583	6,350
High Kirk	† R Houston	06.06.10	39,661 (32%)	12,692	5,241
Second Comber	* G Maclean	06.06.10	41,100 (32%)	13,152	4,781
Carrickfergus – First	* G McConville	20.06.10	39,948 (32%)	12,783	5,150
Kirkpatrick Memorial	* D McCullagh	27.06.10	38,000 (27%)	10,260	7,673
First Newtownards	* C Millar	06.06.10	31,170 (32%)	9,974	7,959
Cuninghame Memorial	* N Mulholland	13.06.10	37,822 (32%)	12,103	5,830
Newtownbreda	† J Nelson	27.06.10	34,270 (32%)	10,966	6,967
Legacurry	* M Proctor	13.06.10	34,072 (32%)	10,903	7,030
Ballyclare	* N Smyth	20.06.10	34,200 (32%)	10,944	6,989
Kilbride	* J Spence	13.06.10	34,000 (32%)	10,880	7,053
Ballywillan (to 29/3)	* J Stanbridge	06.06.10	33,201 (32%)	2,569	1,767

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance – House provided by Congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES – 2012

Licentiates are paid 85% of the Ministerial Minimum = £19,053.60 plus House Allowance pa (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and CMF

THIRD YEAR – From 1 January, 2012

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
First Larne	* L Keys	22.06.08	36,484 (32%)	11,675	7,379
Hill Street, Lurgan	* A Faulkner	05.06.09	35,676 (27%)	9,633	9,421
Rathcoole	† S Glendinning	21.06.09	25,703 (s/a)	0	19,054
Hamilton Road	* M McKeown	07.06.09	42,350 (32%)	13,552	5,502
West Church, Ballymena	* R Moody	21.06.09	39,900 (32%)	12,768	6,286
Ballygilbert	* I Steen	01.06.09	33,481 (s/a)	6,600	12,454
Fisherwick	* K Viner	21.06.09	38,999 (32%)	12,480	6,574

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance - House provided by Congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS**From 1 January, 2012**

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend £</i>	<i>% Min</i>	<i>Salary £</i>	<i>House Allow. £</i>	<i>Total £</i>	<i>Cong. Cont. £</i>	<i>CMF £</i>
Newcastle #	B Reid	20.10.06	33,459	100	22,416 (s/a)	—	22,416	0 (s/a)	22,416
Finaghy, Lowe Mem	BC Bower	01.10.00	36,600	95	21,295	—	21,295	9,882	11,413

Moderator's Assistant

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS – 2012

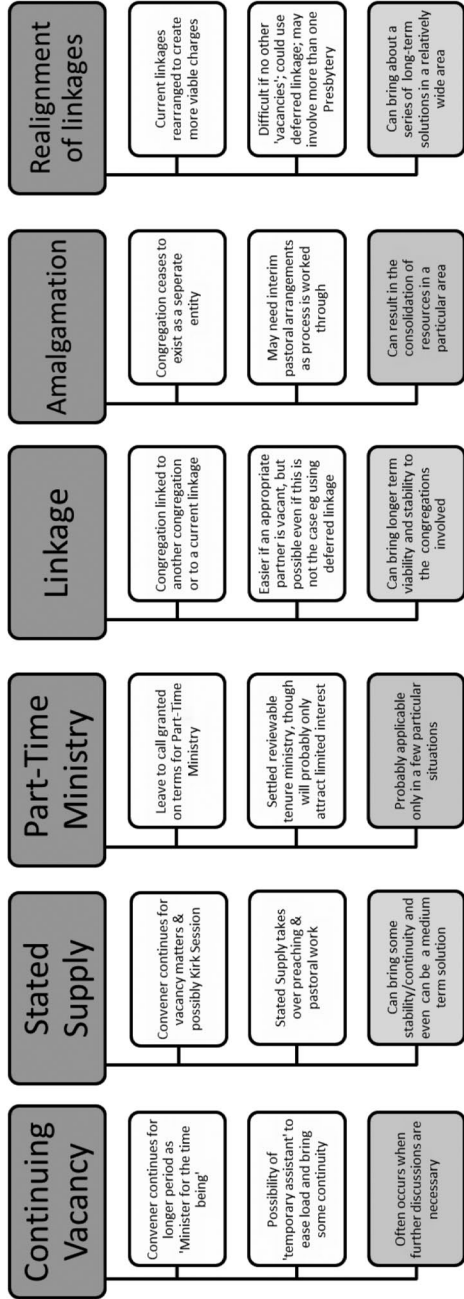
<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary Paid £</i>	<i>Recovery £</i>	<i>House Allowance Paid £</i>	<i>Annual Assessment Recovery £</i>
BJ Walker	Knock	25,500.00	25,500.00	n/a	2,019.00
DW Leach	Hamilton Road	22,416.00	22,416.00	2,000.00	331.00
DM Spratt	First Bangor	22,416.00	22,416.00	500.00	331.00
AJ Dunlop	First Portadown	22,416.00	22,416.00	500.00	331.00
AD Mullan	Mourne	25,000.00	25,000.00	n/a	1,746.00
LA Wilson	First Comber	22,416.00	21,325.00	1,000.00	328.00

APPENDIX 1

WHEN LEAVE TO CALL IS NOT GRANTED

'CONTINUITY'

RECONFIGURATION



RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That CMF be authorized to pay inadequate expenses grants towards expenses incurred by Ministers, up to a limit of NI €6,300 or RI €9,500, within the terms of res 3, p 70, General Assembly Minutes, 1988.
3. That the Protracted Illness Guidelines be noted.
4. That the General Assembly agree that the annual holiday entitlement for Ministers in Pastoral Charges be set at six weeks annually, including a maximum of six Sundays and inclusive of all statutory holiday entitlement.
5. That the Congregation of Nelson Memorial be amalgamated with the Congregation of _____, the date of amalgamation to be no later than 31 May 2014, (as agreed by the Presbytery of North Belfast in consultation with the Union Commission), on terms set by the Union Commission.
6. That the resignation of the Rev Dr SA Matthews as Convener of the Union Commission be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev WJ Henry be appointed in his place for a period of five years.
7. That the Union Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with par 128 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 128(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 128(1) of the Code the words “the Convener of the Home and Irish Mission Committee” be deleted and the words “the Convener of the Strategy for Mission Committee and the Convener of the Pensions and Assessments Committee” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 193(1)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 193(1)(c) of the Code be deleted and the following sub-paragraph substituted in its place:

“(c) Eligibility for Restricted List Charges, whose ministers’ stipends are less than the basic ministerial minimum, shall be limited to those Ministers declared eligible to be candidates for such charges by the Union Commission.”

Anent Par 195 (11)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 195 (11)(d) of the Code be deleted and the following sub-paragraph substituted in its place:

“(d) a promise also that the cost for a holiday pulpit supply for six weeks annually during vacation will be met as a congregational expense, and an acknowledgement of the Minister’s entitlement to avail of both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time by the General Assembly.”

Anent Appendix 5A of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Appendix 5(A) of the Code the words “one month annually during vacation, together with such supplies and other arrangements as will be required to permit the minister to attend In-Service Training Courses, on the basis of one week for every three years of service” be deleted and the words “six weeks annually during vacation, and an acknowledgement of the Minister’s entitlement to avail of both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time by the General Assembly” be substituted in their place.

Anent Appendix 5D of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Appendix 5(D) of the Code the words “and to meet as a congregational expense the cost of such arrangements as will be required to permit the associate minister to attend In-Service Training Courses, on the basis of one week for every three years of service” be deleted and the words “and an acknowledgement of the Associate Minister’s entitlement to avail of both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time by the General Assembly” be substituted in their place.

SA MATTHEWS

BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS

Convener: Rev CA MEBAN
Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

‘Serving a mission-hearted Church’

1. The vision for the General Assembly’s Board of Mission Overseas (BMO) is *“to serve a mission-hearted Church, in step with the God of mission, reawakened to the missionary nature of God’s Word, placing mission at the heart of all it is and all it does, from the end of the pew to the ends of the earth.”* (Overseas Board Report to the General Assembly 2005 p.142). The Board is committed to proclaiming Christ and his universal reign and to upholding values of being God-centred, people-focused, Church-based and forward-thinking.

2. As BMO seeks to mobilise the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) in this vision, the Board’s Mission Review 2005 identified four areas of priority namely: Mission Engagement; Outreach Initiatives; Leadership Development; and Compassionate Ministries. These continue to provide clear foci for the ongoing work of BMO’s four Assembly Committees, which in turn are served by the Steering Committee operating as the Business Committee of the Board.

Steering Committee (SC)

Para 3 to 22

Main Issues: Minority Christian communities; Fit for Purpose aspirations; Hearing the prophetic voice of God; Partner Church visits and visitors; Staffing; Mission personnel; Finance.

Outreach Ministries Committee (OMC)

Para 23 to 28

Main Issues: Mission through education; mission through peace building.

Leadership Development Committee (LDC)

Para 29 to 35

Main Issues: Evolving leadership development practice; Featured partnership; Leaders in training.

World Development Committee (WDC)

Para 36 to 46

Main Issues: World Development Appeal; Moderator-supported special appeals; Corporate tax accountability.

Mission Involvement Committee (MIC)

Para 47 to 62

Main Issues: Resources, training and teams.

STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)

3. In the last year, the “Arab Spring” has been filling news bulletins and hearts with awe, trepidation, hope and fear. The picture painted is of an internet-empowered generation mobilising to challenge dictatorship. What does this awakening mean for the Kingdom of God? God hates oppression of minorities,

outsiders and the poor; God hates violence, injustice and all kinds of greed. Will an internet-empowered generation, including Presbyterians, engage to bring true freedom of body and soul – a revolution within PCI spilling over to partners across the globe?

4. For minority communities, such as Christians in the Middle East, there is great tension. In some of these countries the dictatorship, although unjust in many ways, might also protect minorities from other kinds of oppression, such as religious fundamentalism. Christians in such circumstances may choose, despite state oppression and corruption, to side with the ruling powers, or at least to remain silent, rather than facilitate a revolution that may lead to governance by forces that may prove to be no less oppressive, and perhaps more hostile towards minorities. This kind of dilemma is historically familiar to faith communities in Ireland, although the “right answer” is not easily discernible, even with hindsight. Biblical narratives such as Jeremiah’s call to invest in and pray for Babylon demonstrate that what seems right at a given time may not be obvious or instinctive to the faith community. Jesus’ clash with the Pharisees – His willingness to eat and drink with “sinners” – illustrates the conflict of Kingdom values with traditional or community values.

5. Conscious, then, of the urgency of the Gospel, and the political upheaval and financial uncertainty of many of PCI’s partners, SC reflected, in a report to the Panel on the Review of Structures, on how the work of the Board relates to the Fit for Purpose aspirations set by the General Assembly 2012 – 2016:

- *A Prophetic Voice (2012)*: PCI should not only speak prophetically, but more importantly, be humble enough to listen for the voice of God speaking through the prophetic voice of brothers and sisters in the global Church, particularly on issues of poverty, justice, oppression, sacrifice, environment, climate change, stewardship and simplicity of lifestyle. International relationships help to relativise nationalisms and other idolatries. Relationships with overseas partners ought to challenge the Church here to reflect on the extent to which PCI may: have limited interpretations of Scripture; have limited understanding of the fullness of the Gospel; have developed and retained a colonial mindset or paternalistic attitude; be in thrall to the desire for wealth and power; and/or be ignorant, apathetic or indifferent to the cries of brothers and sisters in distress.

BMO, uniquely, has many years of experience of supporting partners and mission personnel who have lived and witnessed in societies opposed – and often dangerously hostile – to Christian values and lifestyle. It has been a privilege to share the learning of those who have lived, worked, or come from these situations. There are prophetic voices from outside of Ireland that PCI needs to hear and BMO would like increasingly to facilitate their amplification within PCI’s Congregations, Boards and College. In the year highlighting “a prophetic voice” BMO will be seeking to hear those voices better, and to make them heard in PCI. Who will be listening and who will really hear? – In addition to encouraging the visitors attending General Assembly in 2012 to bring and share their own stories of God’s work among them, the Board is

planning a day conference on 29 September 2012 at which key internationals will be invited to give voice to PCI's partners.

- *A Place of Transformation (2013)*: BMO seeks the transformation of Christ's universal Church as it in turn seeks global transformation, in anticipation of God making all things new. The world is crying out for a new financial architecture, for systems that empower and liberate the poor, and for accountability amongst those who wield power and resources. Yet systems alone cannot liberate: "the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart." BMO's vision for an increasingly mission-hearted Church has a part to play in helping PCI participate fully in the universal body of Christ and in transforming the world. A desire for transformation means that Christians seek to share whatever measure of kingdom transformation they have experienced so that others may experience it too, and so Christians desire to have created and nurtured within themselves not just a mission mindset but a heart for mission that will lead each person into active engagement towards bringing in God's kingdom and justice (righteousness) wherever God's Spirit guides. The Congregation should be a key place of transforming, equipping and training for whole-life discipleship, releasing people into the wider world. BMO already encourages, trains and equips people for overseas engagement alongside partner Churches in a way that leads to transformation. PCI members testify that some of the most transformational moments in their lives have been in the going, seeing, learning and serving opportunities in a cross-cultural, overseas context, many facilitated by BMO. People go to give, and yet end up receiving so much more, and speak of having a 'life changing experience'.

BMO wants to place more emphasis on leadership development opportunities for experience and study overseas for students for ministry, such that they are taken out of their comfort zones and experience further transformation that will make a difference to their future ministry. Theological institutions, with their heritage of theological reflection, should be places of transformation, not only for home grown PCI students of ministry and mission but those from other countries who have an opportunity to come to study in Ireland.
- *A People of Service and Outreach (2014)*: In addressing this priority, PCI Congregations provide a platform for service and outreach worldwide, both local and global. Congregations need encouragement to see mission as a comprehensive unit that embraces our local community, the nation, and the whole world. It has been said that in terms of mission, "geography is history". The world is on our doorstep, and a Congregation only engaged in its own locality may find itself irrelevant to an internationally aware community in the internet age. On the other hand, Congregations more focused on making a difference overseas will be challenged to make a difference at home. To this end, BMO has sought to

encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to have an ‘ends of the earth’ component in their mission plans.

Global service and outreach are not just for the chosen few but are integral to discipleship for every follower of Christ, whether serving in a paid capacity or giving one’s time, or sharing one’s wealth. Service and outreach can take place in everything believers are and do, within every area of society and culture, near and far. Even when mission is global it is still local: authentic mission is always local, since the Gospel has to be incarnated in the locality in which it is being proclaimed. Giving to world mission supports real people on the ground bringing gifts which point to the Kingdom of God in practical service and outreach.

- *A Caring Fellowship (2015)*: PCI participates in the global community and the fellowship of the Church worldwide. The global Church is increasingly represented in multi-cultural Ireland. BMO mission personnel, staff and others who visit overseas on behalf of PCI know to varying degrees what it is like to enter another culture as a foreigner, and experience the need to be welcomed. Having adjusted to a new culture overseas, they may again feel like a foreigner once back in their own homeland. To this extent BMO has stood where the stranger stands, has an understanding of the issues they face here in Ireland, and can help Congregations welcome the foreigner/stranger/outsider – all who are not used to the Church sub-culture. Overseas perspectives help PCI members see that they are pilgrims here. Such a perspective may contribute towards effectiveness in mission locally, helping Congregations to “sit loose” to Church culture and tradition (“how we do things here”) and to reflect creatively on what Christ-like living should look like.

The diversity of the global communion of faith in Christ may assist PCI in establishing appropriate priorities for dealing with controversial issues that threaten the health and unity of PCI. BMO therefore encourages PCI members who go overseas on holiday and on business to have confidence to attend indigenous Churches while they are away from home, share in fellowship, learn from and be witnesses to Jesus Christ in whatever context they find themselves.

- *A Community of Global Concern (2016)*: While global concern has been made a separate aspiration for 2016, BMO sees it as pertinent to the other aspirations, all of which can only be fulfilled properly when they have a truly global perspective. Although sitting last in the list of aspirations, Global Concern should therefore be prioritised: the health of the Church in Ireland depends on our making an imperative of this challenge, such can be the immediacy and magnitude of the impact which worldwide events have on our island and on kingdom priorities.

BMO desires, under this heading, to particularly address the “spiritual injustice” of unreached people groups, those not in the world Church. BMO can have a significant role in the fulfilling

of this aspiration, building on the work of the different forms of engagement reflected in each of its Committees. Here at home there also needs to be a readiness to learn in the wider Church about the global issues that ultimately challenge lifestyles within PCI. At the Global Connections, 'Passion for Mission' Conference in June 2011, Chris Wright, commented that there is a need to shift the deeply ingrained paradigm of mission from being (mainly) the work of church-paid professionals to whole-life discipleship of all believers and engagement of the gospel with every area of society and culture and a need to find better ways of equipping and training all Church members for that missional task. BMO has a role to play in addressing this need.

6. In light of the above remarks, BMO intends to make good use of each of the five themes in the next five years, and not limit its contributions to the theme of the Community of Global Concern. On the contrary, BMO has a particularly refreshing and challenging contribution to make at each stage of PCI's refocusing on becoming Fit for Purpose and the Church Christ wants us to be. Following the attendance of representatives of the Board at the Global Connections annual conference in November 2011, it was highlighted as vitally important that time is taken to listen prayerfully to God regarding the on-going work of the Board. The conference itself provided grist to the mill of addressing paradigm shifts in western missionary and Church thinking and practice, and in terms of the economic and spiritual divide between Global North and Global South.

7. Hearing the prophetic voice of God: SC took a retreat day away in January to listen, reflect and allow the voice of God to be heard. The following summary provides a brief flavour:

Through the "retreat" day away, SC sensed the call on BMO firstly to be willing to come and be in God's presence, then to be willing to go to new and surprising (and uncomfortable) places, to find what the Spirit is doing, and to then bring the voice from the margins into the heart of the Church.

Prayerful reflection on Acts 10 reiterated input from the Global Connections Conference in November, calling PCI away from the single identity model of the Jewish Church in Acts 2 towards the multicultural Church of Revelation. The global Church experiences of BMO are for the whole Church. This fits with BMO's understanding of the General Assembly theme for 2012-13 of A Prophetic Voice – that prophecy be primarily to the Church: God calling PCI to "come to me" in repentance, faithfulness and justice, and only then to "go in mission" to bring news of Christ, and care for the oppressed and outsiders.

As in Acts 10, old paradigms are insufficient for the realities of the world and God's Kingdom in it. In order to be able to see and participate in what God is doing, PCI must incorporate rest and prayerfulness, and not be driven by activism. The call is to be like both Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10, praying and caring faithfully for the marginalised, until such time as God sends a clear instruction that challenges previously deeply held convictions and brings clarity of where to go next, offering new, hitherto unthinkable relationships, and indicating where to send to for help to move PCI from limited vision in the current paradigm, to the new thing God is doing.

In thinking about partnership, the role of the local Congregation in sending personnel, global partnerships, SC also considered partnership with other Boards (BMI & YAC) and potentially other Christian groups. In the light of Peter and Cornelius, “partnership” is inadequate, and should be replaced with friendship, mutual learning and discovery. At each stage of the Acts 10 story’s unfolding, the primary element of the encounter was hospitality, both given and received. Peter had to choose, first to welcome in the messengers as his guests, then to go with them and become the guest of Gentiles. It is a lesson Peter had to re-learn with Paul’s help later on. SC’s thinking on this, and on its implications, is on-going.

8. The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation, held in Cape Town, South Africa in 2010, with the theme of “God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” (www.lausanne.org) continues to inform and interrogate BMO and PCI practice and values. Additionally, BMO’s membership of **Global Connections** enables the Board to keep up-to-date with new thinking and initiatives in world mission. A delegation from PCI attended the Global Connections Conference in Swanwick in November 2011. It came across strongly that PCI’s BMO is the envy of many mission organisations, because as a denominational mission board (the mission agency of the Church) it is connected to Congregations and pews. BMO is perceived not to have to fight to gain access to, and a hearing by, local communities of Christians. [It is a moot point whether that perceived access is as direct, and as universal, as might be hoped.]

9. The opportunity to work alongside other agencies and societies in the local context through the **Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP)** is valued. Further reflection on mission comes through membership of the **British and Irish Association of Mission Studies (BIAMS)**. All such forums and conferences have provided good opportunities to participate in discussion and be challenged on a broad range of mission related issues.

10. **Partner Church Visits:** The following overseas visits were made to attend consultations and conferences called by partner Churches and mission organisations, and to offer pastoral support and encouragement to BMO mission personnel:-

- Helen Johnston attended the Global Connections AGM and Passion for Mission event in London, 26 June 2011.
- Uel Marrs attended the Global Connections CEO Forum in Northampton, 20 and 21 June 2011.
- Gordon and Sandra Campbell visited the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary (BRTS) and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia (ERCL) in Riga, Latvia from 27 August to 07 September 2011.
- Stephen Lynas visited Kigezi Diocese, Church of Uganda, 12 to 20 September 2011.
- Ivan and Maureen Patterson, and Cecil and Dorothy McCullough visited the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) in Lebanon from 9-15 September 2011.
- Ivan and Maureen Patterson visited BRTS and ERCL in Latvia, 17-22 September 2011.

- Edna McIlwaine and Sandra Stokes travelled to Spain to visit the French family working with Grupos Biblios Unidos (GBS), 04-08 October 2011 and Portugal to visit the Cochrane family working with the Portuguese Bible Institute (IPB), 21-25 October 2011.
- Uel Marrs met with CCAP leadership and mission personnel in Malawi, 22 November to 7 December 2011.
- Steering Committee delegation to Global Connections Annual Conference, Swanwick, 28-30 November 2011.
- Gordon Campbell to Faculté Jean Calvin, Aix en Provence, France, 3-10 January 2012.
- Uel Marrs met with leadership of the Church of North India in Delhi and Gujarat, 1-13 February 2012.
- Joe Campbell met with the leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) and visited related projects in South Sudan, 17 March to 2 April 2012.
- Cheryl Meban visited with the leadership of the Evangelical Christian Church in Timor (GMIT) and Barry and Elsy McCroskery in Kupang, Indonesia 4-9 May, including participation at Executive Committee of World Communion of Reformed Churches hosted by the Batak Karo Church in Sumatra, NE Indonesia, 10-18 May 2012.
- Uel Marrs attended a partners' roundtable hosted by the Transylvanian Church Districts of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Oradea, Romania from 13-17 May 2012.

11. BMO was delighted to receive the following **visitors from partner Churches and mission organisations:**

- Mark Galpin, Executive Director of United Mission to Nepal (UMN), 26-28 September 2011.
- Victoria Chihana, Women's Empowerment Co-ordinator, Lay Training Centre, CCAP Synod Livingstonia, Malawi, 30 September-28 October 2011.
- Personnel Director, IAM, Central Asia, 14 October 2011.
- Alwan Masih, General Secretary of the Church of North India (CNI), 21-24 March 2012.
- Maqsood Kamil, member of Faculty staff at Gujranwala Theological Seminary currently undertaking doctoral studies at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS), 26-28 March 2012.
- Vinod Malaviya, Bishop of Gujarat Diocese (CNI) India, May 2012.

12. **Office Staff and Volunteers:** BMO is once again very grateful to its full time staff, who, in handling a heavy workload, have carried out their work with great efficiency, enthusiasm, and adaptability in the face of adversity. The staff team has been assailed with a number of physical ailments that have caused substantial absences and proven the resilience of the whole team, but stretched resources beyond the limits of human capacity. At this time, when the Board is seeking to listen carefully to God's leading, prayer for protection and provision for BMO staff and their families must be a priority. At present that team is comprised of the Overseas Secretary, Mission Overseas Development Officer,

Personnel Officer (Overseas) and Mission Overseas Training Officer. Over the past year they have been ably supported by an administrative staff team which has included a Senior Administrative Officer with special financial responsibilities, three Senior Secretaries, and a Secretary. We also extend heartfelt appreciation to those who, from time to time, help out in the office on a voluntary basis.

13. In August 2011, Pamela Hopper resigned from the post of Senior Secretary (Mission Training and External Funding). To date this post has not been re-advertised pending review of staffing needs. On 3 May 2011 Julie-Ann Hall resigned from her role as Secretary to take up a new appointment as a receptionist within Assembly Buildings. A welcome was extended to Lorna Walker, who took up the role of Secretary on 16 August 2011.

14. **Personnel:** BMO thanks God for faithful provision for all BMO mission personnel, who share their lives, gifts and skills in different nations and continents around the world – see Appendix A. The Board continues to strive to encourage and support them as they share the Good News and learn from people of different languages and cultures.

15. On 19 June 2011, Dr Lyn and Mr John Dowds were commissioned in Craigavon Congregation by the Presbytery of Armagh for missionary service in Malawi under BMO's Integrate Programme. Lyn is serving as a medical doctor at the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) David Gordon Memorial Hospital. Together with their children Cody (6) and Suni (3), they departed for Malawi in August 2011.

16. At the Board meeting on 7 March 2012 Calls were issued to Peter and Valerie Lockwood for missionary service in Nepal. Together with their children, Conor (9), Joel (7), and Erin (5), they hope to depart for Nepal in the summer of 2012.

17. During the last year memorial minutes were recorded and sympathies expressed in respect of Mrs Renee Flynn who passed away on 11 April 2011 having served as Secretary to the Convener of the Foreign Mission/Overseas Board from the early 1970's to 1987; Mr Edward Sinclair (Ted) Jackson who passed away on 10 October 2011 having served in India from 1964-1969; Mrs Martha Magee Singleton (nee Woods) who passed away on 24 October 2011 having served in India from 1964-1966; Miss Annie Mann who passed away on 16 November 2011 having served in India from 1950-1973; and Mrs Margaret Sheila Lyle (nee Stevenson) who passed away on 1 December 2011 having served in India from 1950 to 1973. Full details of memorial minutes are held in the BMO office.

18. BMO is grateful for the on-going services of its **Pastoral Adviser Team**, comprised of Brian Hughes, Dobbie McCaughan, Stephen and Ruth McCracken, James and Willi Barton and Tony and Valerie McGall.

19. **Finance:** The on-going commitment by PCI members to support the work of mission in a broad range of ways brings much encouragement. Thanks are recorded to individuals and Congregations who year after year have provided financial support through the United Appeal, and for all that the United Appeal Board does to ensure that the target of honour for the total appeal is reached each year. BMO received £920,000 from the United Appeal Board in 2011, and £897,500 has been approved by UAB for 2012. The married couples' furlough allowance, which is the benchmark to the setting of all other missionary

allowances, was set at £22,087 for 2012 so remaining at the same level as in 2010 and 2011.

20. General Assembly should note that as a proportion of total grants disbursed from United Appeal Funding, BMO's share has reduced from 36% in 2002 to 26% in the current year. BMO recognises the importance of mission at home as well as beyond the shores of Ireland, and is working to reduce expenditure wherever possible. There is a risk that further reductions in BMO income may, in the current global economy, seriously impact BMO's capacity to support PCI members and Congregations as they respond to the call of God to serve overseas.

21. Once again the Board of Mission Overseas is very grateful for the on-going support of **Presbyterian Women (PW)** whose office bearers, Central Committee and members continue to contribute faithfully to the work of the Board. In 2011, the annual grant made by PW to the work of the Board was £190,000. BMO commends PW for their enthusiasm and commitment to the work of PCI in mission beyond the shores of Ireland, and thanks its members for their prayerful and practical support of BMO mission personnel.

22. BMO is once again indebted to Mervyn Whittle, who having stepped down from his role as Finance Officer (Overseas) in 2011, continues to oversee an on-going programme of maintenance for all BMO mission properties. The Board is very appreciative of the ongoing support and guidance provided by the Board of Finance and Personnel.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE (OMC)

23. Since its inception in 2006, OMC's work has largely focused on overseeing, and producing guidelines for, five areas of strategic focus:

- Mission through education
- Medical mission
- Specialist Service Agencies (SSA's)
- Evangelism and church planting
- Sustainable development.

24. Having completed and compiled these guidelines the Committee has been in a period of transition with much time recently focused on how best to take this work forward. Last year's report to General Assembly indicated that the Committee would likely adopt a rotational approach and highlight one of the five key themes over each of the next five years. This year-long focus would include an evaluation of OMC work around the world, strategic thinking about new opportunities, and the promotion of specific projects. Different approaches were considered but it was felt that a rotational approach (focusing on a different theme each year rather than a region or continent) might foster a greater sense of collective ownership, of serving together within the Committee, and be more effective. It was further agreed that the Committee should adopt the strategic themes in the order in which they were originally addressed. This means that 'Mission through Education' will be considered first, in 2012/2013.

25. The Committee will seek to take a comprehensive approach to each of these areas, to evaluate guidelines, review on-going work and seek to promote

and highlight that work to the wider Church. This will include such things as examining:

- The countries/partners to whom OMC relates
- Visits, either by executive staff/Committee members, a BMO team, or by partner representatives to Ireland
- Mission personnel involvement, and inviting them to report/meet with OMC
- Funding needs/opportunities for one-off or on-going grant provision, either by OMC or the wider Church
- Special events to promote the work, either in Ireland or overseas
- Provision of prayer information
- Articles for the web or Church publications
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact of each strategic focus, in terms of the proclamation of the gospel and the making of disciples
- Reporting to the Board and General Assembly.

26. **On-going work outside of the strategic theme.** OMC often addresses diverse matters on a range of subjects involving partners and relationships from all around the world. Just because one area of strategic focus will be highlighted each year, does not mean that other areas will be ignored. An image that has been used at the Committee is that of opening a number of different documents on a computer screen and highlighting one to bring it centre screen. Although one area will be highlighted and focused on, other matters will still be addressed.

27. Throughout 2011/12, OMC has sought to develop relationships with the Israel Education Forum (IEF), as one new strand of involvement in the Middle East Region; discussions have taken place about partnership with International Christian Schools specifically in India, the work of Harry Bryans, European Children's Ministry Network Advisor, and how to further develop relationships with Specialist Service Agencies (SSAs).

28. **Peace Building as an OMC Strategy.** During the year the question was raised as to what extent peace building ought to be more formally recognised as a strategic priority of OMC alongside the other five priority areas. After a brief discussion it was agreed that it certainly was something that needed to be looked at more closely and that OMC should request Joe Campbell to draft a paper outlining the importance of peace building in the global context, and the role that PCI has already and may continue to play in this area. This would provide an initial discussion document for consideration in September 2012.

STEPHEN RICHMOND, Convener (OMC)

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LDC)

29. In the 2011 BMO report to General Assembly, resolution 4 committed LDC and sister committees to making guidelines for partnering in mission available to Congregations and Presbyteries; resolution 11, meanwhile, exhorted Ministers and mission agents to channel BMO's resources and highlight mission opportunities to the Church at large. Accordingly, LDC commends to all Ministers some new material specifically designed to help the Church give appropriate support to leaders in training (LITs). This guidance is available as part of wider

guidelines for mission practice provided by the Mission Involvement Committee. LDC has also reviewed the support which LITs studying in Ireland currently receive while on placement here and is considering ways of enhancing their pastoral care.

30. Resolution 7 reaffirmed BMO's commitment to "genuinely reciprocal relationships of inter-dependency and mutuality" with overseas partner Churches and institutions. LDC has moved to strengthen partnership in two areas. One area is that sense of fellowship and face-to-face engagement with overseas partners, in Christian mission and discipleship, which BMO sees as vital to healthy partnerships. Building on experience gained in recent visits to training institutions in Latin Europe (see last year's report), LDC has produced Criteria and **Objectives for Overseas Visits**. These are a guide for all those from PCI – including executive and non-executive staff – who engage in visits to, or consultations with, partner Churches and institutions; they are intended to increase the effectiveness and value of such encounters. A second area is the key process of nominating, selecting and assessing possible LITs. With a view to helping partners achieve stronger ownership of and participation in this, LDC has developed a new mechanism for partner Churches to recommend potential LITs. The partner Church's input will now supplement the information provided by those in their care who make individual application for PCI scholarships and by their referees, using procedures which have been enhanced by a working group of LDC. LDC plans to develop parallel application procedures in respect of grants, with the main aim of improving communication with partners about their strategic objectives for people-focused development and, where appropriate, their capacity and provision for training generally.

31. BMO's on-going leadership development work currently includes projects in fifteen countries – three in Africa, six in Asia, four in Europe and two in the Middle East. For both 2011 and 2012 LDC has been in a position to allocate grants to twenty or more training initiatives undertaken by our partner Churches and Colleges in (for example) Sudan or Nepal, Portugal or Lebanon. The budget for this support is £110,000, supplemented through the Lindsay Memorial Fund by an additional £30,000 available for projects in Africa. However, as part of transition away from unspecified block grants and towards "more clearly designated funding projects with a marked people focus" (General Assembly Report 2011), LDC gave notice of an intention "to make a featured partner the focus for LD work each year." It was subsequently decided to delay the implementation of this policy – originally planned for late 2011 – until BMO could consider further how this approach might contribute to partnership relations generally. LDC also took time to develop a considered rationale for **featured partnerships**, which has taken shape around the answers to three crucial questions: what will featured partnerships involve? How may such a practice best be implemented? Why is this a good idea?

32. What will featured partnerships involve? The answer, in a phrase, is increased focused engagement with each partner in turn. On a rotational basis LDC will incorporate an annual regional focus into its on-going work. In line with this the awarding of grants and scholarships will be concentrated on the partners in that region and their needs. This focus will be communicated to the wider Church for information and as an opportunity for direct engagement through focused prayer and giving. The desired outcome is that the wider

Church be significantly impacted, in a cumulative way, by all of PCI's privileged commitments for the development of quality leadership in church and society in partners' contexts.

33. How may such a practice best be implemented? Within the framework of a strategic forward plan the on-going commitment of BMO to partnerships will now be complemented by a targeted deployment of available resources in LDC's work. In any given year this will entail significantly assisting some partners, on rotation, with their projects for the development of gifted and committed Christian leaders for Church and society. In order to begin focused engagement with featured partners from September 2012, executive staff have been tasked with evaluating PCI's current partnership commitments, drafting a planned approach to more concentrated support for regional LD projects in the medium term and proposing a first region with which to undertake enhanced commitments.

34. Why is this a good idea? It is LDC's conviction, hope and prayer that featured partnerships will sharpen the Committee's work, benefit BMO's partners and enthuse the Church in Ireland. Rotational featured partnering will commit BMO, with one partner after another, to pro-active engagement on each partner's presenting needs for the training and equipping of mature Christian leaders to serve in their unique context. Consequently PCI will incrementally enhance her on-going relationship in mission with partners in one region after another. Through development of an awareness of each partner's mission in general and of their leadership development needs in particular, profiles of overseas partners will be significantly raised, one by one, within PCI. This will be of particular benefit to partnerships in non-African (especially Asian and European) contexts.

35. Each year, LDC is privileged to be able to engage directly with **Leaders in Training (LITs)** who study in Ireland or Britain. Scholarship applications currently in process for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 involve leaders in training from partner Churches in Hungary, Malawi, Myanmar and Pakistan. LD scenarios are all forms of discipleship training and, as such, are not without their cost in energy, money or time. An issue which LDC must grapple with further is the increasing frequency of requests from partners for funding the PhD studies of candidates for leadership development; key aspects of the challenge include financial sustainability and the stewardship of limited resources, or the care of families separated while a student completes prolonged studies away from home.

GORDON CAMPBELL, Convener (LDC)

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (WDC)

36. The theme for the work of the World Development Committee at present is *Let Justice Flow*. WDC hopes that this theme will resonate particularly strongly with the 2012 PCI focus on the calling of the Church both to speak in a prophetic voice, and to remain open to the prophetic voices of others whom God may use to announce disruptive good news to PCI.

37. **The 2011 World Development Appeal** took as its strap line *Let Justice Flow: Thirsting for Justice*, and focused on the role of water and sanitation issues in integrated and sustainable development. Projects highlighted

were in partnership with the Kigezi Diocese of the Church of Uganda, and a rural development scheme, Living with Dignity, in Cambodia. The Appeal was launched on 18 October 2011, and WDC expresses warm gratitude once again to Stephen Lynas, who travelled to Kigezi Diocese in September and subsequently produced the Appeal materials with sensitivity and skill.

38. WDC is delighted to report that by early March 2012, the offerings received for the 2011 Appeal were keeping pace with the previous year, and WDC was able to disburse £200,000 each to Tear Fund (TF) and Christian Aid (CA). As offerings for the World Development Appeal are received throughout the year, WDC was also able to disburse an additional £65,000 each to TF and CA, in connection with the 2010 Appeal, in October 2011. WDC expresses thanks to Presbytery agents, individuals, and Congregations for their continuing generosity in a time of recession, and for their accompanying witness to God's grace and sustaining care for the whole world.

39. The **Moderator-supported East Africa Appeal** was launched in Summer 2011, and the same steady generosity has been reflected in the giving of individuals and Congregations to this special appeal. A total of £ 385,026 has been received so far for the East Africa Appeal, and has been disbursed in equal amount to TF and CA.

40. Small amounts of income were also received during the year for previously announced Special Appeals, and a further £41,046 and £18,350 were paid out in connection with the Pakistan Flood Appeal and the Haiti Appeal, respectively.

41. The annual allocation from the World Development Appeal to the Board of Mission Overseas has been set at 5 %, with the result that the allocation made in October 2011 was £35,000. This allocation will be used by BMO to support the United Mission to Nepal in its project work with women and children. In addition, a sum of £10,000, which had been held over from the Moderator-supported Appeal for Pakistan has now been sent to the Presbyterian Church in Pakistan, as they are now in a position to use the funds constructively.

42. WDC is seeking the support of the General Assembly for a resolution endorsing the setting up of new and more transparent accounting standards for international companies with regard to their tax liabilities in developing countries. This proposed resolution would lend considerable weight to the on-going efforts by both Christian Aid's Tax Justice Campaign and Tear Fund's Unearth the Truth Campaign, both of which seek to address the issue of **corporate tax accountability** from a biblical perspective.

