

THE CODE



The book of

The Constitution and Government

of

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Published by the Authority of the General Assembly

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INTRODUCTION

Enactment of the Code

- (i) This Code of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is enacted by the General Assembly on the 7th day of June, 1979, pursuant to an overture dated the 7th day of June, 1978, approved by the Presbyteries of the Church.
- (ii) Subject to paragraph 140(3) this Code comes into operation on the 1st day of January, 1980, and supersedes the version of the Code of the Constitution and Government of the Church in force immediately before that day.
- (iii) Every court, congregation and members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is governed and protected by this Code.

Previous editions of the Code were published as follows

General Synod of Ulster: 1825

General Assembly: 1841, 1859, 1887, (1896), 1912, 1948, 1963.

Part I

The Basic Code

CHAPTER 1 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

SECTION 1 - THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

1. **The one catholic or universal Church of Jesus Christ** is both invisible and visible.
2. **The invisible Church** consists of all those who have been, are being or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head.
3. (1) **The visible Church** consists of all those throughout the world who profess to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and to live obedient to God's Word, together with their children.
 (2) The visible Church was established by the Lord Jesus Christ for the glory of the Father and the advancement of His Kingdom in the world. These great purposes are to be accomplished by the proclamation of the Gospel, by witness-bearing to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ and by the promotion of Christian fellowship and mutual edification among all believers.
4. (1) **Many particular Churches** are included in the visible Church. Each of these consists of a congregation of persons who are associated for the administration and observance of ordinances according to the Scriptures or a number of such congregations under a common government.
 (2) **The Presbyterian Church in Ireland** is thus a particular Church of the visible catholic or universal Church of Jesus Christ.

SECTION II - THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

(See Pars. 175, 176 for Qualified Voters)

5. **All who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour** are called to be members of the visible Church in the fellowship of a congregation, with all the rights and responsibilities attached thereto.
6. **Church members are called** to make diligent use of the means of grace, to share faithfully in the worship and work of the Church, to give of their substance as the Lord may prosper them, to render whole-hearted service to Christ and His Kingdom throughout the world and to continue in the peace and fellowship of the people of God.
7. **The children of believers** are, through God's covenant and promise, called to be part of the visible Church. Hence they are entitled to baptism and to nurture by the Church and pastoral care, to the end that they may personally embrace Christ and claim the benefits of the covenant.
8. **All baptised persons**, even though they are adults and have made no personal profession of their faith in Christ, are entitled to the pastoral care and instruction of the Church and are subject to its discipline.
9. **The whole Church**, in its ministry and membership, is called to proclaim to all people by word and deed the Christian Gospel of salvation.

SECTION III - THE STANDARDS OF THE CHURCH

10. **The Word of God** as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the supreme standard of the Church.
11. **It is the privilege, right and duty of everyone** to examine the Scriptures personally, and each individual is bound to submit to their authority. Having formed a definite conviction as to what the will of God is upon any subject, it is the duty of everyone to accept and obey it. In exercising the inalienable right of private judgement, individual Christians are not to set their reason above the Word of God, or to refuse light from any quarter. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they are to use their reason to ascertain the divine will as revealed in Scripture, and are to refuse to subject conscience to any authority but that of the Word of God. In the words of the Westminster Confession "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the

doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.”*

12. **The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**, as a witness for Christ, has adopted subordinate standards in which is set forth what she understands the Word of God to teach on certain important points of doctrine and worship. These subordinate standards are a testimony for truth and against error, and serve as a bond of union for members of the Church.
13. **The Confession of Faith** (as approved by the Church of Scotland in her Act of 1647), and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, prepared by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, are the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Accepting these subordinate standards, the Church holds that, although civil rulers are bound to render obedience to Christ in their own province, yet they ought not to attempt in any way to constrain anyone’s religious beliefs, or invade the rights of conscience.
14. **In the Church** resides the right to interpret and explain her standards under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

SECTION IV - THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

15. (1) **The Lord Jesus Christ is the sole King and Head of the Church**, whether invisible, visible or particular; and He has appointed therein a government distinct from civil authority. The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world, its laws are founded on His authority, they are specially directed to the conscience and their sanctions are spiritual.
 - (2) Christ is always present in His Church and governs it by God’s Word and Spirit through the ministry of men. This government is both representative and corporate. Accordingly, voting members have the inalienable right to choose their own officers; and such officers are under obligation to serve together in the courts of the Church.
16. (1) **The permanent officers in the Church** are Presbyters (that is elders), who in Apostolic times were also called bishops or overseers, and Deacons. In each apostolic Church there was a plurality of Presbyters: all ruled and some also laboured in Word and doctrine, hence the titles Teaching Elder and Ruling Elder.
 - (2) The Teaching Elder, who is also called preacher, evangelist, teacher, pastor or minister, in addition to the oversight of the Church which he exercises in conjunction with the Ruling Elders, is commissioned to preach God’s Word, to administer the sacraments of the Gospel and to instruct the people, and is set for the defence of the Gospel.
 - (3) The Ruling Elder is appointed to watch for souls and to exercise government and discipline in conjunction with the Teaching Elder.
 - (4) Deacons are appointed to care for those in need and to manage the temporal affairs of the congregation. This office is also discharged by committee.
17. **Calling to office in the Church** is an act of God by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This calling is ordinarily made manifest through the inward testimony of a good conscience on the part of the person, the approval of God’s people on the part of the Church and the concurring judgment of a court of the Church.
18. (1) **In discharging their various duties** the officers of the Church are entitled to receive the assistance of other members of the Church. Scripture directs Christians to know those who labour among them and are over them in the Lord, to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake, and to obey them that have the rule over them.
 - (2) The authority of any officer in the Church is derived from Christ and belongs not to the officer, therefore any person appointed to office may not assume any spiritual pre-eminence over others, but be only minister, disciple and servant. Teachers or rulers are not warranted on their own authority to publish any doctrine nor to prescribe any ceremony; nor is submission to them obligatory, except in so far as their doctrine and decisions are consistent with the Word of God.

* The Confession of Faith, Chapter XX, Article II.

SECTION V - THE COURTS OF THE CHURCH

19. (1) **The Presbyterian Church in Ireland shall be governed by Presbyters in representative assemblies**, otherwise known as the courts of the Church. These courts comprise Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the General Assembly.
- (2) Each congregation and each member of a congregation (except members of Kirk Session) in all matters of doctrine, discipline, worship and order, is under the immediate jurisdiction of the Kirk Session of the congregation; each Kirk Session, in these matters, is under the immediate jurisdiction of the Presbytery; each Presbytery is similarly under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly.
- (3) The Moderator of each Church court shall preside at its meetings as the first among equals.
- (4) Any member of the Church may be present at proceedings of Church courts; but when a court deems it expedient, and no law of the Church interferes, it may transact its business in private, excluding all but members of the court and any others whose attendance the court considers necessary (but see also sub-paragraph 6).
- (5) A barrister or solicitor shall not be permitted to represent or appear on behalf of any minister or office-bearer or member of a congregation in any inquiry or other proceedings whatsoever conducted by any court of the Church or by any commission thereof.
- (6) Meetings of Kirk Session shall normally be held in private and all discussions kept in confidence.
20. (1) **A superior court may**, subject to this paragraph -
- (a) direct any court subordinate to it (in this section referred to as an “inferior court”) to investigate any matter properly falling within the jurisdiction of the inferior court;
- (b) remove any matter from an inferior court and itself or by a commission with the powers of the superior court investigate and adjudicate thereon;
- (c) call for and examine the records of an inferior court;
- (d) amend those records or pronounce such judgment on the actions of the inferior court and give that court such directions, conformable with the law and standards of the Church, as the superior court deems right;
- (e) exercise all the powers, authority and jurisdiction of an inferior court and, in particular, may -
- (i) confirm, reverse or vary any decision, determination or pronouncement of the inferior court; or
- (ii) remit any appeal to it from an inferior court, or any matter arising thereon, to the inferior court with such declaration or directions as the superior court may think proper;
- (f) appoint one or more of its ministers or of the ruling elders within its jurisdiction to be a member or members of an inferior court for the purposes of any matter arising before the inferior court, but an appointment under this paragraph shall not prejudice any right of appeal or reference exercisable in relation to the inferior court.
- (2) Before pronouncing judgment or making any declaration with respect to any decision, determination or pronouncement of an inferior court or giving any direction to an inferior court, the superior court shall have before it the inferior court or representatives of that court together with the inferior court’s records or authenticated copies thereof. The inferior court shall comply with any direction given to it.
- (3) The Assembly, or any commission or committee with Assembly powers, shall not adjudicate in any matter of discipline except by way of reference or on appeal; and if, before or on the hearing of any such reference or appeal, fresh charges or complaints emerge, they shall be remitted for investigation in the first instance to the appropriate inferior court.
21. (1) **An inferior court may** refer any matter, or any point of difficulty arising in connection with any matter, coming before it to the next superior court for directions or determination or advice. Such a reference may be without the expression of any opinion on the matter by the inferior court. The inferior court shall comply with any direction given to it.
- (2) In addition, an inferior court may petition or complain to a superior court with respect to the proceedings of any court exercising co-ordinate or lower authority over which the superior court has jurisdiction.

(3) A petition or complaint shall not lie under sub-paragraph (2) unless, at least ten days before the superior court meets, written notice of intention to petition or complain, together with particulars of the subject-matter of the petition or complaint, shall have been given to the Clerk of the co-ordinate or lower court by the Clerk (or, if he is unavailable, by a member) of the court complaining.

(4) Except to the extent provided for in sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), no inferior court has a right to review the proceedings of a superior or co-ordinate court.

(5) An inferior court, or a committee thereof, shall not meet during any sitting of a superior court to which it is subordinate without leave of that court.

- 22.** (1) The acts of a Church court shall be treated as valid, subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), notwithstanding -
- (a) any defect that may afterwards be discovered in the appointment or qualification of a member of the court; unless it shall be shown that the vote of such a member was decisive, particularly in cases of discipline;
 - (b) any accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to a member of the court, or non-receipt by a member of a notice duly sent; or
 - (c) the presence at any sitting of a court of a person not entitled to be present.
- (2) Where, on the ground of irregularity arising by reason of any such defect or failure as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1), an appeal is made to set aside the proceedings in which the defect or failure occurred, or any step taken in connection with or in consequence of those proceedings, the court appealed to may either -
- (a) grant the appeal upon such conditions; or
 - (b) allow amendments to be made; or
 - (c) make such other orders or issue such directions with respect to the proceedings generally, as the court may, in all circumstances and in keeping with the rules of natural justice, think just and proper.
- (3) an appeal under sub-paragraph (2) shall not be allowed unless it is made before the party appealing has taken any fresh steps after becoming aware of the irregularity.
- 23.** (1) **Any Church court may appoint a commission or committee**, the latter being sometimes called a board, for such purposes as the court may determine, or may resolve itself into a committee of the whole court.
- (2) In every case the commission, committee or board shall report to the court.
- (3) Nothing in sub-paragraph (2) shall operate to prejudice any powers conferred on commissions of the Assembly under paragraphs 126-130.
- 24.** Rules may make such provision as the Assembly shall think proper for the holding and functioning of Church courts, including provisions for -
- (a) the appointment, powers and duties of commissions, committees, boards or members or officers of such courts and the fixing of a quorum for, or the appointment of an assessor to, any such court, commission, committee or board;
 - (b) the practice and procedure to be followed in or in connection with proceedings before such courts, commissions, committees or boards, or on appeals or references arising therefrom; or
 - (c) the records to be kept and reports to be made by such courts, commissions, committees or boards.

(See Pars. 141-147 for conduct of business in Church Courts)

CHAPTER II - THE KIRK SESSION

SECTION 1 - MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

25. (1) **The Kirk Session shall consist of** the ordained minister or ministers and the ruling elders of the congregation except that a ruling elder may be given permission by the Kirk Session not to carry out the duties of the eldership for a specified time. All members, including the Moderator, are entitled to propose, speak to and exercise equal votes, except that the Moderator shall have no deliberative but only a casting vote. Where a ruling elder has been temporarily released from the duties of the eldership in the Congregation for a specified time, that elder shall not act as a member of the Kirk Session and shall not be entitled to attend, speak or exercise a vote in the Kirk Session.
- (2) It is recommended that deaconesses working in a congregation be invited to sit and deliberate with the Session when matters affecting their work are under discussion.
26. (1) **In a congregation not having two ruling elders** able for active duty, the Presbytery shall, if it sees fit, take measures to have elders elected by the congregation: but, until a Kirk Session be thus obtained, the Presbytery shall associate one or more of the ministers or ruling elders under its jurisdiction with the minister and ruling elder or elders of the congregation, as the case may be; and these together shall constitute its interim Session.
- (2) An interim Session of a congregation shall have all the powers and responsibilities of a regular Session.*
27. (1) **The Moderator shall be** the minister who is in active duty in the congregation. In his absence, or if it seem expedient, any other minister of the Church may, at his request, act as Moderator for the time being. (*See also Par. 198 (6)*).
- (2) Where the minister in active duty is incapacitated, or temporarily suspended from ministerial functions, or where the congregation is vacant, that is without a minister in active duty, the Presbytery shall appoint one of its ministers to be interim Moderator of Kirk Session.
- (3) Without a minister to act as Moderator there cannot be a meeting of Kirk Session.
28. **Each Kirk Session shall appoint a Clerk** from its members, and he shall continue in office during the pleasure of the Session.
29. (1) **Stated meetings of the Kirk Session** shall be held at least twice in each year and, in addition -
- (a) the Moderator may convene the Session on his own authority and shall do so upon the written request of any two members of Session; and
- (b) the Session shall meet when directed to do so by the Presbytery or General Assembly.
- (2) A meeting of Session may be convened by announcement from the pulpit at a public service in the congregation, or by notice given to every member of the Kirk Session, on the authority of the Moderator.
- (3) Subject to sub-paragraph (4) the Moderator and any two members shall form a quorum of the Session.
- (4) The Session may by resolution fix its quorum to include more than two members in addition to the Moderator.
30. (1) **The duty of ruling elders** as members of Kirk Session is to work together with the minister in the oversight and government of the congregation, for the upbuilding of God's people in spiritual fruitfulness and holy concord, and for the extension of Christ's kingdom among all people.
- (2) Ruling elders, by their calling, share equally with ministers in responsibility for practical witness both within the congregation and in the wider world.
- (3) In the discharge of his duties each elder should be assigned a district or special responsibilities within the congregation in which he may more particularly represent the Kirk Session by visitation, private counsel and report but the Kirk Session may assign such other duties as it sees fit.