43. Members of the General Assembly will be acutely aware that recent years have brought a decrease in the development aid budgets of many countries, including the UK and Ireland. And yet what is often overlooked is that developing countries could themselves raise much of the money they need to meet their own development goals if prevailing international taxation arrangements were more transparent and less subject to abuse.

44. As things now stand, the lack of financial transparency, inadequate regulation, and the acceptance by wealthy nations of tax arrangements that favour those who have the most resources to begin with, have allowed some companies to dodge their responsibilities with regard to accurate tax reporting

in the countries in which they operate. In this way, poor countries are routinely denied billions of dollars in tax revenue. This is often far more than these countries receive in development aid. It is also income which these countries desperately need for the provision of essential public services.

45. Good development practice looks forward to a time when large-scale development aid will no longer be needed on an on-going basis, when the unjust arrangements that kept people poor have finally been replaced with fairer structures. And good theology underpins such a hope with its conviction that the Spirit of God is tirelessly at work in the world, setting right the relationships which bind all human persons to one another, to the created earth, and to the God who made and redeemed them both in Christ Jesus. WDC understands this resolution to be one small but important expression of that hope.

46. Finally, the 2012 World Development Appeal will focus on projects which build the capacity of partners to offer a prophetic voice, a voice of advocacy for the poor, within their own communities. Projects highlighted in 2012 will be based in Egypt and Nepal, and PCI's partners will include the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services and the United Mission to Nepal.

KATHERINE MEYER, Convener (WDC)

MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (MIC)

47. Acknowledging that the Congregation is the fundamental unit of missionary endeavour, BMO, through MIC, seeks to help Congregations reach out from the end of the pews to the ends of the earth. To this end, MIC is working to develop greater involvement in global mission by encouraging Congregations (i) to be better informed and envisioned about God's mission in the world today and (ii) to be equipped for, and more engaged in, the many opportunities that exist for PCI to participate in God's global plans.

48. In order to meet the diverse needs of individuals, Congregations and Presbyteries, MIC seeks to provide a wide range of readily accessible resources, events and opportunities, as detailed below. To ensure, however, that these actually do address people's requirements, feedback is regularly sought from those who participate in MIC events and teams. In addition, over this past year, MIC has sought input from congregational leadership through a mission involvement questionnaire and is grateful to the significant number of Congregations who responded. MIC is also grateful for the hugely significant input made to its work by BMO's executive and administrative staff.

49. **Be Informed:** Information on what God is doing in fulfilment of His mission plan in His world today can be accessed through a wide variety of sources including BMO's web-site (www.pcimissionoverseas.org) and weekly Prayerline; both of which supplement the information on the work of the Board that is available through PCI's Points for Prayer handbook. The profile of BMO's mission personnel was further raised this year through the free distribution to each Congregation of an updated Wall Poster of Mission Personnel. Likewise, an updated version of BMO's 'Take 2' report has been produced, that seeks to dig deeper into the stories of the people and partners that PCI works with. Four

regional 'Celebration of Global Mission' evenings have been held since the last General Assembly: in Ballygawley and Assembly Buildings, Belfast in October 2011; and in First Derry and The Mall, Armagh in March 2012.

50. **Be Envisioned:** Recognising that the best advocates for global mission are so often those who are serving overseas, MIC encourages Congregations to avail themselves of the deputation opportunities afforded by mission personnel on home assignment. MIC continues to seek to equip mission personnel on home assignment for the task of deputation in order that the experience is a positive one for both speaker and listener alike. With a limited number of mission personnel available at any given time, it is unfortunately not always possible to meet all the requests for mission speakers that come in from Congregations. To address this, MIC is in the process of establishing a pool of 'Mission Mobilisers' who have a passion for mission, experience of overseas mission work and a desire to envision others. A training programme for would-be Mission Mobilisers has been piloted that provides participants with the resources and skills necessary to enable them to envision PCI members in ways that are relevant and appropriate to the group they are addressing. It is hoped that very soon these Mission Mobilisers will be available for booking by Congregations through the BMO office.

51. **Get Equipped:** MIC continues to provide both practical training and resources for members of PCI serving in global mission, whether that is as 'senders' or those being 'sent'. Where appropriate, MIC's mission training events are run in conjunction with other Boards of PCI and the Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP).

52. Training events aimed at equipping congregational leaders in their role as 'senders' have included '*Prepared to Send?!'*', an interactive workshop looking at the issues that should be considered as teams or individuals are helped to prepare for short-term service overseas; and '*Prepared to Unpack the Experience?!'*' This second workshop aims to equip leaders for the task of helping those who have been overseas to reflect on their experiences and to explore how these might be integrated into the life of both the individual and the Congregation. Youth leaders attending selected YAC Road Trips have also had the opportunity to look at how their young people might be better encouraged to get involved in God's Big Mission. Plans are also in place for a new training event for congregational leaders in November 2012. Entitled: '*Serving as Senders*', this event aims to help congregational leaders explore the pastoral care and support that's required by their members who are serving overseas long-term.

53. MIC continues to heartily commend to congregational leaders BMO's '*Do It Well*' Toolkit that is designed for Congregations who are either contemplating or are in the process of sending a team overseas. MIC believes that this toolkit helps whole Congregations, not just the 'team', to be better prepared and equipped, and therefore less likely to make mistakes.

54. For those who are being 'sent' overseas, a regular event in MIC's training calendar in recent years has been the Overseas Teams Training (OTT) day. In response to feedback from participants and in recognition of that fact that there are also many individuals from PCI who serve in overseas mission projects each year, this training day has been re-branded as '*Prepared to Go?!'*' Through an extensive seminar programme, this event provides relevant, practical advice and training on topics not normally or easily covered by teams or individuals in

their pre-departure preparations. Again, MIC commends this training opportunity to all who are travelling overseas whether as part of a team or as an individual.

55. **Get Engaged:** Engagement in global mission can take various forms including praying, being a good steward of global resources, giving, sending, going and receiving. MIC is grateful to all those who faithfully pray for BMO's office staff and overseas mission personnel. It is also grateful to all those who contribute financially to the work of BMO through the United Appeal, through 'extra mile' giving and through the various Boards and organisations within PCI including the YAC and PW Projects.

56. The Junior BB's PCI World Mission Committee has traditionally sought input from and reported to BMO. During the course of this past year, that relationship has been formalised through the adoption of the Committee as an MIC working group. The Junior BB's 2011 Project, '*Bridge of Hope*', was able to donate £12,000 towards the building of a second footbridge across the Galana River in Kenya. Their 2012 Project seeks to educate participants about and raise funds for children's work in Mera, a village near Cluj in Romania. The work there is being supervised by Ilona Veres, one of PCI's mission personnel, and the funds will provide a building for use by deprived children that will incorporate, amongst other facilities, a classroom and kitchen.

57. For many members of PCI, mission engagement involves short-term service through a congregational overseas team. For others, however, the option of serving on a congregational team does not currently exist and so, for these individuals, the centrally organised PCI Overseas Teams administered by BMO and YAC continue to be a necessary provision. This summer's teams have been promoted under BMO's '*Ignite*' programme that seeks to provide short-term overseas opportunities for up to one year. Having reviewed last year's four teams with team members, team leaders and our overseas partners it was agreed that this year's teams would return to the same projects and partners. On that basis, an all-age team will travel to Ukraine in July to lead an English-language teaching camp for young people in partnership with the Rev György and Mrs Enikő Szanyi of the Transcarpathian Reformed Church. An all-age team will also travel to Italy in September in support of an evangelistic outreach event being organised by the Christian publishing company, Coram Deo and the Sola Gracia Church in Mantova. A youth team will travel to London in August to support the work of the Rev Edwin and Mrs Anne Kibathi and the PCEA UK Outreach Congregation in East London during the period of the Olympic Games. The team will be involved in running a children's holiday Bible club and other evangelistic events in conjunction with the local Stratford Churches' '*More than Gold*' initiative. A second youth team will travel to Romania in July to support PCI mission personnel, Csaba and Ilona Veres, in their work with young people.

58. In addition to the *Ignite Teams*, and following consultation with some of our PCI mission personnel, several additional *Ignite Individual Opportunities* were created in order to provide for those wishing to spend part of a gap year or intern programme serving in mission. Associated with this, BMO had significant input into the training and orientation of YAC's Volunteer and Intern Programme (VIP) participants as they prepared for a week's overseas trip to Spain in March, in support of the work being done amongst students by PCI's Derek and Jane French in and around Bilbao in the north of the country.

59. In the recent past, in addition to providing opportunities for those who wish or need to be part of a broader denominational team, BMO/YAC have provided various 'team' opportunities that complement what's going on at congregational or Presbytery level. These have included specialist teams, family trips and teams for those who wish to 'Go See' a particular type of work or location with a view to establishing a longer term partnership or mission interest. Looking to the future, however, MIC continues to strategically review all of its work and discussions have already commenced as to whether and, if so, how the range of overseas 'team' opportunities on offer should continue or be further developed.

60. As well as reviewing 'team' opportunities, discussions are also underway as to how best to ...

- Share the story of what God is doing in his world using appropriate media that connects with people of all ages;
- Envision the members of PCI to be global disciples at the congregational level through prayer and Bible study.

61. In all of these discussions regarding how best to encourage and equip a mission-hearted Church for active missional engagement, MIC welcomes 'light from any quarter' and seeks the active assistance of Congregational and Presbytery Mission Agents in making MIC's various resources and opportunities known.

62. MIC recognises, however, that the development of a mission-hearted Church requires a movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals and Congregations and can't simply be orchestrated through the production and delivery of quality publications and events. It is MIC's desire, therefore, that congregational leaders would (i) prayerfully ask themselves what the Holy Spirit is saying to them about their Congregation's current level of involvement in His global mission and, (ii) source and promote the necessary resources that allow their Congregation to develop their involvement by being better informed, envisioned, equipped and engaged.

MARK WELSH, Convener (MIC)

63. Aside from the full-time staff in the Mission Overseas Office, many members of the Board willingly sacrifice of their time, energy, gifts and experience to serve on BMO's Assembly and Board Committees. Gratitude is extended to all who, on behalf of the Board over the past year, have attended consultations with partner Churches, visited missionaries in their country of service and spoken in PCI Congregations about the work overseas.

64. The Board gives all honour, praise and thanks to God for his guidance and sustaining grace over this past year, and ever seeks to bring glory to his Name.

APPENDIX A

In the main report most of the names of BMO mission personnel have not been mentioned but their names, spheres and category of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report.

INTEGRATE PROGRAMME – service of two or more years**BRAZIL**

Naomi Keefe	2004	Outreach programme, The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), Recife
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GREAT BRITAIN

Christopher & Nivedita Benjamin	1989	Ministry among Asians in Wembley, London, Church of North India (CNI)
Edwin & Anne Kibathi	2009	Ministry among East Africans in East London, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)

INDONESIA

Barry McCroskery	2004	International Partner Relations and Diaconal Work (social witness), Evangelical Christian Church in Timor (GMIT), Kupang
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KENYA

Stephen & Angelina Cowan	1985 1989	Outreach and Development Work, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Tuum
Naomi Lere more	1991	Teacher for Centre for Early Childhood Education and development of Sunday School materials, PCEA, Nairobi
Derek & Linda Roulston	1998	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA, Timau
Gary & Mary Reid	2000	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA, Olkinyiei

MALAWI

Diane Cusick	1995	Pre-school teacher training, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Livingstonia Synod, Mzuzu
Robin & Helen Quinn	2004	Livingstonia Theological College and Women's Empowerment, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Ekwendeni
Una Brownlie	2007	Nursing, David Gordon Memorial Hospital (DGMH), CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Livingstonia
Neil & Sara Kennedy	2008	Head of Department of Paediatrics & Child Health – College of Medicine of the University of Malawi & Consultant Paediatrician in the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre

Volker & JinHyeog Glissmann	2010	Executive Director, Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM) and music, Zomba Theological College, Zomba
Lyn & John Dowds	2011	Doctor, DGMH, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Livingstonia

PAKISTAN

Ron & Hilary McCartney	2007	Teaching, Forman Christian College, Lahore
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PORTUGAL

James & Heather Cochrane	2008	Leadership training, Bible teaching and Discipleship, Portuguese Bible Institute (IBP), Faro
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ROMANIA

Csaba & Ilona Veres	2001 1993	Programme Co-ordinator, IKE-YMCA Mera Children's Project, Aksza Mission & Caleb House, Cluj
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SPAIN

Derek & Jane French	2000	Student outreach with Grupos Biblicos Unidos (GBU), Bilbao
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INVOLVE PROGRAMME – service of up to two years**MALAWI**

Matthew Williams	2011	Lecturer, Livingstonia Theological College, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Ekwendeni
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IGNITE PROGRAMME – service of up to one year**KENYA**

Eddie & Mary Dorrans	2011	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA
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NEPAL

Joe & Janet Campbell	2011	Advisors in Conflict Transformation; trauma counselling and pastoral care United Mission to Nepal (UMN), Kathmandu
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CANDIDATES IN MISSION**INTEGRATE PROGRAMME – service of two or more years****NEPAL**

Peter & Valerie Lockwood 2012 Programme Advisor with UMN

IGNITE PROGRAMME – service of up to one year**MALAWI**

Adam McCormick 2012 IT Support, CCAP Livingstonia Synod

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly commit to listening for the prophetic voice of God, particularly in attending to the voice of poor and oppressed people, those marginalised in Church or community, and the persecuted Church, in order that PCI's strategic priorities would fully reflect the mission priorities of God's coming Kingdom.
3. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithful service and dedicated witness of PCI's missionary personnel and their families serving overseas, and affirm the sending out of missionary personnel in response to the Call of God and at the invitation of partner Churches, as a strategic mission priority of PCI, whatever the challenges of the on-going global financial crisis.
4. That the General Assembly encourage the Outreach Ministries Committee to pursue its focus on mission through education in 2012/13 and further explore mission through peace-building in the global context.
5. That the General Assembly acknowledge the wide-ranging support which leadership development work offers partner Churches, endorse the Leadership Development Committee's adoption of a 'featured partner' approach to be introduced in 2012-13 and encourage Congregations to seize the opportunity for learning about PCI's leadership development initiatives and praying for leaders-in-training.
6. That the General Assembly give thanks in these difficult times for the continuing and generous support of individuals and Congregations for the annual World Development Appeal, for the recent Moderator-supported East Africa Appeal; and, despite the challenges of the on-going global financial crisis, encourage continued financial generosity to others around the world.
7. That the General Assembly recognise the importance of taxation in developing countries for enabling development and building accountability between state and citizens; and request that both the Irish and UK governments support the call for a new international accounting standard requiring companies to report on profits made and taxes paid in every country in which they operate – so called country-by-country reporting.

8. That the General Assembly ask congregational leaders to prayerfully seek and discern how their Congregation might be better informed and envisioned regarding what God is doing in his world today and the steps they need to take to be increasingly equipped for and engaged in the work of global mission.

9. That the Board of Mission Overseas, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 279 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev RA PATTON
Secretary: Rev DJ BRUCE

INTRODUCTION

Board Conventership

1. This year, the BMI says farewell to its Convener, the Rev Roy Patton. Following his election as Moderator Designate, the Board recorded its warm congratulations to Roy and his wife Daphne as they commence a very different year. Roy's commitment to mission in Ireland, to the work of the Board and the support of its staff has been exemplary. He has helped to forge a clear vision for the Board's work following its formation in 2000, and especially since becoming convener in 2006, and hands it on to his successor with a clear understanding that "*Serving the Church, Enabling Mission*" is not only a task, but also a value. The Board staff, Board members (past and present), Ministers, Deaconesses and Workers who have benefitted from Roy's wisdom and care, wish him well as he serves the Church for this Moderatorial year, and then returns to the busy life of the parish in Ballygilbert.

2. The Board welcomes the nomination of the Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus as its new Convener.

Board Committee Conventerships

3. This year, the Board welcomes the Rev Trevor McCormick as Convener of the Communications Committee. Thanks are extended to Mrs Cherry Poynton for her long and committed service to the Board as Convener of this Committee.

4. At the time of writing, Board appointments to the conventerships of the Finance, Personnel and Property Committees are pending.

The BMI Team

5. The BMI team is made up of Home and Urban Mission Ministers, Deaconesses, Irish Mission Workers and other Church-based staff supported by BMI grants. We record our thanks to Almighty God for the work being done across Ireland through the ministry of these dedicated people who serve so faithfully. A directory of their names and spheres of service is appended as Appendix A to this Report.

6. In addition to this, the office team continues to serve the needs of the Board, and does so with great commitment. The Board records its special thanks to them: Lorraine Beatty (Property and Grants), the Rev David Bruce (Executive Secretary), Evelyn Craig (Secretary pt), Nehru Dass (Finance Manager), Robin Fairbairn (Communications), Mandy Higgins (Office Supervisor), Elaine Huddleston (Secretary), Laura Whitcroft (Secretary pt), the Rev David Thompson (Mission Development), Marianne Trueman (Personnel pt).

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times since the last meeting of the General Assembly.
2. The remit of the Committee is the supervision of the Home Mission and Irish Mission of the Church, and the formation of missional strategies, including mission planning and development, Church planting and specialist networks.
3. The Secretary to the Committee is the Board Secretary.
4. The Nightlight Panel reports to the Committee.

Mission Development

5. 2011/2012 has witnessed the beginning of an exciting range of initiatives under the heading of Mission Development. Last year's report defined Mission Development as follows:

Mission development needs to be seen as a dynamic on-going process to which we are always bending our minds and hearts and wills, rather than an exercise in mission planning to which we routinely return every five years.

(Board of Mission in Ireland Report to the General Assembly 2011)

6. Engaging in a wide range of conversations and listening carefully have become central features of the way in which Mission Development is shaped so as to genuinely seek to fulfil the Board's purpose of serving the Church and enabling mission. The aim is to stimulate hunger and imagination throughout the Church to reach contemporary Ireland for Christ and to accompany and support Congregations and Presbyteries in relevant ways as they seek to do so. Through a series of networks, facilitation, courses and resources the Board is endeavouring to deliver a wide range of possibilities in support of local mission.

Accompanying Presbyteries

7. The Board's Mission Development Officer has engaged in an extensive range of conversations with Presbytery Clerks and Mission Development Coordinators in an effort to identify small, but significant, steps that can further the work of mission within their bounds. This has led to a wide range of outcomes – everything from a conference highlighting the anticipated developments in the city of Belfast and how they might impact upon the form of future Presbyterian presence for witness in the city, to a reshaping of some Mission in Ireland Evenings, to taking forward proposals for potential new church plants, to exploring new patterns of rural ministry and mission. The Board is committed to continuing these conversations and doing everything possible to support Presbyteries as they seek to respond to a variety of presenting issues on the ground. The Board officers are always on hand to offer assistance in any way possible.

Accompanying Congregations

8. The Committee continues to respond to a variety of requests for support and stimulation from local Congregations. Input ranges from highlighting the need for local mission at Sunday Services to more specific input to help shape thinking and strategy through Elders' and Congregational Conferencing. In addition, a six week study resource, *Tapestry: A Mission Woven Life*, was developed in conjunction with Waringstown Presbyterian Church and offered

for congregational use as a free download from the BMI website (see Research and Resources Report for further details of this). Again, the Board welcomes any requests to accompany Congregations in their missional journey and seek to respond as capacity allows.

Networks

9. There is a basic need to hone a missional edge to our lives as a denomination, as Presbyteries, as Congregations and as members. This missional edge defines the contours of our everyday existence, and leaves no part of our encounters with others untouched. Such a culture change only comes about slowly – one conversation at a time.

10. The Committee is encouraged by the response to the new initiative of networks which have brought hundreds of Ministers, Elders and members together to consider the challenges faced in urban mission, rural mission and in leading missional change in congregational life. As these gatherings have happened through the year there has been a real sense of fellowship and encouragement. The Committee is grateful to those who spoke at these events and to those who participated enthusiastically.

11. A programme of regional gatherings was held as follows:

Rural Mission Network

‘Grappling with the realities of rural mission in contemporary Ireland’

- 2nd Broughshane
- Clogherney
- Donoughmore
- 2nd Dromara
- Raffrey

Urban Mission Network

‘Mission by being Good Neighbours’ with Steve Timmis

- Ravenhill

‘Urban Futures Belfast’

- Assembly Buildings

Transformission: The Missional Church Network:

‘Leading Change for Mission’

- Bannside
- Greenisland
- 1st Newtownards
- 1st Cookstown
- Trinity (Ballymoney)
- Lucan

12. These events are supplemented by occasional e-zines, distributed on-line. (Should any members of Assembly wish to receive these e-zines or participate in the networks, they are invited to contact the BMI office).

13. The Committee is confident that the networks are a practical way to sharpen PCI's missional focus, by 'spurring one another on towards love and good deeds', and 'encouraging one another' (Hebrews 10:24&25). The Committee will continue to be flexible in exploring how best the networks can fulfil this remit.

Church Planting

14. In recognition that there are a number of models of church planting some of which are more suitable to the particular setting of Irish Presbyterian forms and opportunities for mission, some preliminary work has been undertaken in exploring the potential of rural church planting and urban re-planting. This remains a priority for the Board and efforts are being made to feed experience from other Churches into the mix of our reflections. The Mission Development Officer corresponds with, and meets with colleagues in Scotland and England. He promotes dialogue within PCI on the outcomes of these conversations.

Training

15. January 2012 saw the launch of the *Course for the Training of Evangelists*. Over ten weeks, twenty-three enthusiastic participants benefitted from the team of experienced teachers and practitioners who brought a variety of perspectives on the task of effective evangelism in a range of settings across Ireland today. The Committee gives thanks to God for those who participated in the course and for all that was learned and shared together. The Committee prays with anticipation for the impact of those trained in the amazing diversity of settings in which they are sharing Christ with others.

16. It is anticipated that the course will run again in 2014.

17. During the intervening year (2013) it is planned to pilot a *Missional Church Course*. (For further details on plans for this, see the Research and Resources Committee Report below).

Co-operation with other Boards

18. The Committee is grateful for the opportunity to seek to dovetail some elements of Mission Development with the work of other Boards. This year has seen a number of such initiatives.

- '*Urban Eyes*' - an Urban Mission Summer Team in conjunction with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry
- *Leading Change for Mission* Seminars offered as part of a module in Leadership for Ministerial students at Union Theological College
- Input into the Board of Christian Training Post-Ordination curriculum for Ministers in their first charge
- A joint seminar on imaginative ways to stimulate congregational interest in mission with the Board of Mission Overseas as part of a Christian Training Roadshow event for Carrickfergus and Templepatrick Presbyteries
- Participation in the *SPUD 2012 Big Event*.

NIGHTLIGHT PANEL

The Rev Alistair Bill reports:

19. The ministry of Nightlight continues in the entertainment areas of Belfast with Mr John Luke as Director. He continues to receive numerous invitations to speak to Congregations reflecting the high level of interest and support shown by the Church in general. Mrs Linzie Cobain and Mr Brian Simons head-up the teams in the Golden Mile area and the Odyssey Complex respectively. Mrs Catherine Dalzell continues as Part-time Resource Worker and in that role she produces Nightlines Prayer Letters, Information Packs and Leaflets and other resource material, as well as co-ordinating deputation.

20. During the year the staff team has fulfilled most of the requirements of the recent Strategy for Mission Committee review of Nightlight. These include:

- a training course for all volunteers which will also be available to other teams
- a learning visit by the Director to other teams in Scotland and England
- continuing assessment, reflection and action on opportunities for staff and team deployment, especially with others working in the entertainment areas of Belfast.

21. A training/networking event was held on 24 March 2012 to which teams involved in Christian night time work throughout the province were invited. It is hoped that this will lead to the establishment of a network for all those involved in such work.

22. A team of 47 volunteers working on rota takes Christ onto the streets on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 10 pm through to 3 or 4 am. Team members are committed Christians of all ages and from a wide range of backgrounds. They share a burden for the work of Nightlight and have experienced God's call to become actively involved. The team constantly changes as individuals' personal circumstances alter. It is always encouraging to welcome new members, who each go through a period of assessment before becoming full members of the team.

23. Nightlight is based at the Kinghan Church in Botanic Avenue where team members meet for prayer before and after working on the streets; it also provides somewhere to bring anyone in need of help and counselling. A regular Saturday and Sunday morning (12midnight to 3am) "Tea Table" takes place on the footpath outside the Church and this has become an invaluable point of contact.

BRIAN COLVIN, Convener

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Research and Resource Committee has met three times through the course of the year.

2. The remit of the Committee is to commission and undertake research and produce resources to serve and enable the mission of the denomination.

3. The Secretary to the Committee is the BMI Mission Development Officer, the Rev David Thompson.
4. The following Panels report to the Committee:
 - Worship Panel
 - Panel on the Review of the Book of Public Worship
 - Divine Healing Panel

Mission Development

5. The Committee's work is informed by, and supports, the work of Mission Development in a number of ways.

AWAKE 2012: God Speaks: Good News for a Church in Exile

6. The Committee is excited to launch this year's AWAKE programme at the Assembly.

7. One response gained from Presbytery feedback following the Mission Planning process was an expressed desire for publicising new models of mission from around the Church to stimulate fresh thinking and build confidence to try new initiatives. To seek to address this need, AWAKE 2012 is a five session Bible Study resource with accompanying video material, flexible enough to be used in a range of settings. Alongside this, AWAKE includes a 35-day daily devotional guide booklet, which is designed to be distributed and used over the same five-week period. Through exploring the analogy of the experience of the Old Testament people of God while exiled in Babylon, the material seeks to raise the awareness of individuals and Congregations to the realities of our starting place for mission in contemporary Ireland.

8. The ten short video stories are drawn from Congregations: north, south, east and west; rural, urban and suburban, and include brand new and inherited models. They will earth the material, stimulating conversation and imagination for mission right where we are. The Committee hopes and believes that these excellent materials can become a vital part of each Congregation's participation in the first of the denominational 'Fit For Purpose' themes, *A Prophetic Voice*. A resolution is appended.

TAPESTRY: A Mission Woven Life

9. *Tapestry: A mission woven life* is a free six-week, downloadable small group conversation guide particularly suitable for use with members of Congregations who commute to work each day and whose patterns of life find them split between two spheres of influence for mission – in their local community and their work place. Produced in such a way that users can cut and paste sections into, or out of, the materials as found on the BMI website, whatever the setting, Congregations can make this resource work for them – and we encourage them to do so. A resolution is appended.

Course for the Training of Evangelists

10. As agreed by the Assembly, the Committee undertook the planning for this course during the year. For further details on the successful implementation of the project, see the BMI Strategy for Mission Committee report under Training.

Missional Church Course

11. The Committee is examining the potential of running a Missional Church Course with a pilot course beginning in January 2013. There is a significant global conversation around the concept of 'Missional Church'. Amid the cacophony of voices there are important emphases for PCI to grapple with in the Irish Presbyterian setting. The Committee foresees the course providing an opportunity to do so as it addresses some of the following topics:

1. MISSIONAL JOURNEY – Missional Dynamics
2. MISSIONAL STORY – Reading the Bible missionally
3. MISSIONAL VISION – Reading context and culture
4. MISSIONAL GROOVE – Fusing Biblical text and contemporary context
5. MISSIONAL LIVING – Gospel imperatives and crossing cultural divides
6. MISSIONAL MESSAGE – Evangelistic thresholds and engaged discipleship
7. MISSIONAL MIX I – Models of missional Church – reflection
 - (a) Refining – whole Church/whole life discipleship
 - (b) Realigning – growing new alongside old
 - (c) Designing – church planting and tent making
8. MISSIONAL MIX II – Models of missional Church – practice
 - (a) Refining – whole Church/whole life discipleship
 - (b) Realigning – growing new alongside old
 - (c) Designing – church planting and tent making
9. MISSIONAL CHANGE – Leading change for mission
10. MISSIONAL SPIRITUALITY

12. The Committee's hope is that this course will be of interest to both Ministers and Church members of all ages working in existing congregational bases and open to pioneering new initiatives.

WORSHIP PANEL

The Rev Karen Campbell reports:

Mentoring

13. The Worship Panel continues to run a successful mentoring service. There are currently four mentors who are willing to travel to any Congregation to provide support in the following areas:

- vocal workshops
- choir workshops
- band workshops
- reviewing the overall vision for worship teams

14. Over the past year, these mentors have successfully engaged with four different Congregations.

15. The Panel has recently approved a mentor to work with youth bands. The Panel recognises the need to encourage young people to be involved in worship from an early age and therefore this mentoring scheme has been piloted this year. The youth mentor is available on request from the BMI Office.

Musical Arrangements

16. Many Congregations still avail of the arrangements service to buy orchestral parts for different songs and hymns.

Psalms Roadshow

17. Due to the popular demand of the Psalms Roadshows last year, the Panel agreed to take the Roadshow to Strabane in March 2012. Over fifty participants attended and the Panel was encouraged by the response.

The Arts in Worship

18. A new initiative was piloted in May. In co-operation with genesis-art, the Panel organised a one-day workshop looking at creativity and spirituality. This was with a view to further researching how to encourage the use of all arts in worship.

PANEL ON THE REVIEW OF THE BOOK OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

The Very Rev Dr David Clarke reports:

19. The revised materials on the sacraments, having been drafted and reviewed by the Panel were sent to Presbyteries for comment during the year. In light of the responses received from Presbyteries, the Panel further revised the materials.

20. All the completed materials are now available for free download on the BMI website. A feedback facility is provided on the website so that responses from Ministers can continue to be received, and the resources continuously improved.

21. The resource is published by the BMI at this time. After a period of time, and in light of comments received, the Board may consider bringing the completed resource to the Assembly for its adoption.

PANEL ON DIVINE HEALING

The Rev James Tosh reports:

22. The Panel members met with Presbytery Agents and others on 19 September 2011 to ask what areas of ministry they would like help with. Two specific areas were mentioned:

A Christian understanding of suffering

How to pray helpfully with those with physical or mental health issues, those facing terminal illness and other such difficult situations

In response to this, the Panel has taken the following steps:

On Wednesday 17 October 2012, Dr Keith Warrington (author of *Healing and Suffering: Biblical and Pastoral reflections*. Paternoster) has been invited to lead a morning seminar entitled *The mystery of suffering and the practice of prayer*. Dr Warrington will give two substantial presentations, and be open for questions and dialogue. Full details will be released in due course

A seminar was held with the Rev Dr Derek McKelvey on 27 March 2012 in Cooke Centenary with the Churches Council for Health and Healing on the theme *Healing Prayer*.

23. The Panel Convener welcomes comment and requests for assistance from the Church at large on the question of divine healing.

CHRIS KENNEDY, Convener

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has met on nine occasions since the 2011 General Assembly.

2. The remit of the Committee is the approval of plans for new Churches, halls, manses and other structures erected on congregational property, and the approval of plans for the demolition and renovation of existing buildings.

3. The Secretary to the Committee is the BMI Support Officer, Miss Lorraine Beatty.

4. A large number of submissions were dealt with during 2011/12 including three new Churches, several new church halls, new manses, and stained glass windows, along with the usual major and minor renovations.

5. It is evident that many Congregations are interested in redesigning the entrance areas to their buildings so that they become more welcoming, and flexible in use. From a missional perspective, the Committee welcomes this trend.

6. Three deputations visited with the Committee in Assembly Buildings and Committee members made a number of site visits.

7. In November the Committee visited Wellington, Ballyloughan and St Saviours (Church of Ireland) in Dollingstown to view new building designs. This proved a most worthwhile learning experience.

8. It is in everyone's interest that Congregations submit plans to the Committee at an early stage – even before working drawings are produced. In this regard, the Committee draws the attention of Presbyteries, Ministers, Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees to Paragraphs 57(4), 277(3)(b) of the Code, which define the expected steps required in seeking approval for building projects.

TOM REID, Convener

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mrs Irene Younge reports:

Introduction

1. The Committee has met three times since the last meeting of the General Assembly.

2. The remit of the Committee is the recruitment, review and supervision of all aspects of staff called or deployed by the BMI.

3. The Secretary to the Committee is the Board Secretary.

4. The Board currently deploys eight Irish Mission Workers and one probationer.

5. In partnership with PW, BMI deploys 27 Deaconesses with a further three student Deaconesses completing their probationary year on 31 May 2012 and one student Deaconess having her probationary period suspended due to sickness.

6. There are currently 34 Ministers serving with the Board, including 2 Church Planters, 3 in Urban Mission Congregations and 29 in Home Mission Congregations.

7. A full directory of personnel serving with the Board is listed in Appendix A.

Home and Urban Mission Ministers and Church Planters

8. The Rev Colin Gamble resigned from Naas in June 2011, having received a Call to Immanuel, Belfast.

9. The Rev Dr Brian Savage retired from Kells and Ervey in August 2011.

10. The Rev Dr Gary Millar resigned from Howth and Malahide on 1 January 2012, having been appointed as Principal of the Queensland Theological College, and Lecturer in Old Testament and Hebrew.

11. The Rev David Moore gave notice of his intention to resign from Kilkenny in June 2012, having received a call to Knock, Belfast.

Irish Mission Workers

12. Mr Harry Moreland has been redeployed from Fermoy to serve in the Cork City area.

13. Decisions about the commissioning and deployment of Mr Eamon Doyle have been deferred.

14. Mr Kevin Hargaden will resign from the Irish Mission (Maynooth) at the end of July 2012 to continue his studies for the ministry on a full time basis. He will remain in Maynooth.

Deaconesses

15. Mrs Amy Magee was called by the BMI and inducted by the Templepatrick Presbytery to serve as a Deaconess in Muckamore alongside the Rev Peter Dickinson on 23 October 2011.

16. Mrs Carole O'Hara was transferred from Assistant to the Chaplain duties in Musgrave Park Hospital (one session) to Craigavon Area Hospital (two sessions) and continues in Antrim Area Hospital (4 sessions).

17. Miss Michelle McCauley was called by the BMI on 7 March 2012 to serve part time in Ballygowan and part time in 2nd Saintfield Congregations.

18. Mrs Elizabeth Feely (nee Warnock) resigned from the Diaconate with effect from 1 January 2012.

Student Deaconesses

19. Mrs Eileen Black commenced a probationary year on 1 June 2011 under the supervision of the Rev Dr Isaac Thompson in 1st Cookstown. She continues her probationary training in Portrush in a temporary capacity, with the Rev John Kirkpatrick.

20. Miss Joanne McCourt commenced a probationary year on 1 June 2011 under the supervision of the Rev Paul Jamieson in Hillhall.

21. Mrs Hazel Reid commenced a probationary year on 1 June 2011 under the supervision of the Rev Brian Boyd in Kells and Eskylane.

22. Miss Tracey Nicholl has postponed her probationary year in Ballywillian due to sickness.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Rev Trevor McCormick reports:

Introduction

1. The Committee met three times since the last meeting of the General Assembly.

2. The remit of the Committee is the supervision of production of digital, printed and other recorded materials for the BMI, including editorial oversight of ReachOut magazine and the BMI website. In addition, the Committee oversees the conferences and events run by the Board.

3. The Secretary to the Committee is the BMI Communications Officer, Robin Fairbairn.

Website

4. The Committee has responsibility for the BMI website www.missionireland.org. In this technological age the website is becoming the main method for disseminating information about the Board's work, as well as providing downloadable resources including prayer bulletins. *Prayerfocus*, while a downloadable resource, continues to be emailed to subscribers every week.

ReachOut

5. Six editions of *ReachOut* magazine were published during the year. 8,000 copies of each edition were printed for distribution but it has been noted that there is still a significant number of Congregations which do not promote the magazine. *ReachOut Connect*, the pull-out section in the magazine has been redesigned. It contains a monthly prayer diary as well as information about field-workers and specific mission situations.

Conferences

6. The Board's Communications Officer, Robin Fairbairn encouraged Mission in Ireland events in 14 Presbyteries in 2012. Some of these involved direct input from BMI personnel, while others explored the theme of mission in Ireland more broadly. Attendances were generally encouraging. He was also responsible for the practical arrangements for residential and day conferences for Deaconesses and for Irish Mission Workers. In addition there were meetings in connection with Urban and Rural Missions. The Psalms Roadshow event took place in Strabane this year.

Publications

7. The Committee's Publications Panel continues to look at the production

of all of the Board's printed material, which this year will include the major production of *AWAKE 2012, God Speaks. Good News for a Church in Exile*. This production includes a mix of printed, online and video materials.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mr Brian Knox reports:

Introduction

1. The Committee met three times since the last meeting of the General Assembly.
2. The remit of the Committee is the management of all aspects of the property portfolio of the Home Mission and Irish Mission, including acquisitions, disposals, construction and maintenance.
3. The Secretary to the Committee is the BMI Support Officer, Miss Lorraine Beatty.
4. In addition to the stated meetings of the Property Committee, sub-groups from the Committee, using the varying experiences of its members, have visited numerous Church properties and met with many congregational representatives over the past year.

Mullingar

5. Following receipt of Planning Approval, a contract has been signed for the purchase of a site for a new Church building at Rathgowan, Mullingar. In relation to the existing Church building in the town centre, a sale has been agreed and the purchaser has signed a contract with an anticipated completion date in May 2012.

Drogheda New Church Building

6. Construction work on the new Church building near Bettystown, Drogheda, commenced in June 2011 with an anticipated completion date of April 2012. Upon handover of the new building the contractor/purchaser will take possession of the old Church building.

Ballyshannon – Sale of Old Church Building

7. The Church building has now been sold and the Board has retained approximately 7.5 acres of building land for future use or sale.

Mountmellick – Old Church and Adjoining Manse

8. Both parties for the sale of these listed buildings have signed a contract and completion is anticipated within a short period.

Arklow Church Building Extension

9. The building work for the extension of the Church building has been completed and the Congregation are presently worshipping in their upgraded building which provides much more appropriate accommodation for the development of the work in Arklow.

Strand, Belfast

10. Following demolition of the Church building in summer 2011 due to an unfavourable insurance inspection, plans were put in place to construct a new building on the site. Tenders have been sought with a view to construction work commencing in Spring 2012.

Shankill Road Mission

11. It has been agreed that the property should be sold and monies reinvested in the area. Discussions with potential purchasers are on-going, however the Committee continues to monitor the condition of the property and carry out necessary repairs and maintenance.

Sligo Church Halls

12. It is proposed that the Church hall and ancillary rooms should be refurbished. Work is to be progressed over the next months.

General

13. The co-operative interaction of the various Committees within the Board has been an encouragement for those involved in the management of Home Mission properties. The Committee endeavours to be supportive in respect of numerous property matters throughout the island.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Douglas Cowan reports:

Introduction

1. The Committee met three times since the last General Assembly.
2. The remit of the BMI Finance Committee is the general oversight of BMI finances, including the review of quarterly management accounts, the preparation of annual accounts for presentation to the Board and the General Assembly, consideration of the finances of major capital projects, and the preparation of budgets for annual submission to the United Appeal Board.
3. The Grants Panel reports to the Committee.

Financial results 2011

4. The Committee records thanks to God for his generous provision. The financial results for 2012 are better than forecast for the following reasons:
 - The Board received several bequests in 2012
 - Some planned 2012 capital expenditure will not be incurred until 2013
 - The Board received most of the funds held with PMS.
5. The Committee prepares projections of income and expenditure for the Boards capital programme in line with projects approved. A number of factors such as delays in purchasing land, the obtaining of planning permission, the appointment of professional advisors and tender approvals can make the prediction of project completion dates imprecise.

Disposal of assets, and capital funds

6. The Board holds some properties that are no longer required by the Church but, in the current depressed property market especially in the Republic, the Committee considers it imprudent to place these properties on the open market for sale at present. The Committee is concerned that, based on most recent projections, capital funds for any new major projects will be exhausted by the end of 2013. The Board has agreed to reassign long-held funds from the sale of the former Shankill Road Mission Congregation manse in order to make this available for BMI approved projects on the Shankill Road area, or beyond.

Controlling costs

7. The Committee continues to look at expenditure, seeking to identify any possible savings while safeguarding our key mission priorities. The net cost to the Board of being responsible for the employment of 27 Deaconesses plus 4 Probationers who will be eligible for a call in May 2012, is being monitored. The Committee is especially grateful for a one-off additional grant of £40,000 from PW in 2012 towards the costs of Deaconesses completing their probationary training.

Grants Panel

8. The Grants Panel meets three times per year to consider requests for help from Congregations and Presbyteries through Mission Support Grants, Irish Mission Fund Grants and Repair Grants for Home Mission Congregations. These applications for assistance are considered carefully, and according to criteria agreed by the Board. The Panel also monitor projects as they proceed to completion. The quality of projects submitted for grant assistance from every part of Ireland is encouragingly high. Each applicant must demonstrate the aim of supporting local Congregations and Presbyteries in mission and outreach.

9. The Committee considers that this grant-making capacity is central to the work of the Board and has sought to increase the budget in 2013 for the Irish Mission Fund to enable the support of more projects. Grants awarded in 2011 are as follows:

BMI Grants, 2011	
Revenue Grants	£
Urban Mission Support	46,163
Building Report (Home Mission)	152,766
Irish Mission Fund	67,133
Capital Grants	
All capital grants (Home Mission)	585,487

(Extracted from the PCI General Assembly Accounts 2011, BMI Income and Expenditure, including note number 20)

APPENDIX A

Directory of Ministers, Deaconesses and Irish Mission Workers currently called by the Board, and of additional staff supported by BMI grants.

Home Mission Ministers

Congregations in brackets are not in the Home Mission

Rev RS Agnew	(1st Monaghan) and Smithborough
Rev MRJ Anderson	Arklow
Rev SG Anketell	1st Bailieborough, Corraneary, (Trinity) Bailieborough)
Rev Janice M Browne	(Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan
Rev GD Campbell	(Blackrock) and Bray
Rev CFD Clements	Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo
Rev Molly Deatherage	Ballina, Killala, Ballymote
Rev CI Dickson	(Cavanaleck) and Aughentaine
Rev JG Faris	Cork and Aghada
Rev WJ Hayes	Tullamore and Mountmellick
Rev HJ Honeyford	(2nd Castlederg) and Alt
Rev KA Jones	(Waterside) and Fahan
Rev SJ Lockington	Corboy and Mullingar
Rev Dr DK McCrory	Maynooth
Rev IT McKee	(Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane
Rev G Jean Mackarel	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis
Rev Katherine P Meyer	Sandymount (Alternating scheme)
Rev NS Millen	(Dundalk, Castlebellingham) and Carlingford
Rev GA Mitchell	Sligo and Boyle
Rev DJ Montgomery	Greystones
Rev W Montgomery	Fermoy and Cahir
Rev Troy Morgan	Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss
Rev SW Rea	Carlow and Athy
Rev DW Reid	(Ardstraw) and Douglas
Rev SJ Richmond	Donegal
Rev RB Thompson	(Badoney, Corrick) and Glenelly
Rev DJ Woodside	Drogheda
Rev GP Young	Moville and Greenbank
Vacant	Carndonagh and Malin
Vacant	Carrigart and Dunfanaghy
Vacant	Christ Church, Limerick (Alternating Scheme)
Vacant	Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount
Vacant	Inch
Vacant	Enniscorthy and Wexford
Vacant	(Frankford, Castleblayney) and Corvalley
Vacant	Galway (Alternating Scheme)
Vacant	Howth and Malahide

Vacant	Kells and Ervey
Vacant	Kilkenny
Vacant	Maguiresbridge, Lisbellaw, Newtownbutler and Lisnaskea
Vacant	Naas

Urban Mission Ministers

Rev M Gibson	Westbourne
Rev R Love	Taughmonagh
Rev D Rankin	Strand

Church Planters

Rev A Carroll	Donabate, North Dublin
Rev DF Leal	Cliftonville Road, Belfast

Deaconesses

Jenny Clegg	Ballycrochan, Bangor
Amanda Cooper	New Row, Coleraine
Muriel Cromie	Belfast City Hospital Chaplaincy Team and NI Cancer Centre
Doreen Draffin	Whitehouse and Hospice Chaplaincy Team
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington, Ballymena
Lynda Gibson	NI Prison Service Chaplaincy Team
Sharon Heron	Strand, Belfast
Roberta Irvine	Greystone Road, Antrim
Christine Kyle	Ulster Hospital Chaplaincy Team
Phyllis Linton	West Church, Ballymena
Michelle McCauley	Ballygowan and 2nd Saintfield
Heather McCracken	Alexandra and RVH Chaplaincy Team (locum)
Sonya McCullagh	Shore Street, Donaghadee
Sadie McCullough	Whiteabbey
Lynda McFaul	1st Carrickfergus
Carol McRoberts	Tullycarnet
Amy Magee	Muckamore
Elizabeth Matthews	Elmwood, Lisburn
Carol O'Hara	Antrim and Craigavon Area Hospital Chaplaincy Teams
Jackie O'Neill	Joymount, Carrickfergus
Jean Gwyn Patton	RVH Chaplaincy Team
Julie Peake	Portrush
Margaret Robertson	Gardenmore, Larne
Jenny Robinson	South Belfast Friendship House
Kathleen Spence	Scarva Street, Banbridge
Rosemary Spiers	1st Antrim
Evelyn Whyte	1st Lisburn

Probationary Deaconesses

Eileen Black	1st Cookstown/Portrush
Joanne McCourt	Hillhall
Hazel Reid	Kells
Tracey Nicholl	Ballywillan

Irish Mission Workers

David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Kevin Hargaden	Maynooth
Harry Moreland	Cork
Billy Patterson	Drogheda
Keith Preston	International Meeting Point, Belfast
William Workman	Athy
Philip Whelton	Arklow

Probationary Irish Mission Worker

Eamon Doyle

BMI-Supported Outreach Workers

Richie Cronin	Dun Laoghaire
John McCandless	Mountpottinger and Mersey Street
Gareth Parker	Ballyloughan
Jonathan Reid	1st Ahoghill
Michael Sentance	International Meeting Point, Belfast
Eddie Spence	Ballygomartin

Supported by the BMI

Rhonda Glass	Westport, Co Mayo
Karen Burns	Westport, Co Mayo

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Strategy for Mission Committee

2. That the General Assembly commend the Rural, Urban and Transformation networks, and encourage Ministers, Elders and members to be part of the on-going conversation.

3. That the General Assembly, giving thanks to God for the successful completion of the *Course for the Training of Evangelists*, pray for the course participants as they seek to put what they have learned and experienced into practice, and encourage Congregations to identify evangelists or potential evangelists by assisting them to participate in future courses.

4. That the BMI maintains annual contact with Presbytery Clerks and Mission Development Co-ordinators to offer support in mission development in whatever manner is deemed appropriate.

5. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to consider carefully the outworking of their mission plans, and to make full use of the resources of materials and personnel made available through the BMI for their further reflection and action.

Research and Resources Committee

6. That the General Assembly welcome the Awake 2012 project, God Speaks: Good News for a Church in Exile, and encourage Congregations to use the material in considering the 'Fit for Purpose' theme of 'A Prophetic Voice.'

7. That the General Assembly welcome the 'Tapestry: a mission woven life' material and encourage its wide use especially among Congregations with significant numbers of commuters within the Church.

8. That the General Assembly welcome the initiative of the BMI in organising a Missional Church Course in 2013, and commend it to the Church.

9. That the General Assembly welcome the completed work of the Panel on the Revision of the Book of Public Worship, and the publication online by the BMI of the revised materials, and encourage Ministers to make use of this resource and to offer comment on it to the editors.

10. That the General Assembly commend the Panel on Divine Healing initiative to organise a seminar on Wednesday 17 October 2012 with Dr Keith Warrington entitled "The mystery of suffering and the practice of prayer", and encourage Ministers, Elders and those with pastoral care responsibilities to attend.

General

11. That the General Assembly commend *ReachOut* magazine to all Congregations and encourage its wide circulation as a stimulus to missional thinking and action.

12. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to set aside one Sunday in the year to celebrate their rich access to Scripture and, in this regard, commend the online resources of the Bible Societies in Ireland to Ministers and Kirk Sessions.

13. That the resignation of the Rev RA Patton as Convener of the Board of Mission in Ireland be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and the Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus be appointed in his place.

14. That the Board of Mission in Ireland with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 280 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 204 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 204 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“204. The ordination or installation of ruling elders shall be conducted by the Presbytery, or a commission thereof, who shall appoint ministers and ruling elders to officiate at the service.”

Anent Par 210(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that sub-paragraph 210(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“(1) appoint ministers and ruling elders to conduct the service.”

Anent Par 212(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 212(1) of the Code the words “an address dealing with” be deleted and the words “an address or statement dealing with” substituted in their place.

DAVID J BRUCE

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

President: Mrs EDNA McILWAINE
 General Secretary: Mrs CAROLINE HAWTHORNE

Theme for the year: Under His Wings

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Board of Mission in Ireland, Board of Mission Overseas and Board of Social Witness.)

1. The theme for this past year has been **Under His Wings**. It is hoped that it has helped members draw close to God through recognising His authority, spending time with Him in study and prayer and understanding the need to 'nestle' in His care.

2. The Presbyterian Women's (PW) office continues to be staffed by Mrs Caroline Hawthorne, General Secretary; Mrs Charlotte Stevenson, Communications and Development Officer; and Miss Naomi Campbell, Receptionist/Secretary. Miss Fiona Bingham retired as Senior Secretary and we welcomed a new Senior Secretary, Mrs Rose McCullagh in April.

3. The Resources Committee continues to be commended by members for the production of the resource pack. Groups are offered this pack each year to help with their programme – it is full of useful ideas relating to the theme for the year. PW records sincere thanks to Mrs Ann Blue for convening this Committee and for the valuable contribution she and Committee members have made. A new Convener, Mrs Lynn Murray, was welcomed in March.

4. The PW website contains useful information relating to the organisation. Helpful resources and images are available on the website for members to download. The website address is www.presbyterianireland.org/pw.

5. CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2011/12

Office Bearers:

President:	Mrs Edna McIlwaine (Armagh)
Home Vice President:	Mrs Valerie Tweedie (East Belfast)
Overseas Vice President:	Mrs Elizabeth Moffett (Iveagh)

Other Committee Members:

Mrs Margaret Stevenson (Ards)	Mrs Jean Annett (Iveagh)
Mrs Moyra Stirling (Armagh)	Mrs Pat Martin (Monaghan)
Mrs Lynn Murray (Ballymena)	Mrs Ann Blue (Newry)
Miss Anna Morison (Ballymena)	Mrs Deborah Hyland (Newry)
Mrs Dorothy Marshall (North Belfast)	Mrs Pauline Irvine (Newry)
Dr Jean Shannon (South Belfast)	Mrs Valerie Reid (Omagh)
Mrs Winnie Moffett (East Belfast)	Mrs Gwen Carson (Route)
Mrs Lynda Stothers (Carrickfergus)	Mrs Edith Holmes (Templepatrick)
Mrs Hazel Clarke (Coleraine & Limavady)	Mrs Anne Thompson (Tyrone)
Mrs Violet Miller (Coleraine & Limavady)	Mrs Caroline Hawthorne (staff)
Mrs Elaine Crocket (Derry & Donegal)	Mrs Charlotte Stevenson (staff)

Mrs Sandra Stokes (Down)
Mrs Phyllis Spence (Dromore)

Mrs Maureen Patterson (Ex Officio)

6. New Members of Central Committee 2012/13

Mrs Jean Farlow (Coleraine & Limavady)
Mrs Elma Leeburn (Dromore)
Mrs Margaret Grayson (East Belfast)
Mrs Evelyn Coleman (North Belfast)
Mrs Ann Millar (Route)

7. New Office Bearers from Annual Meeting, 3 and 4 May 2012

President 2012/13: Mrs Valerie Tweedie (East Belfast)
Home Vice President 2012/14: Mrs Anna Morison (Ballymena)

8. Central Committee met seven times during the year. As well as carrying the responsibility of steering the work of the organisation, the Central Committee continues to provide representatives to several Boards and Committees in PCI and various other organisations and bodies.

9. Mrs Winnie Moffett represents PW at Women's Link and serves as their President.

10. Mrs Edna McIlwaine has served as President during 2011/12. During this year she has given generously of her time in attendance at meetings of Boards and Committees and has travelled extensively throughout Ireland to fulfil her many speaking engagements. Edna also travelled to Malawi and Europe with another member of Central Committee during her time as Overseas Vice-President and recently as President. Central Committee deeply appreciates the contribution Edna has made to PW especially during her term in Office.

11. PW Central Committee continues to appreciate the support and advice given by the Clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev Dr DJ Watts.

12. The Committee also records its thanks to the Rev DJ Bruce, Secretary to the Board of Mission in Ireland; the Rev WS Marrs, Secretary to the Board of Mission Overseas; and Mr L Conway, Secretary to the Board of Social Witness, for their help and expertise.

13. Events 2010/11

- The Annual Meetings were held on 26 May 2011, in Assembly Buildings. The music, provided by Graham Hawthorne and his band, was uplifting and the songs were relevant to the theme. The guest speaker was Jennifer Rees-Larcombe. Jennifer has a fruitful and long-established prayer, healing, speaking and writing ministry and currently leads a charity called Beauty from Ashes which supports her work. It aims to encourage people whose lives have been distorted or broken through trauma towards faith in, and dependence on, Christ. She was inspirational as she addressed the theme, Under His Wings, at the Meetings. Her message was fresh and tinged with many touches of wit and good humour. With great openness, she spoke from her tremendous wealth of experience of life and of God's continued guidance and protection through many problems.

- Prior to Central Committee in September 2011 the Rev Nigel McCullough conducted a Communion Service.
- Instead of PW Forum a leadership event was held in partnership with Focusfest on 10 September, 2011 in Assembly Buildings, Belfast with the theme, “What do you carry with you?” American author, Elisa Morgan, was the keynote speaker and seminars focused on various aspects of leadership, helping women to think about the role to which God had called them. The seminars were led by Elisa Morgan, Caroline Hawthorne, Heather Morris and Sharon Heron. There were plenty of opportunities during the day to chat with friends as well as to worship and learn.
- PW Forum met on 11 February, 2012 in the Minor Hall, Assembly Buildings. Edna McIlwaine (President) led opening devotions and gave a short report on her trip to Spain and Portugal with Sandra Stokes (Central Committee member). The Resources Committee gave a flavour of what is in the 2012/13 *Resource Pack*, highlighting the theme for next year; “Light of the World”. A presentation on leadership was given, encouraging members to meet the aims of PW. Groups were to be welcoming to all women and meetings should be varied and well planned with rotas to share the work. Groups were to be permeated by a real spirit of love and fellowship. Fund Raising to replace money formerly raised through membership fees affected all groups and ideas were given on how this could be done. In her closing epilogue, Caroline Hawthorne spoke on discipleship. She spoke on the importance of becoming more like Him, demonstrating His love and bearing fruit for God’s glory.

South Belfast Friendship House

14. The House is funded by PW through the PW Mission Fund.

15. PW Central Committee continues to value the partnership with the Board of Social Witness in relation to the management of South Belfast Friendship House.

16. The Management Committee is thankful to Mrs Jenny Robinson, Mrs Eunice Moore and Miss Natalie Johnston for their faithful service and commitment to the work of South Belfast Friendship House. The Committee would like to record its thanks to all the volunteers who help on a regular basis – their support is invaluable and it has been very encouraging to see the team grow over the past year.

17. The work of the House continues to grow through After-School Group; Homework Club; Youth Alpha; Breakfast Club; Friendship Group; Toddler Group; and Utility St Men’s Hostel. Sincere thanks are given to the men from Orangefield Congregation who help with the men’s work in relation to the local men’s hostel.

18. In August 2011 two summer teams were held at the House. One was led by Stuart Hawthorne from Woodlands Presbyterian Church and the other was led by a team from the PCI Youth and Children’s Board. On-going contact is made with the teams as some of the team members volunteer throughout the year.

In February 2012 a Canadian team ran a Holiday Bible Club during half term and were involved in some of the youth activities at the House.

19. Once again, there was a wonderful response to the Christmas Appeal. PW Groups, Congregations and individuals gave money gifts, toys and household goods, and many people were helped as a result of this generosity. A number of PW Groups also gave up their time to help wrap and sort the gifts. It is a huge encouragement to the staff team when personal contact is made with the House. The Management Committee would like to record its thanks to all who contributed.

Finance

20. PW Central Committee is very grateful for the on-going support of its members which enables PW to contribute to the mission of the Church. Income to the Mission Fund in 2011 amounted to £597,802.

21. PW gave a grant of £255,000 in 2012 to the Board of Mission in Ireland to partly support 27 Deaconesses serving in Congregations, the Community, Hospitals and the Prison Service. In addition, PW partly supported the four Probationary Deaconesses. PW gave an additional donation of £40,000 to the Board of Mission in Ireland in 2012 to support Deaconess work.

22. PW gave a grant of £190,000 in 2012 to the Board of Mission Overseas. In addition, PW gave an additional donation of £20,000 to support James and Heather Cochrane's literature project in the Portuguese Bible Institute.

23. PW Central Committee acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:

Agnes Simpson	£10,000
Jeannie Harkness	£11,711
Jessie B Davies	£19,730
Margaret M Ritchie	£500
Hilda E Anderson	£202,000

24. The total amount received for the 2010/11 Birthday Project was £71,077. This supported God's work in the Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi through the David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Women's Empowerment in Ekwendeni and the training of teachers in Mzuzu.

25. Through the PW Mission Fund it was hoped the Special Projects (2011/12) will support the Church of North India, CAP and PCI's Tritonville Sheltered Housing in Dublin.

Wider World

26. PW Central Committee records sincere thanks to the Editor, Mrs Charlotte Stevenson for producing a consistently high standard magazine which included articles on overseas mission personnel, deaconess work, PW Groups and events, as well as issues facing Christians today.

27. Wider World has a readership of over 18,000. The Committee continues to promote Wider World amongst the members of our Church and would encourage more members to subscribe to this excellent magazine.

28. Selected extracts from Wider World continue to be available on audio tape for those who are blind or partially sighted.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev RA LIDDLE

Secretary: Mr LINDSAY CONWAY, OBE

THE BOARD AT A GLANCE

- 20 locations
- 445 bed spaces
- 423 staff
- 200 volunteers
- £8.75 + million operational budget

AREAS OF WORK

- **Residential Care** – Older People and Learning Disability
- **Nursing Care** – Older People
- **Working with people with Addictions**
- **Working with Offenders**
- **Supported Housing** – Older People and Learning Disability
- **Student Accommodation**
- **Counselling Service**
- **Child Protection** – Training, Advice and Support
- **Chaplains** – Hospital, Hospice, University Forces and Criminal Justice
- **Ministry to the Deaf**
- **Family Centre** – Young Families, Older People, School Children and Homeless
- **Lobbying and Campaigning**
- **Family Holiday**
- **Pastoral Care**
- **Day Care** – Learning Disability

BOARD STRUCTURE

- Specialist Ministries
- Older People Services
- Family Services
- Adult Services
- Social Issues and Resources

In Summary

1. The following reports only provide a snapshot of the work of the Board of Social Witness (BSW). As the Board embarks on a new Strategic Planning Process, the Church is challenged to get involved.

2. **Specialist Ministries** reports on the on-going work of Chaplains working in Criminal Justice, Health Care, Education and the Armed Forces; the Prison Chaplains Review; a Hospital Visiting Guide; the future shape of University Chaplaincy in Belfast and Dublin; the call of a new Army Chaplain.

3. **Older People Services** reports on the extensive work carried out in Residential and Nursing Homes. The Board again celebrates one of our units being the Best of the Best and offers a cautionary note on the effect of underfunding in the sector.

4. **Family Services** reports on the establishment of the Taking Care Advisory Committee, the on-going work with Learning Disability, the issue of Vulnerable Adults and refers to anxieties related to Welfare Reform

5. **Adult Services** reports on the work of Thompson House, Carlisle House, and Gray's Court. Funding and public support are the most demanding aspects of this vital work, all situated in North Belfast.

BOARD REPORT

Strategic Objective 1

“The Board shall deliver an effective service to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the wider community.”

“A bad argument being countered by an equally bad one.”

1. In their book, *‘Transforming the world: The gospel and social responsibility,’* Dewi Hughes and Jamie Grant, relate how the twentieth century saw liberal theologians reducing the mission of God to social action and evangelicals reducing it to making individual converts through proclaiming the gospel. This, they say, is “A bad argument being countered by an equally bad one.” They argue that the issue should never have been ‘and/or’ but always ‘both/and’. *‘... the Church, as God’s representatives on this earth - should be characterized as those who bring a message of salvation that deals with humanity in its every aspect, practical as well as spiritual.’* (Apollos Books, IVP 2009 p12)

2. Care for the stranger, the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalized is enshrined in the Old Testament law. The compassion and care of Jesus for the whole person is evident and clear in the gospels and in Paul’s organisation of a collection for the poor shows an outworked example of the great Apostle’s practical theology, caring for the whole person. *‘He dramatizes his message through his life, challenging those who lead and teach that generosity, sacrifice and the sharing of koinonia with others in God’s family is not optional but integral to the call to Christian life in community.’* (Jason Hood, *Theology in action: Paul and Christian social care*, in Hughes and Grant p144).

3. The dynamic impact of the Reformation on education, social welfare, employment practices, business etc is well documented and the social vision driven by Calvin and through him Knox and others is immense. The Biblical and evangelical drive towards reformation is what influenced both John Wesley in his time and William Wilberforce in his. They were driven by what David Smith calls *‘world-transformative’* Christianity. (David Smith, *Evangelicals and Society*, in Hughes and Grant p248). That is, the recognition that the gospel must be preached and applied to the whole person and the Church entrusted with the gospel must demonstrate this in word and action. A Church that sees *“... a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food and says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs...”* Jas. 2v15 is not behaving as the NT biblical, evangelical, mission-focused Church.

4. The Board of Social Witness does not meet all needs but it seeks to meet some. When the question is asked, "*What is the Presbyterian Church doing about...*", the Board of Social Witness is part of the answer. The Board encourages PCI to take pride in the various projects through which it actively demonstrates gospel care 365 days a year (and this year 366). This includes care for the elderly and the young, soldiers and students, the sick and the prisoners, the disabled and the disillusioned.

5. The Board also encourages thanksgiving that, along with other Boards, the BSW brings PCI's voice to significant places of influence across a broad sweep of social issues, from criminal justice to welfare reform.

6. The Church's calling and commission is not to win souls for Christ, but to win people for Christ; people who are physical, emotional and social as well as spiritual beings. Jesus, Paul and the other apostles preached and demonstrated 'world-transformative' Christianity, applying the gospel to the whole person. As a Church PCI is still commissioned to do the same.

7. In accepting and following the call, the Church must have the confidence, in faith to meet the challenges of the day. BSW's report of 2011 placed a cautionary note before the General Assembly by saying "Challenges and opportunities will arise during this period of recession both at Board and local levels. Ministers and Elders will experience a higher demand on their time as they respond to more and more pastoral needs as a result of local services being cut. Considerable stress will be experienced at congregational level when individual care packages are reduced, elective surgery is postponed or cancelled, treatment or medication is denied, and the scenarios are endless." Regrettably that has proven to be the experience of many, as reductions in services have been introduced, extensive rationalisation carried out, hospital wards closed and serious breaches of care investigated. In Northern Ireland major reforms, of both the Health Service and Benefits, are producing high levels of anxiety to health care staff and to claimants alike. Horrific stories of professional services falling short of acceptable levels of care and treatment, patients undernourished and dehydrated, some very basic human rights being breached. All of these reforms will impact on every family and household, in many instances creating severe hardship. Reforms to the Universal Social Charge in the Republic of Ireland have had a mixed reception from claimants, Trade Unions and Children's Charities. Both Child and Fuel Poverty are at an all-time high, many families having to make a choice between heat and food during the winter months. These together with the on-going financial crisis are creating real hardship to thousands of families.

8. The Board welcomes the fact that the Church Leaders have engaged in the whole "Welfare Reform Debate", initially meeting with Lord Freud Minister for Welfare Reform, the Secretary of State and Northern Ireland Peers in December 2011, then hosting an event in the Assembly Buildings in February 2012. There has been clear acknowledgement from politicians that the Churches have a role to play in how reforms are implemented and accepting that we have an essential role to play, as challenges and opportunities are met. Churches must remain engaged with this whole process, to continue to be that challenging but forceful voice, a Church body that can be the voice of so many.

9. The Community Faiths' Forum commissioned research in 2011:
 - To help equip the faith based sector to be more involved with social and justice issues.
 - To help government bodies understand better the issues of faith based engagement in the community.

10. The research confirmed that “faith based community work had been addressing social disadvantage in Northern Ireland for decades” – “Faith communities have an important place in responding to the changes in social needs.” Pages 22 and 23 of the report summarises the role of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland – “Social Witness is one way that Christians demonstrate God’s love for people who need practical help and encouragement to get them through everyday life.” Acknowledgement is made to the Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry and the growth in appointment of Youth and Children’s Workers among the denomination. Presbyterian Women is sighted as a major “Women’s Organisation, with 14,000 members within 500 groups.” Combine these findings with what goes on in individual Congregations the length and breadth of Ireland, and it clearly demonstrates that PCI does make a difference. There is a growth in Pastoral Care Teams, Lunch Clubs, Parents Groups, and Congregations exploring new worship formats, including Café Church. The cautionary warning at the General Assembly of 2011 now becomes reality. The General Assembly of 2006 was reminded of the significant debate at the General Assembly of 1921, which resulted in the following resolution being passed “That the report including the Programme of Social Reform, be received and adopted.” History repeating itself, by 1922 the General Assembly discussed the deterioration in “Local Social Conditions”, culminating in the Belfast Presbytery ordering a special collection in all the Churches within their bounds. Many Congregations organised special funds for their own members. A Church responding to the call of Jesus “to go and do the same.” More and more opportunities will arise for all Christians to witness, to be the light in the darkness of an economic recession that continues to impact on so many aspects of our lives.

11. The Board is now in the final year of its Strategic Plan 2007-2012. This Strategic Plan has facilitated steady growth in activities, with the majority of targets being met, but a number of significant targets that were not achieved, will be incorporated in the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan. The Board will focus on consolidating existing work and restrict new developments. At the same time new challenges and opportunities will have to be considered. The Board has now agreed six new Strategic Objectives and two new Strategic Statements, as it consults on and implements the next Strategic Plan (see below).

12. The Strategic Objectives and Statements are:

Strategic Objective 1

“The Board shall deliver an effective Social Care service *on behalf of* the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, *for* the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and *to* the wider community in partnership with appropriate organisations including the promotion of volunteering and comment on Social Issues.”

Strategic Objective 2

“The Board shall effectively communicate to its members, the wider Church and community, the work, services and achievements of the Board.”

Strategic Objective 3

“The Board through Specialist Ministries shall promote and support all the work of Health Care, Criminal Justice, University and Forces Chaplains and develop and support the Church’s Ministry to the Deaf Community.”

Strategic Objective 4

“The Board through Older People Services will deliver a high standard of social, residential and nursing care to all users; campaign and raise awareness on behalf of older people issues and services, and facilitate the development of the Pastoral Care of those requiring support in their own homes.”

Strategic Objective 5

“The Board through Family Services will promote a healthier family life, and the physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing of all; continue to develop services for those who are vulnerable or with additional needs; actively raise awareness of the impact of Welfare and Health Reforms; and support the work of the Taking Care Programme, PCI Counselling, PCI Holiday and South Belfast Friendship House.”

Strategic Objective 6

“The Board through Adult Services shall manage and develop the work of Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray’s Court, and contribute to an addiction and crime free society.”

Strategic Statement 1

“The Financial Management of the Board shall be overseen by the BSW Finance Committee.”

Strategic Statement 2

“The Personnel Functions of the Board shall be carried out by the Board of Finance and Personnel.”

New Developments

13. The Board has several on-going developments:
 - **Thompson House:** Rebuild is nearing completion.
 - **Lucan:** Develop a Social Housing Project – when funds are available (in co-operation with Youth and Children’s Board)
 - **York House and Ard Cluan:** Options are under discussion in relation to the refurbishment or relocation.
 - **Denegarth House:** The possible establishment of a Pastoral Care Centre.

14. So often “history repeating itself” is a negative statement, but BSW prays that history does repeat itself, that Christians provoke an awaking of the social conscience that in turn brings about a Gospel based social change within the Church. The Board only provides a fraction of the Social Witness, Social Outreach and Social Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Congregations and other Board’s and Agencies provide valuable services.

THANKS

15. With real gratitude the Board celebrates those who serve on the frontline of the work; the more than four hundred staff in the office and projects along with those who serve on local support Committees, Board and Assembly Committees and Panels. In particular the Board continues to be grateful for the wisdom and experience of the Secretary and Director of Social Service, Lindsay Conway, who regularly carries more than one or even two jobs. The Board serves a wide range of people and meets a wide range of needs due to dedicated skills and commitment of these staff. A large thank you is also due to the Board Convener, the Rev Bobby Liddle.

16. The Board is grateful to be able to work so closely with a wide range of statutory and public agencies which work with the Board as it seeks to minister to a broad range of needs in society. Grateful thanks are extended for their continued funding and support to the Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety; Supporting People (Northern Ireland Housing Executive); Probation Board of Northern Ireland; Northern Ireland Prison Service; Access (NI); Police Service of Northern Ireland; Garda Siochana; partner Housing Associations; Department of Education and many others.

17. A special word of thanks goes to those within the Presbyterian Family; to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Financial Secretary, Head of Personnel, Presbyterian Women, Head of Press and Media and their staff teams and to the United Appeal Board for their funding and support. It has also been good to be part of a much closer co-operation and consultation between Boards and the Board of Social Witness expresses its thanks to all the Board Conveners and Secretaries. Invitations to visit Presbyteries and Congregations to inform of the Board’s work are always appreciated and thanks are due to all such for their support.

SPECIALIST MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Strategic Objective 2

“Specialist Ministries shall promote and support the work of Chaplains and the Churches ministry to the Deaf Community.”

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. (Matthew 25:35, 36)

1. Through the work represented by Specialist Ministries PCI has the privilege and opportunity to engage in this ministry which Christ commends. Chaplains bring both a Christian voice and pastoral care to people undergoing traumatic experiences. The Committee appreciates their dedication and professionalism and commend them to the prayerful and practical support of the wider Church. Perhaps individual Congregations could take a particular interest in a particular Chaplain and their work.

2. During the year the Church has had opportunity to be represented at consultations on the Code of Conduct for Healthcare Chaplains, the Criminal Justice Chaplains Review, and a UK wide conference on Children's Hospice provision. These challenging financial times and the changing nature of the context of chaplaincy oblige thinking about new working models, involving shared funding and partnership. The Committee seeks to remain alert to developments and to play its part in shaping the philosophy and practice represented by these dimensions of service.

STUDENT SERVICES

3. **Review of Chaplaincies:** A number of individuals have agreed to serve on a Panel to conduct a review of University Chaplaincy in Belfast. While the Committee recognised that the review should be rolled out beyond Belfast, this must form part of the BSW 2012-17 Strategic Plan. For Chaplaincy in the Republic, due to the missional aspect, input from BMI/YAC should be encouraged, although it was felt that University Chaplaincy in both NI and the Republic is best served by remaining within BSW.

4. **Ulster University at Jordanstown Campus:** The Rev Cheryl Meban has presented a paper "Future of Chaplaincy at University of Ulster (Greater Belfast Area)". This paper outlines the thinking of the interdenominational chaplaincy team at UUJ regarding the future of chaplaincy at University of Ulster once the main campus moves to the city of Belfast around 2018, at which time it is anticipated that the interdenominational chaplaincy effort would be fully integrated into the University's wider student services provision. It outlined the hope to be involved in an off-campus, shared, interdenominational, cross-community, residential chaplaincy centre administered by a group such as Youthlink. Further discussion and consultation will be necessary as the Committee could see disadvantages to such an arrangement.

5. **Queen's Chaplaincy:** The Chaplain, the Rev Karen Mbayo is on maternity leave having delivered a daughter recently. The work is being covered by the rest of the team.

6. **Trinity College, Dublin:** Discussions are on-going about the funding of this. One possible arrangement would be for a Protestant Chaplain for Trinity with a three-way split on the funding.

7. **Dublin Institute of Technology:** A vacancy will occur soon and it is open to any Christian to apply for the post.

8. **Magee University, Londonderry:** Stronger links are being developed with the Magee CU. In addition to the usual Christmas Carol Services, Chaplains held a Bible Read-a-thon to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Version, and staff and students took part. The Moderator visited Magee recently

and reports that the Vice-Chancellor would like to link up with the 2013 meeting of the General Assembly scheduled for Londonderry.

9. A **proforma** is being drawn for University Chaplains to ensure regular updates are being discussed by the Board.

CHAPLAINS COMMITTEE

10. This Committee oversees the work of the Board's Healthcare and Criminal Justice Chaplains.

11. The **Rev Richard Kerr** reported on a form of chaplaincy which has been created to minister to the new Immigration Detention Centre at Larne. Initially this is for a three year period. Three of PCI's Ministers are involved as 'religious visitors' (there are eight altogether) – the Revs Richard Kerr, Karen Campbell and Dr Colin McClure. Richard Kerr is investigating sourcing Scriptures in various languages.

12. The Director of Social Service, Mr Lindsay Conway, is involved in on-going discussion with the Dublin and Munster Presbytery regarding the provision of chaplaincy at the **Tallaght Hospital** from which the present Chaplain, the Rev Donald Rodgers retires in June this year.

13. **Hospital Visiting Protocol** for Ministers and pastoral workers visiting healthcare facilities (hospitals, hospices, nursing and residential homes) is being finalised, and the leaflet will be launched at this General Assembly.

14. **Personnel:**

(a) **Hydebank.** A vacancy for a part-time Chaplain (ten hours) at Hydebank is still open.

(b) **City Hospital.** At the time of writing the Rev Brian Hughes is on sick leave for the next few months.

15. **Criminal Justice Chaplains Review:** The Director, Mr Lindsay Conway, the Convener of the Board of Social Witness, the Rev Bobby Liddle, the Convener of the Chaplains Committee, the Rev Marlene Taylor, and the Convener of Specialist Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Donald Patton, attended a meeting with prison representatives at Maghaberry Prison on Thursday 1 March 2012. This is part of a wider consultation with the main Churches.

16. A wide-ranging discussion took place regarding the place, structure and management of chaplaincy within the prison service in Northern Ireland. The group had available to them responses from PCI Chaplains to a previously distributed questionnaire. Consultation will be on-going as the review progresses.

FORCES COMMITTEE

17. **Membership of the Committee:** Two new members have recently strengthened the work of the Committee.

18. **The Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Ivan Patterson,** visited the 1st Battalion the Royal Irish Regiment, at Tern Hill, Shropshire, on Remembrance Day 2011.

19. **General Assembly 2012:** Once again Chaplains who are available are being invited to the General Assembly on Wednesday morning 30 May and to lunch afterwards. Those attending will be presented to the Moderator and the live streaming of the session will be paused at this point.

20. Last year, mention was made of the Government's 'Strategic and Security Review' and since then details have emerged confirming that over the next few years, all three Services will undergo a considerable reduction in manpower.

21. However, in spite of these reductions, UK Forces will continue to be part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. It is now over ten years since British Forces have been deployed there and, at the time of writing this report, 404 service personnel from the Royal Marines, Army, Royal Air Force and Special Forces have lost their lives and hundreds have been seriously injured.

22. It is in these difficult and dangerous situations that Chaplains carry out their ministry, a ministry that is much appreciated not only by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, but also by the respective Services and their personnel.

23. Currently there are five Chaplains serving in the Army and two in the Royal Air Force:

- Rev Norman McDowell – Senior Chaplain 19 Light Brigade (Lisburn).
- Rev Stephan van Os – Senior Chaplain Worthy Down.
- Rev Dr Paul Swinn – Senior Chaplain 12 Mechanised Brigade is presently on deployment in Afghanistan.
- Rev Mark Henderson – Station Chaplain, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland.
- Rev Heather Rendell – Chaplain, 9/12 Royal Lancers, Hohne, Germany.
- Rev David Edgar – Senior Chaplain RAF Brize Norton.
- Rev Jonny Wylie – Station Chaplain RAF Leuchars.