* (For procedure in a new cause see rules regulating Formation of Congregations, pars. 227-234).

31. (1) **To be chosen for the office of the eldership** in a congregation a person must be a voting member of that congregation and a regular attendant on its ordinances. He should be circumspect and exemplary in his conduct, both in the Church and in the world, of acknowledged piety, endeavouring to maintain the worship of God in his family and held in esteem by the people. Women shall be eligible for election on the same conditions as men.
- (2) A ruling elder shall not hold office in more than one congregation at the same time, except as a member of an interim Session.
- (3) Sub-paragraph (2) shall not apply to retired ministers who may be members in the congregation.
32. (1) **Procedure in the election** or co-option of ruling elders, and their subsequent ordination or installation by Presbytery, shall be in accordance with rules. (*See Pars. 175-182*).
- (2) Subject to rules, it devolves normally upon the Session to determine when an election of ruling elders is to take place, and the number of ruling elders to be chosen; but any member of the congregation may petition the Session upon the subject, and the decision of the Session in these matters is subject to review by the superior courts.
33. (1) **Should a ruling elder cease** to be a regular attendant on the ordinances of the congregation and contributor to its funds without a cause considered by the Session to be sufficient the Session shall report the matter to the Presbytery, who shall take such steps as are deemed advisable.
- (2) Any formal charge or injurious complaint against a ruling elder shall be dealt with by the Presbytery.
- (3) A ruling elder may resign his duties in a congregation or his office of eldership in the Presbyterian Church with the consent of the Presbytery.
- (4) When a ruling elder has resigned his duties in a congregation he shall be placed upon a roll of elders without charge. Where such resignation arises from his transfer to a congregation in another Presbytery, the receipt of his disjunction certificate shall be reported to that Presbytery, who shall place him on their roll of elders without charge.
- (5) After his name has been for three years upon a roll of elders without charge an elder shall be deemed to have resigned from the office of eldership, unless otherwise resolved by Presbytery.
- (6) When a ruling elder has resigned from the office of the eldership, or has been suspended or excluded from Church privileges, he ceases to be a ruling elder of the Church. During temporary suspension from office, while a charge against him is under investigation, he shall cease to act as a member of Kirk Session.

SECTION II - DUTIES AND RIGHTS

34. **The Kirk Session is the governing body of a congregation in its Christian calling** and as such has the rights and duties set out in this section.
35. The Kirk Session shall -
- (a) watch over and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation, and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its bounds;
 - (b) seek to further the contribution of the Church to Christian witness and service in the local community;
 - (c) authorise such measures of practical co-operation with other Churches as may involve the life and work of the congregation.
36. The Kirk Session shall -
- (a) call meetings of the congregation, decide what matters shall be brought before such meetings and record their proceedings and decisions taken;
 - (b) transmit memorials and other documents from the congregation to the Presbytery;
 - (c) be responsible for the due appointment of a congregational committee and congregational trustees;
 - (d) conduct the election of ruling elders for the congregation;
 - (e) select candidates for hearing in a vacant congregation, in accordance with rules;

- (f) call assistant ministers, deaconesses and lay workers for service in the congregation.
37. The Kirk Session shall -
- (a) fix the time and place for the administration of the ordinances of the Church. In the conduct of services and any invitation to occupy the pulpit the minister is responsible to Presbytery, not to the Kirk Session;
 - (b) be responsible for the appointment of the organist, choirmaster and members of the choir;
 - (c) control the Sunday Schools of the congregation, and approve the teachers employed, the books used, and the regulations of the schools;
 - (d) decide what meetings shall be held in the Church buildings, subject to the laws of the General Assembly;
 - (e) refuse to sanction the holding of a bazaar, sale of work, or entertainment of any kind for the purpose of raising funds for religious or philanthropic objects until the promoters have undertaken that no money shall be raised by means of balloting, raffling, or lottery tickets.
38. The Kirk Session shall -
- (a) exercise authority in the Lord over all persons connected with the congregation both with regard to their doctrine and conduct;
 - (b) admit suitable persons to Church privileges and authorise the granting of certificates of disjunction to Church members;
 - (c) inquire into and judge concerning the truth of allegations or charges with reference to the doctrine or conduct of members of the congregation; admonish, suspend or exclude from Church privileges, or readmit on satisfactory evidence of repentance, those who have been suspended or excluded therefrom;
 - (d) receive the petition of any member or adherent of a congregation seeking redress of a grievance, and transmit to Presbytery any appeals against decisions taken. The Moderator of Kirk Session shall advise an appellant, if so requested, on the procedure to be followed.
39. (1) **Baptism** shall be administered to those who make a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the infant children of one or both believing parents. It shall be administered in all cases by a minister and, as far as possible, it shall be administered publicly.
- (2) Sacramental discipline is the responsibility of the Kirk Session; so it is desirable (though not necessary, except in difficult cases) that the Session should be informed that a baptism is to take place and that the elder for the district should visit the home. Refusal also is the prerogative of the Session.
- (3) The Kirk Session shall keep a record of all baptised persons in the congregation not yet in full communion; and shall in due time seek to lead them to full confession of their faith by their partaking of the Lord's Supper.
40. (1) **Admission to The Lord's Supper.** The Kirk Session shall admit to the Lord's Supper only those who have been baptised, who make a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, and whose character is consistent with such a profession. (*See also Par. 84(2)*).
- (2) Persons proposing to take communion for the first time shall be carefully instructed by the minister. When the Kirk Session has satisfied itself as to their knowledge, soundness in the faith and Christian experience, their names shall be entered on the roll of communicants and be read to the congregation. Such communicants should be received into the fellowship of the Church in the presence of the congregation.
- (3) The Session may admit to membership of the congregation a member of the Church in full communion on receiving a certificate of disjunction, but no member to whom a certificate of disjunction has been refused shall be received without authority of a superior court. In the case of undue delay in presenting such certificate, the Kirk Session shall not admit to privileges until it is satisfied regarding the reasons for delay, and also regarding the character of the person during the interval. Where the person comes from a denomination which does not provide such certificates or similar documents, he may be received on written affirmation of his full communicant status or on reaffirmation of his faith.
- (4) The Session shall distribute tokens of membership to communicants in the congregation previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper.

- (5) (a) In addition to oversight of the public administration in a congregation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is desirable that Sessions should encourage opportunities by which communicants who are housebound may also partake in the sacrament from time to time.
- (b) In such services it is desirable that one or more persons representing the main congregational fellowship should be present to share with the minister and individual communicant; though it is no requirement of the communion service that there be an elder to distribute the elements.
- 41. (1) Communicants' Roll.** The Kirk Sessions shall keep a roll of members of the congregation in full communion, and shall revise it at least once in each year. A list of adherents shall also be kept and regularly revised.
- (2) The Session shall not remove the name of a communicant from the roll, unless on his decease, or his removal from the congregation, or unless he has been continuously absent from the Lord's Table for two years and has failed when approached in person, or if that prove impractical, by personal letter on behalf of the Session to give reasonable grounds for absence, or unless it has dealt with him by way of Church censure, or unless it is satisfied that he has left the congregation to avoid censure. No communicant shall be removed from the roll merely for absence due to age or infirmity.
- (3) The Session shall, on application within a reasonable time, authorise a certificate of disjunction to be issued to a person entitled to it. A member has the right to this certificate if he is free from scandal and official censure, and clear, as far as the congregation is concerned, of every pecuniary obligation to it into which he may have entered.
- (4) A communicant has the duty, when leaving a congregation, to obtain a certificate of disjunction and to present it at the earliest opportunity to the Kirk Session of another congregation. Where a communicant expects to be absent for two or more years he should be reminded of this obligation. *(See App. 2 for Forms).*
- 42. (1) The Kirk Session shall promote** by example and exhortation the ideal of Christian Stewardship in every department of life.
- (2) The Session shall work in co-operation with the Congregational Committee to ensure that the congregation accept their full obligation under the various assessments and United Appeal of the General Assembly as well as in support of the local Church.
- 43. (1) The Representative Elder.** The Kirk Session of each established congregation shall commission a ruling elder to represent it in the Presbytery or General Assembly.
- (2) Such commission shall continue in force for the period of meeting mentioned in the commission, unless in the meantime the commission has been withdrawn and its withdrawal certified to the court, or unless in the meantime another commission has been issued.
- (3) Through the membership of minister and representative elder, the Session shall not only seek to represent the interests and concern of the congregation in the higher courts of the Church, but also the interests and concerns of the higher courts within the congregation.
- (See App. 3 for Form of Commission)*
- 44. (1) Records, etc.** Each Kirk Session shall keep a minute book with a record of its proceedings, and shall submit this to the Presbytery for inspection when so required by them.
- (2) The Session shall keep in its minute book full lists of the disused and current record books of the congregation, of legal documents relative to its property, of every bequest or donation received, and of all other Church property of historic interest, together with information regarding where or in whose custody these items are normally kept.
- (3) The Session shall give answers to such statistical or other queries as may from time to time be addressed to it by any superior court, or committee thereof.
- (See also Pars. 255-258)*

CHAPTER III - THE CONGREGATION

SECTION I - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

45. (1) **Subject to rules, meetings of the congregation shall be called from the pulpit at a public service of the congregation -**
- (a) by the authority of the Kirk Session, for such purposes as the Session may determine; and
 - (b) when directed by the Presbytery, or by a superior court, to consider any matter mentioned in the direction.
- (2) In every case of a special meeting of a congregation, the notice convening it shall specify the business to be transacted; and no business except that specified shall be brought before the meeting.
- (3) Rules may make such further provision as the Assembly may consider proper with respect to meetings of the congregation, including provisions regarding the holding of, or the procedure to be followed in or in connection with and the keeping of records of such meetings, and may make different provision for Annual Meetings and special meetings.
46. **Meetings of the congregation may be called for the following purposes -**
- (a) to consider the state of religion and needs of the community;
 - (b) to promote the cause of missions, Christian training and co-operation, or otherwise advance the Lord's work;
 - (c) to foster Church fellowship in the life and work of the congregation;
 - (d) to choose a minister, ruling elders or members of the Congregational Committee;
 - (e) to authorise transactions affecting the congregational organisations or agents;
 - (f) to authorise transactions affecting the congregational ownership of, interest in, or plans for, any lands or buildings;
 - (g) to appoint, remove or accept the resignation of trustees of the congregational property; (*See App. 6C*)
 - (h) to appoint auditors for the congregational accounts;
 - (i) to contribute to, or authorise the raising of, special funds for congregational or other religious or charitable objects; or
 - (j) for such other objects as the Kirk Session may determine.

SECTION II - THE CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

47. (1) **The duties of the Congregational Committee** shall be to take care of the poor and administer the temporal affairs of the congregation.
- (2) The Committee shall also -
- (a) administer all funds belonging to the congregation, or held by trustees for its use and apply these funds for the purposes for which they have been created or contributed;
 - (b) administer all other property of the congregation, take care to maintain and insure it and take steps to gather funds needed for these purposes;
 - (c) have charge of the letting or allocating of seating accommodation in the Church building;
 - (d) regulate conditions under which the Church premises, halls or rooms are used, subject to decisions of the Session;
 - (e) promote the interests of the Central Funds and Missions of the Church;
 - (f) be responsible for appointing or dismissing the sexton;
 - (g) manage the graveyard; and

- (h) carry out such other functions as may be prescribed.
48. (1) **The Congregational Committee shall consist of** members of the Kirk Session together with such numbers of persons elected to the committee by the congregation as the Session may fix.
- (2) Persons so elected shall be voting members of the congregation who are regular in attendance on the Church's ordinances but a person shall not be disqualified from election on the ground of irregular attendance unless he has failed when approached on behalf of the Kirk Session to assign reasonable grounds for his irregular attendance.
- (3) Elections to the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with rules. (*See Pars. 183-185*).
- (4) Rules may provide for the filling of casual vacancies occurring in the membership of the Committee. (*See Par. 186*)
49. (1) **A meeting of the Congregational Committee may be called** by the Moderator of the Kirk Session on his own authority or that of the Kirk Session, and he shall call such a meeting at the written request of any three Committee members. In addition, the Committee shall meet when directed by the Presbytery, or by a superior court, to consider any matter mentioned in the direction.
- (2) All such meetings shall be called either by intimation from the pulpit at a public service of the congregation or by notice given to every member.
- (3) The Moderator of the Kirk Session has the right to act as chairman of the Congregational Committee; but, at his request or in his absence, the Committee may appoint one of its members to preside.
50. (1) **Rules with respect to the Congregational Committee** may make such provision as the Assembly considers proper, including provisions with respect to the procedure to be followed on or in connection with the keeping of records and accounts, the fixing of a quorum for its meetings, the appointment and duties of officers, the exercise of the functions of the committee and the oversight and management of the property and funds under its control.
- (2) It shall be the duty of every member of the Congregational Committee to disclose to the Committee any pecuniary interest he may have (whether on his own account or by or with or through another) in the outcome of or in any commission, advantage or benefit arising from any contract or proposed contract or other transaction affecting the committee and to withdraw from any meeting of the Committee while such transaction is discussed and voted upon by the Committee.
- (3) The Committee shall give answers to such queries as may from time to time be addressed to them by any superior court of the Church, or by a committee or commission thereof.
51. (1) Any member of the Congregational Committee or any member of the congregation who is dissatisfied with any decision of the Committee may, after notice in writing to the Committee, petition the Presbytery against that decision.
- (2) The decision of the Presbytery, or a superior court, on such petition shall bind all parties.
52. (1) Where the functions of a Congregational Committee are discharged by a Board of Deacons, the election, ordination, installation and resignation of the deacons may be regulated by rules.
- (2) Rules may also provide for the suspension or exclusion of a deacon.

SECTION III - CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY

(*See also Pars. 241-245 and App. 7*)

53. **Appointment of Trustees and Declarations of Trust.** Every congregation shall ensure that -
- (a) congregational trustees are or have been appointed to receive and hold the property of the congregation upon trust for the congregation and subject to its directions, so far as those directions comply with the terms of such trust and with this Code; and
- (b) the terms of such trust are set forth in a deed or deeds and, if drawn after the commencement of this Code, are in conformity with the provisions of the relevant rules.