24. The Rev Colin Jones, Minister of Edenderry and Seskinore Congregations in the Omagh Presbytery, who has been serving as a part-time TA Chaplain, has been accepted as a Chaplain to the regular army and will be inducted at a service in Edenderry Church on Sunday evening 15 April 2012. We wish Colin well in his new role. On 30 April he will begin his initial training as an Army Chaplain at The Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Aampot.

25. Vacancies for Ministers from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland still arise and anyone who would like to find out more about Chaplaincy work should contact the Convener or any member of Committee. In particular, the Committee would encourage Ministers from the Church to consider applying for a Commission in The Royal Army Chaplains' Department to serve as a Territorial Army Chaplain to Units that are based within Northern Ireland and whose personnel are recruited mainly from within the Province.

26. In addition to the opportunity to serve as a Chaplain in the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force, including the Reserves, there are vacancies for Ministers to serve as Chaplains to the Sea Cadets, Army Cadets or Air Cadets. At present, the Rev Kenneth Crowe serves as an Army Cadet Force Chaplain while the Rev Joseph Andrews and the Rev Anne Tolland serve as Chaplains in the Air Training Corps.

27. The Rev Derek Weir MBE and the Rev Prof Paton Taylor MBE act as Officiating Chaplains to the Military.

28. The Committee appreciates the work of all PCI Chaplains and thanks them for their valuable and vital ministry.

29. Each year the Church is asked to support the work of The Royal British Legion, The Royal Air Force ‘Wings Appeal,’ and The Royal Irish/UDR Benevolent Fund. In addition, Congregations are encouraged to remember to give support to Christian charities working within Naval Bases, Military Garrisons and Air Force Stations.

30. The Convener, the Rev Dr Victor Dobbin, attended the Church of Scotland/Presbyterian Chaplain’s Conference at Amport House last September. PCI Chaplains are treated by the Armed Forces as part of the Church of Scotland’s chaplaincy. Dr Dobbin raised this issue in discussion and explained that PCI wish to have more autonomy in this whilst at the same time maintaining close links. Further discussion is planned.

31. Dr Dobbin is seeking to raise the profile of Forces chaplaincy within the Church and hopes to encourage more TA Chaplains.

KINGHAN CHURCH

32. The Rev Glen Jordan is making very good progress in learning sign language and is beginning to sign for himself in Church Services. He hopes to become fully fledged in the summer as the Minister of the Kinghan Church. He travels widely to pastor people with hearing impairment and is making contacts in the Ballykelly area where there is interest in holding services.

33. Canon Will Murphy continues to help with the work. A meeting is being arranged with a view to formalising the relationship between the Kinghan Church and the Church of Ireland Board of Responsibility.

34. The Local Support Committee is being strengthened. Two new members were welcomed in January.

35. The Moderator visited the Church on Sunday 15 January 2012. He and Mrs Patterson were warmly welcomed and brought the encouragement and interest of the wider Church.

36. Deaf Awareness Week is 7-13 May 2012 and the Kinghan Church will be taking part in it as well as working to create a greater understanding of the Kinghan’s work throughout PCI.

37. The part-time post (22 hours) of Youth and Children’s Associate was re-advertised. Four applicants were interviewed and the position was offered to one of these.

DONALD PATTON, Convener

OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Strategic Objective 3

“Older People Services will deliver a high standard of social and nursing care to all our residents and to campaign on behalf of older people.”

Grey hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. (Proverbs 19:31, ESV)

1. It has been said that a society can be measured by how it treats its weakest members. At the time of writing a report into the care of elderly people

has called for a “root and branch” reform of the system to ensure that those who look after older people understand dignity. “Being compassionate should be as important as being clever when it comes to the recruitment of staff to care for the elderly...The recommendation was one of a series made by the Commission on Improving Dignity in Care for Older People to improve standards in hospitals and care homes in England.” Nick Triggle, Health Correspondent, BBC News, 29 February 2012.

2. “Health Minister Edwin Poots has defended staff working in Northern Ireland’s nursing homes, saying the majority provide good quality care. It follows an investigation by the NI Human Rights Commission which heard claims of abuses. Mr Poots said a minority should not besmirch the good work of the majority.” Julian O’Neill. BBC Newline, 5 March, 2012.

3. For over sixty years PCI has been involved in the care of the elderly through the provision of residential care. Residential and Nursing Homes of the Board of Social Witness comprise Adelaide House and Corkey House in Belfast, Ard Cluan in Londonderry, Harold McCauley House in Omagh, River House in Newcastle, Sunnyside House in Bangor, and York House in Portrush. These provide 230 registered beds. In addition there is sheltered housing at St Andrew Bungalows, Newtownabbey, and at Tritonville Close, Dublin.

4. The provision of these services is highly regulated, and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is an independent body that monitors such homes in Northern Ireland. It is gratifying to report that PCI Homes have received consistently positive reports after RQIA’s announced and unannounced inspections. These reports can be viewed on the RQIA’s web site, www.rqia.co.uk.

5. Regular unannounced visits are also carried out by members of the Board’s own central management team, in conjunction with members of the Local Support Committees of the various homes. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of care and support that go well beyond the call of duty or of professionalism alone. The Committee is thankful to God for the Christian ethos that is so often evident. The management, staff and volunteers are much to be commended in this regard. Members of the Older People Services Committee are given oral reports from representatives of the Homes at each meeting of the Committee.

6. Recognition has continued to come from other sources. Harold McCauley House once again won the title of ‘Best of the Best’ for Health and Social Care facilities at the Northern Ireland Amenity Council Awards on 13 September 2011, and River House was again runner-up in the Best Residential Facility in the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust region. Adelaide House, Ard Cluan House and York House were highly commended and received certificates.

7. In the current financial climate and in view of rising costs the Committee has asked the Older People Services Management Group to consider the whole matter of top-ups where the cost of residence is more than the local Health and Social Care Trust is able to pay. The Group’s report will then have to be discussed before any possible changes may be made.

8. Older People Services still continues to consider the relocation or refurbishment of some of our existing facilities, most notably Ard Cluan and York House, where older buildings though familiar and homely do not always allow the fullest provision of all the desired facilities. At present, however, the

widespread incidence of government cut-backs makes unlikely the realisation of any such plans in the immediate future.

9. Training and registration for the provision of care for sufferers from dementia is underway, since the high incidence of this affliction among the elderly could otherwise result in the necessity of transferring residents from what is in fact their home to other facilities.

10. The Committee records its gratitude to Mrs Linda Wray, the Residential Services Manager, to her Assistant, Mrs May Gordon, and to all the staff in Assembly Buildings who continue to carry out their demanding and often exacting work with cheerfulness and efficiency as well as to the managers and staff of the units who provide the daily care and support of the residents in PCI Homes.

JOHN SEAWRIGHT, Convener

FAMILY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Strategic Objective 4

“Family Services will promote family life and the general well-being of our members, continue to develop services for the disabled within the Church, support the work of the Taking Care Office, PCI Counselling, PCI Family Holiday and South Belfast Friendship House”

1. This objective *‘to promote family life and the general well-being of our members’* still provides a great challenge for PCI in dealing with the financial constraints and the change in welfare benefits impacting on many units and on-going projects.

2. The Committee owes a great debt of gratitude to those who continually give their time and expertise to assist in this busy but rewarding ministry of PCI, whether it is a child being raised by a grandparent, an adult with learning disability, a couple going through a difficult relationship or a leader who needs support within a youth organisation. Family Services seeks to resource and provide a Christian witness in compassion and concern through social action and practical advice.

3. Family Services is concerned with the ‘wholeness’ of the individual and with this in mind the Committee is delighted to bring the sub-committee concerned with Addictions under our umbrella.

4. Welfare Reform is causing great concern within PCI and will impact on Congregations throughout the General Assembly. The Committee therefore intends to keep Ministers and their people informed of any changes implemented, with details as to how this will affect individuals and groups under their care.

5. In a society which is coming to rely more and more on the generosity of volunteers, the Committee acknowledges again the members of Local Support Forum and the ‘Friends of’ groups who supplement many of the BSW projects with their encouragement, prayerful support and practical assistance. Also thanks to BSW’s Assembly Buildings office staff, who, throughout all their many moves, have remained committed to ensuring that the ministry of Social Witness is supported efficiently and graciously.

TAKING CARE

6. **Advisory Panel:** The inaugural meeting of the newly formed Taking Care Advisory Panel has taken place and the Committee welcomes on board and say thank you to the many new members of that Panel who are bringing expertise and enthusiasm to such an important ministry within PCI.

7. **Training:** The Committee reports a busy season, with 17 foundation training evenings, 5 refresher training and 5 Designated Persons events taking place. The Refresher Training has proved very helpful and it is hoped that this will continue to develop. It was decided that a more central approach was needed in facilitating training and with this in mind a foundation calendar is being developed with each Presbytery being asked to give possible dates and venues to the Taking Care office. It is envisaged that foundation training would be offered twice within each Presbytery (September-November and February-May) and that these dates would be made known to all Congregations who had new leaders. Mrs Deborah Webster is currently assessing the Presbytery responses and updating the database of Social Witness Agents within each Presbytery.

8. **Communication:** It is hoped that a Taking Care Sunday resource pack could be developed in order to publicise the work of Taking Care and give possible aids which could be used at Enrolment, Leaders' Dedication and Children's Day Services.

9. **Republic of Ireland:** Taking Care Advisory Group is currently working towards a Training Roadshow in 2012 as well as continuing with the Child Protection Network meetings.

10. **Vulnerable Adults:** There has been very little progress in relation to working with vulnerable adults as the Committee is still waiting for information regarding the Governments guidelines to those working with vulnerable adults. However the Committee does realise the significance of need of specialised training and in the interim, Mrs Deborah Webster has been liaising with Volunteer Now who offers a training course for those who work within this sector. The Committee thanks Deborah for this involvement and look forward to progress reports as to the best way forward.

11. **Staff:** The Committee welcomes Miss Amanda Cotter back after her sabbatical and as always express a heartfelt thanks to all those who are willing to process forms, organise trainings and field the many phone calls. It is sad to have to report that the number of incidents being dealt with by Taking Care has risen and so the Committee asks that the Church remembers the staff that have to deal with these sometimes distressing stories and also the individuals involved.

LEARNING DISABILITY

12. **Willowbrook and Topley Terrace:** Again the Committee would pay thanks to the committed and dedicated staff of these units. Tenants are fully supported within a safe and healthy environment but this requires 24 hour care and from time to time, when situations arise, it is the staff on the ground that have to field phone calls and be able to respond immediately. Please remember Mrs Anne Campbell and her team who show Christian witness and love to some of our most vulnerable adults. After a successful Harvest service, Willow Brook tenants are now looking forward to a holiday to Greyabbey. As Willowbrook has

now reached its 10th Anniversary, a special Thanksgiving Service was held on Sunday 15 April at 6.30pm in New Row Presbyterian Church Coleraine.

13. **Aaron House:** Occupancy of Aaron House remains high and following the separate registration for day care, they have just had their first inspection and passed with flying colours. Well done to the staff. Concern is being expressed at the threat of respite care being withdrawn and the wider picture of the Welfare Reform Act. Behaviour Support Services are also still working within this unit and the Committee's appreciation has to go to all members of staff, under the management of Mrs Denise Keegan, who patiently and graciously provide a stable and loving environment to all those in their care.

14. **Christmas Cracker Scheme:** Another extremely successful event, where in partnership with Prospects, a respite opportunity was offered for adults in December, hosted by Orangefield Presbyterian and McQuiston Memorial. Numbers had increased from last year, proving again that there is a need for this kind of support and highlighting that Churches can fill the gap that is opening up within society.

PCI COUNSELLING

15. PCI's counselling service is still actively used and the Committee is indebted to the counsellors who seek to meet the needs of those hurting and afraid. Although numbers are down, the Committee believes it is due to the economic climate and possibly cost of petrol is a deterrent. Stephanie Windrum is continuing to keep a check on this but in a recent feedback survey, it was clear that this service is very much needed and appreciated. Concern was expressed at the increase in cost of facilities used for counselling and other possibilities are to be explored. It is with this in mind that the centre at Dengarth, Mallusk is to be developed. This has always been an aim of BSW – to develop Denegarath into a centre for Pastoral Care and the Committee feels that now is an opportune time to go forward with this plan.

PCI FAMILY HOLIDAY

16. The PCI Family Holiday takes place each year from Easter Monday through to Friday at the Share Centre, Lisnaskea.

17. This year 175 people were accommodated in the Guest House, chalets and caravans. Among the families are those sponsored by the Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society. Like everyone they enjoy the relaxed family atmosphere.

18. The Share Centre offers a wide variety of activities and their staff deal very professionally with all participants, both those who are able-bodied and those with special needs. Outdoor activities include canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, banana skiing, climbing, archery, hillwalking and Laser Skirmishing. There are also indoor activities for the more artistic and creative – T-shirt printing, handcrafts and drama. The Centre's indoor leisure pool, sauna and steam rooms, and fitness suite are always a great attraction.

19. Families often enjoy the weekly shopping trip to Enniskillen and, weather permitting, a visit to the Marble Arch Caves. The PCI Youth Team also organises games and activities for the children most mornings and afternoons. What an impact this team of enthusiastic and dedicated young Christians has on the younger participants!

20. Each morning begins with a short time of worship for all ages before the day's activities begin. In the evening there is a time of worship for everyone before the young people go off for their own time of Bible teaching with the Youth Team, leaving the adults to have their time together. Every year there is a visiting speaker and this year it was a delight to have the Rev Philip Thompson, Minister of Waringstown Congregation.

21. In the later part of the evening there is an "Evening Extra" for all ages. A Beetle Drive, a Table Quiz, a Concert and a Farewell Party are held on different evenings. It's all good, wholesome fun in which mums and dads can mix together with their children.

22. The Holiday is filled with fun ... and soon comes to an end! New friendships are made, old ones renewed, and everyone has the opportunity to learn more about putting the Bible into practice in everyday life. The organisers are always grateful for many answered prayers and for a real sense of the Lord's protection and presence through the week.

SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

23. In partnership with PW, the Board of Social Witness continues to encourage and be actively involved in the running and management of this vital and urgent mission within the heart of the city.

24. The work continues to thrive in South Belfast Friendship House, ably supported by an enthusiastic band of volunteers. Natalie Johnston has been working hard as the new youth and children's worker and already two summer teams have signed up for clubs during the summer break – the PCI youth team and Woodlands Presbyterian who are becoming firm favourites.

25. Staff – at present, Friendship House is in need of administrative help and is currently being considered. The Committee hopes this situation will be resolved in the near future.

WELFARE REFORM

26. At a recent evening in Assembly Buildings, the four Church Leaders came together and hosted the Secretary of State Mr Owen Patterson, MP, and the Social Development Minister Mr Nelson McCausland, MLA, in a discussion on the proposed Welfare Reform Act. It is clear that the proposals are going to have a potentially major detrimental effect on aspects of BSW's work, PCI Congregations and the wider community.

ANNE TOLLAND, Convener

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Strategic Objective 5

"Adult Services shall manage the work of Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray's Court and promote an addiction free society through our Addiction Services Committee."

1. The Adult Services Committee continues its work with energy and pace according to the vision statement of its designated remit towards people suffering from addictions and former prisoners released on license under the auspices of the Probation Board.

Thompson House

2. Since the last General Assembly Thompson House has seen an increase in voluntary visitation to residents through a retired solicitor and a former prisoner. Both are committed Christians and the latter is piloting a self-belief course through which attitudes and behaviours can be changed. This course "Steps" from the Pacific Institute is highly regarded and it will be interesting to see how residents respond to it.

3. On the approach to Easter all residents received an Easter Egg affording the opportunity for a personal conversation regarding the true meaning of Easter. Quarterly UCB Bible notes are given to all residents and Bible Study continues within the Thompson House constituency.

4. The former Chair of Thompson House, the Rev Dr Jackson Buick, MBE, died in the early New Year and appreciation of his work was shared at the February Adult Services Committee.

5. During 2011, 48 residents were accommodated under the Thompson House project which reflects an overall occupancy of 90%. This is slightly lower than normal due to keeping some beds empty in May and June in view of the imminent decant due to building works. The move to Centenary House was smooth and staff and residents are very appreciative of their new surroundings. Salvation Army senior staff have been very sensitive and supportive to the nature of the work.

6. The build at Thompson House on the Antrim Road, under the auspices of Helm Housing, continues apace despite internal problems with the named Housing Association. This has not affected the building project. Problems with security of the site are always under review by Helm.

7. A Criminal Justice inspection was carried out on 16 December 2011 which returned a favourable report. The vacant position of Project Worker has been filled.

8. This has been a very busy chapter for the Adult Services Committee and the prayers of the Church are coveted for the months that lie ahead. The Committee is always aware of the opposition to Schedule 1 residents and is sensitive to the views of the community and will endeavour to allay all fears and concerns.

Carlisle House

9. At the last Committee David Cuthbert, Director of Carlisle House, reported that staffing levels are at an optimum with the exception of the administrative team – this includes 3 full-time group facilitators, 6 part-time support workers and a project worker. Meanwhile the current admin team is engaged in an audit which aims to provide information as to the requirement levels of administration with associated savings in this area. The Director and Programme Co-ordinator are now more involved in the delivery of the therapeutic programme and the aim is to off-load more administration work to the admin team.

10. Therapeutic activities include groups, counselling, family therapy, relaxation and eco projects as well as art and music therapy. A very rewarding Christian Retreat Day took place under the supervision of the Rev Tom Wilson and at Christmas time a celebration took place with over 60 ex-clients and families attending.

11. Financially the deficit has been reduced significantly. There will be little change to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust income until after the Bamford review has been completed in approximately 18 months' time. However a number of donations have been received this year from relatives of former residents at Carlisle House who have since passed away. Sponsorship has also been provided for the refurbishment of bedrooms including a sizeable private donation from a Presbyterian family in the Ards Presbytery.

Gray's Court

12. Gray's Court continues to run at full occupancy and the funding for an additional Support Worker is nearing a decision from their funders Supporting People.

COLIN MEGAW, Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. Leaflets with Bible verses and prayers to cover various pastoral situations are almost ready to go to print and should be available soon.

2. Some work has been done to revise and update the booklet on "Getting Married". Again the Committee hopes this resource will soon be at the disposal of the wider Church.

CHARLES McMULLEN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly call on the Northern Ireland Executive to seek to reduce the risk of potential hardship in the implementation of Welfare Reform.

3. That the General Assembly encourage all Ministers, Elders and Pastoral Carers to follow strict Hospital Visiting protocols.

4. That the General Assembly approve a grant of £6,500 from the Incidental Fund for the PCI Holiday and instruct that from 2013 the PCI Holiday is funded directly by the Board of Social Witness.

5. That the Board of Social Witness, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed with Par 281 of the Code as follows:

FOR INFORMATION

The following funds are not under the control of the General Assembly and the Reports are included for information only.

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND*The Rev W P H Erskine reports*

1. The Directors report that during the last financial year, which ended 31 December, 2011 93 beneficiaries (41 in the Old Age Fund, 36 in the Women's Fund and 16 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The changes in beneficiaries during the year are as follows:

Beneficiaries	Old	Presbyterian	Indigent	TOTAL
Receiving Quarterly Grant	Age Fund	Women's	Ladies	Fund
			Fund	Fund
At 1 January 2011	38	32	15	85
New Grants Provided	2	2	1	5
Deaths	(1)	-	(3)	(4)
Grants no longer required	(2)	-	-	(2)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
As at 31 December 2011	37	34	13	84
Beneficiaries receiving one-off donations	1	2	-	3
Deaths and Grants no longer required (as above)	3	-	3	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
No of Beneficiaries receiving assistance during the year	41	36	16	93

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £131,189 (£58,114 from the Old Age Fund, £53,300 from the Women's Fund and £19,775 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

4. An annual grant of £1,200, paid quarterly, was sent to beneficiaries during the year (2010: £1,100).

5. A 'Special Gift' of £300 (2010: £275) was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

6. During the year the Directors responded sympathetically to various problems which had been brought to their attention. They gave one-off donations, as needed, to assist in particular cases where immediate financial aid was more appropriate than annual grants. Ministers are asked to bear in mind the possibility of help from these funds in similar cases connected with their own Congregations.

7. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

8. The Directors of the Funds deeply appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who have remembered the work of the Funds either by gift or bequest, and hope that their example may encourage others to support this vital aspect of the Church's outreach.

9. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the Staff for the sensitive and sympathetic way in which they carried out the efficient administration of the Funds during the year.

BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Convener: Rev JONATHAN MOXEN

Director: Miss ROZ STIRLING

1. Presbyterians have a number of clear distinctives. A commitment to the nurture of children and young people in the Christian faith is integral to the covenantal DNA of the Presbyterian denomination. The biblical mandate of Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78 to pass the faith on from one generation to the next is the challenging responsibility of every parent and Congregation. The Board of Youth and Children's Ministry exists to support every Congregation within PCI to fulfil this high calling. The culture and context which children, young people, young adults and parents must navigate in 21st century society requires a thoughtful yet biblically distinctive approach to the passing on of the faith. Recognising the challenges that Congregations face, the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry have worked hard to be 'fit for purpose' and serve Congregations in the fulfillment of this immense task. To that end the Board is deeply grateful that God has placed gifted and insightful people within the Board's work for such a time as this.

2. The Board over the past two years has worked with the Rev Mark DeVries, a consultant in church-based youth and children's ministry. Mark is a Senior Pastor in 1st Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee and the author of two strategic books, 'Family based Youth Ministry' and 'Sustainable Youth Ministry'; he also directs the work of Children's and Youth Ministry Architects. The value of his on-going consultancy over this two year period has allowed a continual appraising of the work of the Board in respect of clarity of focus and delivery of remit, meeting of goals and effectiveness on the ground. There has been much to be encouraged about alongside a refining of focus and vision. Part of this refocusing has been the beginning of a project to produce a 'Framework' document for the spiritual formation of children and young people. The 'Frameworks' project will seek to provide a structure for congregations to model their ministry around. It will address the progression of faith from birth to adulthood, looking at the developmental stages of children and young people and provide a structure that the whole Congregation can be a part of, so fulfilling their baptismal vows to parents and their children.

3. The Board's work is delivered through the activity of five Assembly Committees. The Board records its thanks to the Conveners, working group chairs and the many volunteers who work throughout the year to deliver on this demanding work. Highlights from the past year of the work of the Committees;

- The **Training Committee** enjoyed the benefit of the Rev Mark DeVries's visit in January by hosting an evening 'Keep it in the Family' when parents and church leaders were encouraged to consider ways to support the spiritual nurture of children and young people within the nuclear and Church family context.
- **Ministry Events Committee** saw the launch of the new young

adults' bible conference, 'The Word'. This event was a huge encouragement with full capacity of young adults from across the denomination.

- **Ministry Opportunities Committee** had a first within the work of the VIP programme as in the spring of 2012 the volunteers and interns engaged in a very successful visit to Spain to work with Derek and Jane French and the university work of GBU.
- **Ministry Resources Committee** for many years hosted a Youth and Children's Project which has provided an opportunity for Sunday schools and youth groups to raise funds for overseas and home projects. The 2011/12 project has seen a number of areas of the work of the Board pulled together as the 'Stand by Me' project has been promoted throughout the Church.
- **Research and Education** continues the vital work of investigating the challenges that confront youth and children's ministry. Graeme Thompson, Youth Development Officer, has in recent years been completing PhD research into keeping young adults within the Church. He will report to the 2012 Assembly with insights that will bring clear challenges to every aspect of ministry life within PCI.

4. Full reports from each of the Committees follow later in this report.

5. The Board records its gratitude to the vast number of volunteer youth and children's leaders and to the growing numbers of full-time youth, children's and family workers in local Congregations. The many hours of ministry carried out by these people who give sacrificially of their time and talents in the service of God is deeply appreciated. Congregations could not provide the level of ministry for their youth and children's activities without these dedicated volunteers who give selflessly of their time to provide leadership and facilitate weekly programmes for hundreds of children and young people. Ministry to and for children and young people delivered by Churches continues to far exceed that delivered by non-church based youth and children's agencies.

6. The work of the SPUD Youth Assembly continues to be a very influential body within PCI. While the SPUD Steering Group and Committees have their own structures, the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry continues to mentor them and support their development.

7. The Board is deeply grateful to those employed to serve the Church through the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry. Miss Roz Stirling, (Director), Miss Barbara McDade (Director of Programmes), and the team of administrative staff, Mrs Lois Gibson (Senior Administrative Officer), Mrs Claire Child, Mrs Janet Maxwell, Mrs Donna Thompson, Mrs Kathy Brown, Miss Pamela Patton, and Miss Liz Harrison. The Board is indebted to Mr David Pattison for his expertise in organising and compiling Board finances.

8. The Board is grateful for the work of the Development Officers, drawing alongside Congregations, through the training that they bring, helping to resource young people, Sunday Schools, and parents as well as mentoring and encouraging full time staff already in place in Congregations. These officers are seeking to place sustainable and Christ like ministry in Congregations across our land. Mrs Ruth Bromley continues in her role as Children's Development Officer and the Board encourages Congregations to make use of her services. Youth

Development Officer, Mr Graeme Thompson, continues to work alongside many Congregations seeking to bring relevant and discerning advice on youth ministry. Mrs Carol Johnston, Young Adults' Development Officer, in developing her role is seeking to widen the work of the Board amongst young adults. The Board acknowledges the many ways in which the Development Officers serve the Board and thanks them.

9. The Board encourages Congregations to draw on the professional support available to them through the Board Director, Director of Programmes, and team of Development Staff. This staff team, ably supported by the administrative staff in the YAC office, in addition to being integral to the work delivered through the programmes of the Board are available for congregational consultations when assistance to review the work on youth and children's ministry has been welcomed by many PCI Churches. Staff can be contacted through the YAC Office.

The Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus

10. The Board extend sincere thanks to the Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus for his three years of service as the Convener of the Training Committee. Christoph brought to this role a clear insight and vision for the development of a training strategy that would be rolled out over a number of years. The ambition was to create a well-developed, professional team of trainers who would work alongside the YAC staff team in the delivery of the Board's training programme. The past three years have seen considerable advancement in this ambition, which in no small part is due to the clarity, intention and focus of Christoph as Committee Convener. His role as Convener also gave him a place on the Board's Steering Committee. In this sphere too his wisdom and clear thinking were greatly valued. The Board wish him well in his ministry in Kirkpatrick Memorial.

The Rev Jonathan Moxen writes:

11. The Board wishes to recognise with deepest appreciation the work carried out over the past twenty years by Roz Stirling, its Executive Secretary and Director who will leave the work of the Board in September 2012. Roz has been a true pioneer of youth work within our denomination. As the remit of the General Assembly expanded so did her vision which evolved from Youth Officer to Director of Youth and Children's Ministry. In the words of one of the leading exponents of Youth Ministry in the world, "*PCI are a beacon of hope to denominational youth and children's ministry throughout the UK and Europe.*" This has come about in no small part because of the dedication and vision that Roz, through the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, has brought to our Youth and Children's work. This has also meant that Roz has been robust in her defence of the work of the Board in all courts, even through many times of illness. Roz also brought a pastoral heart that has endeared her to all her staff, all of whom hold her in the highest regard. She has always made herself available to those in need, for those who require a listening ear and a word of guidance. Many will miss her but we wish her God's blessing in the days ahead as she undertakes to step out in faith into the next exciting chapter that God will reveal to her.

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES

Rev John Peacock, Community Relations Manager at Youth Link: N.I. reports:

1. In a divided society, as a partnership of Churches working together, Youth Link will contribute to a more inclusive and welcoming society by enabling young people and youth practitioners to build positive, sustainable relationships within and between communities through training and empowerment programmes.

2. Having spent nine years on the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, it is good to step down and pass on the chairpersonship of the Reconciliation Working Group to Jim McDowell. There are important developments at an inter-Church level which will keep the importance of peace and reconciliation at the forefront of the Board's work and also look at how the area of peace building can develop across the Churches in a post-conflict situation.

3. Youth Link staff have settled into new training and resource facilities on the Springfield Road, enabling us to further develop the Centre for Youth Ministry degree programme, our OCN accredited Youth work and Community Relations training and our active citizenship work with young people.

4. Having been placed in a situation of socio-economic need, Youth Link considered how we might best serve the local community. Through funding from the International Fund for Ireland we have established an Apprenticeship Peace Programme. Through this programme, young adults (18-25 years old) have been placed in eighteen youth work/ministry settings in North and West Belfast and then come together for training at Youth Link on alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays. As a result they build relationships across this divided community and at the same time develop skills which will enable them to progress to third level education in youth work or ministry.

5. Youth Link's work has received further Peace III monies to build community capacity in Belfast and the border regions through youth work and community relations training in these areas. The project continues to focus on areas where the infrastructure and confidence of the Protestant community has traditionally been weak i.e. Armagh, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Donegal.

6. I would like to thank the Presbyterian representatives on the management council of Youth Link for their on-going support and encouragement.

The Rev David Stanfield, Centre Director for the Centre for Youth Ministry Ireland, reports:

1. I am pleased to report another successful year in my role as Director of the Centre for Youth Ministry Ireland. The partnership between Youth Link and Belfast Bible College continues to prove fruitful and the nature of the qualification fits well with the ethos and value base of both organisations.

2. In October we celebrated the Graduation of our first cohort of students and it is gratifying to see almost all finding employment in the areas of ministry they feel called towards (while most continue in some form of Christian ministry context some are working for ELBs and other secular organisations). The fact that at every level we seek to encourage and enable students to inter-relate theology and youth work theory and apply both to their practice contexts means that our graduates should be well prepared to minister to young people in communities

of faith (Churches and Christian organisations) and be able to think Christianly in secular work contexts. There is no doubt that the structure of the course with three years of practical experience (14-20 hours per week) helps considerably in this. Not only do the students have a track record of experience but they have developed the capacity to reflect on that practice in ways that improve the quality of their engagement with young people.

3. We are very grateful to the increasing number of Churches that recognise the value of the course and are prepared to provide a context for the student to undergo training while realising the benefit that a student can bring to their ministry amongst young people. Currently there are 36 different Congregations (13 Presbyterian, 13 Church of Ireland, 5 Methodist, 3 Catholic, 1 Baptist, 1 other) and 12 other Christian contexts providing practice contexts. We particularly appreciate those contexts that take a new student when their current student graduates and a few organisations who have two or more students.

4. The training of students for ministry is a very labour intensive process and a team of almost 120 people have been actively involved in teaching, supervising and supporting the students this year. Over the last 5 years we have developed a team of quality module tutors, who are all practitioners with expertise in their particular area of teaching. As a result they are able to integrate theology, theory and practice into every aspect of the course.

5. I am encouraged that even with an increase in fees for 2012 entry we still have demand that exceeds the number of places available and anticipate having our full capacity of students across all three year groups for the first time in September. It is also noteworthy that while every candidate has to have completed at least 400 hours of leadership experience in a youth work/ministry context before being considered for a place, almost all of our intake will be in their 20s and already have some years of experience at different levels of volunteering.

6. Once again I wish to record my gratitude to the large number of Presbyterians from across our Congregations who have supported the development of this work in the last 12 months through prayer and encouragement as well as those who have worked as module tutors, professional practice tutors or line managers in Congregations who have provided practice contexts for our students.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. The Training Committee continues to assess its current work in order to bring it into line with the aims of the Board which are to enable Congregations in the development of covenantal ministry with children, young people, adults and families. The work of the Committee has concentrated its efforts in the training of leaders for youth and children's ministry. Along with other Committees of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, the Committee has begun to formulate an overall approach, or framework, to guide its development and help discern what training it will deliver to whom and how in the future.

2. The Committee thanks God for His guidance and blessing on the Committee and the working groups during the past year.

Certificates in Youth and Children's Ministry

3. The Certificate in Youth Ministry course has again been facilitated this year in Belfast. The course has run on Monday nights with 31 in attendance. A residential weekend has again been central to the implementation of the course. The Committee is currently considering running an additional course, outside of Belfast, in 2012-13.

4. The Certificate in Children's Ministry Course ran at Union Theological College and Waringstown with 46 participants attending.

5. The Board continues to work in partnership with Union Theological College to facilitate a Graduate Certificate in Youth Ministry.

Road Trip

6. Road Trip is a one evening, six seminar event, which makes high quality training available to Presbyterian Congregations at a local level free of charge. In 2011-12 Road Trip has been in 10 different locations around Ireland. Participants have had the opportunity to learn in areas as diverse as: 'The Inbetweeners-Ministry with 8-13 year olds'; 'Grow Your Own Spuds: how to develop youth participating in your Congregation'; and 'Helping Young People Play their Role in God's Big Mission Story', among others.

Summer Mission Training Day

7. The first Summer Mission Training Day run by the Committee in consultation with the Summer Outreach Team Working Group took place in June 2011. Two hundred people attended the event, 160 of whom were planning to participate in PCI Summer Outreach Teams. The planning for a 2012 event 'Mission Outreach Training' (MOT) is well under way. As in 2011, the aim will be to equip those who are new to Summer Mission, to further encourage those who are experienced in Summer Mission and support Summer Mission team leaders.

Supporting Families

8. In January 2012 the Board hosted an evening with the title 'Keep it in the Family: Rooting our Ministry in the Family Context'. Mark DeVries helped the audience to consider practical ways to engage with children and young people in their nuclear family and Church family contexts. He dealt with a variety of questions, including: How do we support families? How can we find time to get to know the parents of our kids? How do we help children and young people to feel a vital part of the whole Church? The evening proved very inspiring to the parents, youth workers, children's workers, family workers, deaconesses, elders, Sunday School co-ordinators and youth leaders who attended.

Communicators' School 2012

9. In previous years the Board has hosted a Communicators' School to equip youth and children's workers to better communicate the gospel and the message of the Bible. Following the success of these training opportunities in the past, the Committee has made plans for a similar event to take place in

October 2012. A one day event will also be held for those who have attended Communicator's School before.

Expanding our Vision

10. The Committee has been pleased to work alongside the Board of Christian Training, Board of Mission in Ireland, Board of Mission Overseas, and Board of Social Witness in planning this inter-Board training event in March 2012. The event will be aimed at anyone serving in their local Congregations and those attending will have a choice of attending two seminars out of four.

Building Blocks Conferences

11. The two conferences were held on Saturday 12 November 2011 at Orangefield and Saturday 19 November 2011 at All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin. Nick Harding was the keynote speaker with a focus on boys in the Church.

Youth Link

12. Youth Link continues to support and complement the work of the Board and the Committee is grateful to its representatives for their input into working groups and Committees of the Board.

CHRISTOPH EBBINGHAUS, Convener

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee endeavours to create opportunities for young people and emerging adults to grow their relationship with God and have their faith stretched as they engage in service opportunities offered through the work of Ministry Opportunities. The work of the Committee has continued to provide vital outreach opportunities at home and overseas. While the work has gone from strength to strength, a review of summer mission is being undertaken with a view to further inform the development of the Committee's work.Camps

2. The review which the Committee has undertaken led to the establishment of two new camps this year to add to the Tech camp that has been running for several years. The Committee hope that these new ventures will be well supported and be beneficial to the spiritual growth of those who attend.

Summer Outreach Opportunities

3. The opportunities for summer work at home this summer have been further enhanced with the addition of an inner city urban outreach that endeavours to provide team members with experience of several urban contexts and a variety of approaches to reaching those communities. These teams are a great opportunity for members to develop their gifts in the service of God and see him at work, and the Committee encourage many more to take up these opportunities this year.

4. To help equip team members, the Committee encourages them to attend the Mission Outreach Training (MOT) day, which is available to all who are doing youth and children's outreach work within Congregations.

Overseas Opportunities

5. In partnership with the Board of Mission Overseas, YAC will support in the administration of two teams in the summer of 2012. These teams have provided a very good training ground for many in recent years and give an understanding of ministry in an overseas context.

Volunteer and Intern Programme (VIP)

6. The VIP Scheme has continued to develop in the current year and is including a team experience for the VIP's with a trip to Spain to support the work of GBU. The working group, with the assistance of Carol Johnston, are seeking to draw up plans for the future expansion of the programme with the possibility of other areas of ministry being offered. These will, it is hoped, be an ongoing evolution which will always be kept under review.

SPUD

7. The work of the SPUD Youth Assembly has been placed under the remit of this Committee and is continuing its good work with several developments in its structure designed to enhance and further its desire to see the youth of our Church fully involved in all aspects of the denominations' work.

8. Thanks are extended to the many volunteers who staff the working groups responsible for much of the practical organisation of the Committee's work, without whom the ministry opportunities would not be able to be provided, and also to all those in the YAC Office who provide valuable assistance with such skill and grace.

JOHN FLAHERTY, Convener

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. Stories have long been used to engage our senses, stir our emotions and excite our imaginations. Some would say that telling stories is the best way to teach, persuade, and even understand ourselves. Perhaps this is why the Research and Education Committee feel compelled to tell young people's stories about the challenges and issues they face growing up in Ireland today. Having completed an Ireland wide survey in response to the 2009 SPUD resolution, the Committee has progressed to producing a resource that will be available to the wider Church. Stories of internal and external pressures identified *fear of failing* and *fear of the future* as the top concerns for teenagers. One girl said "I'm scared I'm not good enough"; this is a painful admission for anyone but this girl was only 13 years old. Speaking of school work a 12 year old said "I'm scared of letting dad down". UNICEF, the UN's children's body, says: 'the true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children'; a statement that perhaps resonates

with the older biblical story of Molech-worship. The Committee is compelled to act in light of the experiences expressed by young people. The Committee's present concern is to generate informed and effective prayer for children; this is something the young people have specifically asked for. A resource has been produced to equip parents, small groups, midweek prayer meetings and youth leaders to listen to and pray for young people.

2. The Committee has been able to build on the commitment to awaken new insights into the challenges young people face growing up in the 21st century. Currently it is exploring the way in which children and young people are enabled to participate fully in the life of the Church. It is planned to disseminate the learning from Graeme Thompson's PhD research and explore the impact of current youth ministry models on children's, young people's and emerging adults' participation.

3. The Committee greatly values the work of the YAC staff team and the VIP Internship programme. Co-working on the survey and prayer resource with Helen Forsythe has been a joy and the Committee is grateful for her commitment to the work of the Board.