54. Every deed of trust and memorandum of choice and of appointment of congregational trustees executed after the commencement of this Code shall be in general conformity with such forms, if any, as may be prescribed by rules and a copy thereof shall be given to the Congregational Committee. (See App. 7)
55. (1) **Property held on behalf of or for the benefit of a congregation**, without any trusts having been expressly declared or created in respect thereof -
- (a) shall be held in trust for the congregation, so long as the congregation continues to acknowledge the authority of, and remain in connection with the General Assembly and to profess and maintain the Standards of the Church as contained in the Code of the Church for the time being in force; and
- (b) thereafter shall be held by such trustees and applied for such purposes as the Presbytery, with the approval of the Assembly may decide.
- (2) Rules may contain provisions with respect to the use and occupation of manse property by ministers and such provisions shall safeguard the rights possessed at the commencement of this Code by ministers ordained prior to 5th June, 1935.
56. **All title deeds and securities** of the congregation should be deposited by the congregational trustees for safe custody in the strong room provided for the purpose at Church House, Belfast, or such other place as may be prescribed, and the trustees should give a copy of every such deed or security to the Congregational Committee.
57. (1) **It shall be the duty of congregational trustees** to carry out the lawful directions given to them on behalf of the congregation by the Congregational Committee and, in giving such directions and in administering the property of the congregation, the Committee shall be bound by the subsequent provisions of this paragraph.
- (2) Transactions creating, transferring or affecting any estate or interest in congregational property shall not be entered into without the authorisation of the congregation and the sanction of the Presbytery being first obtained; save that the Kirk Session may, subject to this Code and to rules, authorise what meetings shall be held in or on congregational property.
- (3) All leases, declarations of trust or other assurances relating to the acquisition, disposal or use of congregational property shall before being executed be submitted to the Presbytery and shall not be executed without the prior approval of the Presbytery. It shall be the responsibility of the minister and the representative elder to ensure that this submission is made.
- (4) The site and plans of all new buildings proposed to be erected on congregational property and of all proposed demolition, structural alterations of or structural additions to existing buildings thereon (including all proposals and designs for memorials, windows, artificial lighting and for seating and furnishings requisite for public worship) shall be submitted for the approval of the Committee on Church Architecture and of the Presbytery and, without such approval, and without the approval of the congregation, no such erection or alteration shall be undertaken or made.
- (5) Notice of the convening of a meeting of the congregation for the purpose of giving an approval required under sub-paragraphs (2) or (4) or paragraph 46(f) shall be given from the pulpit on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.
58. (1) **Without prejudice to any other provision** of this section every donation or bequest made to a Kirk Session or Congregational Committee without specific directions for its application shall be applied by the Session or Committee for the benefit of the congregation.
- (2) Nothing in this section shall operate to prevent any congregational property being brought into a common investment scheme made under section 25 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 or any amendment or re-enactment thereof, or under any corresponding enactment of the Republic of Ireland.
59. (1) **The administration of the property and funds** in the charge of Congregational Committees shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Code and any relevant rules.
- (2) Rules may contain provisions with respect to:-
- (a) the accounts and records to be kept by Congregational Committees and the audit thereof;
- (b) the funds which shall or may be maintained or supported by the Committees;

- (c) the obligations to be discharged by the Committees, including the fulfilment of financial obligations to or in respect of the minister, and to the Assembly or the Presbytery, and the time and manner in which these obligations are to be met; and
 - (d) the custody and application of the property and income of the congregation.
- 60. (1) Co-operation with other Churches.** Where congregations or Church Extension charges are organised jointly or in co-operation with other Churches or organisations, special arrangements or schemes may be made, with the approval of the General Assembly and the sanction of the Presbytery, for the holding, application and use of property.
- (2) A special arrangement or scheme under this paragraph may provide for -
 - (a) the vesting of property in trustees representative of the participating Churches;
 - (b) the creation of special trusts in respect of property so vested;
 - (c) property to be held jointly with all or any of the participating Churches or organisations; or
 - (d) assistance to be given by an appropriate agency of the Church.
 - (3) Provisions in special arrangements or schemes under this paragraph shall prevail over any provision of this section or of any rule which is inconsistent therewith.

CHAPTER IV - THE PRESBYTERY

SECTION I - MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

61. The Presbytery shall consist of:-

- (a) the ministers in active duty of the congregations assigned to it by the Assembly or retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;
- (b) a ruling elder (being a member of Kirk Session in the Presbytery) appointed by the Kirk Session of each established or fully constituted congregation in the Presbytery;
- (c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Board of Mission Overseas and other ministers serving under any Assembly Board in special work outside Ireland, who have been installed or inducted to their charge by Presbytery or have retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;
- (d) associate ministers, ordained assistant ministers and ministers in special work (including Church Extension charges) located within the Presbytery as members of its congregations, where called by authority of the Assembly;
- (e) associate ministers, ordained assistant ministers and ministers in special work retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;
- (f) ruling elders in the Presbytery appointed annually by Presbytery to correspond in numbers to ministers qualified under the foregoing sub-paragraph (d);
- (g) ruling elders in special work, so ordained and/or inducted by Presbytery;
- (h) ministers or ruling elders associated with congregations in the Presbytery who are ex-officio members of Assembly;
- (i) such other ministers or ruling elders as the Assembly may from time to time determine.

62. The Presbytery may invite ministers or elders of other Presbyteries, or other elders and members of their own congregations, or corresponding persons in sister Churches, to sit and deliberate with them, giving liberty of attendance and debate but without a vote.

This invitation shall not operate when a judicial process is before the court nor when the court sits in private, except where attendance is desirable for the business of the court.

63. In cases of difficulty the Presbytery may request the General Assembly's Moderator's Advisory Committee to appoint representatives, from among the ministers and ruling elders of the Church who shall for this purpose have the full powers of members of the court.

64. (1) The stated officers of a Presbytery shall be the Moderator and the Clerk, who shall be chosen by the Presbytery.

(2) The Moderator shall exercise only a casting vote.

(3) A Presbytery may also appoint other special officers or agents with particular responsibilities as may be required. These shall report to Presbytery on their work at least once a year.

65. (1) The Moderator shall enter upon office at the stated meeting of Presbytery in March; and shall continue in office one year, unless in the course of the year it be otherwise determined by the Presbytery.

(2) The Clerk shall be appointed by the Presbytery from among the ministers or ruling elders under its jurisdiction and shall hold office at the pleasure of the court.

(3) At the first meeting of a new Presbytery the senior minister present shall act as Moderator in constituting it, unless the General Assembly has appointed otherwise.

(4) In the event of a Moderator ceasing to be a member of the court, dying, becoming incapacitated or otherwise prevented from discharging his duties, the member of Presbytery last occupying the Moderatorship shall assume the office with authority to discharge all its functions until it be otherwise determined by the court.

66. The Presbytery shall meet as follows:

- (1) It shall hold at least four stated meetings in each year, and shall notify the Clerk of Assembly annually when these are to be held. Members shall attend such meetings or be required to give satisfactory reasons for their absence.
- (2) It shall meet when and where it is directed to do so by the Assembly.
- (3) It shall hold special meetings at its own discretion. Such meetings shall be convened when decided by the Presbytery, or at the request of the Moderator, or of any seven members.

- 67. (1) Notice of every meeting** or adjourned meeting of Presbytery, except meetings directed to be held by the Assembly who shall direct how notice of such meetings shall be given, shall be given by post or otherwise conveyed to every member by or with the authority of the Clerk, at least three clear days before the date of the meeting, that is to say not including the date of the posting or conveying the notice and the date of the meeting. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of a notice by, any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of that meeting.
 - (2) The notice convening the meeting shall state as fully as possible the business to be transacted.
 - (3) At a special meeting only business specified in the convening notice shall be transacted.
 - (4) The foregoing provisions shall not apply to a special meeting convened by announcement in the General Assembly and held with its permission.

- 68. (1) A quorum shall be** ten members of Presbytery, at least three of them being ministers, met at the appointed time and place.
 - (2) In the absence of a quorum an ad hoc Committee of Presbytery may be formed to transact any urgent, non-controversial business. Any decisions taken require to be sustained at the next meeting of Presbytery.

SECTION II - DUTIES AND RIGHTS

- 69. (1) The Presbytery is the body primarily responsible for corporate oversight** of the congregations and causes assigned to it by the General Assembly, and of the ministers and elders connected with it, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom generally within its bounds.
 - (2) The Presbytery shall, so far as lies within its powers, observe the laws and directions of the Assembly and ensure that those subject to its jurisdiction do likewise.
- 70. The Presbytery shall -**
 - (a) superintend generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of its congregations and interpose in any matter which, in its judgment, affects their welfare;
 - (b) hold visitations of congregations and issue such directions for work in them as may be for the encouragement, progress or correction of the congregation and its members. (*See Pars. 246-251*).
 - (c) sanction those joint projects for Inter-Church co-operation within its bounds which are subject to official Schemes or terms approved by the General Assembly (*See Par. 60*).
- 71. The Presbytery shall -**
 - (a) provide ordinances for congregations in the pastorate of which there is a vacancy, and for destitute districts in their area;
 - (b) appoint interim Moderators and interim Kirk Sessions in accordance with rules;
 - (c) constitute new congregations when so authorised by the General Assembly.
- 72. The Presbytery shall, in accordance with rules -**
 - (a) arrange for the election of ministers in congregations. (*See Pars. 189- 195*);
 - (b) receive and sustain or refuse calls from congregations or other authorised bodies in the Church (*See Par. 196*);

- (c) ordain licentiates and install or induct and appoint ministers to their charges in its congregations or in special work to which they have been called (*See Pars. 210-213*);
- (d) ordain or install and appoint ruling elders, including missionary elders (*See Pars. 204-206*);
- (e) commission and appoint deaconesses, lay agents and missionaries who have been called by an authorised body in the Church (*See Pars. 201-203*);
- (f) receive resignations of ministers, loose them from their charges and appoint them as ministers without charge under their care or grant them appropriate credentials (*See App. 4*);
- (g) determine when a minister has abandoned his charge (*See Par. 220*);
- (h) receive licentiates and ministers without charge having satisfactory credentials from another Presbytery in the Church; and receive and report applications for admission from licentiates and ministers in active duty or ministers without charge of another Church;
- (i) receive resignations of ruling elders (*See Par. 33*).

73. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) see that ministers preach the Word faithfully to their congregations, regularly visit the families under their charge, visit the sick, promote peace and temperance among the people, adopt means for the instruction of the young in Gospel doctrine and the distinctive principles of the Presbyterian Church, encourage education and missionary enterprise and discharge all other duties of the pastoral office;
- (b) see that the duties of the eldership are properly discharged;
- (c) require that Kirk Sessions maintain two services each Lord's Day, unless the Session decides otherwise, and that they make provision where practicable for the holding of meetings during the week for praise and prayer and the religious instruction of the people;
- (d) ensure that a minister or licentiate in active duty shall not accept any paid public appointment, unless it be of an occasional kind, without the consent of his Presbytery and the Union Commission. A breach of this rule shall amount to contumacy, for which the Presbytery shall proceed against the offender.

74. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) inquire into and deal with reports affecting the character, usefulness or soundness in the faith of ministers in its congregations or in special work under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, and into the character and soundness in the faith of ministers retired or without charge or in work not under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, of deaconesses and of licentiates and students under its care. In the general case of ministers in special work or of students, the Presbytery shall invite four representatives of the appropriate Assembly Board to sit with them as assessors in the case, who shall for this purpose have the full powers of members of the court. In the special case of theological professors this procedure shall be followed if the College Management Committee, following preliminary investigation, requests the Presbytery to act;
- (b) receive formal charges or complaints against ministers, licentiates, ruling elders or deaconesses, summon witnesses and take evidence in cases of complaint or charge, and pronounce and publish judgment, in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the Church.

75. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) advise Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees in cases of difficulty;
- (b) inquire into the conduct of Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees and set them right if they have erred. For this purpose it shall have the right to call for a review at any time the records of a Session or Committee;
- (c) receive and deal with references for advice or for adjudication from Kirk Sessions and appeals against decisions of Kirk Sessions;
- (d) deal with Memorials, that is petitions, addressed to it by bodies or persons under its care, or by others alleging wrongs to have been done by such bodies or persons.

76. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) examine and sanction transactions affecting the congregational ownership of or financial interest in any lands or buildings; and have power to intervene for the declaration of trusts or appointment or renewal of trustees according to rules;
- (b) examine and approve of the site and plans of all new Church buildings and of all permanent alterations or additions to Church buildings or property and of furnishings used in the conduct of public worship and of any demolition involved in such projects subject to the previous sanction of these by the Church Architecture Committee;
- (c) examine the statement of accounts of each congregation and certify the annual statistical returns, in accordance with directions issued by the General Assembly from time to time;
- (d) require that, except for a special service or sale of work, no minister shall seek financial aid outside its bounds for the benefit of congregational property or reduction of debt, except with the prior permission of Presbytery and in accordance with directions made by it;
- (e) have the right to make an assessment on each of its congregations proportional to the amount of stipend paid, to meet the incidental expenses of the Presbytery; and be required to publish annually an audited statement of accounts of its Incidental Fund.

77. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) foster Sunday School work within its bounds, requiring as far as possible that at least one school be maintained in connection with each congregation, having a programme which embraces study of Scripture, the Shorter Catechism, and the Missions and Agencies of the Church;
- (b) (i) encourage the development and foster the progress of education generally, with a pastoral concern for and Christian responsibility towards all involved in or seeking to benefit from education or vocational training, and
 - (ii) for these purposes safeguard and secure the exercise of the Church's rights of representation on school management committees and similar bodies. Particular care should be taken to discharge these duties during a ministerial vacancy.

78. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) have the right, in accordance with rules and procedures, of nominating for the approval of the General Assembly, persons desiring to undertake the work of the ministry; of receiving them under its care, when approved, as recognised students for the ministry, and of licensing them as probationers;
- (b) co-operate with the Board of Christian Training in supervising the life and conduct of the students under its care. Where the character or work of a student is considered unsatisfactory, the Presbytery may proceed as in paragraph 74 or, if it deem it advisable, delegate its authority to the Board of Christian Training.

(See Pars. 214, 215)

79. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) license memorials received for transmission to superior courts, if these are in order;
- (b) have the right to petition or overture the General Assembly;
- (c) report annually to the Assembly and furnish returns on such matters as may be specified by the Assembly;
- (d) have the right annually to make a nomination for the office of Moderator of Assembly, such nomination to be made at a date or time set by the Assembly;
- (e) have the right to submit recommendations for the nomination of chaplains to public institutions within their bounds. Having received such recommendations, the Church and Government Committee, Forces Committee, Chaplains Committee or Education Board, shall make their nomination with Assembly powers; and no minister other than the minister so nominated shall accept the appointment without thereby forfeiting his claims on the central funds of the Church.

(See also Pars. 259-263)

CHAPTER V - THE MINISTER

80. (1) **The special calling of the minister** is the ministry of the Word, in public and in private, the conduct of public worship, the administration of the Sacraments, the instruction of the young and the pastoral care of souls. For the performance of these duties he shall be ordained by Presbytery as a minister in the catholic or universal Church and shall be responsible to the Presbytery having oversight of his ministry.
- (2) The minister should be a man of faith, dedication and good judgment, well trained and equipped for his work. His manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian Gospel, both within and outside the Church.
- (3) The minister's calling is exercised in the service of others. This should be done in partnership with the whole company of believers, each having his own gifts and making his own contribution, in the spirit of brotherhood and never as lord over another's faith.
- (4) The minister should seek to ensure that members of Kirk Session, the Congregational Committee and the congregational trustees know and discharge the duties of their office.
81. (1) **A minister in active duty** shall not leave the pastoral charge of his congregation for more than two successive months without previous notice to the Kirk Session and congregation, nor without the consent of Presbytery.
- (2) A minister in active duty is responsible for making arrangements to provide for essential ministerial services in his congregation during any absence therefrom, of which arrangements the Kirk Session should be informed. When a minister is prevented from making such arrangements, through illness or other impediment, the Presbytery shall be responsible for them.
- (3) It is the right of a minister to employ any minister or licentiate or accepted student of the Church as a temporary assistant. A minister of another Church may be employed for a period not exceeding 12 months, after which the approval of the Committee for the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates must be obtained.
- (4) No one shall occupy the pulpit of a congregation or be invited to address a meeting within the church premises without the permission of the minister, except by direction of the Presbytery or a superior court.
- (5) As a pastoral charge of a minister extends only to his own congregation or special work he shall not conduct nor take part in public services, other than marriage or funeral services, within the bounds of another congregation without authority from the minister of that congregation or, in a minister's absence or a ministerial vacancy, without written authority from the Interim Moderator or the Presbytery. This shall not inhibit the customary right to speak at ecumenical conferences or at conventions or evangelistic services which promote the cause of Christian unity and fellowship.
82. (1) **The minister shall be entitled** to the use of the place of worship and other church buildings for the purposes of his office, subject to any direction of Presbytery.
- (2) The minister has no right to use the buildings nor grant the use of them for any other purposes without the authority of the Kirk Session.
- (3) A minister shall not enter into any private or other arrangements with the congregation or its representatives, as to stipend, endowments, manse, glebe or manse farm, either before or after his settlement among them, without the consent of Presbytery and of the Union Commission.
- (4) No manse, glebe, or manse farm, shall be let or sold, nor its proceeds used for any purpose, without the consent of Presbytery and of the Union Commission having been first obtained. No capital funds created by a sale of a manse, glebe or manse farm prior to 31st December, 2005, shall be used for any purpose other than as previously agreed without permission of the Presbytery and the Union Commission.
83. (1) **A minister shall encourage baptism** of the children of all such as may make a credible profession of faith. More shall not be required, nor less accepted, by way of profession than that authorised by the Church as a whole.
- (2) A minister shall not decide on the admission or refusal of a person to baptism without the authority of the Kirk Session.
- (3) The sacrament of baptism is only to be administered once to any person.

(4) A minister shall not baptise the child of a member of another congregation, without authorisation from the minister of that congregation or its Interim Moderator, or Presbytery.

84. (1) **A minister shall encourage those who have been baptised** as children in due time to make a personal profession of faith, shall instruct them in preparation for first communion and shall present them to be received by the Kirk Session.
- (2) A minister shall not decide on the admission or exclusion of a person from the Lord's Supper, which authority belongs to the Kirk Session. Nevertheless, the minister presiding at any celebration of the Lord's Supper may invite all communicant members of other congregations and of other Christian Churches who are present to partake of the sacrament; but such an invitation shall not be taken as authorising participation of any person who has been excluded from the Lord's Supper by a Kirk Session or other competent Church authority.
85. (1) **Marriage.** The Church recognises that every ordained minister on the roll of a Presbytery or officially under its care as a minister without charge or licentiate is legally qualified to celebrate marriage.
- (2) A minister should not celebrate marriage on Sunday.
- (3) The minister should endeavour to ascertain that there is no lawful impediment to a marriage.
- (4) Where difficulty arises as to whether a marriage by the Church is advisable, the minister may consult with his Kirk Session or refer the matter to the Assembly's Committee on Marriage and the Family before granting the certificate for marriage.
- (5) A minister should not join in marriage a member of the Church with one holding beliefs or having a Church membership incompatible with the Christian witness of the Protestant Reformation, until careful instruction has been given in the doctrines and obligations of our evangelical faith or until other conditions approved by the General Assembly's Committee on Marriage and the Family have been observed.
- (6) While this Church does not prohibit the marriage of a divorced person or persons, it is strongly recommended that a minister does not join in marriage a person who has been divorced, except in circumstances recognised by the Committee on Marriage and the Family as justifying such action. In the case of a divorced minister wishing to remain in office after re-marriage the approval of Presbytery shall be obtained.
- (7) Where persons have been legally married in a Registrar's Office, it is lawful to add a religious ceremony on production of the certificate of marriage before the Registrar; but the religious ceremony shall not be held to supersede or invalidate the marriage before the Registrar.
- (8) A second religious ceremony of marriage shall not be held for any couple.

CHAPTER VI - THE SYNOD

86. – 92. *(Formerly Membership and Meetings of the Synod).*

93. (1) Every congregation shall be assigned to one or other of the historic Synods whose Union constituted the General Assembly.

(2) Five members, at least three of them ministers, shall form a quorum for these Synods.

94. – 96. *(Formerly Duties and Rights of the Synod).*

CHAPTER VII - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION I - MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

97. The General Assembly shall consist of:-

- (a) the ministers in active duty of the congregations connected with it or retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;
- (b) a ruling elder (being a member of a Kirk Session of the Church) appointed by the Kirk Session of each established congregation connected with the Assembly;
- (c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Board of Mission Overseas and other ministers serving under any Assembly Board in special work overseas, or retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;
- (d) associate ministers, ordained assistant ministers and ministers in special work (including Church Extension charges) in Ireland who have been called by authority of the Assembly;
- (e) associate ministers, ordained assistant ministers and ministers in special work retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;
- (f) ruling elders appointed annually by Presbyteries to correspond in numbers to ministers in active duty qualified under the foregoing sub-paragraph (d);
- (g) ruling elders in special work, so ordained and/or inducted by Presbytery;
- (h) ministers or ruling elders who are ex-officio members of the General Assembly in virtue of their appointment as:-
 - (i) Conveners and Secretaries of each of the Assembly's Missions or Agencies;
 - (ii) Conveners of each of the Assembly's Standing Commissions, Boards and Committees;
 - (iii) Clerks of Presbytery, being ministers without charge or ruling elders;
 - (iv) Two of the Trustees of the General Assembly, being ruling elders, appointed annually by the Executive Committee;
- (i) ministers or ruling elders who may be constituted members of the Assembly;
- (j) not more than 30 ruling elders, appointed annually by the Business Board, whose membership is desirable in the interests of the particular work of the Assembly or its Commissions.

98. The Assembly may invite other elders and members of the Church, or corresponding persons in sister Churches, to sit and deliberate with them, giving liberty of attendance and debate but without a vote. This invitation shall not operate when a judicial process is before the court, nor when the court sits in private, except where attendance is considered desirable for the business of the court.

99. (1) The stated officers of the Assembly shall be the Moderator and the Clerk, appointed by it and continuing in office at its pleasure.

(2) The Moderator shall exercise only a casting vote.

(3) The Assembly may also appoint other special officers or agents as may be required from time to time, who shall continue in office at its pleasure.

100. (1) The Moderator shall enter upon office at the annual meeting of the Assembly.

(2) The Moderator, during his year of office, shall be the principal public representative of the Assembly.

(3) In the event of a Moderator ceasing to be a member of the Assembly, dying, or, in the judgment of the Moderator's Advisory Committee, becoming incapacitated or otherwise prevented from discharging his duties, the member of Assembly last occupying the Moderatorship shall assume the office, with authority to discharge all its functions until it be otherwise determined by the Assembly.

(4) In the event of a Clerk ceasing to be a member of the Assembly, dying, becoming incapacitated or otherwise prevented from discharging his duties, the Moderator, or the court if in session, shall have power to appoint a Clerk pro tempore.

- 101. (1) The Assembly shall meet** at least once annually.
- (2) In addition to the annual meeting the Assembly may hold special meetings. Such meetings shall be authorised by the Assembly, or held at the request of five Presbyteries or of the Moderator, and shall be convened by the Moderator at a time and place to be determined by him in consultation with his Advisory Committee.
- 102. (1) Notice of the date, time and place** of the next annual meeting shall be given by the Moderator before the close of the previous annual meeting of Assembly and shall be included in the minutes. If for any reason the meeting cannot be so held, it shall be held at such other time and place for which the like notice shall be given as for a special meeting.
- (2) Notice of every special meeting of Assembly shall be posted to every minister and every Kirk Session (through its Moderator) and every other member of Assembly by the Clerk, at least ten clear days before the day of meeting.
- (3) The notice convening a special meeting of Assembly shall state the business to be transacted; and no other business shall be transacted at a special meeting except that which has been specified.
- (4) The commission of each representative ruling elder shall be sent to the Clerk of Assembly at least twenty-eight clear days before the date fixed for a meeting of the Assembly.
- 103. A quorum shall** be fifty members of the Assembly, at least half of them being ministers, met at the appointed time and place.

SECTION II - POWERS AND DUTIES

- 104. (1) The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church**, representing in one body the whole Church, including all subordinate courts and particular congregations, and acting as its supreme legislative, administrative and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it.
- (2) As such authority, the Assembly exercises the powers stated by this Code; and, in particular, it may -
- (a) deliberate upon and superintend matters which concern the whole Church in its doctrine, worship, witness, discipline and government, and declare the mind of the Church thereupon;
- (b) issue such directions and take such other action as it may find conducive to the welfare of the Church and the fulfilment of the Church's duties or the well-being of the community; and
- (c) deal with any matter, whether within or concerning the Church, which may arise and for which no other provision has been made.
- (3) Decisions of the Assembly are final and binding upon the whole Church, but a member of the Assembly who dissents from a decision may require a statement of the fact of his dissent to be recorded in the minutes, although he shall not thereby free himself from obligation loyally to implement the decision so long as it stands unaltered.
- 105.** The Assembly and only the Assembly may -
- (a) enact, alter or abrogate a law of the Church or prescribe rules;
- (b) amend, rescind or reverse its own sentences, decisions or resolutions;
- (c) decide the Church's general policy on co-operation or joint action with other Churches and authorise congregations, Presbyteries, boards or committees of the Church to participate in joint projects in accordance with such Scheme or on such terms as the Assembly may from time to time determine (*See Par. 60*).
- 106.** The Assembly is the only court of the Church which can exercise or delegate to a commission powers to -
- (a) regulate the number and extent of the several Presbyteries under its care;
- (b) remove congregations and ministers from one Presbytery to another;
- (c) place ministers and congregations for a time and for a specific purpose under committees or commissions appointed by itself;

- (d) admit congregations from other denominations or other ecclesiastical bodies, with or without their ministers;
- (e) determine the name by which congregations shall be known and their bounds;
- (f) sanction the promotion of new congregations and the porting of existing congregations;
- (g) unite congregations or dissolve unions of congregations;
- (h) dissolve existing congregations.

107. The Assembly is the only court of the Church which can exercise or delegate powers to -

- (a) constitute a member of the Assembly and subordinate courts any minister or ruling elder who, in the judgment of the Assembly, has rendered or is rendering important service to the Church;
- (b) call and appoint ministers, ruling elders or Church members to missionary service and call and appoint ministers to special work outside the pastorate of a congregation;
- (c) declare that a minister is eligible as a candidate for a vacant pastorate;
- (d) receive under the care of the church licentiates or ministers without charge from other churches;
- (e) approve of suitable persons as students for the ministry, appoint their course of studies and superintend their theological education;
- (f) permit ministers of congregations and ministers in special work to retire from the active duties of their office;
- (g) permit congregations to fill a vacant pastorate or choose a successor to a retired minister and fix the terms under which leave to call is given;
- (h) restore ministers suspended or deposed from office or removed from the records, and probationers for the ministry from whom licence has been withdrawn.

108. The Assembly shall itself and through its agencies seek on behalf of the whole Church to -

- (a) maintain correspondence with sister Churches;
- (b) conduct negotiations with the Governments of the country;
- (c) appoint times of special prayer, humiliation or thanksgiving over the entire Church;
- (d) issue public testimonies for the truth or against prevalent error;
- (e) issue pastoral addresses and directions to congregations; and
- (f) develop and superintend missionary operations and generally devise means for extending the Gospel at home and abroad.

109. In the discharge of its duties the Assembly may -

- (a) enquire as to any act or omission of any inferior court or of a Congregational Committee; provided that notice of motion proposing any inquiry involving matters which might affect the character of a minister or member of the Church must be given at least three weeks previously to the Clerk of Assembly for transmission forthwith to such minister or member through the Clerk of the inferior court or Secretary of the Congregational Committee;
- (b) on due cause being shown, appoint a commission or committee of visitation to any congregation or congregations of the Church, to supersede the Presbytery for the time being except in any case of discipline, having all the powers of Presbytery in relation to such congregation or congregations or as the Assembly may determine;
- (c) remit any cause before it to a commission, board or committee, whose powers shall arise from and (without prejudice to paragraph 126(3)) be limited by the resolution of Assembly which appointed it;
- (d) establish and superintend the agencies, committees, boards and commissions necessary in the general work of the Church at home and abroad which is maintained and regulated by the General Assembly and requires constant administration throughout the year;
- (e) adopt, amend or suspend Standing Orders to regulate proceedings at its meetings (*See App. 1*).