LYNDA GOULD, Convener

MINISTRY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee remains committed to providing helpful resources for those involved in youth and children's ministry within PCI. It seeks to do this through the development of existing resources and the provision of new materials that will facilitate effective ministry.

2. The Committee is grateful to God for His guidance over this past year, and is thankful for the significant contribution the YAC Office staff and Development Officers have made to the work of the Board. They, along with the members of the various working groups, are to be commended for their hard work and dedication.

Website (www.pciyac.org)

3. The Committee acknowledges, with gratitude, the work done on the website by Laura Crossett (YAC Intern), who has now completed her internship. The website is now managed within the structures of the YAC staff team so that updates can be monitored, and the content has been enhanced by the addition of a 'Children's Ministry' section. It is hoped that the current development of the main PCI website will lead to further improvements in the YAC website.

Youth and Children's Project

4. The Committee thanks everyone who supported the 'SAT-7 KIDS/On The Box' 2010/11 project. The total amount raised was £55,085.12, and it is hoped that this financial contribution will serve to enhance this vital ministry to children and young people in the Middle East.

5. Money continues to come in for the 'Stand By Me' 2011/12 project. Ruth Bromley, together with Michael Holmes and Alistair Bennett of Stand By

Me/Kids Alive UK, have been visiting various Sunday Schools and youth groups to receive cheques and express their thanks.

6. The **2012/13 project** will focus on assisting existing ministries in Kenya and the south of Ireland. The overseas element will seek to equip the new girls' school in Nanyuki where Linda Roulston is involved in a pastoral care role. Support will also be given to the work Gary and Mary Reid are doing among the Maasai through the provision of resources for primary schools in the OI Kinyiei area. Closer to home, the project will help resource the Sunday school and crèche rooms within the new Church in Drogheda.

Youth and Children's Workers

7. The Committee greatly appreciates the contribution that youth and children's workers make to the ministry offered by local Congregations to children and young people. The full-time workers are supported and encouraged through their attendance at special monthly meetings that are facilitated by Graeme Thompson. A retreat is planned for June, with some sessions being led by the Rev John Kirkpatrick.

Guysmere Youth Centre

8. Mr Jonny Ross completed his time as temporary warden in September 2011. The Committee extends its sincere thanks to him and his wife Catriona for their excellent service to the Board while at the Guysmere Centre.

Reconciliation

9. The work of PYP remains an important one. The Reconciliation Working Group continues to offer training to those who require it, but the Resources Committee is currently assessing the direction this group should take. It has been suggested that a training night should be run on the topic of 'reconciliation' due to the interest shown by participants in the Youth Ministry Certificate Course.

Discipleship Resources

10. **Presbyterianism Course:** This resource aims to give young people a clearer understanding of what it means to be a Presbyterian. It comprises six sessions: Identity, History, Beliefs, Sacraments, Worship, and Mission, and can be used in a variety of settings including Bible Class, youth fellowship and 'Church Membership' classes. After final assessment by several youth workers, it is hoped that the course will be available via download from the YAC website in October 2012.

11. **Youth Issues (Discipleship):** The working group has produced a resource called 'Upside Down Kingdom'. Consisting of four sessions, it aims to encourage young people and their leaders to consider their relationship with God, themselves, humanity and the environment. Each session has an Old and New Testament study to help young people deal with the issues they face from a biblical perspective. This resource will be in the form of a folder for leaders, which will also be downloadable. After a trial run with a few youth groups, this resource will be made available to the wider Church.

Generate Magazine

12. The Board's dedicated newsletter is proving to be a good resource in Churches and has been well received. The Committee would encourage those involved in youth and children's ministry to submit any ideas they have to the YAC Office for inclusion in future editions of the magazine.

Special Needs

14. The Committee continues to assess how we might support children and young people with special needs and their leaders in Church. It has been agreed that a group of people should be brought together to look into the possibility of providing appropriate support and training.

DAVID BROWNLOW, Convener

MINISTRY EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Ministry Events Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry is tasked with organising and promoting a series of events which are relevant to the needs of children, young people and young adults across our denomination. Through its working groups, the Committee seeks to deliver events which will teach, train, challenge, encourage and inspire, as well as reminding all who attend that they are Presbyterian and part of something bigger than what is experienced locally. This year, as well as the normal schedule of events, the Committee has been investigating the possibility of running new ventures for toddlers and young adults. The Committee is grateful to God for all that He has done through events in the past and we wait in eager and prayerful anticipation to see how He will bless us this year.

Kids' Praise Party

2. As with many other groups and organisations this year, the Kids' Praise Party working group is seeking to use the London Olympics as a platform upon which to develop a programme for the event. This year's Kids' Praise Party is planned for the afternoon of Saturday 19 May in Carnmoney Presbyterian Church. The Olympic torch is due to begin its journey around the United Kingdom on the day before the event, so under the theme 'Light of the World' a lively programme of praise and interactive discovery will seek to remind the children who attend that they are part of a global Church and that they have a responsibility to pass on the torch of the Good News to all those with whom they come in contact. In a new departure, the main event will be preceded by a Kids' Olympics which will see those who attend take part in a fun programme of sporting challenges.

Youth Night

3. Youth Night is also going Olympic in 2012! The event is scheduled for Assembly Buildings on the evening of Saturday 2 June 2012 at the climax of General Assembly week. It is again hoped that there will be a tremendous turnout of young people from all parts of the island, gathering for worship led by Andy Lamberton, as well as to hear what God would say through our speaker,

Stuart Hawthorne, Co-ordinator of Youth Ministry in Woodlands Presbyterian Church, Carrickfergus and a member of the Youth Night working group. The theme for the evening will be "Run" and the interactive programme and teaching will focus on the challenges of Hebrews 11 and 12.

MAD Weekend

4. The MAD weekend remains one of the most significant events run by the YAC Board. Now in its 14th year, it is anticipated that the 1,000 places will be quickly filled by young people from all over Ireland who will descend on the University of Ulster campus in Coleraine to enjoy the varied programme of worship, teaching and activity on 26-28 October 2012. Many young people and now young adults have cause to look back at MAD as a time and a place which was important in their faith journey; many who have attended the event in past years are now part of the hugely energetic and dedicated MAD Crew who help run the weekend. The Committee trusts that God will move in power once again at 'MAD 14' and that lives will again be impacted. The Committee is delighted that the speaker at this year's event will be Duffy Robbins from the USA, continuing a long association between the Board and this renowned author and teacher. Once again, Alastair Bennett and his band have been invited to lead the worship at MAD 14.

The Word

5. After a very successful inaugural event last August in Castlewellan Castle, 'The Word' is planned again for the August Bank Holiday weekend in 2012. This event is a Bible conference for young adults aged 18-30 years and its vision is to "equip a generation to be transformed, not conformed" –this expresses a desire to give young adults the tools to handle correctly the text of the Bible, to apply its teaching to many of the serious issues with which they're grappling and to defend the truth of God's Word in the 'marketplace' of today's culture. The Committee aims to accomplish this through the provision of high quality and relevant teaching, offered through keynote addresses, seminar streams and fellowship/discussion groups. 'The Word' will take place at Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle from 24-26 August 2012 and the keynote speaker will be the Rev Alastair Bates, Minister of Scrabo Presbyterian Church in Newtownards.

6. The cost of attending 'The Word' will again be £85 per person – while the Committee is confident that this rate is very competitive when set alongside the cost of similar events, it does recognise that this is a fairly large sum of money for some who are students or unwaged. To that end, Congregations and individuals are encouraged to consider the possibility of partly subsidising or fully sponsoring the costs of some of their young folk who might benefit from attending 'The Word'. Please also be aware that your Congregation will, in turn, benefit from what these young leaders will experience and learn at this conference.

Future Plans

7. In addition to co-ordinating the current roster of events, the Committee also continues to consider plans for new events, including one for pre-school

children. A working group is also working on a pilot evangelistic event for young adults.

Thanks

8. As ever the Committee is so thankful to God for His guidance and provision, and places on record its gratitude to the extremely committed working group chairs and members, as well as the hard-working and efficient YAC field and office personnel.

ANDREW THOMPSON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received
2. That the General Assembly approve the Youth and Children's Project to equip the Girls' Secondary School in Naniyuki, assist the outreach programme in the Ol Kinyiei area of Kenya, and resource the Sunday school and crèche rooms within the new Church in Drogheda.
3. That the resignation of the Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus as Convener of the Training Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that _____ be appointed in his place.
4. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of Miss Roz Stirling, as Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, effective from _____, thank her for her many years of devoted service and wish her God's richest blessing in her future life and ministry.
5. That a grant of £9,736 be paid from the Incidental Fund to Youth Link: NI.
6. That the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows:

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 continues through its Committees and Union Theological College to provide training for Ministers and Church members in a variety of areas of Christian ministry and seeks to equip the Church to fulfil her mission and pastoral calling.

2. The Committee for Training and Resources reports on the plans for the Auxiliary Ministry course, the success of the Accredited Preachers Scheme and the on-going production of resources on Leadership Training and Pastoral Care in Congregations.

3. The Committee on Ministerial Studies and Development is recommending that the General Assembly approve a review of the application process for the ordained ministry and the effectiveness of a regular assessment of candidates prior to ordination. Post ordination training continues to be developed and a sustained number of Ministers are taking advantage of sabbaticals.

4. The Union Theological College Management Committee reports that curriculum issues are being discussed by the Curriculum Sub-Committee and Faculty and that a new Summer School for students is being introduced in 2012. The Training Resource Centre was officially opened and a phased programme for the restoration of the stonework of the College was considered.

Board Convener's Introduction

5. The Board has been encouraged by a number of positive developments in the past year. The response to the Accredited Preachers scheme has been overwhelming and the Board recognises that Presbyteries and Ministers have contributed to the successful launching of the scheme, through their willingness to encourage Church members to participate. The opening of the Training and Resource Centre, following the regrettable delay due to a malicious fire, has proven to be worth waiting for. The Church now has a modern centre that provides a first class facility to be used by all agencies to facilitate training. The Board continues to be optimistic in regard to the candidature for the ordained ministry as this continues to be consistent at around twenty.

6. The increasing secularisation of society and the changing environment in which Church is operating creates challenges for the future training of Ministers. The Board recognises the need for regular reviewing of the curriculum provided in Union Theological College and the considerable pressure that the Faculty is under to facilitate an effective and constructive training programme contributing towards the 'ministry formation' of students. The Board is indebted to the Faculty and adjunct lecturers at Union Theological College for the expert delivery of an academic and practical course preparing students for ordination.

7. The Rev Prof Patton Taylor, having been appointed in 2010, continues as the seconded Principal of UTC with executive responsibilities. To assist Faculty with its diverse responsibilities the Management Committee of UTC recommended to the General Board that the Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop be appointed as Chairman of the Faculty. It was agreed that Dr Dunlop will continue in this position as long as it is required and that the Board will keep the arrangement under review.

8. The Board presented to the General Assembly in 2009 the report of the Union Theological College Review Panel and it was agreed that a nomination for Principal of UTC with executive responsibility be brought to the 2010 General Assembly for appointment (2009 Minutes, page 95 resolution 8). In 2010 the Priorities Committee of the General Board requested that all Boards make financial savings. Due to this request the BCT agreed, as an interim measure, to set aside temporarily the 2009 decision of the GA. The temporary arrangement adopted involved the appointment of a Principal with executive responsibilities for a fixed term of three years which commenced on 1 July 2010 and terminates on 30 August 2013.

9. The Board has reviewed the arrangement accepted in 2010 and agreed that it should carry out the recommendation of the College Review Panel in 2009 and take the necessary steps to implement the decision of the 2009 General Assembly to appoint a Principal with executive responsibilities and that this appointment should take place at the 2013 meeting of the General Assembly.

10. The Executive Secretary informed the Board that, with the high number of students for the ministry entering training, projections indicate that the number of vacant charges was likely to reduce significantly over the next few years. While it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to recommend the introduction of a 'cap' on student numbers it was also recognised that this issue should be kept under review. It was further agreed that applicants be made aware that, while the Board provides training for all those who are nominated by the General Assembly and will seek to assign them to assistantships, it can give no guarantee of a 'call' on the completion of training.

11. Training for the ministry is enhanced by the assigning of students to Congregations for their student assistant year and subsequently for the duration of their licentiate assistantship. The Board recognises the contribution that experienced Supervising Ministers make to the 'on the job' training and are indebted to Ministers who invest time in mentoring and equipping assistants. It is becoming increasingly difficult to place students because of the financial constraints some Congregations are experiencing and also Congregations, that may have taken assistants in the past, are appointing Additional Pastoral Personnel. The Assignments Committee appeals to Ministers and Kirk Sessions to seriously consider the significant contribution they could make to the training of potential Ministers by offering the opportunity for an assistant to be assigned to their Congregation.

12. The Assignment arrangements were reviewed and it was agreed that the Assignment Committee become a sub-committee reporting to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee. The Convener of the Assignment Committee is to be the Director of Ministerial Studies and the Secretary is the Executive Secretary of the BCT.

13. The review of the Assignments included a reconsideration of the length of assistantships. At the time of writing the exact outworking of this is still under discussion and it is hoped to report more fully in Daily Minutes.

14. The Judicial Commission requested that the BCT consider the issue of how to avoid appeals against Presbytery decisions, in relation to applicants for the Ministry and the Accredited Preachers Course, having to be addressed by Judicial Commission. The BCT agreed to recommend that a Standing Special Commission of the Judicial Commission be formed to deal with appeals and to interview the parties involved. It also suggests that training of this Commission would be necessary so that all members would be familiar with the guidelines adopted by the BCT when interviewing applicants for the Ministry and for the Accredited Preachers Course.

15. The Board has also been requested to facilitate an overture being brought to the General Assembly to clarify the position regarding students for the ministry who are also Elders. The proposal is that such students will be deemed to have resigned the duties of the eldership at the point of licensing. The appended overture to Par 209 of the Code has this effect and also tidies up the Code with reference to the transfer of credentials for those students who will be serving as Licentiate Assistants in Presbyteries other than their own, in line with the guidelines approved by the General Assembly in 2007.

16. The Board recognises the industrious and expert work done by the Director of Ministerial Studies and the Christian Training Development Officer and acknowledges that the progress of work of the BCT is expedited by its dedicated staff.

17. The Board acknowledges the significant volume of work done by the Executive Secretary of the Board, the Rev Trevor Gribben, and the professional and efficient way his duties are carried out.

COMMITTEE FOR TRAINING AND RESOURCES

1. The Committee has met twice during the year but the Panels which progress its work have met more frequently and have made significant progress in their areas of responsibility.

2. This year has seen the formation of a Panel on Auxiliary Ministers which has begun to outline the training required for this new role within our Church, which was approved in principle at the 2010 General Assembly. Much work remains to be done but there is a keen sense of anticipation of the benefits this could bring to the Church's work and witness.

3. The Committee continues to be ably served by the Christian Training Development Officer, Tom Finnegan.

Panel on Auxiliary Ministers

4. The Panel on Auxiliary Ministers, convened by Mr Ossie McAuley, has met several times since June 2011. The Panel has made much progress in defining the course content and the application process. It is planned that the first course for Auxiliary Ministers will commence in early 2014 with applications being received in the latter half of 2013. This is to allow possible candidates from the Accredited Preacher Scheme courses in Belfast, the North-West and Dublin time

to complete their course and gain some experience before considering applying. (Applicants for the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme have to already have successfully completed all stages of Accredited Preachers Scheme.) The course content is likely to include biblical theology, pastoral care, working in a team and Church life. Further training will be provided for those Auxiliary Ministers working in 'pioneering situations', and this is being discussed with representatives of the Board of Mission in Ireland.

Panel on Pastoral Care

5. The Panel completed the first and major part of its work with the publication of the booklet 'Developing Pastoral Care in our Congregations'. This was endorsed by the General Assembly in 2011, with the exhortation to all Kirk Sessions to take an honest look at how comprehensive is the care offered to all the individual members of a family unit. Rather than being satisfied with a single, and maybe infrequent contact with the one Church-going individual in a family, a new bespoke pastoral care programme should aim at making effective contact with all generations, both sexes, regular attendees and others.

6. To this end, the General Assembly requested all Kirk Sessions to examine their current provision in the light of the several suggestions in the booklet by September 2013.

7. Initial responses to the various models are being received, and to date have been positive. When a significant quantity of responses has been accumulated, the Panel will evaluate them.

8. Resources have been produced by the Panel to help equip Congregations who want to establish pastoral care teams and also to train those responsible to deliver pastoral care.

Panel on Accredited Preachers

9. Like a group of architects, this Panel was given a brief to fulfil and a blank sheet of paper. Over time it has been very rewarding to observe how, under the guidance of God, dreams and plans have become realities.

10. Within the past year this Panel has been able to supervise its work developing along three parallel tracks.

11. Firstly, those who were selected, from the Armagh, Monaghan and Newry Presbyteries, for training through the pilot scheme, have completed both the formal class training and the mentoring phase of their training. In addition, they were also independently assessed in taking a service and preaching by an assessor from outside their Presbytery and all were successful. The Panel was very pleased, when through a service of recognition in Ballyalbany Presbyterian Church, they became the first Accredited Preachers with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Panel trusts that they will prove a useful support to the Ministers and Congregations within their localities and that they will continue to develop their skills in leading public worship and preaching the Word of God.

12. Secondly, in the autumn of 2011, over 60 participants presented themselves for training at Union Theological College. Currently they are in the mentoring phase of their training. Given the large number within this grouping the Panel is very grateful to the many Ministers of the Church who

have willingly agreed to act as mentors – this requires that, within the Minister’s own Congregation or another, they listen to our trainees conduct three services of worship and then provide feed-back.

13. Thirdly, two further groups of trainees are undergoing training, in the Dublin area and in the North-West.

14. The Panel has been greatly indebted to the Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson who has prepared both the Trainer’s Notes and the Students’ workbooks for this course. The Panel is grateful also for several others who have agreed to teach the course in the respective venues.

15. The Panel is also deeply indebted to Mr Tom Finnegan, the Christian Development Training Officer, who has carried much of the administrative burden of this Panel, in addition to his many other responsibilities. The Panel is pleased to be in the position where its work is complete and is confident that a very good beginning has been made and that a scheme for the provision of Accredited Preachers within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has now been established.

16. The Committee agreed to discharge and thank the Panel, as its work in setting up the Accredited Preacher Scheme has been completed. A small working group of Rob Craig, Nigel McCullough, Trevor Gribben and Tom Finnegan has been set up to oversee the administration of the scheme. This working group will make decisions on items such as appointing assessors and any detailed administration work.

Panel on Leadership

17. The drive of PCI to becoming a missional Church, through culture change and mission planning, depends on missional leadership in its Congregations. Meaningful implementation of Fit for Purpose, that doesn’t merely inform the denomination but which actually transforms the denomination, depends on transformative leadership in Congregations. If the denomination is to move beyond paying lip service to these and other change initiatives in our constantly changing context, it must be recognised that the fundamental key to change is the leadership of (constant) change in our Congregations. To this end the work of the Panel continues as it researches need and identifies, provides and delivers appropriate and relevant resources and training.

18. The Panel has spent some time further researching congregational leadership within PCI. Focus Groups, with ruling elders and outside agencies which work on ministerial and leadership development within Churches, provided useful information for the Panel’s own use and for the use of the Committee on Ministerial Studies and Development.

19. A useful meeting has been held with Presbytery Christian Training Agents under the auspices of the Christian Training Development Officer. The agents have been encouraged to ask Presbyteries to consider how they may respond to the list of suggestions made in the General Assembly report of 2011 to encourage greater interest in and involvement in leadership development.

20. An initial set of resources has been produced as a starting point for Ministers, Kirk Sessions, organisations or Congregations who wish to explore and develop aspects of leadership. This series includes:

- Leadership
- Developing Leaders
- The Leadership of Kirk Sessions
- Kirk Session Away Days

These resources are available for download from the PCI website and a further series of resources is being produced on leading change. The Panel plans to hold a series of Road Shows to introduce the new resources. Seminars will be available both on their use and also to provide training in leadership issues.

21. The Panel recognises that while it can carry out research and identify or produce resources, even provide training seminars, the issue of leadership and leadership development needs to be owned across the denomination and championed by Presbyteries and Boards. The Panel recognises the vast amount of work asked of Presbyteries. It feels that the issue of leadership and leadership development is fundamentally important and is best delivered by a combination of the Panel's bottom up approach, supported systematically by Presbyteries on-going and proactive involvement. It believes that significant steps forward will be taken as the types of support systems and support structures for Ministers, Elders and Congregations put forward in last year's report are implemented.

22. As part of the structural supports to encouraging leadership and leadership development the Panel is delighted to acknowledge the rapid response to the 2011 report by the Committee on Ministerial Studies and Development and by the Director of Ministerial Studies. Changes have been introduced already to raise the profile of Ministers as leaders of Congregations and as developers of leaders within Congregations, and training opportunities identified to address this.

NJ McCULLOUGH, Convener

COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT

1. The Committee met on three occasions since the last General Assembly (October 2011, February 2012 and April 2012).

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

3. In the academic year 2011-2012 there were 49 students under the care of Presbyteries, as listed in the appended Schedule (see Appendix 1).

MINISTERIAL STUDIES

Leadership

4. In response to the resolution passed by the General Assembly in June 2011 (Reports 2011, p 217, res 16) the Committee has been considering the recommendations outlined in paragraphs 15-18 of the report of the Panel

on Leadership (Reports 2011, pp 201-202). The Committee reports that the following action has been taken: (a) the introduction of required reading on the subject of leadership for those applying for ordained ministry; (b) the planned introduction of a 'Leadership module' as part of the Ministry training course, hopefully in the academic year 2012-2013; (c) a Board Conference, held in March 2012, which was aimed at directing and shaping the Board's vision for leadership and leadership development within PCI with particular reference to Ministers of Word and Sacrament; (d) the monitoring of existing 'Leadership components' in both the Licentiates' Course and Post-Ordination Training courses.

Interviews

5. The interviews of 24 candidates were held in Union Theological College on Tuesday, 3 April 2012. The Interviewing Panel comprised: Revs Alistair Bates, Robert Beggs, Amanda Best, Gordon Best, Robin Brown, Janice Browne, Mervyn Burnside, Jim Campbell, Rob Craig, John Coulter, Kenneth Crowe, David Cupples, Sam Finlay, Mark Goudy, William Henry, Liz Hughes, John Hutchinson, Stephen Johnston, Philip McCrea, Adrian McLernon, Ian McNie, Adrian Moffett, Colin Morrison, Dr Donald Patton, Dr Brian Savage, William Sinclair, Alan Thompson, David Thompson; Messrs Joe Campbell, Norman Graham, Roy Thompson; Mrs Isobel McAuley, Dr Lena Morrow, Ms Anne Taylor, Mrs 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.

6. Having completed the interviewing process, 20 candidates are being nominated to the General Assembly by the Board of Christian Training.

Application Process

7. Following discussions concerning the application process for ordained ministry it was agreed to recommend that the General Assembly approve a review of the application process and the on-going effective assessment of ministry candidates prior to ordination.

Biblical languages

8. The Biblical languages curriculum was revised for the academic year 2010-2011 and after two years is now due to be reviewed. It was agreed that the Convener undertake this review through consultation with the relevant members of staff and an appropriate cross-section of students.

Post-graduate Study

9. Increasing numbers of Ministers are undertaking, and successfully completing, post-graduate study courses. In light of this, it was agreed that the DMS should compile a database, recording information about Ministers who have undertaken such study, as the first step toward seeking to harness their insights and expertise for the benefit of the wider Church.

STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND

The Rev David Irvine reports:

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

11. In the academic year Sept 2011-June 2012 there are 47 students in receipt of grants. The cost to the Fund of grants, fees and other expenses for this period is £606,000. 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.

12. 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.

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Post-Ordination Training

13. A twin-track residential is planned for 15-18 May 2012, facilitating those who were ordained in 2010 and 2011 on the respective themes 'Delivering the Vision' and 'Shaping the Vision'. A conference for those ordained in 2009 was held from 1-3 May 2012 on the theme 'When it really hurts'.

Sabbaticals and In-Service Training

14. It was agreed that all sabbatical applications should be forwarded to the DMS by Presbyteries and that the notice required prior to taking a sabbatical be reduced from 6 to 3 months.

Ministers with Staff Teams & Additional Pastoral Personnel

15. Before the end of 2012 the Committee plans to provide courses that will give basic training for Ministers who have the responsibility to manage staff teams and/or additional pastoral personnel.

Pre-Retirement Residentials

16. The Very Rev Dr John and Mrs Rosemary Dunlop and the Rev Bill and Mrs Margaret Sanderson facilitated two residentials in November 2011 and February 2012. The residentials continue to be very beneficial to those who attend. The Committee wishes to record its appreciation to the facilitators for the significant role they play in the success of such residentials.

WJM PARKER, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

1. The College continues to fulfil a strategic role both in its core function of training and equipping PCI's future Ministers and in its provision of theological education for others. Student numbers continue to be encouraging. In the 2011-12 academic year the student body has comprised a total of 292 students (95 part-time, 197 full-time) of whom 46 are PCI ministry students.

Curriculum Sub-Committee

2. An on-going conversation is developing between the Sub-Committee and the Faculty about respective roles, ministerial formation, the proposed Summer School and other ways in which the theological curriculum can be tailored to prepare students for effective Christian ministry.

3. The Vision Statement in the College Handbook has been amended to consist of 3 sections: section 1 "What We Are" being the previous Vision Statement, a new section 2 "Why We Exist" (see below – para 4) and a new section 3 "How We Do This" which incorporates revised departmental mission statements.

4. "Union Theological College exists to train men and women for effective Christian ministry and leadership by:

- Walking humbly with God
- Loving God's people
- Studying and understanding God's Word
- Communicating the Gospel faithfully and relevantly
- Enabling the Church to fulfill its calling"

5. It is planned to hold an annual Summer School in September each year, beginning in 2012 with a 1-week event comprising 3 days for 1st and 2nd year ministerial students plus the existing 2-day retreat for all ministerial students.

Finance, Property and Administration Sub-Committee

6. The Training and Resource Centre was officially opened on Monday 12 September by the Very Rev Dr J Stafford Carson and has proved of great benefit. Now based in the TRC are the Professor of Practical Theology, the Director of Ministerial Students and the Christian Training Development Officer, along with associated secretarial staff. The Committee is most grateful to Mr Desmond Fulton who has overseen the work in a meticulous and gracious way.

7. In the course of completion of the TRC project, dry rot was discovered in the Chapel lobby. Work which commenced on 19 September 2011 subsequently uncovered a spread of the rot to parts of the Organ Loft. This necessitated the temporary removal of the organ and an extension to the remedial work. Progress has been slow due to the proximity of the Chapel which, due to the size of the student body, is required for lectures during semesters.

8. Following the report to the 2011 General Assembly about the condition of the stonework of the College, Alastair Coey Architects Ltd provided the Committee with a budget costing for a phased programme of stonework restoration over a number of years. The costs (excluding VAT, professional fees or any grants that may be available) are as follows:

• Phase 1: Purchase (rather than hire) of scaffolding to be sold on completion of the restoration	£24,000
• Phase 2: Portico at the main entrance	£360,000
• Phase 3: North west wing and elevation	£304,000
• Phase 4: South west wing and elevation	£317,000
• Phase 5: South elevation (not including any structural intervention)	£439,000
• Phase 6: Courtyard	£387,000
Total budget cost:	<u>£1,831,000</u>

9. The current level of grant assistance is 35% of eligible costs up to a maximum of £50,000 for each phase, giving a maximum grant assistance of £250,000 over phases 2-6. All repair work will be eligible for VAT. A conservative estimate of professional fees and VAT would add c£500,000 to the total budget cost. The Committee will start to consider the way forward when all the work associated with the TRC has been successfully concluded.

10. Protective fencing has been put in place, and emergency repairs carried out, to ensure that no health and safety risk is posed by the condition of the stonework. No action is deemed necessary at present in regard to the relatively recent structural movement on the south side (accommodation and administration block) of the building.

11. The installation of a new line by Virgin Media in order to upgrade internet service for the College was delayed due to collapsed cabling in the courtyard. However, it is anticipated that the new line will soon be fully operational with significant benefits for students, staff and residents.

12. Negotiations have continued regarding a formal lease with Fitzroy Avenue Presbyterian Church, the occupants of first floor offices at 26 College Green.

HA DUNLOP, Convener

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Fiona Forbes	Union
	Robert Hamilton	Union
	Edward Kirwan	Union
	Stuart McCrea	Union
	Gary McDowell	Union
	Jeff McWatters	Union
ARMAGH	Keith Ward	Union
	Philip Cleland	Union
	Russell Edgar	Union
BALLYMENA	Simon Hamilton	Union
	Michael Currie	Union
	Ross Kernohan	Union
	Adrian Adger	Union

	Philip Kerr	Union
	Norman Kennedy	Union
	Philip McClelland	Union
	David McMillan	Union
	Stephen Orr	Union
	Matthew Simpson	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Gareth Simpson	Union
	Michael Fryer	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley	Union
	Chris Barron	Union
	David Cromie	Union
	Corrina Heron	Union
EAST BELFAST	Andrew Boreland	Union
	Stephen Cowan	Union
	David Currie	Union
	Mark McMaw	Union
	Trevor McNeill	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Mark Dodds	Union
	Alan Moore	Union
	James Warburton	Union
COLERAINE & LIMAVADY	Chris Cordner	Union
	Ivan Linton	Union
	Gordon McCracken	Union
DOWN	Gary Ball	Union
DROMORE	Nathan Duddy	Union
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Damien Burke	Union
	Kevin Hargaden	—
	Reuben McCormick	Union
	John O'Donnell	—
IVEAGH	Graham Mullan	—
NEWRY	Jeffrey Blue	Union
TEMPLEPATRICK	Mark Johnston	Union
TYRONE	Nigel Kane	Union
	Philip Leonard	Union
	Ben Preston	Union
	Roland Watt	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:

Name	Congregation	Presbytery
Matthew Boyd	High Kirk	Ballymena
Alan Burke	First Dunboe	Coleraine & Limavady
David Clarke	Culnady	Tyrone
Gerard Clinton	Drogheda	Dublin & Munster

Richard Cronin	Dun Laoghaire	Dublin & Munster
Alan Dickey	Bloomfield	East Belfast
David Gray	Kirkpatrick Memorial	East Belfast
Martin Gray	Howth & Malahide	Dublin & Munster
Bryan Kee	Albany	Tyrone
David Kelly	Stormont	East Belfast
Stephen Kennedy	Bessbrook	Newry
Stephen Lowry	Hamilton Road	Ards
Robert McClure	Ballywatt	Coleraine & Limavady
Alistair McCracken	Stormont	East Belfast
Susan Moore	McCracken Memorial	South Belfast
Bobby Orr	Ballynure	Carrickfergus
Jonathan Porter	Clontibret	Monaghan
Michael Rutledge	Newcastle	Iveagh
John Torrens	First Garvagh	Coleraine & Limavady
Brent van der Linde	Fitzroy	South Belfast

3. That the General Assembly request the Board of Christian Training to finalise a job description for the previously agreed position of Principal of Union Theological College with executive responsibility, and agree that the post be advertised and a nomination brought to the 2013 General Assembly for appointment.

4. That the General Assembly request the Board of Christian Training to carry out a review of the application process for the ordained ministry and of the on-going effective assessment of ministry candidates prior to ordination.

5. That the General Assembly encourage Ministers and Kirk Sessions to seriously consider the significant contribution they could make to the training of potential Ministers by offering the opportunity for an assistant to be assigned to their Congregation.

Leadership Development and Pastoral Care

6. That the General Assembly commend to Ministers and Kirk Sessions the resources and training opportunities on leadership development and pastoral care offered through the Board of Christian Training.

Accredited Preacher Panel

7. That the General Assembly welcome the accreditation of the first group of Accredited Preachers and commend both the course and the new Accredited Preachers to the Church.

General

8. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be 0.25p per £ of stipend.

9. That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be 5.25p per £ of stipend.

10. That the Board of Christian Training, together with the appropriate working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 285 of the Code, as follows:

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 209 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 209 of the Code the following be added prior to the end of the sentence “and also transmit credentials to the Clerk of Presbytery within whose bounds the Licentiate will be serving as Licensed Assistant. Any student who is a ruling elder will be deemed to have resigned the duties of the eldership at the date of licensing.”

TD GRIBBEN

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Rev Dr CD McCLURE
Secretary: Rev TD GRIBBEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supporting Christians in Education and Supporting Your Local School

1. Following on from last year's resolution a Working Group reports on a programme to be piloted which will be made available to Congregations.

Republic of Ireland

2. Families and pupils from the minority Protestant community face challenges in maintaining educational opportunities in keeping with their ethos.

Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion

3. In responding to the Department of Education's report of responses to its own 2009 consultation the Transferring Churches expressed concerns about the resources available to provide supported inclusion in "mainstream" schools.

Review of Public Administration (RPA)

4. An Educational and Skills Authority has been proposed which will retain meaningful Transferor representation. There is also a proposed Controlled Sector Support body.

Stranmillis – Queen's University, Belfast (QUB) Proposed Merger

5. Political inertia prevents this project proceeding under present circumstances.

Religious Education

6. Progress is being made to provide further non-statutory guidance for teachers to continue to provide imaginative, inspired and creative educational opportunities.

Shared and Integrating Education in Northern Ireland

7. The Executive's Draft Programme for Government invited consideration of imaginative ideas for furthering this concept in a variety of ways.

School Chaplains Report: Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe

8. The Rev Stanley Stewart has retired from teaching on grounds of ill health. He remains an Ordained Minister.

Abbreviations used:

- TRC = Transferor Representatives' Council
The body representing the three main Protestant Churches (Transferors) – PCI, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church

in Ireland – who previously “transferred” schools and have a statutory responsibility within the “controlled” sector

- ESA = Education and Skills Authority
The government’s proposed education authority
- ELB = Education and Library Board
These will be subsumed into the Education and Skills Authority.

INTRODUCTION

9. As is usually the case, the Board has met twice between General Assemblies (11 October 2011 and 13 March 2012). However the challenges of representing PCI, developing its historic contribution and, in conjunction with other Churches, advocating for education shaped by distinctively Christian values, necessitate constant interaction with a variety of agencies. Board office-bearers have worked closely with colleagues in the Transferor Representatives’ Council (TRC) to engage in the profusion of consultations and discussions covering a range of matters with potentially long-term implications. Matters such as the legislative framework for the setting up of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) and an associated Controlled Sector Body, as well as the provision for sustainable teacher training, have demanded appreciable engagement and scrutiny. This is within a wider context of fiscal challenges to the schools and bodies through which PCI makes its contribution to the broader educational enterprise.

10. Indispensable as the representative function is, within this report there is clear evidence of the Board’s prioritisation of support for local Congregations and Church members as they seek to minister, mission and make their faith work through service in education – whether as staff, students, governors, parents, Education and Library Board members or other committed stake-holders.

11. The Convener and Executive Secretary are actively involved with all other Boards in the “in-house” discussions facilitated by the Priorities Committee and Structures Panel. This will allow for explorations and assessments of the continuing effective discharge of the Board’s functions.

Supporting Christians in Education and Supporting Your Local School

12. A working group, in accordance with a resolution of last year’s Assembly and utilising expertise from this Board, SPUD, the Youth and Children’s Ministry Board, and Scripture Union NI, has energetically progressed this remit. Aware of the unprecedented demands made on those involved in schools, the group determined to encourage, affirm and resource without inadvertently adding to the burden of yet more programmes or meetings. After extensive research it became clear that much useful material is already available. Therefore, in creative partnership with Scripture Union, Scotland a programme incorporating and adapting their “Back to School with God” material will be piloted from September 2012. Thereafter it is anticipated that the resource will become available throughout PCI. (See Resolution 4)

13. As well as this on-going focus on “Supporting Christians in Education” the Board will continue to encourage and resource Congregations in “Supporting Your Local School”.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

14. The on-going difficult economic situation in the Republic of Ireland has meant very stressful times for everyone involved in education. Budget 2012 set out the areas to be initially affected as follows: school transport; teacher retention, resource hours, SNA hours, capitation and capital funding. These budgetary measures are beginning to impact on schools across the State. Smaller primary schools are especially vulnerable and the vast majority of Primary Schools under Protestant patronage fall into this category.

15. On-going contact, mostly through the good offices of our colleagues in the Church of Ireland, has been maintained with government. The particular needs of small schools, often serving isolated minority communities, has been emphasised.

Mrs Eleanor Petrie, PCI representative on the Secondary Education Committee, reports on issues affecting the secondary sector:

16. The Secondary Education Committee (SEC) is a body comprising representatives from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends.

17. The Committee derives its authority from a resolution passed by the sponsoring Churches in 1965.

18. The functions of the SEC are twofold. The distribution of a Block Grant provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DE&S) to ensure necessitous Protestant children may attend Protestant secondary schools and the representation of the interests of the member Churches in the post-primary education system.

Block Grant Scheme

19. Enrolments (2010/11) in the twenty-one fee charging schools totalled 9,803 (9,794 in previous year). This figure does not include the five comprehensive schools. In the school year 2010/11 the audited accounts showed the total amount, received from the DE&S, was €6,481,720 (€6,381,185), the grant in aid of fees totalled €6,541,479 (€6,580,259) and the capitation adjustment grant was incorporated (€244,126). The net cost of administering the SEC scheme was €109,130 (€115,752). There is a small grant to assist the running of the office.

20. The following numbers of grants were awarded in respect of the 2010/11 school year: 1,681 day grants (1,588), 837 boarding grants (894), 2,518 in total (2,482).

21. The Committee agreed to retain the grants for the school year [2011/12] on a scale from boarding €570-€7,767 (€1,140-€7,767) day €240-€2820 (€480-€2,820). An increase in certain allowances was also agreed in relation to the reckoning of assessments. This resulted in improved access to grants for a number of families.

22. The SEC exists to increase access for children from Protestant traditions to attend second level schools with a Protestant ethos. In this regard, the SEC notes with concern the continuing trend of low levels of Protestant children transferring to Protestant second level schools from primary level. It is noted

that the increased budget cuts at primary level may well lead to the closure of up 20% of Protestant primary schools over the next four/five years which may significantly impact on this situation in the long term.

23. Discussions between the SEC and the Department of Education and Skills have taken place on securing the future of the “Block Grant”. Given the overall context of policy in relation to second-level fee-charging schools, the SEC had on-going concerns about the security of the grant, despite numerous reassurances from Ministers for Education over many years. It was put to the Department of Education and Skills that the annual payment of the “Block Grant” to the SEC has never had any formal footing and has been at the discretion of the Minister of the day since its inception in 1968. After a series of negotiations, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the Department of Education and Skills and the SEC. The level of the “Block Grant” will, from January 2011 onwards, be determined by analyzing the level of need expressed through applications. This will be done at four year intervals. This will give stability to the level of funding received, which in the past had always fluctuated. In recent years the SEC had been unable to cope with this fluctuation since it no longer had reserve funding following a direction from a previous Minister for Education and Science to disperse its reserve funding. A key provision of the Memorandum of Understanding is that the status of the grant is no longer solely at Ministerial discretion but is sewn into the “ordinary” round of Department of Education and Skills annual funding.

Educational Developments

24. In 2011 a dialogue was continued between representatives of the Protestant schools sector and the Department of Education. This dialogue reached a hiatus on the fall of the Fianna Fail/Green Government. While these discussions have not closed, the new Minister has not initiated the resumption of that dialogue. Protestant fee-charging schools were disappointed to have a further one point rise on their Pupil Teacher Ratio imposed on them in the Budget in late 2011. This puts the PTR in (Protestant and Catholic) fee-charging schools at two points above all other second level schools in the State. Budget 2012 also announced plans by the DE&S to conduct an analysis of all fee-charging schools to determine schools net income from fees. The DE&S has been in contact with schools recently and has also met with the Committee on Management in this regard.

25. Protestant schools are to be commended for the manner in which they have worked to limit the impact of the budget cuts. However, schools have, at this point, run out of scope to trim their budgets; the impact of cuts is now being seen in our classrooms. With continuing difficult economic conditions the financial pressures on Protestant families to fund their children’s education, means it is increasingly difficult for them to exercise their constitutional parental right to choose a school for their child which reflects the ethos of their home. We should also be aware that the moratorium on public service appointments, and the redeployment scheme for teachers, will mean that fewer young teachers from our community will be afforded the opportunity to work in our schools, further threatening the values and identity of these schools.

NORTHERN IRELAND**Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion**

26. Children with a SEN or disability are 20% of the school population.

27. The Transferring Churches, drawing together a comprehensive and knowledgeable group of practitioners and parents, had submitted a response to the 2009 consultation. (see [http://www.deni.gov.uk/appendix 8](http://www.deni.gov.uk/appendix_8) – updated responses from statutory education partners.pdf)

28. The response identified with parental aspirations and concerns. In particular, there was a broad welcome for the concept of “supportive inclusion” even though financial and resource support details were lacking. Furthermore, the experience of parents of children with SEN was registered. For them “statements”, which could statutorily open up further services and supports, were invariably difficult to obtain.

29. The Department of Education’s response to the 2009 consultation (February 2012) proposed the removal of “statements” of SEN and replacing them with “Co-ordinated Support Plans” (CSPs). CSPs would only be available to pupils in special schools or with serious needs. The identification of need and appropriate help would be largely school-based. An undertaking was also given to streamline the bureaucracy so that a CSP would be obtained in no more than 20 weeks compared to 26 weeks. The Minister also subsequently sought to reassure parents that the plans accompanying existing “statements” will be honoured.

Review of Public Administration (RPA)

30. As in former years the intricacies and complexities involved in overseeing this key issue have made immense demands on the time, resourcefulness and energy of Board representatives, through TRC Executive and in particular the three Secretaries of the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland and PCI.

31. A statement from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) was issued on 16 November 2011 heralding political agreement on the establishment of a single Education and Skills Authority (ESA). At the time of writing the Executive have approved a policy memorandum relating to ESA and approval is anticipated for the draft legislation. The target date for passage through the legislative Assembly process is July 2012. As well as securing transferor representation on ESA there would be established a new controlled schools support body.

32. The continuing rights of Transferors have been established and the central role within a key decision-making body for schools has been clearly defined. Indeed, in conjunction with a similar representation from the maintained sector, there remains a strategic Christian ethos input into ESA.

33. Of major consequence is the setting up for the first time of a controlled sector support body which will, to a considerable degree, match a similarly proposed Catholic Trustee Support Body. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) will lose its statutory basis and become a voluntary body.

34. These sectoral support bodies will have a range of roles which may include advocacy and representation for their sector, nomination of governors,

working with schools to develop their collective ethos, planning of the schools' estate, developing shared education and co-operation with other sectors.

35. Whilst recent experience might caution against easy optimism the current proposals seem to offer intriguing prospects for productive engagement.

Stranmillis – Queen's University, Belfast (QUB) Proposed Merger

36. Much publicity has accompanied the saga of this proposed merger, with several dramatic episodes along the way. Any changes that might have been vaunted appear to have come to naught. On 28 November 2011 the Minister for the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL), Dr Stephen Farry, announced that there was insufficient political support to pass necessary legislation through the Assembly. It appears that both main Unionist parties are unwilling to contemplate a merger of teacher training institutions which does not include St Mary's College.

37. The Transferor Churches have expressed disappointment at the inertia, anomalies and inequalities created by this stalemate. In addition, shortly after the ministerial announcement the Executive decided to dispense with the Department of Employment and Learning and consequently divide its responsibilities between the Department of Education and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. This all serves to add further uncertainty and inequality to the provision of Initial Teacher Training – especially for the Controlled sector. In addition, unlike St Mary's, Stranmillis has no formal representation by Churches.

38. The Minister has commenced a study of the overall teacher training infrastructure in Northern Ireland to produce an objective analysis of the financial stability and sustainability of the two university colleges – particularly in the current economic climate. Given a context of fiscal stringency, falling school numbers, school closures and an oversupply of teachers there surely needs to be decisive action.

Religious Education

39. The regular consultations between TRC Executive and the Education and Library Board's RE Advisers are mutually appreciated. However, the extensive range of additional demanding administrative and "school improvement" duties these Advisers are now required to undertake serve to underline our acute concerns about the future curriculum support for RE teachers – not least within the new ESA arrangements. Moreover there is now a greatly reduced number of designated RE Advisers insufficient for the need, particularly in the controlled, integrated and non-maintained voluntary sectors.

40. The RE Advisory Group, in conjunction with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and chaired by the Board Convener, has been developing resources for the enhancement of the teaching of RE. The focus has been on generating non-statutory guidance for the revised RE syllabus in keeping with the overall framework of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This has been accomplished, despite budgetary pressures, by a dedicated group representing various sectors and interest groups. The commitment of CCEA staff has been crucial in maintaining this group's momentum.

Shared and Integrating Education in Northern Ireland

41. In keeping with resolutions of last year's General Assembly (Annual Reports 2011, p 235, res 5 & 6) and in conjunction with TRC colleagues a response has been made to the draft Programme for Government (see Appendix 1) endorsing the aspiration to seek creative initiatives for meaningful shared education. The Department of Education's Viability Audit and the Minister's determination to act upon its findings will undoubtedly give impetus to area-based planning. Almost everyone understands the desirability of sharing and the need for rationalisation. However, there is a clear challenge in co-ordinating a planned programme, which may include agonising rationalisation, when some sectors are at different stages of strategic planning and have existing resources and are strategically better placed to plan for and enable change and transformation.

42. The Programme for Government includes a commitment to establish a ministerial advisory group to explore and make recommendations to the Education Minister to advance shared education, ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes and to maximise the number of schools sharing facilities. Examples considered to be good practice have been showcased and several of the philanthropic international funding agencies still seem willing to produce financial backing. At one such conference in November 2011 the Queen's University Shared Education Programme, the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Fermanagh Shared Education Project were all commended.

School Chaplains Report: Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe

43. These last few years have presented all educational establishments with new and varied challenges, not least in governance and curricular provision. Since his appointment in 2005 the Rev Stanley Stewart has earned the respect of his colleagues and pupils as one who brought established credibility and a proven integrity to the role. He has been sensitive and appreciated in his pastoral and educational roles.

44. The Board wishes Stanley strength and health as he retires from teaching and becomes a Minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal.

APPENDIX 1

Transferor Representatives' Council submission to the NI Assembly Education Committee re the Draft Programme for Government (January 2012)

The Transferor Representatives' Council welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Programme for Government (PFG) – Priorities and Commitments relevant to the Department of Education.

The Committee asks for comment under three headings.

1. In terms of the Priorities and Commitments for DE are there any gaps in the draft PFG?

The TRC welcomes the seven commitments and agrees that these are the top priorities areas for action by DE. In particular we would endorse the urgent need to address the issue of underachievement of children from disadvantaged

areas. We would urge a particular focus on the needs of children from Protestant working class areas especially in urban areas. Recent local studies have made recommendations on how to tackle this problem. Close attention should be paid to the findings and recommendations within these research reports. We also strongly support the commitments related to shared education and believe these have the potential to contribute to a more cohesive and shared community. Transferors believe this will be best achieved by a particular focus on sharing between the largest school sectors – Maintained and Controlled.

2. Are the milestones/outputs set out in the draft PfG realistic and robust?

Under *Priority 4: Building a strong and shared community* – the TRC believes that it was correct to include the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus as a key priority and as a model of imaginative co-operation between school sectors. Transferors also warmly support the priority being given to enhance and extend opportunities for children to participate in shared education. It is important that the Ministerial advisory group is established quickly and given a remit which would enable it to agree and recommend realistic yet creative options to sharing in the future. The TRC urges that new legislation will permit the establishment of the widest possible range of shared education at school level – including jointly managed schools. Therefore the ministerial working group on sharing must begin work very soon and that its work informs the legislative development process for the establishment of the ESA.

3. How best to monitor and progress towards delivery?

The TRC has warmly welcomed the decision to establish the ESA using existing legislation. It is however crucial, given the current challenges within the education system, that the legislative process to establish the ESA, progresses efficiently and speedily. Transferors have a concern about the interim period when they believe the Controlled sector could be disadvantaged particularly in the arena of Area Based Planning. The TRC has welcomed the decision to create a Controlled Sector Support Body however while it is being established other sectors will be able to use their existing support bodies to make preparations and provision for the new dispensation. Hence we would urge that special attention is afforded to the establishment of a Controlled sector body both in its make-up, functions and capacity. In particular we recommend that any working group is resourced with professional assistance to ensure its early establishment and smooth running. This work will require close monitoring and should be given an individual set of priorities and milestones particularly for the next 12 months.

The Transferor Representatives' Council presents this submission on behalf of the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly thank those who serve as managers and teachers in schools under Presbyterian patronage within the Republic of Ireland and, at a time of financial pressure and rationalisation, call upon the government to ensure that the particular needs of schools serving minority communities continue to be both acknowledged and met.

3. That the General Assembly thank those who serve as Transferor Governors and representatives on Educational and Library Boards and who are not only having to manage the outworking of the current difficult economic situation, but are also having to cope with the additional pressure caused by the uncertainty regarding the future of educational administration in Northern Ireland.

4. That the General Assembly welcome the piloting of “Back to School with God” material in September 2012 and encourage the Board of Education in its plans to make such a resource available throughout PCI.

5. That the Board of Education be appointed in accordance with Par 284 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Convener: Mr JOHN HUNTER, CB

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board is seeking the General Assembly's approval to:

- Rates of assessment reflecting an overall rate of 69.0p in 2012; and
- Implement the recommendations of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel on the remuneration of Ministers, subject to the report of the General Board on the Biblical principles.

The report also provides an update on the work of the Board's four Committees.

THE BOARD'S REPORT

1. Over the past year the Board of Finance and Personnel has continued to support the work of the General Assembly and its Boards through its control of Church finances, its development of personnel policies and its oversight of property matters affecting Assembly Buildings. Inevitably finance figures large in the Board's deliberations as it grapples with such issues as the Ministerial Minimum, the salaries and wages paid to staff, congregational assessments, IT developments and various budgetary matters, plus Church accounts. Essentially the Board exists to underpin the wider mission and ministry of the Church, through its stewardship of our resources.

2. The Board remains conscious of the very difficult financial circumstances facing many Congregations and members. This is reflected most clearly in the small number of Congregations defaulting on their assessments. We live in challenging economic times with many in our pews living on fixed or declining incomes, which are being steadily eroded by inflation. It behoves us all to ensure that we make no unnecessary demands on Church members and manage those resources entrusted to us to the best of our ability in God's service.

3. Against that backcloth, the Board is pleased to recommend no increase in the overall level of assessments at 69.0p per £ of stipend for 2012. It wishes to maintain the reduction of 4.5p achieved the previous year, compared to 73.5p in 2010. This has involved some minor adjustments of a couple of the funds making up the total as shown in the table that follows. However, there is a health warning. The largest item in the total assessment is the PCI Pension Scheme (2009) at 30.0p. This sum reflects in part the large deficit in the Scheme at its last revaluation. The next actuarial revaluation of the Scheme is underway and will reflect the value of the investment portfolio and scheme liabilities at the end of December 2011. The outcome of this revaluation will determine the level of the pension assessment for the next three years.

4. The Board intends to continue to bear down on costs, but most of the expenditure met through assessments is non-discretionary in regard to stipends, salaries and pensions. Where expenditure is discretionary the Board intends to

scrutinise bids for resources more robustly, for example in the Incidental Fund for which the recommended assessment for 2012 is 5.0p.

	2012 p/£stipend	2011 p/£stipend	2010 p/£stipend
Central Ministry Fund	19.00	18.50	18.50
Retired Ministers' Fund	1.50	1.50	2.75
Widows of Ministers' Fund	4.00	4.00	4.50
Prolonged Disability Fund	0.25	0.25	0.25
Incidental Fund	5.00	5.00	5.00
Ministerial Development Fund	0.25	0.25	0.25
Special Assembly	-	-	0.25
Church House Repair Work	3.50	3.50	3.50
Sick Supply Fund	0.25	0.25	0.25
Students' Bursary Fund	5.25	5.75	5.25
Sub-Total	39.00	39.00	40.50
PCI Pension Scheme (2009) Fund	30.00	30.00	33.00
Total	69.00	69.00	73.50

5. The most difficult decision faced by the Board during the year concerned the Ministerial Minimum. After much heart searching, which took into account the current rate of inflation and the zero increase in the previous two years, the Board reluctantly decided on no increase in the current financial climate. The same conclusion was reached in respect of the salaries payable to General Assembly administrative and executive staff. The Board is very conscious that zero increases cannot apply indefinitely to those who conscientiously and diligently serve the Church and are already paid at a much lower rate than their professional counterparts.

6. The Board is also conscious that its proposals for revisions to the method for remunerating Ministers through the Tyrone Memorial remain outstanding. At last year's General Assembly it was agreed to refer the Board's Report on the Review of the Tyrone Memorial to a Panel appointed by the General Board for consideration on Biblical grounds. This matter is under consideration by the General Board who will report directly to the General Assembly. The Report of the Review and the recommendations of the Board of Finance and Personnel flowing from it are reproduced from the Reports of the 2011 Assembly for ease of discussion. On the subject of expenses paid to Ministers, the Board continues to urge Treasurers to make a prompt return of Ministerial Expense Forms, in accordance with the agreement reached with HMRC.

7. The 2011 Assembly endorsed proposals from the General Board for a new method for computing assessments based on “assessable income”, rather than stipends. During the year the Financial Secretary’s Office held training events for congregational treasurers to explain the new Statistical Return at which the new methodology for calculating assessments was highlighted. A significant number of queries have been received regarding the completion of the new return and some of these concerned the definition of “assessable income”. The new method comes into effect in 2013. The Board plans to issue further guidance on the completion of Statistical Returns as necessary and intends also to hold a meeting of Presbytery Finance Conveners to brief them on queries to date. The Board remains confident that the new assessment methodology will provide a fairer basis for raising assessments.

8. During the year the Board monitored the slow pace of developments in regard to the required amendments to the Charities Act for Northern Ireland. The process of registration seems likely to start in 2013.

9. The Board’s plans to strengthen our small IT Department were thwarted by a failure to appoint a suitable person as an IT software developer. The buoyant market for IT staff and the salaries paid in the market place both militated against the Church. The Board is very conscious of the demands being placed on the current team of three, including those associated with the use of more sophisticated IT equipment in our new conference facilities. It has decided to appoint an additional IT support person instead, with the possibility of outsourcing key software development projects.

10. The Board was pleased to be able to offer financial help to several Ministers with their housing in retirement through the Retired Ministers’ House Fund. It authorised a temporary increase in the Fund’s overdraft limit to £450k to provide loans to applicants pending receipt of proceeds from the sale of properties not required.

11. On the personnel front, the review of General Assembly staff posts through the job evaluation scheme is nearing completion. The Board also approved a new policy on Raising Concerns and revisions to existing policies on Harassment and on Vehicle Drivers.

12. The Board is disappointed that the difficulties referred to in previous reports on Mall lettings have continued. The market is very competitive with a number of vacant shops in Belfast City Centre. The Board is anxious to address this deficit situation through potential short to medium term lettings and by promoting the use of the Assembly Hall and meeting rooms for conferences and seminars – perhaps in conjunction with neighbouring hotels. On a more positive note, the second floor of Fisherwick Buildings has been let with some interest in part of the third floor. The letting of the second floor required substantial renovations including work on the lift amounting to approximately £90-100k. The Board is delighted to report that the internal repairs contract agreed last year by the General Assembly has been completed within time and within budget. Tribute is due to all those who successfully oversaw this and the preceding contracts. The Church now has a building fully fit for purpose. The Board recommends that the assessment of 3.50p to cover the work should continue.

13. Finally, the Board is grateful to the three new Conveners of its Pensions and Assessments Committee (Rev David Porter), Finance, Legal and IT Committee

(Mr Bob McCullagh) and Personnel Committee (Mr Robert Campton), and also to the Rev Adrian McLernon (Property Management Committee) for all their work on behalf of the Board. The Board also wishes to thank the staff in the Financial Secretary's Office for all their work. They have been diligent in their advice and support not just to the Board but also to Ministers and Treasurers.

PENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Pensions and Assessments Committee continues to balance the limited resources of Congregations with the need for adequate stipend and pension provision for active and retired Ministers. In the present economic climate this task is made all the more difficult.

2. A number of Congregations have defaulted on payments of both stipend and assessments and there are now clear procedures to follow in such cases as set out in Par 318 of The Code. The Committee is very conscious of the difficulties faced by Congregations and tries to keep assessments to the minimum.

3. The total assessment for 2012 is 69% of stipend which is the same as in 2011. The CMF assessment has increased by 0.5% and the Student Bursary Fund has a corresponding 0.5% decrease.

4. A major change in the basis of assessment from stipend to assessable income was agreed by the General Assembly in 2011. This change will begin in 2013 and will not increase the overall income raised but will result in some Congregations paying more and some less by way of assessment.

5. Information has been gathered in the Statistical Sheet for the year ending 2011 to allow the assessments for each Congregation to be calculated. Treasurers will receive, later this year, an indication of the assessment figure for their Congregation had the new basis been applied in 2012. This will help them to plan for the change when it does come in 2013.

6. The matter of the minimum stipend was widely discussed by the Committee and also by the Board. Representation had been made to the Committee asking that the minimum be increased. The Committee decided to recommend that, for a third year, no increase be awarded. This was based on the general difficulties faced by the members of Congregations, where wages are being held or reduced and in some cases people are being made redundant, and also on the very low increase in congregational giving in 2010. This was not an easy decision. It also applies to those grants that are linked to the minimum stipend and to grants made under the Prolonged Disability Fund.

7. The Committee realise that holding the minimum for a further year will not help Ministers, particularly those with young families, who are struggling to meet increasing costs and the Committee wants them to know that it is aware of their situation. The Committee will not hesitate to raise the minimum when that is possible.

8. The provision of pension at a satisfactory level is another balancing act for the Committee. Changes have been introduced in recent years to try to balance funding cost with the provision of an adequate pension. The need for further changes in the future will to some extent depend on the results of an Actuarial Valuation of the scheme at 31 December 2011.

9. Retired Ministers are guaranteed increases on part of their pension. However, pension accrued pre 6 April 1997 (in excess of Guaranteed Minimum Pension) escalates at a discretionary rate decided each year by the Scheme Trustees. Since 2005, and in light of the schemes funding position, the Trustees have not been in a position to approve an increase in the discretionary part of the pension.

10. That brings us back to the difficulty of balancing the provision of stipend and pension over against the burden of assessments placed upon our Congregations. Has the Committee got the balance right? It hopes so!

11. The recommendations for each fund are set out in the Paragraphs below.

Central Ministry Fund

12. At the end of 2011, CMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £2,092,752, a decrease £80,175 on 2010 in line with budgeted forecasts.

13. The proposed rate of assessment for 2012 is 19.0p per £ of Stipend, 0.5p above the rate for 2011.

14. No increases were set by the Board under the Tyrone Memorial Scheme.

15. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2012:

(a) Ministerial Minimum

	Northern Ireland 2012	Rep of Ireland 2012
Ministerial Minimum	£22,416	€35,241
After 5 years service	£22,977	€36,123
After 10 years service	£23,538	€37,005
After 15 years service	£24,099	€37,887
After 20 years service	£24,660	€38,769
After 25 years service	£25,221	€39,651
After 30 years service	£25,782	€40,533

(b) Family Grants 2012

	2012		2011	
	£	€	£	€
Birth to 10 years	335	982	335	982
11 to 15 years	502	1,548	502	1,548
16 years and over				
At school	752	2,862	752	2,862
At university	2,503	4,774	2,503	4,774
Bands – Joint Incomes				
<i>Reduction - Nil</i>	26,771	40,940	26,771	40,940
<i>Reduction - £1 for every £5</i>	36,002	55,066	36,002	55,066
<i>Reduction - £1 for every £2</i>	36,002	55,066	36,002	55,066

- (c) The grant in respect of any child who is 16 years + falling into category (b) and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 for every £1 by which such grant or other sponsorship or scholarship exceeds £1,000.
- (d) The amount a Minister may earn, apart from congregational work, without the augmented grant being affected shall be £4,680 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) of the Code, or £2,350 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii). The maximum under the above paragraphs shall be £4,680.
- (e) That in reckoning augmentation for 2012, the CMF shall not take account of a sum not exceeding the annual bonus, being income from the Commutation, Sustentation and Central Ministry Funds. Code Par 316(2)(e).
- (f) The Board recommended, that the CMF Bonus remain, at £1,518 for 2012.

Widows of Ministers Fund

16. At the end of 2011, WMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £810,473, a decrease of £102,433 on 2010.

17. Factors contributing to the reduction in the retained balance were a decrease in assessment of 0.5p per £ of Stipend, together with a decrease in bank interest on reserves of circa £5,000.

18. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2012:
- (a) That the assessment for 2012 be unchanged at 4.0p per £ of Stipend.
 - (b) That the maximum Widows Pension be £6,165.
 - (c) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension receive a maximum of £6,165 plus £475.
 - (d) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension or PWFA receive a maximum of £6,165 plus £500.
 - (e) That widows whose husbands were not eligible for Northern Ireland State Pension receive a maximum of £6,165 plus £5,018.

Presbyterian Widows Fund Association

19. While the PWFA is not accountable to the General Assembly, all Ministers under the provisions of the Code are required to join this Association at ordination. For information, the Directors of the Association have set the annual membership subscription at 1.25% of the Ministerial Minimum for active Ministers and at 0.2% for retired Ministers. An additional 0.1% is charged to Ministers not under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Membership provides an annuity to widows, which is currently £1,200.

Retired Ministers Fund

20. At the end of 2011, RMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £1,049,092, a decrease of £395,015 on 2010.

21. Factors contributing to the reduction in the retained balance were a decrease in assessment of 1.25p per £ of Stipend, together with a decrease in bank interest on reserves of circa £11,000.

22. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2012:
 - (a) That the assessment for 2012 be unchanged at 1.5p per £ of Stipend.
 - (b) That the maximum Basic Retirement Allowance be £11,208.
 - (c) That Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic of Ireland with no State Pension be £8,037 married, £5,018 single.

PCI Pension Scheme (2009)

23. An Actuarial Valuation of the scheme was due at 31 December 2011 and the result of this is awaited. It is hoped to include details in the supplementary reports.

24. Congregational contributions to the scheme are collected by an assessment on stipend rather than as a percentage of pensionable income, although this is due to change from 2013.

25. The Committee recommends that the rate of assessment required to fund the agreed contribution is unchanged at 30p per £ of Stipend for 2012.

26. Since the last Assembly the following were granted leave to retire, at or over age 65, by their Presbyteries: Rev WPH Erskine (Windsor), Rev Dr RB Savage (Kells and Ervey), Rev D Knowles (Grange with Craigmore), Rev S Armstrong (Prolonged Disability Fund), Very Rev Dr D Clarke (Terrace Row, Coleraine), Rev J Rushton (Cootehill, Drum, & Kilmount), Rev R Stirling (Conlig), Rev WA Abernethy (Sinclair Seamen's, Belfast), Rev DJ Temple (Warrenpoint and Rostrevor).

27. Unanimous approval was given to the Rev DS Mackay (Magherally) to seek the permission of the 2012 General Assembly to retire on or after his 64th birthday on 3 August 2012, the Rev WT Cordner (First Bangor) to seek the permission of the 2012 General Assembly to retire on or after his 64th birthday on 7 September 2012 and the Rev NA Brown (Wellington, Ballymena) to seek the permission of the 2012 General Assembly to retire on or after his 64th birthday on 30 September 2012.

28. The Trustees did not award any discretionary increase for pensions in payment, accrued pre 1997, in excess of the Guaranteed Minimum Pension.

Ministers Prolonged Disability Fund

29. At the end of 2011, the fund had a retained balance of £723,598, a decrease of £2,536 on 2010.

30. A factor contributing to the reduction in the retained balance was a decrease in Bank Interest on reserves of circa £4,000. This fund remains 'sensitive' to low interest rates as, historically, interest represents a significant proportion of its income.

31. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2012:
 - (a) That the assessment for 2012 be 0.25p per £ of Stipend, the same as in 2011.
 - (b) That the maximum level of grant for 2012 remains at £11,298.

32. In 2011, 4 Ministers received benefits under the fund.

33. In addition to annual grants, pension contributions to PCI Pension Scheme (2009) are paid by the fund until the beneficiary returns to work or attains his or her normal retirement age. In broad terms the cost to the fund for each person receiving benefit, including pension contributions, is in excess of £19,000 pa.

Sick Supply Fund

34. At the end of 2011, the fund had a retained balance of £14,131, an increase of £5,112 on 2010.

35. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2012:

- (a) That the assessment for 2011 be 0.25p per £ of Stipend, the same as in 2011.

Incidental Fund

36. At the end of 2011, the Incidental Fund had a retained balance of £106,818, an increase of £4,723 on 2010.

37. Grants from the Incidental Fund are approved by General Assembly under resolutions pertaining to individual Boards. It is the role of the Board of Finance and Personnel, acting on advice from its Pensions and Assessments Committee, to recommend an appropriate assessment, sufficient to meet the grants agreed and to maintain a prudent reserve.

38. The Committee has particular concern this year at the rising expectations from those who seek funding through the Incidental Fund. If one-off costs associated with the PMS Scheme of Arrangements in 2011 are eliminated, total grants budgeted will increase from £119,650 in 2011 to £157,978 for 2012. 2012 does include a provision of £20,000 in connection with the Priorities theme of "Prophetic Voice" as approved by the General Assembly in 2011.

39. The Committee cannot continue to grant payments without asking searching questions about the necessity, the value and the legitimacy of these requests. It should not be assumed that because a grant has been given in the past that it will continue to be awarded in the future.

40. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2012:

- (a) That the assessment for 2012 be 5.0p per £ of Stipend, the same as in 2011.

Collection of Congregational Assessments

41. During the past year a small number of Congregations have not met the full amount of their assessments on time. Additionally, in some cases, payment has not been received in respect of Stipend. The Committee seek to treat situations of hardship sympathetically and continue to monitor this area carefully.

42. Following the changes in the Code under Par 318(2)(3) and (4), in 2011, one Congregation has been reported to the Union Commission following the investigatory procedures between the Committee and the Presbytery.

43. Currently five Congregations have defaulted on Payments of £41,237 in Assessments and £9,579 in Stipend. The Committee is seeking to resolve these matters and for three Congregations it is awaiting reports from their respective Presbyteries.

The Students Bursary Fund

44. Responsibility for recommending the assessment for the Students Bursary Fund lies with the Board of Christian Training.

The Ministerial Development Fund

45. At the end of 2011, the Ministerial Development Fund had a retained balance of £309,613. Responsibility for recommending any assessment for this fund lies with the Board of Christian Training.

DAVID C PORTER, Convener

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on two occasions during the year.
2. An excellent and professional Human Resources service continues to be provided by the team headed by Ms Laura Kelly, Head of Personnel, and thanks are due to all of them.
3. Thanks are also due to Mr Herbie Smyth and Mr Ian McElhinny for the sterling work carried out to further the work of the Retired Ministers' House Fund.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

4. Work on the completion of the Job Evaluation Scheme has continued. Clerical and Administrative posts have been completed and reviewed. Executive posts are now in the final stages of being completed. Following a review of the outcomes these evaluations will provide a necessary input into the work on the review of structures and the required staffing resource.

5. Work on policy development has been progressed through the Personnel Advisory Panel. During the year there was an agreed revision to the Drivers Policy, a revised Harassment Policy and procedures and a policy on Raising Concerns at Work. These reflected necessary changes to comply with legislative requirements. Draft templates have also been developed to assist managers in relation to Home Working Policy and the engagement of volunteers.

6. The Committee would like to implement the Childcare Voucher Scheme for staff, which is a tax efficient way of assisting staff with the provision of childcare through a salary sacrifice arrangement. However recent changes to the scheme could have significant financial implications for the Church and in the current financial climate the Committee and Board agreed that a decision on introducing it should be deferred for a further year.

7. Work currently in progress includes a new Induction Programme for General Assembly Staff and the development of a policy and procedures to comply with the requirements of Data Protection legislation.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

8. The Health and Safety Panel has continued to make progress on this important area of work.

9. Guidance on the use and maintenance of congregational mini-buses has now been issued to Congregations.

10. The Panel encourages Congregations to use the Health and Safety advice service offered by Peninsula Business Services. Congregations should ensure they comply with legal requirements regarding a Health and Safety

Policy, asbestos surveys and that they have undertaken risk assessment and fire risk assessments. These matters should be reviewed during consultations.

RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSE FUND

11. The Committee continues to oversee the management rental and sale of the land and properties within its portfolio.

12. The land in Cullybackey continues to be held and routine maintenance carried out as necessary, awaiting sale in better market conditions. Planning approval for part of this site for development has been renewed to 2014. The remaining land is let to a local farmer for agricultural purposes.

13. During 2011 a property in Bangor was bequeathed to the fund and the Committee wish to express appreciation for such generous bequests. Two properties have been placed on the market for sale and the proceeds will help provide financial assistance to those who apply for loans.

14. A property held in Galway has been restored to good order. To date it has not been possible to sell this property and therefore an offer from Galway City Council to rent the premises for the next 2 years has been agreed.

15. The Fund continues to provide assistance either by loans, letting of available property or joint equity arrangements. The Ministers newsletter is used to advise on the availability of properties.

16. To allow the Fund to continue to meet demand for financial assistance through loans etc. the Committee and Board have approved a temporary increase to the approved overdraft limit to £450,000. This will facilitate the provision of approved loans pending receipt of funds from house sales. This position will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee and Board.

ROBERT CAMPTON, Convener

COMMITTEE APPENDIX 1

Sterling Salary Scales of Staff in post on 1 January, 2012 (no discretionary increase was applied from 1 January, 2012 following the annual review of salaries.)

EXECUTIVE POSTS

Scale 1 (£22,200 - £26,565)

Communications Officer, BMI
Payroll and Assessment Manager

Scale 2 (£25,201 - £30,519)

General Secretary, PW
Taking Care Trainer and Co-Ordinator
Assistant Residential Services Manager
Buildings Manager & Safety Officer
Children's Development Officer
Young Adults Development Officer
Youth Development Officer

Director of Nightlight
Financial Manager
Finance Manager, BMI
Project Manager, Willowbrook
Support Officer, BMI
University Chaplain, UUI
Minister/Ministry Co-ordinator, Kinghan Church
Mission Training Officer, BMO
Chaplain in Residence, Queens University, Stranmills, Union College
College Librarian

Scale 3 (£28,316 - £34,730)

Director of Programmes YACM
Education in Mission Officer, BMO
Mission Development Officer, BMI
Personnel Officer, BMO
Registrar/Administrator, Union College

Scale 4 (£31,311 - £39,367)

Head of Personnel
Residential Services Manager
Senior Financial Accountant
IT Development and Support Manager
Christian Training Development Officer

Scale 5 (£34,730 - £42,539)

Head of Press and Media
Director of Youth & Children's Ministry
Deputy General Secretary

Scale 6 (£37,374 - £45,750)

Executive Secretary, BMO
Director of Social Service
Executive Secretary BMI

Scale 7 (£42,539 - £55,006)

General Secretary
Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS

Scale 1 (£12,205 - £14,250)

Clerical Officer (FSO)
Secretary/Receptionist (BMO)
Secretary/Receptionist (BSW)
Secretary (GSO)
Telephonist

Clerical Officer (7) (OPS/BSW)
 Receptionist (Term Time), Union College

Scale 2 (£13,208 - £15,431)

Clerical and Resource Officer, Nightlight
 Clerical/Secretarial Assistant (FSO)
 Handyperson
 Personnel Assistant (2)
 Secretary (JS), (BMI)
 Secretary/Receptionist (PW)
 Taking Care Administrator
 Office Secretary, (BMI)
 Clerical Officer – Carlisle House (3) (BSW)
 Clerical Officer, OPS
 Migrants' Project Assistant
 Clerical Officer, Kinghan Church
 Custodian, Union College
 Library Assistant, Union College

Scale 3 (£14,944 - £17,435)

Co-ordinator – Counselling Services
 Clerical Officer (FSO)
 Deputy Building Manager
 Nightlight Development Officers (one FT)
 Personnel Assistant (BMI)
 Secretary (YACM)
 Senior Secretary (BSW)
 Senior Secretary (PW)
 Senior Secretary – Publications & Information (BMO)
 Senior Secretary – Mission Training & External Funding (BMO)
 Senior Secretary (BMI)
 Senior Secretary (GSO)
 Senior Secretary, Finance (YACM)
 Senior Secretary (3 posts), Union College
 Administrative Assistant, Union College
 Information Officer/Receptionist

Scale 4 (£17,066 - £19,805)

Administrative Assistant (JS) (YACM)
 Administrator, Derryvolgie
 Departmental Secretary
 Payroll and Clerical Assistant
 Personnel Administrator
 Personal Secretary (FSO)
 Senior Secretary (GSO)
 Senior Secretary (JS) (YACM)
 Wages Clerk (BSW)
 Senior Secretary, Union College

Scale 5 (£18,766 - £21,819)

Communications Co-Ordinator
Assistant Accountant
Development Officer, PW, (FT)
Financial Assistant
IT Support Assistant (2)
Office Supervisor and Personal Secretary (BMI)
Personal Assistant to the Director of Social Service
Production Manager
Resident Manager, Tritonville Close (Euro Scale)
Deputy Librarian, Union College

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£20,828 - £23,953)

Assistant Chaplain, QUB
Personal Secretary and Office Supervisor (GSO)
Personnel Officer
Senior Administrative Officer (BMO)
Senior Administrative Officer (YACM)

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Property Management Committee is delighted to report the completion of the final phase of the internal refurbishment of Assembly Buildings. While retaining its unique and historic city centre presence, Assembly Buildings has been transformed to provide first rate office accommodation for the administrative staff of PCI and additionally now offers a range of high specification conference and flexible meeting space.

2. Lettings for the Assembly Hall, Conference use and individual room hire have been hampered by the on-going internal refurbishment work since August 2010. Despite this, the Committee have been encouraged by the level of enquiries and bookings since re-opening. Following the name change from Spires Conference Centre to Assembly Buildings Conference Centre the Committee launched a new website www.assemblybuildings.co.uk and associated brochure. The Committee is currently working on a short and long term marketing strategy of the facilities.

3. A national daily newspaper recently reported that 20 shops were closing every day in the UK. Such statistics remind us of the challenging retail climate in which the Spires Shopping Mall seeks to compete. There are currently a number of vacant retail units and every effort is being made by our letting agents to secure suitable tenants. However it must be noted that with each vacant unit the financial burden increases on the Committee as it becomes liable for the additional occupation costs incurred by any vacancy.

4. Over the last few years the office accommodation in Fisherwick Buildings has been utilised as decanting space by our various departments during the renovations. Despite the glut in similar office accommodation in the city centre the Committee is delighted to report that the Second Floor of Fisherwick

Buildings has been let on a long term lease and at the time of writing there is strong interest in the Third Floor.

5. The Committee wishes to thank all staff directly involved in the daily management of Assembly Buildings. It especially wishes to thank the out-going Convener, Mr Hubert Martin, who willingly agreed to help the Committee by overseeing the final phase of the internal refurbishment completed in February 2012.

ADRIAN McLERNON, Convener

FINANCE, LEGAL AND IT COMMITTEE

1. **General Expenses** – General Expenses (which is the cost of the General Secretary’s Office and Financial Secretary’s Office (including Personnel and IT)) for the year ended 31 December 2011 were 4.3% below budget and considered to be satisfactory.

Budgeted expenses for the year ended 31 December 2012 reflect an increase of about 3.4% compared to 2011. This reflects incremental scale point increases for staff and an additional IT post. Approval for this was previously obtained from the United Appeal Appraisals Committee but recruitment exercises to date have been unsuccessful. It is hoped the position can be filled in 2012.

2. **Auditors/SORP Accounts** – For the year ended 31 December 2011, the Trustee Accounts were consolidated into the Accounts of the General Assembly for the first time and are included in the Account Book.