SECTION III - LEGISLATIVE POWERS

- 110.** (1) **The Assembly may make such rules** as, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 111;
- (a) are authorised by any provision in this Code;
 - (b) appear to the Assembly to be expedient for the purposes of carrying this Code into effect; or
 - (c) the Assembly may consider necessary or proper for the purpose of fulfilling the aims or securing the welfare of the Church.
- (2) On the coming into operation of this Code, the rules set out in Part II shall have effect as if they had been duly made by the Assembly under this section; and may be added to, amended, varied or revoked accordingly.
- 111.** (1) **The Assembly shall not make any rule unless** one month's notice thereof has been received by the Clerk of Assembly and the draft included with the printed Reports circulated beforehand to members of Assembly.
- (2) Amendments to the draft circulated may be accepted within the scope of the proposed rule.
 - (3) The rule may be made forthwith by a majority of two-thirds of those voting in the Assembly.
 - (4) A rule approved by less than a two-thirds majority shall be placed on the books for consideration by the next Assembly, when it may be made by a simple majority.
 - (5) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-paragraph (1) a proposed rule if licensed in accordance with Standing Orders may be made by the Assembly forthwith if it be approved *nemine contradicente*.
 - (6) No alterations to the rules governing the Central Ministry Fund, the Retired Ministers' Fund, the Widows of Ministers' Fund or the 1978 Ministers' Pension Scheme Fund shall be made unless notice proposing the making of the rules has been on the minutes of the proceedings of the Assembly for twelve months.
 - (7) The power of the Assembly to make rules under this section includes power, exercisable in the like manner and subject to the like conditions, to amend, vary or revoke any rule so made.
- 112.** (1) **Code Legislation and Barrier Act.** Subject to the conditions set out in this paragraph (which are collectively known as "the Barrier Act"), the Assembly may enact, alter or abrogate any provision of this Code.
- (2) Before licensing for submission to the Assembly, the advice of the Judicial Commission shall be obtained on the form and content of every overture for the enactment, alteration or abrogation of a provision of this Code in relation to the Church's general law.
 - (3) An overture for the enactment, alteration or abrogation of a provision of this Code shall, before being adopted, have been received and entered in the Minutes of the previous Assembly.
 - (4) Every overture which in the opinion of the Judicial Commission contemplates a material change in the constitution of the Church, or in its doctrines or in its worship, must be sent down to Presbyteries for their approval (or disapproval) before it can become the law of the Church.
 - (5) The judgment of the Presbyteries shall be given by a positive or negative vote which shall be recorded in the Minutes and duly notified to the Clerk of Assembly, together with the numbers voting for and against in each Presbytery.
 - (6) If a majority of the Presbyteries approve an overture referred to them, it may be dealt with by the Assembly at its next annual meeting.
 - (7) If an overture is rejected by a majority of the Presbyteries voting, but a majority of votes cast in the Presbyteries are in favour of the overture, then the overture shall remain on the books for a further year, and shall be dealt with at the succeeding annual meeting.
 - (8) An overture sent down to Presbyteries and submitted to the following Assembly shall be in the form in which it was received and entered on the Minutes of the preceding Assembly. When an overture, having been entered on the Minutes of the previous Assembly, is submitted to be dealt with and is then amended, the Moderator shall rule whether or not the overture as amended goes beyond the scope of the overture

as submitted. If he rule in the affirmative, it shall lie on the Minutes for a further year, and the Judicial Commission shall decide whether or not it be sent down to Presbyteries in the amended form.

(9) If the Assembly decide by a two-thirds majority that the passing of an overture which does not contemplate a change in the constitution, doctrines or worship of the Church is a matter of urgency, the Assembly may adopt it as an Interim Act for one year, but shall deal with it at the succeeding annual meeting.

CHAPTER VIII - ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES

SECTION I - MISSIONS

113. (1) In furtherance of the Church's calling to extend the Gospel at home and abroad, the General Assembly shall establish and maintain particular missions and other agencies for Christian service and outreach.
- (2) Such missions and agencies shall be entitled to support from the whole Church through prayer, gifts and personal service. Each subordinate court shall seek to encourage such support from the church members and organisations under their jurisdiction.
- (3) In providing means for extending the Gospel at home and abroad the General Assembly may authorise participation in joint Churches' or inter- denominational missions and agencies in accordance with such Scheme or upon such terms as the Assembly may from time to time determine.
- (4) The administration of the Church's missions and agencies shall be entrusted to commissions, boards, committees, and superintendents, conveners or secretaries appointed by the Assembly.
114. (1) **The Home Mission** shall provide, within the general structure of the Church, for a more flexible organisation in special areas of the Church's life and interest -
- (a) for ordained and supplementary ministries;
- (b) for grants in aid to congregations, causes or agencies giving service to the Church or to its members; and
- (c) for such other fields of service as the General Assembly or its Board of Mission in Ireland may from time to time determine.
- (2) **Presbyterian Women**, developing the work of the former Presbyterian Women's Association Home Department, in association with the Home Mission, shall -
- (a) support deaconesses in various areas of the Church's life and interest;
- (b) undertake such work particularly among women and girls as may be deemed advisable, subject to the approval of the General Assembly.
- (3) **The Board of Mission in Ireland** shall seek to encourage and support the development of new congregations in areas where these may be required -
- (a) by financial assistance for the erection of church premises or other accommodation; and
- (b) by such other grants or loans as may be needed for establishing the cause.
115. (1) **The Overseas Mission** of the Church, which incorporates the work of the Foreign Mission, Jungle Tribes Mission in India, the Colonial and Commonwealth Mission, the Continental Mission and the Jewish Mission, shall proclaim the Gospel in word and action in such countries and in such ways as the General Assembly or its Board of Mission Overseas may from time to time determine, wherever possible in partnership with Churches in that country or area.
- (2) **Presbyterian Women**, developing the work of the former Presbyterian Women's Association Overseas Department, shall seek to further the work of the Church, especially amongst women and children, wherever the Overseas Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is at work and in such other places as the General Assembly or its Board of Mission Overseas may from time to time determine.
- (See Pars. 289-293 for Mission Rules)*
116. (1) **The Irish Mission** shall seek to proclaim and share the blessings of the Gospel throughout Ireland, through the circulation and exposition of the Scriptures, and through evangelism, Christian training and education, in accordance with the evangelical witness of the Protestant Reformation.
- (2) **The Shankill Road Mission** shall seek to provide an evangelistic outreach, social witness and philanthropic ministry both to those who live in the general area of the Shankill Road, Belfast, and further afield.

(3) **The Kinghan Mission** shall seek to provide religious ordinances and pastoral care for those of impaired speech and hearing.

117. Other agencies and causes providing Christian service and outreach may be added from time to time by the Assembly to the list of Missions of the Church and entitled to receive the same general support.

SECTION II - THE COLLEGE

118. (1) The Union Theological College of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, constituted by Act of Parliament in 1978 under this name unites the former Colleges of the Church. Like those Colleges, it is under the control of the General Assembly as the supreme court of the Church. Its property is vested in the Trustees of the General Assembly.

(2) The former Colleges of the Church were:-

(a) The Presbyterian College, Belfast (also known as Assembly's College, Belfast), as governed by the provisions of the Acts of Parliament of 1882 and 1940, which incorporated College Trustees and provided for the management of the College.

(b) Magee Theological College, Londonderry, in association with Magee University College, Londonderry, as governed by an Act of Parliament of 1953. Provisions convening the management and trusts pertaining to the College were contained in the said Act.

(3) The Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland, established by Royal Charter, dated 25th October, 1881, is constituted by the professors in the Assembly's Theological Colleges or College, and is empowered by the said Charter to grant degrees.

119. It shall be a prime duty of the Union Theological College to provide for those theological studies or courses which may be required by the Assembly of its students for the ministry; and generally to promote theological education of high academic standard and practical training relevant to the work and witness of the Church.

120. (1) The right of election and appointment to all chairs and full- time lectureships in the College is vested by the said statute in the General Assembly.

(2) In the Assembly is similarly vested the right of appointment to the office of Principal of the College.

(3) Similarly the Assembly is required to appoint a Management Committee, which shall include nominees of the Faculty and of the Trustees.

121. (1) The Faculty of the College consists of the Principal and other professors appointed by the Assembly, together with such other persons as may be appointed by the Assembly on the proposal of the Faculty.

(2) The Faculty shall consult together for the effective discharge of the duties laid upon the College; for the maintenance of internal discipline in the College and the supervision of the students' chambers.

(3) If a charge is made, or a fama clamosa arise, concerning a student, the Faculty shall report the matter to the Presbytery under whose care the student has been placed.

SECTION III - FINANCIAL AGENCIES

122. (1) The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are a body incorporated under Royal Charter in 1871, with powers and duties regulated by the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871, and the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1901, for management of certain trust properties for the Church and other purposes.

(2) Trustees, who must be members of at least two years standing of some congregation in the Church, are appointed by a vote of the General Assembly and may be similarly removed but otherwise continue in office until they resign, die or disqualify themselves under the statutory provisions.

(3) The Trustees are charged with the management of the Fund created by commutation of the Regium Donum annuity or Parliamentary grant to ministers of the Church, the Sustentation Fund raised for their

further support and other funds and endowments for the benefit of ministers and for other causes under the jurisdiction of the Assembly.

(4) In the Trustees also may be vested colleges, school-houses, manses or other property, whether freehold or leasehold, held in trust for the Church or any congregation in connection therewith, to be held by the Trustees upon such trust and subject to such rights as at the time of grant, assignment or vesting affected the same respectively.

(5) The Trustees are empowered from time to time to make such bye-laws, rules and regulations as may be deemed expedient for the discharge of their duties, provided always that the said bye-laws, and every alteration, repeal or addition thereto shall not come into force and effect until approved by the General Assembly (*See App. 15*).

(6) The Auditors of Accounts of the General Assembly shall annually audit the accounts of all the funds held by the Trustees and shall present a report regarding them to the Assembly at its annual meeting.

- 123.** (1) The object of the **Central Ministry Fund** is to receive and distribute monies intended for the support of ministers and agents of the Church in accordance with such rules as may be approved from time to time by the Assembly (*See Pars. 311-318*).
- (2) (a) The Committee administering the Central Ministry Fund shall also manage the Sustentation Fund, whose object is to supplement local sources of ministerial income.
- (b) To this Committee shall be paid by the Trustees, unless and until otherwise directed by the Assembly, the income arising from the Commutation Fund.
- (3) The Committee administering the Central Ministry Fund shall also manage the Augmentation Fund, whose object is to supplement the emoluments of ministers in active duty of congregations whose incomes from local congregational funds are inadequate.
- 124.** (1) The object of the **Retired Ministers' Fund** (formerly called the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund) shall be to provide an annual retiring allowance of such maximum amount and subject to such rules as the Assembly may from time to time determine for ministers whose pension is not fully provided for from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Ministers' Pension Fund (1978) (*See Pars. 319-323*).
- (2) It shall be the aim of the Fund to undertake the provision and payment of the entire sum to be paid from central funds to such retired ministers.
- 125.** (1) The object of the **Widows of Ministers' Fund** shall be to make provision for the widows and widowers of ministers, of such amount and subject to such rules as the Assembly may from time to time determine, being widows or widowers whose pension is not fully provided for from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Ministers' Pension Fund (1978). This provision shall terminate on death or remarriage.
- (2) The Fund shall be raised by annual subscriptions from each congregation and by voluntary gifts and bequests. Congregational contributions shall be in accordance with directions and rules that the Assembly may make by resolution from time to time (*See Pars. 324-328*).
- 125(A)** The object of the **1978 Ministers' Pension Scheme Fund** shall be to provide the appropriate Funds for the contribution to be made to the Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978. The Fund shall be raised by quarterly contributions assessed on congregations in accordance with the rules of the Fund, together with bequests, donations and endowment income received for the object of the Fund.

SECTION IV - COMMISSIONS OF ASSEMBLY

- 126.** (1) (a) **A Commission of the Assembly may be appointed** to deal with matters referred to it, in which it shall have Assembly powers so far as these matters are concerned.
- (b) Matters may also be referred to a commission of Assembly in which it has not been given Assembly powers and upon which it must report to the Assembly, with recommendations, for decision by the Assembly itself.
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph 127(2)(a), members of a commission of Assembly must themselves be members of the Assembly appointing them.

(3) Each commission of Assembly shall report in full to the next annual meeting all decisions taken in the name of the Assembly. Inasmuch as while acting within its terms of reference the decisions of a commission having Assembly powers are already those of the Assembly itself, the report of such a commission must be received, and from its decisions there is no appeal. But where a memorial is presented alleging that a particular commission has exceeded its powers, the proceedings of that commission shall be reviewed by the Assembly and appropriate action taken. When this is taking place, members of the commission whose action is thus reviewed are not excluded because of having had part in those proceedings.

(4) A committee or board of the Assembly may also be given Assembly powers for a particular purpose, in discharging which there is similarly no place for appeal.

(5) Standing commissions of the Assembly are, the Judicial Commission, the Special Commission, the Union Commission and the Commission on Trusts. Other commissions may be appointed from time to time, with particular terms of reference as the Assembly may determine.

127. (1) **The Judicial Commission** shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and one person (being a minister or a ruling elder) nominated by each Presbytery together with not more than ten persons nominated by the Business Board.

(2a) Appointments shall be made from members on the roll of the Assembly to hold office for five years. During the period of office ruling elders who are members of the Judicial Commission shall be constituted members of Assembly, ex-officio.

(b) Any vacancy which may occur in the Judicial Commission membership through death, resignation or removal from the Presbytery shall be filled by the Assembly on the nomination of the Presbytery having the vacant seat, or of the Business Board respectively.

(3) Seven members shall form a quorum for the Judicial Commission.

(4) The Judicial Commission shall have Assembly powers to dispose finally of any cases of appeal or reference or any other matters which may be referred to it under or by virtue of this Code. However, where the Judicial Commission deems it appropriate, it may refer cases to the Special Commission to hear and to issue.

(5)(a) **The Special Commission** shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and ten other members of the Judicial Commission appointed by the General Assembly having due regard to all relevant factors. It shall hold office for five years.

(b) Any vacancy which may occur in the Special Commission membership through death, resignation or removal from the Presbytery shall be filled by the Assembly on the nomination of the Judicial Commission.

(6) Five members shall form a quorum for the Special Commission.

(7) The Special Commission shall have the same Assembly powers as the Judicial Commission to dispose finally of any cases of appeal or reference which may be referred to it.

128. (1) **The Union Commission** shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Convener and Secretary of the Commission, the Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Convener of the Home and Irish Mission Committee, one representative of the Central Ministry Fund, together with two persons (one, only, to be a minister) nominated by each Presbytery and up to eight by the Business Board appointed annually by the General Assembly.

(2) Nine members shall form a quorum for the Commission.

(3) The Commission shall have Assembly powers to determine conditions under which congregations shall be united, vacant pastorates filled or supplied, associate pastorates established, special ministries provided, and to deal with such other matters as the Assembly may from time to time refer to it. The law of the Church shall apply where relevant to associate ministers where ministers of congregations are referred to but the associate minister shall have no entitlement as such to benefits for the minister in active service.

(4) Before any step is taken by a congregation or Presbytery towards filling a vacancy in the pastorate of a congregation, the sanction of the Commission evidenced under the hand of its Convener shall be first obtained.