3. **Statistics** – see appended tables

4. **Statistics Form and Statement of Recommended Practice** – A number of training evenings regarding the new Statistics Form were held with congregational Treasurers and others during the year. Following completion of the 2011 forms, a meeting of Presbytery Finance Conveners and some congregational Treasurers was convened to obtain feedback on the issues arising and quality of returns. Further guidance will be issued to Treasurers as necessary, before next year’s returns are due.

5. **Statistical Returns from Presbyteries** – Annual Financial Returns from Presbyteries are now being submitted to the Board of Finance and Personnel and a summary is appended to this report.

6. **Regulation of Charities** – The Charities (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 is expected to make progress during 2013, with amendments to legislation now being put forward. The Committee will continue to inform proactively Presbyteries and Congregations about their obligations under the new legislation.

7. **Risk Assessment** – Risk Assessment is on-going. A questionnaire was passed to all Board Conveners/Secretaries to enable them to report to the Board on the key risk previously identified. Returns are awaited and if any issues arise they will be included in supplementary reports.

8. **Bank Overdrafts and Deposit Accounts** – The Committee continued to receive reports on overdrafts and deposit accounts. New bank deposit accounts were opened to improve the returns available. However, all four banks used continue to meet the agreed minimum credit ratings in accordance with the Board’s policy set in 2009.

9. **Ministerial Expenses** – A number of Treasurers failed to submit Ministerial Expenses Returns and their names were reported to Presbytery Clerks accordingly.

10. **Handbook for Treasurers** – The update of the handbook, last updated in 2002, has been deferred until the introduction of the Charities legislation.

11. **Insurance** – Overall premiums are expected to be £156,000 for 2011 compared to £151,739 for 2010. Savings in public liability and employer's liability cover were offset by increased insurance premium tax and VAT in Northern Ireland and government levy in ROI.

12. **Information Technology** – The Committee approved the purchase of new accounting software towards the end of 2010. This is currently being implemented. During recent meetings, the Committee has been made aware of serious concerns in relation to staffing in the IT department. There is a growing demand for IT services and resources continue to be seriously stretched. It has also proved difficult to recruit the vacant IT post in the current environment, where good IT staff with experience, are difficult to find.

13. The Committee continues to work on a number of other tax, finance, legal and IT matters.

14. Special thanks go to the staff in the Financial Secretary's Office for their hard work and assistance to the Committee during the year.

ROBERT McCULLAGH, Convener

TABLE ONE

PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	2010	2011	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	220	230	10	—
Ministers in Active Duty	390	391	1	—
Retired Missionaries	13	15	2	—
Missionaries in Active Duty	43	44	1	—
Total Ministers and Missionaries	666	680	14	—
Licensings during year	18	24	6	—
Congregations	545	545	0	0
Total Families	104,931	103,408	0	1,523
Persons of All Ages	246,480	241,193	0	5,287
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	82,642	80,942	0	1,700
Baptisms	1,624	1,619	0	5
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	1,863	1,877	14	0
Communicants Attended at Least One Communion during year	107,743	104,878	0	2,865
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	66,318	65,471	0	847
Number on Rolls in Sunday School and Bible Classes (Note 1)	6,660	6,563	0	97
	24,617	38,064	13,447	0

Note 1 - 2011 includes numbers enrolled in childrens and youth ministries under control of Kirk Sessions

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	2010		2011		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Specified Sources	31,621,051	3,122,831	32,307,581	3,020,285	2.2%	-3.3%
Building Fund etc	14,400,937	1,703,047	17,153,545	1,876,910	19.1%	10.2%
Missions and Charities	8,664,071	609,450	7,265,856	434,855	-16.1%	-28.6%
Raised from other sources	12,376,111	1,508,667	11,777,256	2,449,761	-4.8%	62.4%
Organisational Income	6,390,451	158,938	6,492,956	188,002	1.6%	18.3%
Total Receipts	73,452,621	7,102,933	74,997,194	7,969,813	2.1%	12.2%

A new Statistical Return was introduced for 2011. Congregations are now required to report movements on "Funds" showing opening and closing balances, income, expenditure, and any transfers between funds. They are also required to provide an analysis of income in the General Fund. The above table uses revised headings to analyse income as compared to previous years. The figures for 2010 have been analysed to the new headings by including "For Others" in Missions and Charities. Organisational income is shown for the first time and bequest income has been included in income from other sources.

TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	2010		2011		N.I.	% Difference	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€			
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	17,685,415	1,732,085	16,899,066	1,546,399	-4.4%	-10.7%	
Payments under Assembly Assessments	7,027,900	714,583	6,822,620	690,708	-2.9%	-3.3%	
Building, Repairs etc.	15,520,793	2,108,950	14,564,887	2,211,707	-6.2%	4.9%	
United Appeal Schemes	3,168,834	250,658	2,952,040	235,827	-6.8%	-5.9%	
Supplementary Schemes							
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	6,896,076	578,562	7,908,609	933,558	14.7%	61.4%	
Organisations	6,276,050	168,392	6,074,643	180,529	-3.2%	7.2%	
General Expenses	10,110,112	1,272,102	12,324,997	1,450,378	21.9%	14.0%	
Total Payments	66,685,180	6,825,332	67,546,862	7,249,106	1.3%	6.2%	

A new Statistical Return was introduced for 2011. Congregations are now required to report movements on "Funds" showing opening and closing balances, income, expenditure, and any transfers between funds. They are also required to provide an analysis of expenditure in the General Fund. The above table uses headings similar to previous years to analyse expenditure. Organisational expenditure is shown for the first time.

TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL FUND BALANCES

	Opening 2011		Closing 2011		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Unrestricted Funds	22,667,754	2,122,071	24,349,388	2,067,040	7.4%	-2.6%
Restricted Funds	45,290,581	3,679,616	50,773,060	4,574,791	12.1%	24.3%
Total Fund Balances	67,958,335	5,801,687	75,122,448	6,641,831	10.5%	14.5%

A new Statistical Return was introduced for 2011. Congregations are now required to report movements on "Funds" showing opening and closing balances, income, expenditure, and any transfers between funds. The format of the above table has therefore changed from previous year. Unrestricted Funds are funds that are free to be used for any of the charitable purposes of the congregation. Restricted funds can only be used for the purpose for which the money was given or collected.

TABLE FIVE**MINISTERS' INCOME AND ALLOWANCES (SEE NOTES)**

	2010	2011	
	£	£	% Difference
Total Ministerial Income (active Duty - Note2)	11,568,299	11,292,774	-2.4%
Stipend Paid	9,466,864	9,464,587	0.0%
Allowances			
Light, Heat, etc			
Ministerial Duties			
Total	2,575,065	2,683,466	4.2%

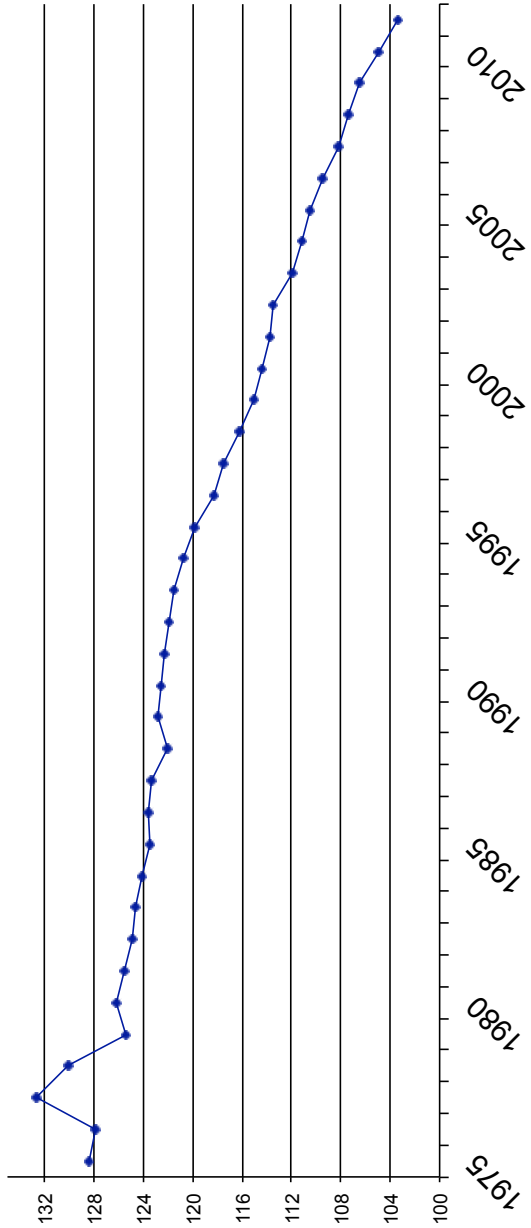
Note 1 Figures for the Republic of Ireland have been converted into £STG using the average value of the Euro for the relevant year (£ 1 /€1 .1496)

Note 2 This refers only to 347 Ministers in charge of Congregations, excluding Assistants, Chaplains, Missionaries, Professors, Administrative Officers and Ministers in recognised service in special work.

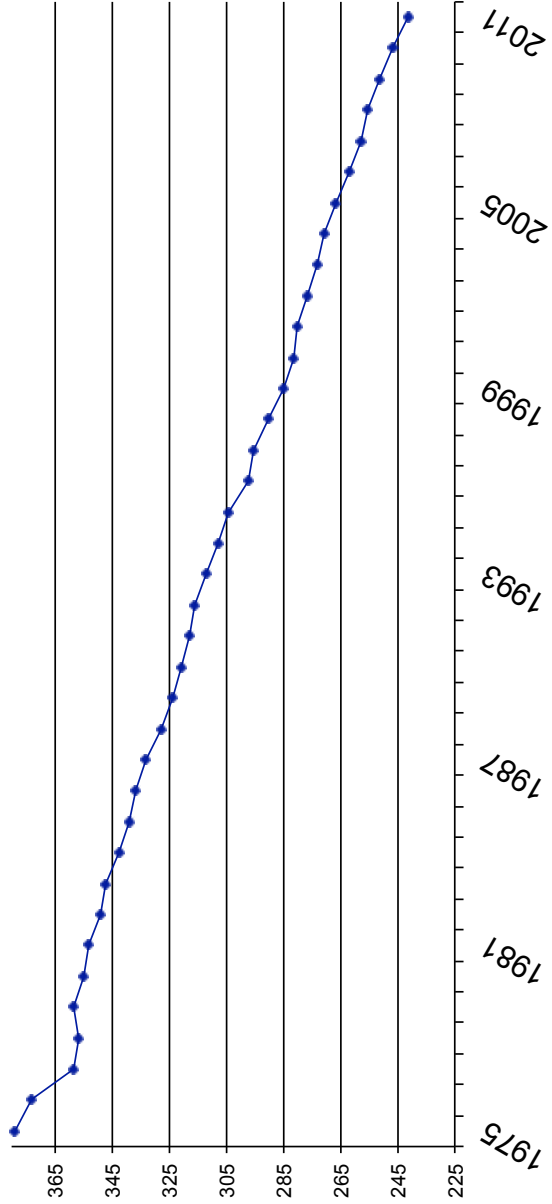
TABLE SIX**PERSONS**

	2010	2011
Persons who are aged 18 and under	42,872	42,156
Average attendance at Sunday Worship - Morning	78,588	77,372
- Evening	18,452	18,301

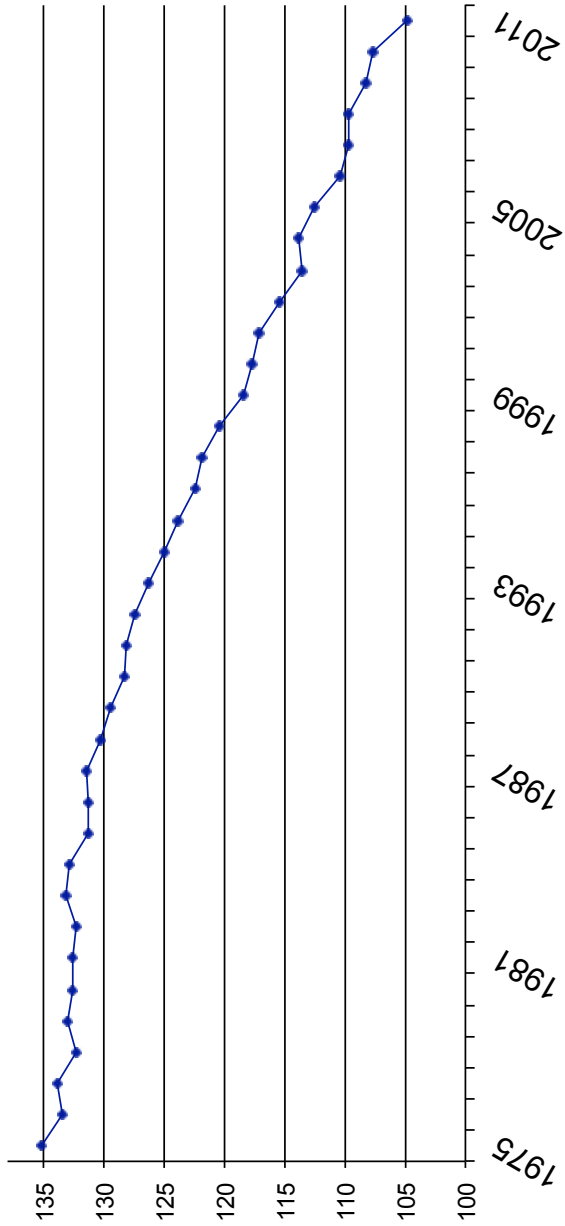
FAMILIES ('000)



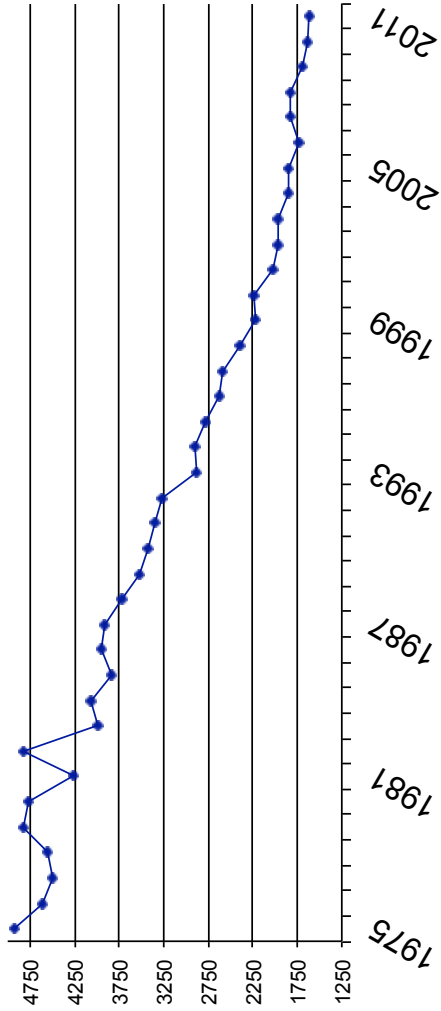
PERSONS ('000)



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BAPTISMS



APPENDIX 1**TYRONE MEMORIAL REVIEW PANEL****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report summarises the outcome of the consultations initiated at the 2010 General Assembly on the proposals for the payment of Ministers set out in the report of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel (see pages 296-302 of Annual Reports, Belfast 2010.) The consultations show a substantial measure of support across Congregations and Presbyteries for the proposed reduction in stipend differentials between Ministers, including the introduction of a Local Allowance and new arrangements for the payment of Incremental Allowances.

2. However, it is clear that the implementation of the proposed measures has raised serious concerns – not least in regard to the proposed change in the method of assessment from “stipend” to “assessable income”. The Panel is clear that it would be unfair and inequitable to continue to use stipends as the basis of assessment, since this would favour larger Congregations at the expense of smaller ones. (It would also be necessary to introduce some transitional arrangement to protect any Congregation whose assessments would substantially increase under the adoption of an “assessable income” methodology.) This issue falls to be considered by the General Board’s Panel on “Pensions and Assessments”, on which a separate report has been prepared for the 2011 General Assembly.

3. The Panel is therefore seeking the agreement of the General Assembly to its proposals for achieving, over time, a reduction in stipend differentials, subject to the Assembly’s agreement to the recommendations in the report of the General Board’s Panel on “Pensions and Assessments”.

4. The report also endorses the existing arrangements for the payment of Ministerial expenses, but recommends that they are more vigorously overseen by Presbyteries, as set out in Par 237 of The Code.

BACKGROUND

5. At the General Assembly in June 2010, it was agreed that “the General Assembly send out the proposals set out in the paper on the Review of the Tyrone Memorial to Presbyteries and Congregations for discussion and comment, with report to the Board Convener by 31 December, 2010, and ask the Board to bring a report with appropriate Code changes to the 2011 General Assembly.” A Consultation Document was issued in September 2010, containing a questionnaire covering the proposals in the report to the General Assembly. In addition, the Panel organised five Consultation Meetings in Londonderry, Banbridge, Dublin, Belfast and Cookstown, to aid the process of discussion.

6. At the Consultation Meetings, a request was made for a summary of the responses to the questionnaire to be issued to Presbyteries and Congregations in advance of the General Assembly. In fulfilment of that request, a summary that draws largely on this report has been circulated widely to recipients of the questionnaire.

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

7. The Appendix to this report contains a summary of the 207 responses received up to 3 February, 2011; the closing date for responses was 31 December 2010. The Appendix does not summarise the wide range of comments received to those supplementary questions that invited a narrative answer. As far as possible, those comments have been taken into account in the following analysis, which follows the order in the consultation response form. (The statistics included below have been rounded to the nearest full percentage point.)

Aims and Objectives

8. 89% of respondents agreed that the Church “should seek to reduce the inequality in stipends between Ministers”. 6% disagreed and 4% was undecided. One Presbytery disputed the assertion in the consultation document that “the chief aim of the Tyrone Memorial was ... to reduce the inequality in stipends between Ministers”. It is true that this aim was never expressly stated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Tyrone Memorial in 2000. However, there is no doubt that the intention of the report’s recommendations (accepted by the General Assembly) was to reduce the differential between Ministers by the application of a basic rate percentage increase to stipends below £20,999, with a sliding scale and lower rate of increase payable to Ministers on stipends above this figure.

9. The second question in this section sought views on a possible reduction in the disparity between the highest and lowest stipend to “not more than 50% of the basic Ministerial minimum”. 77% of respondents agreed, with 20% opposed and 3% undecided. 13 respondents suggested, on average, that the differential should be 72%, rather than 50%. A similar number of respondents (78%) agreed that a Minister’s stipend should “be based primarily on years of service, with in some cases an additional local allowance”. 17% were opposed and 4% undecided. A few respondents suggested that the pay of Ministers should instead be based on performance.

Basic Ministerial Minimum

10. This section sought responses on whether the current Ministerial Minimum of £22,416 was set at an appropriate level. 78% of respondents agreed that it was set at an appropriate level, while 20% disagreed. 25% of respondents favoured an increase in the minimum, with 70% against. Those that supported an increase suggested, on average, that the Minimum should be set at £25,417. Several argued that increasing the Minimum was a more appropriate way to reduce differentials than setting a maximum figure, notwithstanding the current financial climate. Indeed, it was suggested that with no increase to the Minimum, ministry could become a second career option.

11. The Panel is sympathetic to the argument that Ministers are underpaid compared to their counterparts in other professions. While starting salaries may be comparable to those paid in other professions, Ministerial pay quickly falls behind as their counterparts receive annual increments and promotions. Nonetheless, the Panel concluded that it could not argue for an increase in the Minimum at the present time given affordability issues. Such an increase would

almost certainly require an acceleration in the pace of amalgamations, combined with higher CMF assessments. The Panel notes that these are issues explored in the recent paper from the Union Commission on “Ministry, Finance and Mission” and encourages their further consideration in that forum.

12. At one of the Consultation Meetings, it was suggested that the discussion should be informed by comparative figures for remuneration paid in other denominations. This information had been collected by the Panel at an earlier stage in its deliberations. It is difficult to make exact comparisons, given variations in remuneration packages, including pension provision, expenses and family grants. However, the Panel believes that at lower levels, the remuneration paid in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is either comparable to or in excess of, that paid to Ministers in other denominations. At higher levels, it is generally above that paid elsewhere. The Church of Scotland, for example, operates a scale with the minimum (£22,239 in 2008) rising to a maximum some 33% higher, over a period of 10 years.

13. Finally, in this section, an argument was made that the remuneration of Ministers employed in Church House or Union College should be reviewed in the light of decisions on the review of the Tyrone Memorial. This matter does not fall within the remit of the Panel, but the Panel supports the need to consider the position of Ministers in Church House and Union College in the light of decisions on this report and has referred the matter to the Personnel Committee of the Board of Finance and Personnel.

Incremental Allowance

14. This section sought views on the payment of an Incremental Allowance based on years of service up to 20 years, rather than the present 30 years. The increment would be paid every five years at the rate of 5% of stipend, instead of the present 2.5%. 88% of respondents supported the payment of an Incremental Allowance based on years of service, with 10% opposed. 59% supported a five year period for the payment of increments, with 37% opposed. 60% favoured the payment of increments over a 20 year period, with 36% opposed. The latter group favoured, on average, extending the incremental period from 20 years to 27.5 years. Lastly, 64% of respondents accepted that the increase in the level of Incremental Allowance (from 2.5% to 5.0%), partially offset by a reduction from 30 years to 20 years, would result in an increase in costs. 33% questioned whether an increase in the cost of the Allowance was affordable and rejected the proposal, while others suggested that progression should be dependent on some measure of performance or output, without defining precisely what the measure might be.

Local Allowance

15. The responses showed broad support for a Local Allowance – 78% in favour and 18% against. There was an almost identical level of support for the principle that a Local Allowance should be the only way a Congregation could pay their Minister more than the appropriate point on the scale. (The proposed scheme was costed on the basis that any Local Allowance should be funded by the Congregation and not paid by way of augmentation.) The responses of the

18% that opposed this principle reflected, at least in part, a concern over local autonomy and a belief that it represented a transfer of authority over stipends to Church House, although the Union Commission already exercises a role in regard to setting stipends in respect of granting “leave to call”. Nonetheless, the proposals were perceived by this group to represent a centralisation of authority at variance with congregational responsibility.

16. In regard to the factors to be taken into account in setting the level of the Local Allowance, some 82% of respondents supported the inclusion of the size of the Congregation, any specific Ministerial responsibilities, local additional responsibilities and the general needs and resources of the Congregation. A number of respondents suggested additional factors, while others noted the challenge the proposals would present to the Union Commission in setting the level of stipend when granting “leave to call”. However, the Commission’s present process for setting stipend levels is arguably equally challenging. The local Congregation makes its case to the Commission, whose decision is far from formulaic.

17. Finally, 62% of respondents agreed that the maximum Local Allowance should be set at 30% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum. 30% of respondents disagreed with the level: the average increase suggested by this group came to 22%, although there was a wide range. The Panel believes that the size of the Local Allowance is central to its proposals. It reflects a belief that Ministers undertake broadly the same duties, wherever they are called to serve: the Allowance is designed to reflect appropriately the variation in the scale of responsibilities at local level.

The Bonus

18. Responses to questions on the payment of the Bonus produced a mixed response. 52% of respondents favoured continuing to pay the Bonus in accordance with the provisions of the Code. 37% disagreed. Only 30% of respondents favoured fixing the Bonus at the present level and not applying any further increases – a view rejected by 57% of respondents. There was a slight majority in favour of taking steps over time to reduce the Bonus to the amount required under the *Regium Donum* (approximately £275) – 48% to 41%.

19. A number of respondents expressed unease over the term “Bonus”, but were also unhappy with the proposed alternative “Discretionary Grant”. Following discussion in the Panel, it was agreed to adopt the term “CMF Grant”. In the absence of clear agreement on the level of payment, the Panel decided to give further consideration to whether the non *Regium Donum* part of the Bonus should be incorporated into either the Basic Minimum or the Incremental Allowances.

Existing Leave to Call Arrangements

20. A substantial majority of respondents (85%) supported the introduction of the “proposals to all new leave to call arrangements and the protection of the present leave to call arrangements”. That figure dropped to 66% in respect of the proposal that protected stipends should only receive an annual increase of 50% of the increase applied to the Basic Ministerial Minimum. 28% opposed the figure of 50% and on average suggested 26%. Again, there was a wide spread around

the 50% figure. The Panel welcomed the comment from a number of respondents that the call of God was the paramount consideration.

Assessments

21. This section concerned the proposal to move from assessments based on “stipend” to “assessable income”, with Congregations contributing according to their means. While 73% of respondents supported this proposal with 21% against, it was clear from comments that a number of Congregations have serious concerns about the implementation of this proposal and sought clarification of the definition of “assessable income”. The Panel still considers it necessary to change the method of assessments if the proposals in regard to stipends are accepted by the General Assembly. The proposals should have the effect over time of reducing the overall stipend bill, with a consequent saving to wealthier Congregations whose Ministers are currently above the Minimum. To maintain an assessment methodology based on stipends would have the effect of increasing assessments to smaller Congregations least able to afford an increase. Some respondents suggested that a “super” assessment should be introduced on stipends exceeding that recommended to discourage what were described as “maverick payments”.

22. At the same time larger Congregations already have substantial commitments, including staff, and cannot be expected to meet a greatly increased assessment in the short term – without the risk in some cases of making staff redundant. The Panel therefore believes that there needs to be some transitional arrangement to allow those adversely affected to plan for an increased assessment in the future and make any necessary adjustment to their local mission plans. The transitional arrangement should take into account the combination of increased assessments on such Congregations while still paying their existing Minister on his or her protected stipend. It would also be important to smooth out annual variations in the level of “assessable income” for assessment purposes. It is for these reasons that the Panel seeks the endorsement of the General Assembly to its proposals, subject to the Assembly’s agreement to the proposals in the report from the General Board’s Panel on “Pensions and Assessments”.

Overall View of the Proposals

23. The final question invited respondents to categorise their support or otherwise for the proposals. 71% of respondents expressed themselves either in “broad support” (26%) or in “support with reservations or suggested changes” (45%). 10% accepted that “change is necessary but do not support the proposals”, with 5% arguing for “no change”. No alternative schemes were suggested. 15% did not answer the question.

EXPENSES

24. The General Assembly also asked the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel to review the system for paying Ministerial expenses. The present system was devised by the Board of Finance and Personnel in consultation with the Union Commission. The basis for the present method, which enjoys the endorsement of HMRC, is that Ministers are reimbursed for actual expenses based on certain assumptions about travel expenses, manse expenses etc. A single allowance is

intended to cover all expenses incurred by the Minister. Ministers and Treasurers are regularly advised of the detailed procedures, which, if followed, satisfy the requirement to make an annual return of Ministerial expenses to HMRC.

25. The Panel reviewed the existing system and concluded that it remained fit for purpose. Any alternative could place potentially significant additional responsibilities on Treasurers and Ministers and add to the existing paperwork. The Panel believes that the problems lie not in the system itself but in the failure of some Congregations to pay adequate expenses or the practice in some Congregations of using expenses to add to the remuneration of Ministers. Income tax is levied on any amount paid over and above what is declared to be a legitimate expense by HMRC. However, if this additional amount becomes excessive it creates anomalies in the Church's own financial system. For example, it is unfair that Congregations, which draw on augmentation from the centre to fund their ministry, can by this method make an additional payment to their Minister over and above the agreed appropriate Ministerial minimum.

26. The Panel wishes to remind Presbyteries of their responsibilities in relation to expenses as set out in Par 237 of The Code. To that end, the Board of Finance and Personnel and the Union Commission intend to issue a joint communication to Presbyteries setting out their responsibilities and to organise a training event for Presbytery Clerks and Presbytery Finance Conveners.

CONCLUSIONS

27. The Tyrone Memorial Panel invites the General Assembly to:
- (a) receive its Report; accept the Panel's proposals for achieving a reduction in stipend differentials between Ministers, including the introduction of a Local Allowance and new arrangements for the payment of Incremental Allowances, subject to the agreement of the General Assembly to the proposals in the report of the General Board's Panel on "Pensions and Assessments";
 - (b) agree that Presbyteries should more vigorously exercise their responsibilities in regard to ministerial expenses, in accordance with the terms of Par 237 of the Code.

**TYRONE MEMORIAL REVIEW
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORMS**

	YES No	NO No	N/A No	TOTAL No	YES %	NO %	N/A %
1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES							
1.1 Do you support the chief aim of the Tyrone Memorial which was that the Church should seek to reduce the inequality in stipends between Ministers?	185	13	9	207	89.37	6.28	4.35
1.2 One of the objectives in the Review Panel's Report is to reduce the disparity between the highest and lowest stipend to not more than 50% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum (see 2 below). Do you support this objective?	159	41	7	207	76.81	19.81	3.38
If you do not support the 50% is there another % that you believe the Panel should be trying to achieve (if so please specify)? (Average percentage and number of Congregations who responded indicated)	71.77	13					
If you do not support the 50% is there another % that you believe the Panel should be trying to achieve (if so please specify)? (Average percentage and number of Congregations who responded indicated)							

	YES No	NO No	N/A No	TOTAL No	YES %	NO %	N/A %
162	36	9	207	78.26	17.39	4.35	
161	41	5	207	77.78	19.81	2.41	
52	144	11	207	25.12	69.57	5.31	

1.3 One of the fundamental changes arising from the proposals is that a Minister's stipend would be based primarily on years of service, with in some cases an additional local allowance. Do you support, in principle, the introduction of such a method of remunerating Ministers?

2. THE BASIC MINISTERIAL MINIMUM

2.1 The Basic Ministerial Minimum for 2010 is currently £22,416. Do you consider that this is at an appropriate level? (Please note that Ministers in Congregations also receive a supplement from the Central Ministry Fund which is currently £1,518 – see Section 5 below)

2.2 Would you support an increase in the Ministerial Minimum recognising that this will result in an increase in the assessment for the Central Ministry Fund and may impact on the financial viability of some Congregations

2.3 If you support increasing the Basic Ministerial Minimum, have you a view on the level at which it should be set? (If so please indicate amount) (Average and No. of Congregations indicated)

35 25,417

	YES	NO	N/A	TOTAL	YES	NO	N/A
	No	No	No	No	%	%	%
3. INCREMENTAL ALLOWANCE							
3.1 Do you support an increase in the incremental allowance recognising that this will result in an increase in the assessment on all Congregations for the Central Ministry Fund?	133	68	6	207	64.25	32.85	2.90
3.2 Do you support an incremental allowance based on years of service?	182	20	5	207	87.93	9.6	2.42
3.3 Do you support increments every 5 years of 5% (currently 2.5%)?	122	77	8	207	58.94	37.20	3.86
3.4 Do you support increments over a 20 year period?	125	75	7	207	60.39	36.23	3.38
If Not, What period do you suggest? (please specify) (AVERAGE INDICATED)	2.75						

4. THE LOCAL ALLOWANCE

	YES No	NO No	N/A No	TOTAL No	YES %	NO %	N/A %
4.1 Do you support the introduction of a Local Allowance as part of the overall remuneration paid to Ministers?	161	37	9	207	77.78	17.87	4.35
4.2 Do you support, in principle, the proposal that the only way a Congregation could pay their Minister more than the appropriate point on the scale is through a Local allowance?	160	37	10	207	77.29	17.87	4.84
4.3 Do you agree that the factors to be taken into account should include the size of the Congregation, the staffing resources of the Congregation, any specific Ministerial responsibilities, local additional responsibilities, general needs and resources of the Congregation?	169	21	17	207	81.64	10.14	8.22
4.4 Are there any additional factors that should be taken into account or any that should not be taken into account? If so please detail below	57	92	58	207	27.54	44.44	28.02

	YES No	NO No	N/A No	TOTAL No	YES %	NO %	N/A %
4.5 Do you agree that the maximum local allowance should be 30% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum? (i.e. based on a Basic Ministerial Minimum of £22,416 it would be £6,725)	128	62	17	207	61.84	29.95	8.21
4.6 If not what percentage or amount do you suggest? (please specify) (AVERAGE INDICATED)		22%					
5. THE BONUS							
5.1 Do you believe that the Board should							
(i) Continue to pay the Bonus in accordance with the provision of the Code	107	77	23	207	51.69	37.20	11.11
(ii) Fix the amount of the bonus at the present level and not apply any further increases	62	117	28	207	29.95	56.52	13.53
(iii) Take steps over time to reduce the bonus to the amount which is required to be paid under the Regium Donum (i.e. approx £275)	99	84	24	207	47.83	40.58	11.59

7. EXISTING LEAVE TO CALL ARRANGEMENTS

	YES No	NO No	N/A No	TOTAL No	YES %	NO %	N/A %
7.1 Do you support the proposals being introduced to all new leave to call arrangements and the protection of present leave to call arrangements?	175	26	6	207	84.54	12.56	2.90
7.3 Do you support the proposal that protected stipends should only receive an annual increase of 50% of the increase applied to the Basic Ministerial Minimum?	136	57	14	207	65.70	27.54	6.76
If not, what increase should be applied? (please specify) (AVERAGE INDICATED)		26%					

8. ASSESSMENTS

8.1 Do you support, in principle, the move from assessments being based on stipend to assessable income so that Congregations contribute according to their means?	151	44	12	207	72.95	21.26	5.79
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9. OVERALL VIEW OF THE PROPOSALS

9.1 Subject to your detailed responses to the questions above how would you categorise your support or otherwise for the proposals (delete as appropriate)

	YES No	NO No	N/A No	TOTAL No	YES %	NO %	N/A %
- In broad support of the proposals	54						
- In support but with reservations or suggested changes	93						
- Accept that change is necessary but do not support the proposals	20						
- Prefer no change to present arrangements	10						
Did not answer question	30						
	<u>207</u>						

APPENDIX 2**COPY OF REPORT SUBMITTED TO 2010 GENERAL ASSEMBLY****TYRONE MEMORIAL REVIEW PANEL PROPOSALS****1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In accordance with a resolution of the General Assembly in June 2009 this report outlines new proposals for the financial support of Ministers. In bringing forward these proposals the Panel wishes to reaffirm the original aims of the Tyrone Memorial and address some of the issues arising out of its implementation and operation. It is proposed that a new Stipend Scale be introduced, with five-yearly service increments over a 20-year period. In addition, and depending on circumstances, a local allowance may be payable. Payment outside these arrangements would not be permitted. Present call arrangements would continue to be honoured and, if approved by the General Assembly, these proposals would only be implemented in respect of all future leave to call arrangements.

These proposals also include arrangements to change the basis of Congregational assessments from stipend to income.

2. BACKGROUND

At the General Assembly in June 2008, it was agreed that the Board of Finance and Personnel should “prepare detailed proposals for an alternative basis for the provision of financial support for Ministers and make a further report to the General Assembly 2010”.

The Board delegated this work to the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel, which includes representatives from the Board, Union Commission, the Board of Mission in Ireland and other interested parties.

The membership of the Panel is:

John Hunter (Board Convener), Revs Drew Abernethy, David Porter, Leslie Casement, Dr Uel Matthews, Dr Michael Barry, Dr Donald Watts (General Secretary), Messrs James Livingstone, Douglas Crowe, Douglas Cowan and Clive Knox (Financial Secretary).

3. AIMS/OBJECTIVES

In considering an alternative basis for the financial support of Ministers the Panel reaffirms the main aims of the Tyrone Memorial and in particular:

- to reduce the inequality in Stipends / disparity between Ministers
- to enable Bible teaching on giving to be carried out free from the accusation of self interest on the part of Ministers
- to enable Congregations to retain income for local mission

Based on experience of the Tyrone Memorial and in line with its original aims the Panel’s objective is to:

- (i) eradicate as many as possible of the present anomalies (e.g. Congregations exceeding recommended increases, the anticipated

timescales required to reduce the gap between the highest and lowest stipends, varying rates of annual increase under the Tyrone Memorial etc.)

- (ii) reduce the disparity between the highest and lowest stipends to not more than 50% and to take account, where terms permit, of additional sources of income such as bequests, land lettings and manse rents. (*The Panel notes that at one time the highest stipend paid was more than 2.6 times the minimum. At present apart from one instance no Minister has a stipend in excess of twice the minimum.*)
- (iii) address the anomaly which has arisen under the operation of the Tyrone Memorial arrangements where some stronger Congregations are contributing proportionately less by way of assessment than previously was the case.

While it is not within the remit of the Panel to increase the Ministerial Minimum the Panel did consider this matter but concluded that the additional cost to central funds would result in a considerable increase in the rate of the assessment for the Central Ministry and other assessment funds.

The Panel recognises that while some allowance needs to be made for additional responsibilities and pressures it believes the Church ought to recognise every call as a call from God and has a responsibility to provide adequately for the needs of every Minister no matter where the call takes him or her. The Panel does not believe that financial reward should be a contributory factor in a call.

4. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The Panel proposes that a Minister's remuneration is made up of 4 elements

- (i) A Basic Ministerial Minimum
- (ii) An Incremental Allowance reflecting years of service
- (iii) A Local Allowance (where appropriate) reflecting local congregational circumstances
- (iv) A Discretionary Grant which includes the amount due from the Regium Donum (this is an amount that used to be paid by the Crown to Ministers until a lump sum payment was made by the Crown to the Church to take over the payment of this. The amount received is invested in the Commutation Fund. The annual income from this Fund is paid through the Sustentation Fund to the Central Ministry Fund which pays the "bonus" to Ministers under the provisions of The Code Par 315.)

The total of (i) and (ii) above is referred to as the "Appropriate Ministerial Minimum" i.e. the minimum amount of remuneration a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should receive based on their years of ministry.

Throughout this paper, references to “Stipend” mean the amount a Congregation contributes or pays towards a Minister’s remuneration and not the total amount paid to a Minister.

(i) The Basic Ministerial Minimum

The Basic Ministerial Minimum is the minimum amount of remuneration a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should receive.

Current:

The Basic Ministerial Minimum for 2010 is £22,416. The Panel compared the minimum with that in other denominations and found that the basic Ministerial minimum compares favourably, taking into account the additional bonus of £1,518 Ministers received from the Central Ministry Fund. However, some other denominations have better incremental allowances for those with longer service. The Panel therefore decided that rather than increasing the basic Ministerial minimum it ought to consider improving the incremental allowance.