(5) Prior to such sanction being given and after consultation with the Presbytery or Presbyteries concerned, the Commission shall go into the merits of the case and decide -

- (a) whether the case is one for continuance, union, dissolution, porting or other special provisions as may be appropriate, including dissolution of existing unions for alternative arrangements;
- (b) what minimum of stipend, Central Ministry Fund contributions, ministerial expenses and other sums shall be paid from local sources or what grants shall be made from central funds;
- (c) what other special terms should be set or arrangements made for leave to call, pulpit supply or pastoral oversight;
- (d) to what Presbytery a newly united or ported congregation shall belong.
- (6) Where there is not a vacancy in the pastorate of a congregation, the Commission shall have power -
 - (a) upon report from Presbytery or a request from the congregation, to examine the matter and act accordingly;
 - (b) to arrange the retirement from active duty or alternative employment of a minister, upon such terms as may be agreed, to facilitate union with a vacant congregation;
 - (c) where a minister in active duty proposes to undertake additionally a paid public appointment, to examine the proposal and act accordingly so that his duties to the Church shall be discharged and no improper demand made upon the manpower and resources of the Church.
- (7) In congregations and Church Extension charges served by ministers under the Home Mission, ordained assistants or other agents of the Church, the Commission shall have power to -
 - (a) determine the remuneration of those so serving and allocate the cost among the various funds of the Church;
 - (b) determine the contributions to be made by the congregations or charges to various funds of the Church in respect of services received.

(See Par. 274 for Union Commission Rules)

129. *(Formerly The Shankill Road Mission Commission)*

- 130.** (1) **The Commission on Trusts** shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, together with ten other members appointed by the Assembly.
- (2) The Commission shall have 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.
- (3) The Commission shall provide for a compilation annually of an abstract of published bequests, to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and an abstract of bequests made but not yet received.
- (4) The Commission may advise congregations as to trusts affecting their properties.

CHAPTER IX - CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- 131.** (1) **Discipline in the Church is of Scriptural authority**, directed to the glory of God, the purity of the Church and the spiritual benefit of members.
- (2) It is to be exercised in faithfulness, meekness, love and tenderness, for the condemnation of offences and the recovery of offenders.
- (3) It is to be administered by those appointed to rule in the Church, in their respective courts, under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (4) Those who hold office in the Church, communicants, baptised persons and others sharing in the life of the Church, are subject to its discipline and bound to yield obedience in the Lord to the courts of the Church.
- (5) The rights of individuals are to be protected against the wrongful use of Church authority by rules laid down for its administration.
- 132.** (1) **Offences cognisable by a court of the Church** include anything in the teaching or conduct of a person under its jurisdiction which
- (a) has been declared censurable by the Word of God (as, for example, in 1 Cor. V. 9-11; VI, 9-10; Gal. V. 19-21; Col. III. 5, 8 and 9; 2 Thes. III, 6) or by the law and practice of the Church founded thereon; or
- (b) gives rise, or may give rise, to scandal injurious to the purity or peace of the Church; or
- (c) amounts to contumacy, by defiance of or disobedience to the courts of the Church.
- (2) A person who brings a charge lightly or maliciously is himself guilty of a grave offence and liable to censure.
- (3) In the case of an alleged personal and private injury, a court must not enter into a formal process of discipline unless those means of reconciliation have been tried which are commanded by our Lord in Matthew XVIII, 15-17.
- (4) Ministers, licentiates, accepted students for the ministry, deaconesses and all appointed to, or training for, posts of ministry or mission shall disclose promptly to the Clerk of the General Assembly, in confidence, any police investigation, summons, or conviction for offences against children, offences involving dishonesty, sexual misconduct, indecency, violence, alcohol or drugs, or any other serious offence.
- (5)(a) An offence alleged to have been committed more than five years previously shall not be made a ground of discipline unless:
- (i) the offender thereafter withdrew from the discipline of the Church; or
- (ii) the offence is alleged to have been revived by the offender's later conduct which requires investigation; or
- (iii) the offence is of a very grave nature.
- (b) A court shall not re-open investigation of an offence that had previously been investigated by it except in the case of discovery of new evidence that is considered by the court to be of importance for the possible exculpation of the offender.
- (6) A Church court shall not take cognisance of an alleged offence unless either -
- (a) some person or persons undertake to sustain the facts alleged; or
- (b) because of "fama clamosa" (i.e. public notoriety), the court itself considers the ends of discipline would be served by an investigation of the facts.
- (7) Rules may make provisions for the appointment and duties of prosecutors in matters of Church discipline.
- (8) The court may, instead of proceeding to a trial, have recourse to private conference with and admonition of the parties involved.

- 133.** (1) **The censures of the Church** are admonition, rebuke, suspension from rights and privileges of Church membership, suspension from office and deposition from office.
- (2) Except as provided by sub-paragraph (3), these censures may be inflicted only -
- (a) on admission of guilt or conviction for an offence to which paragraph 132(1) relates; and
- (b) by sentence of a Church court to be pronounced by the Moderator of the court.
- (3) In cases of charges of very grave offences or heresy, the Presbytery or the General Assembly may direct the temporary suspension of any minister or other office-bearer from the exercise of all or any of the functions of his office pending the final determination of the charge. Such temporary suspension is not a censure but rather the recognition of the position of one facing a charge yet to be investigated.
- (4) Censures may be removed or suspended only by the court by which they were inflicted or its successor or by a superior court.
- (5) Rules may make provision for the infliction of censures by way of sentence including deposition from office or suspension from exercising the rights and privileges of Church membership or the functions of office in the Church, the duration of any such suspension, or the removal of any such deposition or suspension; and for the restoration of the offender to office.
- (6) Subject to any such rules deposition or suspension from office does not necessarily imply suspension from rights and privileges of Church membership.
- 134.** (1) **The courts by which Church discipline is administered** are the Kirk Session, the Presbytery and the General Assembly. Rules may make provision for the procedures to be followed.
- (2) The Kirk Session has power of discipline within the congregation under its jurisdiction but not over ministers, ruling elders or probationers.
- (3) The Presbytery has power of discipline over its own members, over the ruling elders and congregations within its bounds and over probationers, deaconesses and ministers without charge who are under its jurisdiction.
- (4) All appeals from Presbyteries in cases of offences shall go direct to the General Assembly except where provision is made for the appeal to be heard by a Commission of the Assembly.
- (5) The Assembly, as the supreme court of the Church, has power of discipline co-extensive with the Church, but this power is exercised in accordance with the provisions of this Code and, in particular, of paragraph 20 (3).
- 135.** (1) **When considering an alleged offence** the court may exclude any of its members who may appear to it to be concerned therein.
- (2) Without prejudice to sub-paragraph (1) a member of the court who may be a witness in a case shall not adjudicate thereon.
- (3) Except with the unanimous consent of the court and of the parties, a member of the court who was not present during the entire proceedings shall not vote on any question arising thereon.
- (4) In the exercise of their disciplinary jurisdiction, the courts of the Church shall avoid unnecessary publicity.
- 136.** (1) Rules made under paragraph 24 shall have effect subject to the provisions of this Chapter.
- (2) Such rules may contain special provisions for cases of fama clamosa.

(See Pars. 329-350 and App. 11).

CHAPTER X - INTERPRETATION AND TRANSITION

137. In this Code, unless the context otherwise requires -

“the Assembly” means the General Assembly constituted under Chapter VII;

“audit” and “auditors”, when used in relation to a congregation, mean respectively the independent inspection of the accounts and financial statements, and the persons appointed to carry out such an inspection;

“bounds” means in relation to a Presbytery or congregation, the bounds assigned by the Assembly to that Presbytery or congregation as the case may be;

“the Church,” when used in Chapter II and subsequent chapters, means the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;

“church building” and “church premises” when used in relation to a congregation mean respectively the building used as the principal place of worship of, and the premises held and used for the purpose of, that congregation;

“congregational trustees” means trustees appointed to receive and hold property of the congregation;

“Education Board” means in relation to any Presbytery or Synod a Board established pursuant to the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act 1885 for the administration of endowments of the Presbytery or Synod (as the case may be) applicable in whole or in part to educational purposes;

“manse property” includes a manse farm or glebe as well as a manse;

“financial year” means the period of twelve months ending at midnight on 31st December;

“Presbytery” when used in relation to a congregation means the Presbytery within whose bounds the congregation is assigned by the Assembly;

“prescribed” means prescribed by the rules;

“rules” means rules made by the Assembly under section III of Chapter VII;

“solicitor or barrister” and “qualified as a lawyer” mean any person who has obtained a professional qualification as a solicitor or barrister, whether currently practising or not;

“Trustees” means the Trustees referred to in paragraph 122;

“Voting Member” means a person in communion with a congregation of the Church who is qualified in accordance with rules to vote on the affairs of that congregation.

138. In this Code, unless the context otherwise requires -

(a) words importing persons or male persons include male and female persons;

(b) words in the singular shall include the plural and words in the plural shall include the singular;

(c) where a word is defined, other parts of speech and grammatical variations of that word shall have corresponding meanings;

(d) the word ‘shall’ shall be construed as imperative and the word ‘may’ as permissive and empowering;

(e) a reference to any statutory provision is a reference to that provision as it is for the time being in force;

(f) references to chapters are references to chapters of this Code;

(g) references to sections, paragraphs and sub-paragraphs are references to sections, paragraphs and sub-paragraphs of the respective chapters, sections and paragraphs in which they occur;

(h) references to the Code include references to Rules.

139. This chapter applies to Part II as it applies to Part I of this Code.

140. (1) Any document made before the coming into operation of this Code and referring to the Code of the Church or any provision of the Code of the Church shall be construed as referring, respectively, to this Code or to the provision of this Code which has replaced the provision previously referred to.

- (2) Any person holding office or serving under any provision replaced by this Code shall continue in office or service as if he had been appointed under this Code and nothing in this Code shall prejudice his terms and conditions of service or rights or any allowances accrued or any superannuation in respect thereof.
- (3) Subject to sub-paragraph (4) nothing in this Code shall affect any proceedings begun in any Church court before the coming into operation of this Code, and any such proceedings may be continued and determined as if this Code had not come into operation.
- (4) Notwithstanding sub-paragraph (3), any direction, determination, order or sentence of a Church court after the coming into operation of this Code may be given effect to as authorised by this Code.

PART II

Rules

The following chapters contain the Rules which have effect by virtue of paragraph 110(2) of the Code.

CHAPTER XI - BUSINESS IN CHURCH COURTS

SECTION I - GENERAL RULES

141. (1) **All meetings of each court and committee** of the Church shall be opened and closed with prayer for God's guidance and blessing.
- (2) Any proposal for a pause in the proceedings of a meeting to engage in special devotions shall be made only by the Moderator.
142. (1) **Each court shall be presided over by a minister as Moderator.** If the appointed Moderator of Presbytery or Assembly be not present, or desire temporarily to vacate the chair, his predecessor in office, or one of his predecessors at his request, shall undertake the duties. In the absence of any former Moderator, the senior minister present shall constitute the court and call for the appointment of a Moderator pro tempore.
- (2) It is the duty of the Moderator to speak and act officially on behalf of the court and not personally in issues that come before a Presbytery or Assembly. If he desires to move, second or speak to any motion under debate, he shall, except where the court is a Kirk Session, leave the chair and not resume it until the matter has been determined.
- (3) It is the duty of the Moderator to decide for the court questions of order, to see that order is maintained in proceedings and that rules for the management of business are observed, to declare the decisions and pronounce the sentences and, when necessary, sign official documents in the name of the court.
143. (1) **The Clerk** of each court shall be chosen by the court, shall hold office during its pleasure, shall conduct correspondence on its behalf, and shall be responsible for all official records and documents entrusted to his care, which nevertheless remain the property of the court to be restored at whatever time it may require or at his resignation.
- (2) In the event of the Clerk of any court ceasing to be a member of the court, or dying, or becoming incapacitated for any cause from discharging his duties, or being unable to be present at any meeting of the court, the Moderator of the court, or the court if in session, shall have power to appoint a Clerk pro tempore.

SECTION II - THE ORDERING OF BUSINESS

144. (1) **Every court shall be entitled to adopt standing orders** for the regulation of its business, provided these do not conflict with the general law and rules of the Church.
- (2) Every court may have, or as occasion demands, may appoint a Business Committee to order items of business for submission to the court. Any member of the court may propose to the committee an item, or overture for consideration by the court. In the absence of a Business Committee such request shall be made through the Clerk of the court.
- (3) The Business Committee shall license, or amend and license, or reject a proposed item, resolution or overture, on considering whether it is competent business, properly expressed, but without pronouncing on the intrinsic merits of the proposal.
- (4) Before entering upon discussion of new business at any meeting of a court, an order of business shall be submitted in a report from the Business Committee or Clerk of the court. It is desirable that an order of business detailing, where possible, items for discussion and proposed resolutions should be circulated to members beforehand.
- (5) Should the Business Committee not license a proposed item or resolution, it shall be competent for any member of the court, when the report of the Business Committee is submitted to it, to move that the proposed item or resolution be included; but every such motion shall be made, considered and disposed of in private and the court may place on record its disapproval of any such motion which it considers groundless or vexatious.

(6) Additional business for consideration by a court may, subject to any standing orders in force, be proposed by any member when the order of business is submitted to the court, and may be referred to the Business Committee for license or be added to the proposed order of business but only with the permission of the majority of the members present. Any later proposal for additional business may only be received with the unanimous permission of the court.

(7) When any matter is brought before a court by petitioners or commissioners they, not being members of the court, shall conclude their statement before the court proceeds to deliberate; and they shall not be heard again unless they are asked or given permission to give additional facts or to explain something in their statement.

- 145.** (1) **To alter or rescind any existing decision** of a court, notice of motion shall first be given to and received by the court. The proposal may be made by any member of the court. Subject to any standing orders or rules for the time being in force for that court, the motion shall then be dealt with at the next stated meeting of the court or at a meeting fixed by the court for that purpose.
- (2) Unless in a case of discipline or where an appeal has been lodged, a decision may be reconsidered and rescinded at the same meeting of the court at which it has been given, provided two-thirds of the members who took part in the decision consent and provided the motion to reconsider and rescind be made and seconded by members who were in the majority.
- (3) Presbytery may not alter or rescind any decision taken by it at the same or earlier meeting with reference to the suspension or deposition of a minister, licentiate, elder or Church member or any decision against which an appeal has been regularly taken to a superior court. This prohibition shall not apply to a case of suspension for contumacy by summary censure.
- (4) Under Paragraph 21(4) of the Code it is not competent for a subordinate court to alter or rescind the decisions of a superior court, but it may proceed only by way of regular appeal or of a memorial petitioning for such action to be taken by the superior court.