Proposed:

No change is proposed. The Basic Ministerial Minimum should continue to be reviewed annually by the Board of Finance and Personnel under the provision of The Code, Par 314 in light of relevant factors and where appropriate a discretionary increase applied.

(ii) An Incremental Allowance

Current:

At present Ministers are entitled to an increment of 2.5% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum after each period of 5 years up to a maximum of 15%, i.e. after 30 years service). The Panel considered a number of improvements to the incremental allowance but the costs of implementing some of these improvements were considered to be more than the Church could pay at this time.

Proposed:

It is proposed that the 5 yearly increments are increased from 2.5% to 5% but only up to 20 years service i.e. maximum of 20% after 20 years

The proposed STERLING scale (using 2010 as a base year) is as follows

STIPEND				
Year	Current (2.5%) £	Proposed (5.0%) £	Increase (2.5%) £	%
Increment	561	1,121	560	
1 to 5	22,416	22,416	Nil	
6 to 10	22,977	23,537	560	2.44%
11 to 15	23,538	24,658	1,120	4.76%
16 to 20	24,099	25,779	1,680	6.97%
21 to 25	24,660	26,900	2,240	9.08%
26 to 30	25,221	26,900	1,679	6.66%
31 +	25,782	26,900	1,118	4.33%

The proposed EURO scale (using 2010 as a base year) is as follows

STIPEND				
Year	Current (2.5%) €	Proposed (5.0%) €	Increase (2.5%) €	%
Increment	882	1,762	880	
1 to 5	35,241	35,241	Nil	
6 to 10	36,123	37,003	880	2.44%
11 to 15	37,005	38,765	1,760	4.76%
16 to 20	37,887	40,527	2,640	6.97%
21 to 25	38,769	42,289	3,520	9.08%
26 to 30	39,651	42,289	2,630	6.66%
31 +	40,533	42,289	1,748	4.33%

The Panel notes that the Board of Finance and Personnel has undertaken a review of the differential between the Sterling and Euro scales. In the light of current cost of living and other relevant factors the Board has concluded that no changes are required to the differential at this stage, but will keep the matter under review.

The Panel proposes the following:

- (a) A Minister should be remunerated on the appropriate point on the scale and Congregations should not make any additional payment other than the local allowances if authorised by Union Commission.
- (b) An annual discretionary increase should be applied to the scales as approved by the Board of Finance and Personnel based on cost of living increases and other relevant factors.
- (c) The new scales should apply to all calls issued after 1 January 2012 following General Assembly approval of the Scheme and, from the same date, to all existing arrangements where a Minister is on the Basic Ministerial Minimum or Appropriate Minimum.
- (d) In the case of augmented Congregations, the Union Commission will continue to set the Stipend when leave to call is being granted. The Stipend paid by the Congregation should be increased annually in line with the annual discretionary increases in (b) above.

(iii) The Local Allowance

In addition to the Basic Ministerial/Appropriate Minimum, Ministers may be entitled to a local allowance as agreed by the Union Commission. The maximum allowance is 30% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum, which for 2010 would be £6,725 (30% x £22,416). In deciding the amount of the local allowance Union Commission will take into account a number of factors including, but not limited to

- the size of the Congregation in terms of families, membership etc
- the staffing resource of the Congregation
- specific Ministerial responsibilities
- any local congregational issues which may be appropriate and require additional responsibilities and experience (including missional issues)
- the general needs and resources of the Congregation

A Congregation's ability to pay will not be a determining factor in setting the level of the local allowance.

Congregations will normally be expected to pay the full amount of the local allowance as determined by the Union Commission.

(iv) The Bonus (including the Regium Donum) (to be renamed The Discretionary Grant)

Present:

Under the provisions of The Code Par 315(2) every "qualified" Minister receives a bonus. The amount of the bonus is calculated in accordance with the provision of Par 315(2) or is fixed by the Board of Finance and Personnel. For 2010 the Board of Finance and Personnel has fixed the bonus at £1,518

The Bonus is paid to all active Ministers in Congregations and Ministers who have retired from a Congregation. It is paid to active Ministers, as a monthly amount of £30 i.e. £360 for the year plus an annual bonus paid in December of £1,158. Retired Ministers receive the total bonus on a monthly basis. The

following table summarises the position and approximate annual costs based on 360 active and 205 retired Ministers.

When Paid	RETIRE	ACTIVE		ALL
	MINISTERS	MINISTERS	MINISTERS	MINISTERS
	Monthly	Monthly	Annually	Total
Amount per annum	£1,518 (£126.50/month)	£360 (£30/month)	£1,158	£1,518
Active Ministers (360)	—	£129,600	£416,880	£546,480
Retired Ministers (205)	£311,190	—	—	£311,190
TOTAL BONUS	£311,190	£129,600	£416,880	£857,670

In the first place the bonus is paid out of income received from the Sustentation Fund (this includes the income from the Commutation Fund, the “Regium Donum”). In keeping with the principles of the Sustentation Fund, and based on present levels of income, each Minister should receive approx £550 per annum (assuming 565 eligible Ministers). The remainder of the bonus is paid for out of the Central Ministry Fund and it is this part which is discretionary.

Proposed:

It is proposed that the term Bonus is no longer used and a “Discretionary Grant” of an amount to be determined annually by the Board of Finance and Personnel, and set initially at £1,500, is paid to “qualified” Ministers. This is to be paid to active Ministers in December each year and monthly to retired Ministers. This Discretionary Grant is to include the amount due for the Regium Donum.

5. OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

Ministers will be entitled to receive in addition to the Basic Ministerial/ Appropriate Minimum and Local Allowance any bequest or endowment income where the terms specify that it is **“for the benefit of the Minister”**. Bequest or Endowment income **“for stipend”** is a source of funds contributing to the cost of stipend and therefore should be applied for that purpose by the Congregation and not paid in addition to stipend.

Existing arrangements should continue to apply until a vacancy arises.

6. MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

The initial level of Ministerial Expenses is agreed when leave to call is granted. Congregations are entitled to review the level of the expenses allowance to cover actual expenses incurred but expenses should not be used as a means of increasing the level of Ministerial income.

The Panel support expenses being paid to Ministers based on a reimbursement of actual expenses incurred and recommend that the Board of Finance and Personnel undertake a review of the present system in conjunction with the Union Commission. The review should take account of the impact any change in arrangements would have on a Minister’s current level of remuneration.

7. EXISTING LEAVE TO CALL ARRANGEMENTS

It is proposed that where the level of remuneration from the Congregation in an existing leave to call arrangement exceeds the proposed stipend scales the original leave to call arrangement should continue to apply until the Congregation becomes vacant. In other words where a Minister's stipend at the date of implementation is higher than the proposed scale their stipend will be "protected" and not reduced. However, in such circumstances the annual increases should be limited to 50% of the normal discretionary increase.

Where a Ministers existing level of remuneration is below the proposed scale, the new scale should be applied with effect from the introduction of the scheme. It is expected that non-augmented Congregations will meet in full the additional costs, but where this creates genuine financial difficulties for a Congregation, they may apply to Union Commission for a review.

8. CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

The Panel has also considered whether the assessments, which Congregations have to pay in addition to stipend, should continue to be based on the stipend paid to Ministers in the preceding year. The Pensions and Assessment Panel of the General Board which was initially set up to review pensions but has had its remit extended to look at the level of assessments has also been considering this matter. It appears both panels are minded to recommend a change in the way assessments are levied to one based on Income rather than Stipend. The Panels view is that this will lead to a fairer distribution of the burden of assessments.

The change from Stipend to Income as a rule will mean that the level of assessment will better reflect a Congregation's ability to contribute. The rates of assessment for the various Assessment Funds will continue to reflect the ongoing expenditure requirements of those funds.

9. COST IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

In estimating the cost implications of the proposals it has been assumed that if a Congregation is currently augmented it will continue to be augmented and no increase in stipend will be requested from the Congregation. If the proposed scales were to be applied in 2010:

- (i) the overall cost of stipends to the Church would reduce from approx. £9.1m to £7.9m. There would, however, not be a saving of the difference as these proposals include provisions to protect the stipend of Ministers in excess of the proposed scales.
- (ii) it is estimated that the additional annual cost of augmentation to the Central Ministry Fund would be £180k. For those Congregations not augmented whose Ministers receive less than the proposed scales there would be an additional cost of £38k.
- (iii) There are currently 69 Ministers in Northern Ireland and 32 in Republic of Ireland receiving augmentation (via augmented or incremental grants).

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the rate of assessment for the Central Ministry Fund for 2012 be 19.0p in the £ of stipend.
3. That the rate of assessment for the Retired Ministers' Fund for 2012 be 1.5p in the £ of stipend.
4. That the rate of assessment for the Widows of Ministers' Fund for 2012 be 4.0p in the £ of stipend.
5. That the rate of assessment for the Prolonged Disability Fund for 2012 be 0.25p in the £ of stipend.
6. That the rate of assessment for the Church House Repair Fund for 2012 be 3.50p in the £ of stipend.
7. That the rate of assessment for the Incidental Fund for 2012 be 5.00p in the £ of stipend.
8. That the rate of assessment for the PCI Pension (2009) Fund for 2012 be 30.00p in the £ of stipend.
9. That the rate of assessment for the Sick Supply Fund for 2012 be 0.25p in the £ of stipend.
10. That the General Assembly approve the proposals of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel, and that the necessary Code changes be brought to the 2013 General Assembly and that the proposals be implement from 1 January 2014.
11. That under the provisions of the Code Par 556(3) the Rev DS Mackay (Magherally) be given permission to retire on or after his 64th birthday, on 3 August 2012.
12. That under the provisions of the Code Para556(3) the Rev WT Cordner (First Bangor) be given permission to retire on or after his 64th birthday, on 7 September 2012.
13. That under the provisions of the Code Par 556(3) the Rev NA Brown (Wellington, Ballymena) be given permission to retire on or after his 64th birthday, on 30 September 2012.
14. That the Board of Finance and Personnel, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 315 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 315(3) of the Code the words “, or of more than 25 years service, or of more than 30 years service since ordination of 102.5%, 105%, 107.5%, 110%, 112.5%, and 115% respectively of the Basic Ministerial Minimum;” be deleted and the words “since ordination of 105%, 110%, 115% and 120% respectively of the Basic Ministerial Minimum;” substituted in their place.

JOHN HUNTER

UNITED APPEAL

Convener: Rev RIA ALLELY

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. When the Accounts were closed on 31 January it was discovered that Congregations had collectively failed to reach the Target of Honour by almost £350,000. 42 Congregations had donated nothing by that date, 136 failed to meet their Target, 178 reached their Target (with the majority “making it up” from General Funds), and 145 exceeded their Target. Only 2 Presbyteries reached or exceeded their Target, although the Board is encouraged that, despite the present financial crisis which is affecting all Congregations and allowing for late returns, the 2011 Appeal reached 98.6 % (2010: 98.4%) of the target figure.

2. As reported last year, late returns from Congregations create all sorts of problems – with the majority of the Appeal being received in the period December – February. The Board’s reserves (built up over many years) have to be maintained in order to provide a cash flow for the Boards throughout the year.

3. The Priorities Committee and this Board were in agreement that the Target of Honour should remain approximately at last year’s level (£3,172,500). This restriction obviously affected our decisions regarding the amounts granted to each Board.

4. The Board received the Finance Committee’s considered report, which, after carefully examining the budgets presented by the various Boards, was forced to take £200,000 from Reserves in order to maintain the Target at last year’s level. The Board received requests for almost £3.7m and it was only after lengthy and serious discussion that the final grants were arrived at. The Board regrets not being able to assist the Mission Boards more and wants to acknowledge their collective and individual vision for the greater work of the Church.

5. The Board was disappointed that so many Treasurers failed to have their remittances returned to the Financial Secretary’s Department in time for inclusion in 2011 figures. This is simply unacceptable and Finance Conveners of Presbytery are asked to approach those who have defaulted. The Board Convener and others are more than willing to discuss this matter further with Congregational Committees.

6. It is noticed, with regret, that a good number of Congregations have accumulated funds for building and renovations to the detriment of the Appeal. Indeed, an examination of a cross section of Congregational Accounts revealed that only a small percentage of members give anything to the Appeal. Questions must be asked where considerable credit balances have been accumulated and the Congregation’s target not paid.

7. The Mission Plans of Presbyteries and Congregations clearly indicate a vibrant and necessary vision for outreach at home and overseas. The Board would ask if this is genuinely the mind of Presbyterian people, especially when such a small number of members contribute anything to the Appeal.

8. The Promotions Committee has worked very hard in producing the “Briefing” and the downloadable DVDs. The Board would ask: “Are these being

utilised by Ministers and Kirk Sessions?" Presbytery and Congregational Agents are asked to ensure that those operating IT in Congregations are aware of these resources.

9. The receiving Boards, we believe, are doing all they can to prune their budgets, but in most cases there is little or nothing to fall back on. Therefore, Presbyterian people need to give more biblically and to this end the Board commends the Planned Givings initiative to the Church.

10. Many Congregations have received funds from the Administrator of the Presbyterian Mutual Society. While it is acknowledged that these extra funds will help congregational bank balances, the Board asks if a sacrificial proportion is being given to those in need.

11. The Board acknowledges the professional assistance and advice of the Financial Secretary and his Department, and commends them to the prayerful support of the Church.

12. During the course of the Finance Committee's interviews of the Boards it became obvious that there is a need for a "United Appeal Sunday" in those Congregations where there are no special collections or envelopes issued. The Board recommends that personnel (Overseas Missionary, BMI Evangelist, Deaconess, Home Mission Minister, etc.) who are supported, wholly or in part by the United Appeal, may be invited to address the Congregation on their ministry.

APPRAISALS COMMITTEE

The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:

The Appraisals Committee met twice during the year. It received from the Board of Social Witness its Review of the Elmwood Café and also approved a proposal from the General Board to appoint a Head of Creative Production.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the United Appeal for 2013 be as set out in the Schedules (III) and (IV).
3. That the General Assembly encourage all Congregations to make use of the available promotional materials.
4. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with par 287 of the Code as follows:

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2010	Specified Sources 2010 £	United Appeal 2012 £
Ards	7,722	3,126,876	292,822
Armagh	3,800	1,788,487	155,648
Ballymena	7,395	3,056,094	283,272
Belfast North	5,420	1,992,937	196,197
Belfast South	3,549	1,783,164	150,585
Belfast East	6,003	2,863,898	247,665
Carrickfergus	5,140	1,825,969	183,102
Coleraine and Limavady	5,647	2,293,550	214,456
Derry and Donegal	4,922	1,955,527	184,909
Down	4,699	1,633,562	165,739
Dromore	4,826	1,985,054	184,431
Dublin and Munster	1,228	1,228,478	80,383
Iveagh	3,573	1,416,220	134,075
Monaghan	1,106	607,506	49,324
Newry	2,723	1,144,936	105,215
Omagh	3,459	1,235,560	123,533
Route	3,624	1,299,397	129,652
Templepatrick	4,199	1,570,206	153,212
Tyrone	3,607	1,493,022	138,280
	<u>82,642</u>	<u>34,300,443</u>	<u>3,172,500</u>

50% of the allocation for 2012 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2010 of 1.1655.

SCHEDULE II

	Proposed Requested 2012 £	Grant 2012 £
BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND	1,100,000	1,060,000
BOARD OF EDUCATION	41,000	40,000
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING	395,000	365,000
BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	490,000	435,000
BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS	531,000	425,000
BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS	920,000	897,500
BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS	165,000	150,000
	<u>3,642,000</u>	<u>3,372,500</u>
Allocation from reserves		<u>(200,000)</u>
Appeal to Congregations		<u>3,172,500</u>

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2011	Specified Sources 2011 £	United Appeal 2013 £
Ards	7,716	3,284,631	301,065
Armagh	3,765	1,830,173	157,256
Ballymena	7,154	3,176,499	285,103
Belfast North	5,207	2,069,001	196,451
Belfast South	3,450	1,663,394	143,477
Belfast East	5,639	2,849,403	240,456
Carrickfergus	4,944	1,882,573	182,800
Coleraine and Limavady	5,594	2,383,137	218,351
Derry and Donegal	4,927	1,956,260	185,820
Down	4,696	1,661,917	167,887
Dromore	4,734	2,022,778	185,057
Dublin and Munster	1,139	1,159,472	75,146
Iveagh	3,509	1,473,400	135,989
Monaghan	1,084	625,790	49,776
Newry	2,811	1,145,737	107,365
Omagh	3,493	1,300,366	127,800
Route	3,582	1,299,841	129,524
Templepatrick	4,118	1,549,454	151,414
Tyrone	3,380	1,601,003	139,263
	<u>80,942</u>	<u>34,934,829</u>	<u>3,180,000</u>

50% of the allocation for 2013 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2011 of 1.1496.

SCHEDULE IV

	Proposed Requested 2013 £	Grant 2013 £
BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND	1,080,000	1,000,000
BOARD OF EDUCATION	42,500	40,000
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING	405,500	400,000
BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	435,000	390,000
BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS	422,000	400,000
BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS	1,100,000	1,000,000
GENERAL BOARD – COMMUNICATIONS	185,000	150,000
	3,670,000	3,380,000
Allocation from reserves		(200,000)
Appeal to Congregations		3,180,000

COMMISSION ON TRUSTS

1. In accordance with Para 130(2) of The Code, the Commission has “Assembly powers to deal with all cases where trustees or others desire to transfer any property, real or personal, to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, under the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Acts, 1871 and 1901, and to authorise the Trustees to accept any such transfer on such terms as it deems expedient”.

2. A list of deeds held by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in relation to various properties and trust funds is set out in the annual certificate given by the General Assembly Solicitor which is printed in the General Assembly Accounts Book.

3. During 2011 the Trustees received various bequests designated for a specific Board or Agencies of the General Assembly, “The Presbyterian Church in Ireland” or “The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland”. In accordance with the provisions of the Code Para 130(3) the Commission has received and reviewed an abstract of bequests received during 2011 and has authorised their acceptance.

AJ RANKIN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Hon Secretary: Rev Dr DONALD J WATTS

Financial Secretary: Mr CLIVE KNOX

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting held in Church House, Belfast, on 20 March, 2012.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2011 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

The General Investment Fund

The Commutation Fund

The Non-Participating Trust Funds

The Magee Fund

The Tops Wilson Trust Fund

The Fire Insurance Trust Fund

The Fortune Mission Bequest

The Lindsay Memorial Fund

Various other Trust Funds

3. Moved by the Rev RJA Bell, seconded by Mr D Bell, and unanimously agreed, that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, signed by three Trustees, inserted in the Appendix to the Minute Book and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statement of Accounts were, therefore, signed by Mr L McKeague, Mr L Cubitt and the Rev Dr RJT McMullan and lodged in accordance with the foregoing resolution.

4. It was reported that the Executive Committee will also receive and examine the audited Accounts for 2011 of the Getty Trust, Union Theological College and The War Memorial Hostel and accept these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of the Rev RJA Bell, seconded by Mr D Bell, this report was received.

5. Three retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being the Very Rev Dr David Clarke, Mr G McCullagh, and Mr J Millar.

6. The Executive Committee were authorised to nominate members of the General Assembly according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iv).

Trust Funds

7. A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2011. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.

As in 2011 the Trustees have agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that, where the terms of Trust permit, these should be distributed via the United Appeal rather than directly to various agencies.

Mrs A M Davidson Trust: The total income for 2011 available for distribution is £6,372.50. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£6,372.50</u>
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Sir Wm V McCleery Estate: The total income for 2011 available for distribution is £33,721.08. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	80%
Retired Ministers' Fund	10%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	10%

Estate of Miss Irene Scott: The total income for 2011 available for distribution is £6,893.504. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£6,893.50</u>
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Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown: The total income for 2011 available for distribution is £4,424.00. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£4,424.006</u>
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Estate of Mr Victor Morrow: The total income for 2011 available for distribution is £2,562.00. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£2,562.00</u>
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GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

The General Investment Fund was originally established under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. It is a common investment Fund in which any charity connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can invest.

Investments in the fund or shareholdings tend to arise from trust funds, bequests or donations which often have particular terms or restrictions attached regarding the application of the capital and income.

On occasions the Trustees are notified of bequests where the terms may state they are for the "benefit of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" or to the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland". The present policy of the Trustees is to invest these in the Trustees Discretionary Fund in the General Investment Fund, unless a specific project requiring funding is identified, and then to distribute the income annually. In allocating capital or income, and while recognising no restrictions have been expressed by the donor, the Trustees will have regard to expressions of wish or known interests of the donor. During 2011 the Trustees received a bequest of £250,000 which they have included in their Discretionary Fund.

In accordance with the Scheme Rules, dividends are declared on shareholdings in the fund, at 15 April and 15 October and the shares are also valued on these dates. Recent dividend levels and share values are set out below.

Further details about the General Investment Fund, the investment performance and investment holdings, is available in a booklet available from the Financial Secretary's office. The accounts are included in the Book of Accounts presented to the General Assembly.

8. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.11	15.10.11
Number of shares qualifying	5,327,337	5,363,985
Income from investment for distribution and tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	£529,901	£743,706
Dividend per share	11.00p	14.00p

During 2011 £7,252 was transferred from the Dividend Equalisation Reserve, in accordance with the Scheme Rules, and the balance on the Reserve at 31 December, 2011 is £461,311.

The combined annual Dividend of 25.00p per share for 2011 is to be compared with 26.00p for 2010; 28.00p for 2009; 33.00p for 2008; 31.00p for 2007; 30.00p for 2006; 27.00p for 2005; 27.00p for 2004; 29.3p for 2003; 28.5p for 2002.

9. Valuation	15.4.11	15.10.11
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	39,350,011	37,446,352
Cash on Deposit	372,767	701,888
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	412,456	461,310
	<u>£40,135,234</u>	<u>£38,609,550</u>

No of Shares Issued	5,333,063	5,433,794
Share Value	£7.5257	£7.1054

The Trustees meet with Investment Managers, Newton Investment Management Limited, three times a year to review investment performance. During 2011 there was a negative return of 0.7% compared to a benchmark return of 0.8%.

Newton Investment Management Limited was appointed advisers to the Trustees Funds in June 2006. The Trustees have reviewed the investment performance for the five years to 30 June 2011. During that period the General Investment Fund returned 5.0% compared to the benchmark of 5.1%. The Trustees also reviewed the administrative and reporting arrangements and have agreed to retain Newton Investment Management Limited as advisers to the Funds. This will be reviewed again in two year.

Crescent Church Loan Fund

10. During 2011 a loan request of £49,000 was approved. Interest is currently charged on loans at half the total of bank base rate plus 2% (currently 1.25%) on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan. Loan

outstanding at 31 December 2011 were £186,058 and at that time the fund had £165,400 available to meet loan requests.

Getty Bequest

11. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31 December, 2011 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	£2,330
Overseas – Jewish	£1,270
Home Mission	£3,070
Belfast City Mission	£2,330
TOTAL	£9,000

Presbyterian Mutual Society

12. During 2011 The Trustees contributed £1m from their Discretionary Fund to the scheme of arrangement.

Resignation of Trustees

13. Mr Wilson Ervin tendered his resignation from the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees with effect from 1 October 2011. He was appointed at the 1982 General Assembly and became a member of the Executive Committee in 1983.

14. Sir Eric McDowell tendered his resignation from the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees with effect from 1 January 2012. He was appointed at the 1982 General Assembly and became a member of the Executive Committee in 1986.

15. The Trustees wish to record their appreciation for the many years of faithful and dedicated service given by these members and to recognise the significant contribution each made to the work of the Board and the Executive Committee.

16. The Trustees also received the resignations of Mr Walter Cosgrove and Mr AD McClay and thank them for their faithful service.

Governance Arrangements

17. At present there is an Executive Committee of Trustee which meets, usually monthly, to oversee the management of the various Funds, Trusts and Bequests which fall under their responsibility. There are nine members on the Committee and they report to the Board of Trustees twice a year. The Board of Trustees, which has 34 members, also hold an Annual General Meeting to deal with approval of the annual accounts and to nominate two members to attend the General Assembly.

18. The Board of Trustees and Executive Committee have reviewed the present governance arrangements in conjunction with the General Assembly Solicitor and believe the arrangements could be simplified by having a single governing body. The General Assembly Solicitor has reviewed the relevant legislation which includes the Irish Presbyterian Church Acts 1871 and 1901, A Royal Charter of Incorporation of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1871 and associated Assembly Trustees - Bye Laws. In his opinion

there does not appear to be a requirement to have an Executive Committee. It is therefore proposed to have a single governing body. An option being considered is an entity consisting of 15 members and the Clerk of the General Assembly who would be an ex-officio member. Five of the members would be ministers and 10 would be non-ministers. Members would be appointed for a term of five years renewable for one further term of five years. Disciplines such as banking, accountancy, law, etc. should be represented among the 10 non-ministers. The transitional arrangements in moving to the proposed structure will need to be considered and agreed. The Board and Executive Committee wish to explore further the proposed arrangements and in particular what changes are required to the Bye-Laws and The Code. The Trustees seek by resolution the Assembly permission in principle to alter the current governing arrangements with detailed proposal to be brought to the 2013 General Assembly.

Assembly Solicitor

19. Mr Rankin was appointed General Assembly Solicitor in 1994 and in accordance with the terms of that appointment the Trustees have reviewed the “retainer” (the term of appointment) and the “retaining fee” (the agreed fee for undertaking certain specified duties e.g. including attendance at meetings of Judicial Commission and the General Assembly). The Trustees have agreed to renew the retainer for a further five year period and have agreed an increase in the retaining fee.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs A M Davidson Trust be adopted.
3. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
5. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.
6. That the recommendation regarding the Victor Morrow Trust be adopted.
7. That the General Assembly agrees in principle to a single governing Trustees body and instructs the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee of Trustees, in consultation with the General Assembly Solicitor, to bring detailed proposals to the 2013 General Assembly, with necessary Bye Law and Code changes.
8. That in accordance with the Will of the late John Getty the following be constituted as the Committee for the “direction and management of the application” of the income from the Getty Bequest:
Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, Revs Dr DJ Watts, WJ Orr, OBE;, Very Rev Dr David Clarke, Mr David Bell, CB, Mr AT Ross, Mr John Millar, OBE.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEES**RESOLUTION**

That Mr Norman Bennett be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr RA Wilson, resigned, and of the due appointment of Mr Norman Bennett as a said Trustee attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and of the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

RESOLUTION

That Mr Douglas Crowe be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr Wilson Ervin, CBE, resigned, and of the due appointment of Mr Douglas Crowe as a said Trustee attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and of the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

RESOLUTION

That Mrs Marjorie Guiler be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr Walter Cosgrove, resigned, and of the due appointment of Mrs Marjorie Guiler as a said Trustee attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and of the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

RESOLUTION

That Sir Bruce Robinson be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr AD McClay, resigned, and of the due appointment of Sir Bruce Robinson as a said Trustee attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and of the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

SPUD YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Co Chairs: Mr ANDY DOWNEY, Miss LAURA HUTCHESON
Secretary: Miss AMY McNAUGHER

Miss Laura Hutcheson writes:

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland commissioned a pilot Youth Assembly in 2008. This occurred after a Panel had established that the lack of opportunity for young people to participate in decision-making within PCI was a serious problem. It was a gap that the whole Church decided it wanted to try and fill.

2. In 2007, two members of that Panel met with 9 young people from across Ireland and 2 youth workers in a wee church hall in Newry to look at the issue of youth participation. The things discussed that day both frustrated and excited those present. In the spirit of a true Presbyterian meeting, it could have gone on for days, but that was how massive and far-reaching the issue was.

3. This group of young people, Panel members and youth workers formed the basis of what would later be called the ‘SPUD Working Group’ – the group in charge of organising and running a pilot Youth Assembly. After a successful pilot in 2009, the Church gave permission for the SPUD Youth Assembly to continue, and so it has done. The SPUD Youth Assembly has changed and evolved since 2009; it has faced serious challenges and received countless blessings. To date 645 young people have attended the SPUD Youth Assembly and through this SPUD has brought 18 resolutions to the General Assembly (see appendix). Perhaps the most significant resolution was when SPUD asked Presbyteries to consider its ‘Young People and the Church’ Report in 2010. This highlighted many of the issues around youth participation in local Congregations. SPUD wanted it to be a real conversation-starter with the wider Church, in the hope of eventually being able to tackle the issues together.

4. 17 Presbyteries have so far replied in the conversation, and the following report is intended to give members of Assembly an overview of the key points. It is not an attempt to give full answers or solutions to the issues, although some practical suggestions put forward by both young people and by Presbyteries have been included.

Mr Andy Downey writes:

Young People and the Church Report (2010) Responses

1. Having reviewed the Presbytery Responses and the feedback from the Mash Up 2011, there were a number of issues that each Presbytery mentioned in their feedback. While this is in no way an attempt to give answers it is very much an attempt to begin or feed into conversations taking place at Presbytery and congregational level. These issues also have wider repercussions than just young people within our denomination; they may well be issues that have a bearing on the wider Church.

- (i) **Genuine Relationships:** young people want their lives to be full of genuine relationships. In a Church context that means they want people

of all ages to be interested in them; formally and informally. Young people want adults to be interested in them; they want to learn and grow to be prepared for the future.

The Research and Education Panel of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board has been looking into the issues affecting young people (as asked by a SPUD Resolution at the 2009 General Assembly). They found that 76% of young people were worried about school work and exams, 52% expressed fear for their futures and 40% are worried about body/image and weight issues (from 265 surveys, average age 14).

Genuine relationships would mean that generations grow in understanding of one another, they would open up channels of communication and most importantly they would allow generations to point one another to Jesus Christ and that can only benefit Congregations.

In the responses to the "Young People and the Church" report all Presbyteries saw the issues raised in the report as relevant to varying extents. Most Presbyteries commented that they felt communication was vital for the future, yet none had any real ideas or practices to improve their communication.

Another benefit to developing relationships would be finding the giftings of young people and enabling them to participate in church life to a fuller extent. The report, responses, and subsequent discussions, highlight how some young people do not want to be in leadership roles yet want to be consulted and involved in decision making. Open conversations and consultations, aided by pre-existing relationships, would lead to young people feeling more involved in the life of their Congregation.

- (ii) **Understanding the times:** The 21st century is the most technologically advanced century in history – obvious statement! For instance there is more technology in an iPhone 4 than in the computer systems that sent man to the moon.

Young people want to be in Church families who are striving to live out a real faith in Jesus Christ. The ways in which they engage with Church and culture, however, are totally unique to their generation.

From the responses and feedback it is clear that young people care about Church, and that Churches care about young people. However, tensions and issues rise up when young people expect church to be geared solely for them or when Churches function in a way that only engages older generations. Participation by all members of a Church family will require compromise (which is not a dirty concept, it is a healthy practice).

Take the issue of communication, most young people are users of Facebook and Twitter (and other social media); they are an instant generation, they will read emails and tweets and Facebook posts, perhaps they won't read printed bulletins and announcement sheets. Could one step be to communicate congregational information through a variety of media (printed bulletin, website, PowerPoint slide and Twitter)?

Young people are educated in a very active and hands on way, they work in groups from which feedback is taken. Often decisions at Church (from Sessions or Committees) are rarely explained or a lack of consultation has been done. Young people may not have the perfect answer but they will have opinions on issues that affect them. Does each Congregation have a mechanism for young people's voices to be heard?

- (iii) **A culture of constant change:** No two days are the same, no week is the same. We live in a world of constant change as people look to adapt to the culture and conditions around them. As a Church that should be redeeming culture, should we be afraid of change?

To some young people, and to some Presbyteries, there is an understanding of the need for change; not for change's sake but for the survival and indeed the thriving of congregational life and witness. Within a Church family, where gospel centred love and care is the focus, and where intentional, inter-generational relationships exist, Church life will reflect all parts of the church family. Compromise and forbearance are natural parts of family life; they should be in the church family too.

- (iv) **Awareness of Presbyterian identity:** Very few young people (and maybe Church members in general) know why they are Presbyterian. The importance of baptismal vows and communion are not fully understood by some young people even when they have been through classes.

There is even less understanding of how the structures within the church work. Kirk Sessions, Church Committees, Presbyteries and General Assembly Boards can seem like alien institutions; decisions made at all levels seem to be made in a vacuum, they seem to appear out of nowhere and then get forced upon the Congregation.

An understanding of why the Presbyterian Church is structured as it is would help dispel myths and mistrust. An explanation of decisions to and more consulting of the Church family may help a shared identity be grasped. Young people may not agree with every decision made, their enthusiasm may need tempered, but increased communication and dialogue would help young people understand why things happen as they do.

- (v) **Vision for the future:** Picking up on the fear for the future that so many young people feel, a vision for the future is often seen as lacking in the Church. A Church family needs vision; God's people need God centred vision in order to face the future. With the future in mind, many Presbyteries and young people commented on a need for increased investment in the lives of young people.

Allowing young people to be part of decision making processes and to serve in the Church may increase their feeling of ownership of their local Church.

- (vi) **Prayer:** One of the outcomes of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry's work has been a prayer resource which highlights the issues faced by young people these days and put real life stories into the

foreground so that the wider Church family can be informed for prayer. Prayer is also one of the most important factors in increasing inter-generational understanding and unity.

Miss Nicola Morrison writes:

Local Level Work

1. This year at SPUD there has been extra focus given to SPUD's work at the local level. Local level mainly referring to the meaningful participation of young people in their home Congregations and Presbyteries.

2. The SPUD working group has produced a programme entitled, '**Grow Your Own Spuds**' which aims to act as a conversation starter between young people and Church leaders. The programme will help young people and leaders to get an idea of what youth participation would look like in their own context. SPUD is aware that each Presbytery is different and each Congregation, within any given Presbytery, is unique and therefore there is not a one size fits all solution for effective and meaningful youth participation.

3. Each session begins with a biblical focus and moves on to cover aspects of how youth participation currently looks, through to how it might look. In-between it addresses what challenges or difficulties might present themselves and the variety of steps that need to be taken along the way. 'Grow Your Own Spuds' was tried out as a pilot scheme at this year's Mash Up with great success. SPUD would be happy to accommodate any Congregation who feel this could be the first step in empowering their young people to have their voices heard throughout their Congregation.

4. One aim of the SPUD working group is to facilitate Congregations as they find a way to engage their teenagers and young adults in increasing ownership of their Congregation, alongside the other members of the Church family. Then they can begin to work together, each using their own gifts and talents to advance Christ's Kingdom in their local area.

5. Church leaders need to listen to their young people and young people equally need to listen to their Church leaders. As Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth, "*But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!..... But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it."* 1 Corinthians 12: 18-21, 24-26.

The Working Group

6. The SPUD Working Group realises that tackling these issues is no easy task. But even talking about them has been a major step, that the Working Group is praying can be built upon. Genuine thanks is expressed to the Church at large for this opportunity. Equally, the SPUD Working Group would urge the Church not to waste this opportunity.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to use the Prayer Resource created by the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to inform their on-going prayers for the young people and young adults throughout the denomination.
3. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to make use of the "Grow Your Own SPUDs" programme created by the SPUD working group.

APPENDIX

2009 Resolutions

1. **BMO:** That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Mission Overseas to explore, in consultation with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, how to communicate their work, plans and issues more effectively to young people in order to educate, engage and mobilise the younger generation.
2. That the General Assembly request the Board of Mission Overseas to establish a network, which links children and young people of PCI Congregations with those of overseas personnel.
3. That the General Assembly encourage the appointment of youth representatives in Congregations and Presbyteries to promote engagement and participation of local Congregations in global mission.
4. **BMI:** That the General Assembly consider their Mission Statement of 1992 and question what the Church has done to "enable her members to play their part and encourage the exercise of the gifts of every member of the body", and refer this to the Mission Co-ordination Panel of the General Board.
5. That the General Assembly encourage congregations in the process of formulating Mission Plans, to ensure that young people are involved in a meaningful way in the development of each local plan.
6. **BSW:** That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Social Witness to develop social action teams, both short-term and long-term, to be focused on specific social issues linked to the Board's on-going work.
7. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to reassess buildings and resources by June 2010 to see how they can most effectively be utilised in and by our communities.
8. **YAC:** That the General Assembly request the Research and Education Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to raise awareness about the pressures and issues affecting young people, both among young people themselves and the wider Church.
9. That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to make available further resources and develop training, which equips youth leaders to empower young people both within and outside Congregations in response to the challenges of contemporary culture.
10. That the General Assembly seek to ensure that funding is made available for peacemaking posts to coordinate both existing and potential peace-building projects.

11. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations actively to seek to build relationships with all sections of the community, including those of a different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

12. That the General Assembly invite the Peacemaking Panel to explore ways in which Churches in interface and marginalised communities can receive pastoral and practical support from the wider Church family.

13. That the General Assembly request Congregations to ensure young people have the opportunity to contribute and participate in decision-making at local Congregational level.

14. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to ensure the empowerment of young people in meaningful and appropriate participation in every aspect of Congregational life and witness.

2010 Resolutions

15. That the General Assembly direct Presbyteries to appoint a panel, including at least two people under 25, to examine the SPUD report on 'Young People and the Church', to consider the appended questions and to report back to the SPUD Working Group through the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry by the end of December 2010.

16. That the General Assembly ask the Business Board to take the appropriate steps to ensure that those under 25 years of age are represented within General Assembly structures.

17. That the General Assembly encourage greater co-operation between the Mission Boards, in which young people may play a meaningful part, as our denomination seeks to respond to the challenge of holistic mission and actively engage with both our local and global communities.

2011 Resolutions

18. That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Education to take steps to promote enhanced educational opportunities that will enable young people from across the different school sectors in Northern Ireland to integrate together through contact, collaboration and sharing.

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Pars.	76(e); 235;	73
	313(1); 318(B)(2); 320(2); 325(2)	74
	204	147
	210(1); 212(1)	148

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Pars.	128(1); 193(1)(c); 195(11)(d)	107
	Appendix 5A; Appendix 5D	108
	209	197