- 146.** (1) **The business of any court may be undertaken**, in accordance with the Code either -
- (a) directly by the court; or
 - (b) remitted to a commission, having the power of the court for the matters remitted; or
 - (c) remitted to a board, committee or officer appointed by the court for such purposes as the court shall determine; always provided that their actions shall be subject to review by and may be appealed against to the court appointing them.
- (2) No commission, board, committee or officer can be appointed to exercise greater powers or wider responsibilities than those of the court appointing them.
- (3) A commission of a Church court consists of a limited number of members of the court appointed to consider matters referred to it and invested with the powers of the court itself so far as these matters are concerned.
- (4) A board or committee of a Church court consists of a limited number of persons, being either members of the court or of the Church though not the court, appointed to consider matters referred to them by the court and to report back with recommendations for action by that court. Where appropriate, the inclusion of deaconesses and general Church members, men, women and young people, is recommended.
- (5) A commission, board or committee may, at the discretion of the body concerned, invite persons who have not been appointed to their membership to act as consultants, with power to sit and deliberate but without a vote.

- 147.** (1) **All bodies appointed to undertake the business** of a Church court are answerable only to the court appointing them, and shall report to that court either verbally or in writing not less than annually.
- (2) Such report shall be received by the appointing court, recognising that the report is the responsibility of the body presenting it. The report when it has been received may be referred back for reconsideration.
- (3) Anything in a report or connected with it which a court is asked to adopt shall be specifically set forth in an appended resolution and submitted for adoption by the court. Without such a resolution a court is not bound by anything either in a report submitted or a speech made to the court.

(4) Any resolution submitted for adoption shall refer to the subject matter, in whole or in part, of the report itself. If a resolution is submitted on any matter extraneous to the report, but within the terms of the reporting body, there shall be submitted along with the resolution an addendum to the report itself setting out the considerations on which the resolution is founded.

(5) A resolution not arising out of the contents of a report, which any member of the court may desire to submit, should be presented in the form of a memorial setting out the considerations on which the resolution proposed is founded.

(6) Any member of the court may object to the adoption of any resolution by the court and, in the case of an inferior court, if the objection be not sustained may dissent and appeal to a superior court.

(7) The report of a commission shall be received and, inasmuch as the commission when acting within its terms of reference has the powers of the court, its acts are already those of the court.

(For Vacancy Commissions see Par. 192)

SECTION III - RULES OF DEBATE

- 148.** (1) **General discussions may be permitted** at the discretion of the Moderator, particularly in committee, to open up subjects of concern outside the strict order of debate, but any decisions of a Church court, commission, board or committee resulting thereupon shall be such as are clearly adopted in resolutions.
- (2) Subject to standing orders, when a subject is before a court, any member may submit a motion which, if competent and seconded, shall enter in the minutes and may be discussed. There shall be no record of a motion which has not been seconded. The word "motion" in this section shall be deemed to include amendment.
- (3) No motion is in order if it be the same in substance as any motion which during the same meeting of the court has been resolved in the affirmative or the negative; nor is a motion competent which violates the general law and rules of the Church or any decision of a superior court.
- 149.** (1) **When a motion has been made** and seconded, or while it is being discussed, an amendment may be moved and, if seconded, the amendment becomes the question before the court. Until this has been accepted, rejected, or withdrawn no other amendment can be moved except as specified in paragraph 152 below.
- (2) A competent amendment is an amendment which;
- (a) removes an ambiguity from the motion or overture or varies the wording to clarify the meaning; or
- (b) alters the scope of the motion or overture but not so as to extend it in principle. Restrictive clauses may be introduced which diminish the scope or modify the intention of the motion or overture provided that these do not in principle directly negative the original scope or intention.
- (3) The mere negation of a motion is not a competent amendment.
- (4) It shall also be competent to entertain a motion on a subject before the court which is contradictory or negative of the original motion, or of a substantial part of the original motion; and, if properly proposed and seconded, this shall be disposed of in accordance with the rules governing an amendment.
- (5) When during debate on a motion or subject before the court a motion or amendment is proposed which substantially goes beyond the scope of the initial motion and the court wishes its merits to be examined the debate may stand adjourned until it has been licensed and later submitted.
- 150.** (1) **If a first amendment be negated**, a second amendment may be moved, seconded and disposed of: if this second amendment be negated, a third may be moved, seconded and disposed of: if the third amendment be negated, the original motion shall be disposed of without further amendment.
- (2) If any amendment be carried, the motion as amended shall become the substantive motion before the court. On this only one further amendment may be moved. If the latter amendment be lost, the substantive motion shall be put without further amendment; but if this amendment carry it shall be put to the court as a new substantive motion to be passed or rejected as the decision of the House.
- 151.** (1) The wording of every motion or amendment shall be stated to the court by the mover before he speaks to it. Every motion or amendment, before it is discussed, shall be written out and placed in the

hands of the Clerk, if the Moderator or any member require it. No change in the terms of a motion or amendment under discussion shall be permitted without the unanimous leave of the court.

(2) A motion or amendment, which has been proposed and seconded may be withdrawn by the mover with the unanimous leave of the court; but such motion or amendment shall remain on the minutes and the fact of its withdrawal shall be recorded.

152. (1) When a motion or amendment is under consideration any motion from the list specified in subparagraph (2) below may be proposed and seconded, in which case it takes, for the time being, priority as the motion before the House. If it be rejected the House shall return to the discussion of the original motion or amendment, but if it be carried it becomes the decision of the House.

(2) These specified motions are, in order of precedence:

- (a) to adjourn the House;
- (b) to pass from the question;
- (c) to adjourn the debate;
- (d) to refer to a committee, board or commission;
- (e) to close the debate.

(3) It is competent to move only one of the foregoing amendments at a time, and each must be disposed of separately in accordance with the regulations in this paragraph before another (if any) is introduced. None of these may be moved when a member is speaking or when a vote is being taken.

- (4) (a) When a motion is made "to adjourn the House" or "to adjourn the debate", neither the mover nor the seconder, nor any other member, shall be at liberty to speak to it, but the motion shall immediately be put.
- (b) When a motion "to adjourn the House" is carried, the debate should be resumed when the House next reassembles, unless an order of the day intervenes.
- (c) When a motion "to adjourn the debate" is carried, the time to which it is adjourned shall be fixed. It then becomes the order of the day for that time, takes precedence of all other business, and cannot be entered upon sooner.
- (d) In resuming an adjourned debate the member who moved its adjournment is allowed precedence, provided he rises in his place at the proper time.
- (5) The motion "to pass from the question" may be discussed before it is put; but it shall not be a competent motion in the disposal of a reference or an appeal.
- (6) When a motion is made "to close the debate", the mover shall have leave to speak to it for five minutes and a reply of five minutes shall be allowed, after which the motion shall be put without further debate. This motion shall not be carried unless there be in its favour at least two-thirds of the votes.

153. (1) When speaking in a Church court every person shall address the Moderator.

- (2) Before debate commences, questions may be permitted to obtain relevant information on the meaning of a report or a motion to be submitted; but such questions shall not be used for the expression of opinions which are properly the subject for debate.
- (3) In the course of debate a member may speak only to a motion or amendment, or to a question of order.
- (4) If, during a debate, a member rises to speak to a question of order, the person who has been addressing the court shall resume his seat until the order has been decided.
- (5) Any speaker entering matters obviously not relevant to the question under consideration shall be called to order by the Moderator.
- (6) When two or more persons rise to speak, the Moderator shall call upon the member whom he first observed to rise in his place.
- (7) No person in the course of formal debate shall speak more than once to a motion or amendment, except the mover (or seconder) who has the right of reply; but one who has already spoken may be allowed to explain any statement of his own which he considers has been misunderstood, provided he

confines himself to such explanation. This rule may be relaxed when a court is engaged in discussion as a committee.

(8) No member shall introduce other business till the matter under consideration has been issued, or has been deferred by decision of the court.

(9) When the Moderator rises in his place during debate, any member then speaking or offering to speak shall sit down; and the House shall listen to the Moderator without interruption.

- 154.** (1) **Should any member use offensive** language in the hearing of the House, whether in debate or otherwise, the Moderator shall call him promptly to order; and any member of the House may draw the attention of the Moderator to the use of such language.
- (2) Language ruled to be objectionable shall be forthwith withdrawn and apologised for by the speaker in a manner satisfactory to the Moderator. Any failure to do so shall render the speaker liable to summary censure by resolution of the court for contempt.
- (3) Where Church members or others bringing or seeking to bring a charge, a complaint, an appeal or a petition before a Church court use to the court language of contempt in speaking or writing, the court may, apart from any other action, summarily suspend the hearing of the charge, complaint, appeal or petition till satisfaction has been given.
- 155.** After a debate is closed, no member shall speak except concerning the manner of taking a vote.

SECTION IV - VOTING

- 156.** (1) No voting by proxy shall be allowed in any court of the Church, nor may members be directed by any person or appointing body to vote other than according to their own judgement and conscience.
- (2) No member of a court shall be entitled to deliberate or vote in any case in which he is a party, or in which he is a candidate for office.
- 157.** (1) **A vote** or decision of a court on a question may be given:
- (a) by a majority of voices "aye" or "no";
- (b) by a show of hands; or
- (c) by a division of the House, taken in accordance with the standing orders or usual practice of the court.
- (2) When a vote is taken by voices the Moderator shall state his opinion as to whether the question is carried or rejected; and, if his opinion is not acquiesced in, the vote shall be taken by a show of hands; and, if members are not satisfied with the count, a division of the House may then be taken. When the Moderator has declared any motion carried or rejected, his decision shall not be questioned.
- 158.** (1) **At elections** to office by a court, should there be more than one candidate proposed and seconded the number of votes in favour of each shall be ascertained.
- (2) Should it appear that any one of them has a clear majority of all the votes given, he shall be declared elected.
- (3) Should no candidate have such a majority, one or more of those who have received the fewest votes shall then be set aside and another vote taken on the candidates remaining. This procedure shall be repeated until one receives a clear majority and is declared elected.
- (4) Canvassing on the part of a candidate for an office or appointment shall disqualify him for the office.
- 159.** The numbers voting on any question shall be recorded in all cases where the votes are counted; but otherwise only the decision as to whether the motion was agreed or lost.
- 160.** (1) **A member who has voted or spoken against any decision** of a court may intimate his dissent from, or his protest against, the decision; and he further has the right to have his dissent or protest entered on the minutes, provided he intimate his dissent or protest immediately after the decision has been pronounced.
- (2) Dissent relieves of all responsibility for the taking of the decision incurred, but does not exempt members from obedience to any law or injunction of the Church, nor from the obligation to implement the

decisions of Church courts, until these may have been reversed or altered by the processes of complaint or appeal, or other due consideration by the court.

(3) No reasons need to be given for a dissent. When given briefly they may, at the discretion of the court, be recorded and in any case shall be held in *retentis* among the Assembly papers. A court may reject reasons which are disrespectful to it or injurious to parties, and it may also provide for a reply to reasons for dissent.

SECTION V - ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRIES, APPEALS AND REFERENCES

(For Disciplinary Proceedings see Chapter XIX)

- 161.** (1) Where for any reason it appears to a Church court that a matter within its jurisdiction ought to be investigated by it, it may make a preliminary enquiry into the relevant facts (including, in the case of an alleged offence, an enquiry into the nature of the offence and the evidence likely to be available to establish or refute it) and subject to these rules, may, after such enquiry -
- (a) proceed to review and correct any proceedings of an inferior court;
 - (b) proceed to take any such action as may be authorised by any other provision of these rules;
 - (c) direct that disciplinary proceedings under Chapter XIX be initiated against any person or persons;
 - (d) if satisfied that the facts do not call for further investigations by it, or that appropriate action has been taken to remedy any irregularity, omission or failure disclosed by the facts and to prevent the recurrence thereof, direct that no further proceedings be taken;
 - (e) if satisfied that any offence disclosed by the facts is not flagrant, that the offender admits the offence, acknowledges his error and fully submits to the admonition of the court, direct that no further proceedings be taken; or
 - (f) determine whether at this stage to refer the matter, in accordance with paragraph 21 of the Code, to a superior court.
- (2) In addition to any other power exercisable by it, a Church court may, in the course of any annual or other review or other proceeding carried out by it, direct further or other proceedings to be taken under these rules in respect of any matter.
- (3) A preliminary enquiry under this rule may be initiated by the court itself, by a lower court or by one or more members of the Church acting in accordance with these rules.
- (4) All courts should endeavour to shorten their work as much as is practicable consistently with the performance of their duties and the edification of the Church.
- 162.** (1) If at any stage during the exercise of the jurisdiction of a Church court, it appears to the court that there is a reasonable possibility of an issue being resolved satisfactorily in a conciliatory way and with proper regard to the interests of the Church or of appropriate remedial action being taken in those interests, the court may adjourn its consideration of the matter for such period as it thinks fit.
- (2) On any such adjournment, the court may give such advice and directions as it thinks fit.
- (3) The court's powers under this rule are in addition to any inherent or other power of adjournment exercisable by it.
- 163.** (1) The Appellate courts are the Presbytery and the General Assembly. The Judicial Commission is also authorised to hear and determine appeals as provided for in Par. 165(5) and when doing so shall exercise any and all the powers of the General Assembly as the supreme judicial authority of the Church to hear and determine appeals.
- (2) The right of appeal belongs to –
- (a) any member of an inferior court who disapproves of a decision and desires to have it reviewed;
 - (b) any party in a case before a court who feels aggrieved by a decision in the case and desires to have the decision reviewed.
- (3) In addition to rules contained in this section, appeals in cases of discipline are subject to any special provisions regarding procedure contained in the rules in Chapter XIX.

164. (1) Anyone entitled and wishing to appeal against a decision of a court shall, within ten days from the announcement of the decision, give written notice to the Clerk of the inferior court of his intention to appeal, accompanied by a statement of his reasons; otherwise the decision of the court shall stand (*See App. 11(14)*).
- (2) The Clerk shall at all times be ready to advise an intending appellant on his rights and the procedures to be followed under the law and rules of the Church.
- (3) The Clerk, having received the written notice and reasons of appeal, shall cause a copy of the notice and reasons to be served on the other party, or on the Clerk of the court, if this should be the other party concerned.
165. (1) **When an appeal is regularly notified**, the inferior court and all parties to the case are thereby cited to appear before the bar of the superior court; and execution of the judgment of the inferior court shall be stayed while the appeal is pending.
- (2) Except to the extent to which rules contained in Chapter XIX may otherwise provide with respect to appeals in disciplinary matters, notification of an appeal -
- (a) does not remove any temporary suspension from the ministerial office, or from Church ordinances, under which the inferior court may have placed a minister, a ruling elder or other Church member, while a charge against him is being investigated; and
- (b) does not arrest procedure or process when an appeal is made during the progress of a case or when the appeal, in the judgment of the court appealed from, is manifestly frivolous or vexatious.
- (3) Each appeal shall in the first instance be considered by the Business Committee of the superior court, or in the case of the General Assembly by the Judicial Commission, who shall report with a recommendation on whether the appeal shall be heard and decided upon directly by the court or referred to a commission.
- (4) Every commission appointed to adjudicate in a case shall conduct its business according to the Assembly's rules for management of business in Church courts and procedures in cases of discipline.
- (5) Every appeal against a decision of a Presbytery shall go directly to the Judicial Commission which is empowered to proceed forthwith to hear and determine the appeal. However, should one of the parties, within 14 days of the date of the Notice of Appeal being lodged, request, in writing, that the appeal be referred to the General Assembly the Judicial Commission, shall, without adjudicating thereon, immediately transmit the appeal to the General Assembly with a report and recommendation in accordance with the foregoing sub-paragraph (3).
166. (1) **In preparation for the hearing of an appeal** every appellant is entitled to such extracts from the minutes of the inferior court, and to copies of such documents in its possession, as are necessary to enable him to bring his appeal before the superior court, but such extracts or copies shall be given to him only on the authority of the inferior court or of its Moderator and Clerk.
- (2) A court appealed from shall submit the minutes of its proceedings, and all the documents and evidence in the case in its possession, to the superior court; and shall appoint not more than five of its members to defend its proceedings and decision before the superior court.
167. **An appeal shall be held to be abandoned** and the decision appealed against shall stand, if the appellant, after giving notice of appeal to a superior court, fail to prosecute it at its next stated meeting or such special meeting as may be called to consider the appeal, unless he can satisfy the court that his failure to prosecute it was unavoidable.
168. **When the case comes before the superior court by way of an appeal** the members of the inferior court who are members of the superior court are not entitled to deliberate or vote as members of the superior court.
169. **The order of proceedings in hearing appeals shall be as follows:**
- (1) Read the decision appealed against.
- (2) Read the reasons of appeal.
- (3) Present the whole record of the proceedings of the inferior court in the case and all the documents in its possession, unless otherwise agreed by the court with the consent of the parties in the case.
- (4) Hear the appellant or appellants.

- (5) Hear the other party or parties in the case, if there be such.
 - (6) Hear any new evidence which may be tendered by either party.
 - (7) Hear the court appealed from, through its appointed representative or representatives.
- 170. A Church court may cite** to appear before it and give evidence, such persons, and may take such evidence, as it may think proper for the conduct of any appeal or reference before it; and the provisions of Sections II and III of Chapter XIX shall, so far as relevant, apply for the purposes of proceedings on appeals and references in other cases as well as for the purpose of proceedings in cases of discipline.
- 171. A superior court** may at any time exercise any of the powers conferred on it by paragraphs 20 or 22 (2) of the Code and, in addition, may, if it finds anything wanting in the conduct of an inferior court, advise, reprimand, or otherwise deal with the court.
- 172. (1) In addition to the powers of reference**, petition or complaint available to it under paragraph 21 of the Code, an inferior court may apply for the appointment of assessors by the Assembly's Moderator's Advisory Committee to sit with them in the consideration of a case.
- (2) Where a case is referred to a superior court the inferior court shall -
 - (a) formally notify all parties directly concerned of the action taken; and
 - (b) lay before the superior court an authenticated copy of its proceedings, together with the reasons of reference.
 - (3) Every matter referred to a superior court by a Presbytery for directions or determination or advice shall go directly to the Judicial Commission, which is empowered to proceed forthwith to hear and determine the matter. However, should any party directly concerned, within 14 days of the referral, request, in writing, that the matter be referred to the General Assembly, the Judicial Commission shall, without adjudicating thereon, immediately transmit the reference to the General Assembly with a report and recommendation on whether the matter shall be heard and decided upon directly by the Assembly or referred to a commission.
- 173. When the case comes before the superior court by way of a reference** (as distinct from on an appeal, as to which see Par. 168 on page 77) the members of the inferior court who are members of the superior court shall be entitled to deliberate and vote as members of the superior court.
- 174. The superior court having received the reference may without prejudice to any other power exercisable by it -**
- (a) decline to advise, or to investigate and adjudicate; or
 - (b) remit the case to the court which has made the reference; or
 - (c) give advice; or
 - (d) taking the place of the court referring, it may adjudicate; or
 - (e) appoint an assessor or assessors to be, with the inferior court, a commission to deal with the case in the room of the inferior court; or
 - (f) appoint a commission of their own members to investigate and adjudicate with the powers of the superior court.

CHAPTER XII - ELECTION PROCEDURES

SECTION I - QUALIFIED VOTERS

- 175.** (1) **Voting members in the Church** are communicants on the roll of the congregation who are listed, whether by name or number, as having contributed to the stipend or weekly freewill offering of the congregation in the last financial year.
- (2) In addition to those so listed the following shall also be qualified, if themselves communicants on the roll -
- (a) A wife shall be qualified on a husband's contribution, and vice versa, where both are communicants. This shall also apply should the contributor himself or herself not be a communicant. If neither husband nor wife in such circumstances is a communicant, then their contribution shall qualify the eldest child, residing in the family, who is on the communicants' roll.
 - (b) Should a contributor, who is not a communicant, be a member of a family residing together, then his contribution shall qualify the eldest member residing in the family who is on the communicants' roll.
 - (c) Those who have been added to the communicants' roll of the congregation since the close of the last financial year, upon confirmation by the treasurer that they have contributed during the current year, shall also be qualified voters.
- 176. Lists of voting members** shall be prepared and made available as follows.
- (1) For the election of members of Congregational Committee held not less than once every three years;
 - (a) the procedure prescribed below for the election of elders may be followed;
 - (b) alternatively, for an annual election by members at a Congregational Meeting, those taking part shall be reminded verbally of the qualifications required before any vote is taken. At the request of any three members the election shall be postponed until a certified voters' list has been prepared.
 - (2) For the election of ruling elders -
 - (a) The Kirk Session shall draw up a list of voting members, with their addresses; and this list when completed shall, as the Kirk Session may decide -
 - (i) be read to the congregation at public worship on two successive Sundays, or
 - (ii) be printed, or otherwise copied, and circulated to each member of the congregation therein named, or
 - (iii) be exhibited on two successive Sundays in such a position in the Church premises as the Kirk Session consider to provide reasonable notice of the contents of such list to the members of the congregation.
 - (b) (i) Notice of the intended preparation and availability of the list shall be announced to the congregation at public worship on a Sunday at least six days before the list is published;
 - (ii) At the same time the qualifications required of a voter in the Church as given in Par. 175 above and the procedure detailed below for the lodging of any objections or claims shall be announced to the congregation.
 - (c) Should any member of the congregation who claims to be a voting member desire to make an objection regarding any name on the list, or omitted from the list, he shall lodge his objections, with his reasons in writing, with the Moderator of Kirk Session within a week of the first publication of the lists by any of the prescribed methods; and the Kirk Session shall give its decision thereon or refer the matter for decision by Presbytery.
 - (d) Should any member objecting be dissatisfied with the decision of the Kirk Session with respect to his own or another's qualifications he shall have the right of appeal to Presbytery within seven days. The same right belongs in such cases to any member of the Kirk Session, including any assessors that may have been appointed by Presbytery.
 - (e) When the voters' list has been finalised by the Kirk Session without appeal or reference, or by the Presbytery after appeal or reference, it shall be dated, signed and certified as correct by the presiding

Moderator, who shall forthwith have it lodged with the Clerk of Presbytery, with a certified copy being retained by the Moderator or interim Moderator of Kirk Session as the case may be. This procedure must be completed before proceeding to the election.

- (3) **For the election of a minister**, the same general procedure shall be followed as for the election of ruling elders, with the following additional provisions -
- (a) The list shall be drawn up by the Kirk Session under the supervision of the interim Moderator, assisted by one or more assessors appointed by Presbytery.
 - (b) A certified voters' list, after having been lodged with the Clerk of Presbytery, shall not be altered during the vacancy in a pastorate unless the vacancy extend beyond twelve months, in which case the Presbytery shall have a new list prepared in accordance with the preceding rules.
 - (c) Notwithstanding the foregoing provision, should a widower or widow in a family die in the interval between the making out of a voters' list and the day of voting, the eldest child, being resident in the family and on the communicants' roll of the congregation, shall be entitled to exercise the deceased's vote, unless he is already himself a qualified voter.

SECTION II - ELECTION OF ELDERS

- 177.** (1) **The decision on when an election is to take place** and the number of ruling elders to be chosen devolves normally upon the Kirk Session; but any member of the congregation may petition the Session upon the subject and the decision of the Session in these matters is subject to review by the superior courts.
- (2) The decision of the Session shall be reported to the Presbytery for authorisation to proceed with the election and for the appointment of a commission to discharge the duties of the Presbytery in the matter.
- (3) (a) The minister shall explain to the congregation the duties and qualifications of ruling elders, whose election is sought, and paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Code shall be read.
- (b) The qualifications of voting members of the Church (cf. Par. 175), the method of publication of voters' lists (cf. Par. 176), and the method to be followed in the selection of those to be called shall also be explained.
- 178. The selection of those proposed to be called** to the office of ruling elder in a congregation shall be made by one or other of the following methods, as the Kirk Session shall determine.
- (1) Selection by the congregation -
- (a) On two successive Sundays the congregation shall be informed of the number of new ruling elders being sought and voting members invited to look out among themselves qualified persons suitable for the office, and to give to the Kirk Session on the following Sunday signed lists of the person or persons they propose, not exceeding the number required. The Session may, as they see fit, provide for this by the circulation of poll lists to be marked with the names proposed, signed and returned.
 - (b) The Session shall examine the lists received; and the names which occur most frequently if the Session approves and if those so proposed shall consent, shall form a list up to the number of ruling elders required. Should any decline to act their places may be filled by those who come nearest in the proposals recorded, up to the said number. No name shall be listed which has not received a minimum of one-third of the votes cast.
- (2) Selection by the Kirk Session -
- (a) On two successive Sundays the congregation shall be informed that an election of ruling elders is to take place and voting members invited to propose, in writing, for the consideration of the Session, any member or members qualified for the office.
 - (b) The Session, having considered the proposals received and having obtained the consent of those approved, shall list the names of those to be presented to the congregation.
- 179.** (1) **The list of those selected**, when completed as far as possible, shall be read to the congregation on two successive Sundays.

(2) Should any voter desire to make any objection to any of them, he shall lodge his objections, with his reasons in writing with the Moderator of Kirk Session within a week from the second announcement.

(3) Should the objection not be sustained by the Kirk Session, or should there be no objection, then on a subsequent day, fixed by the Session and not earlier than three weeks after the first reading of the list, there shall be held an official meeting of the congregation to confirm the election and call of new ruling elders.

(4) The names of those selected shall be presented individually to the meeting. A poll of the voters present shall be taken and if two-thirds of those who vote be in favour he shall be declared elected.

180. (1) **The name of every ruling elder elect** shall be reported to the appointed Presbytery commission, who shall confer with him respecting his acquaintance with divine truth, his personal faith, and his sense of the responsibilities and duties of the office.

(2) During a period prior to ordination elders elect shall receive a course of instruction, of not less than six sessions, in the doctrines of the Church as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and in the life and duties of the elder.

(3) The Presbytery commission, being satisfied on these matters, shall report thereon to Presbytery or shall themselves proceed to ordain those approved, if this lie within the terms of their appointment.

181. (1) **The co-option of a ruling elder**, certified as such from one congregation to another, or of a minister not in active duty, or of a ministerial member of the local Presbytery not in charge of a congregation, may be decided upon by the Kirk Session with the approval of the congregation and the sanction of the Presbytery.

(2) The approval of the congregation shall be obtained by announcing the Session's intention to co-opt on two successive Sundays; and if, at a meeting of the congregation, approval be not then unanimous, the Session shall fix a day to take the opinion of the voters, when unless two-thirds of those then voting approve they shall not proceed with the co-option.

(3) The sanction of the Presbytery having been obtained, the person being co-opted shall, on signing in the presence of the congregation, in the minute book of the Kirk Session, the formula of subscription required of ruling elders, be thereupon entitled to act as a member of the Session without the necessity of installation. The signing of the formula of subscription shall be reported to the Presbytery.

(4) Notwithstanding the foregoing, a ruling elder, certified as such from one congregation to another, or a minister not in active duty, or a ministerial member of the local Presbytery not in charge of a congregation may be elected in the normal way by the congregation he has joined and, if so elected, he shall be installed by the Presbytery.

182. (1) **Special arrangements** may be made for a call to the office of a ruling elder under the General Assembly in the case of a person appointed to work under an Assembly Board.

(2) (a) The Board concerned shall submit their call to the Presbytery within whose bounds the work is undertaken; or, if not within the bounds of a Presbytery in Ireland, to the Presbytery within whose bounds is the congregation of which the person is a member.

(b) The Presbytery shall thereupon arrange to confer with him and, if need be, with representatives of the Board concerned; and, being satisfied, shall sustain the call and proceed to ordain him to the office.

(3) No one should be called to office as a ruling elder where only a temporary or short-term appointment is proposed.

(4) Ruling elders ordained under these arrangements shall be members of the superior courts of the Church and shall be eligible for co-option or election to a local Session in the same way as a minister in special work.

SECTION III - ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

183. **The number of Committee members** shall be fixed by the Kirk Session, who shall from time to time determine by what procedure the voting members of the congregation shall elect qualified persons for the Congregational Committee.

- 184. The qualifications for Committee members** shall be those set out in the Code, Par. 48 (2).
- 185. One of the following alternative proceedings** for election can be used.
- (1) Convene a meeting of the voting members and elect qualified persons at such meeting.
 - (2) Ask the voting members to send a list containing the required number of names of qualified persons; and the persons having the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected.
 - (3) Print a list of all qualified persons, stating on it how many persons are to be elected. Circulate the list amongst the voters with instructions to mark the names of those for whom they vote; and the persons having the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected.
 - (4) On two successive Sundays the congregation shall be informed that an election of qualified persons for the Congregational Committee is to take place and voting members are invited to propose, in writing, for the consideration of the Kirk Session any qualified member or members. The Kirk Session, having considered the proposals received, and having obtained the consent of those selected, shall read the list of those selected to the congregation on two successive Sundays. On a subsequent day fixed by the Kirk Session there shall be held an official meeting of the congregation to confirm the appointment of the new members of the Congregational Committee. The names of those selected shall be presented individually to the meeting. A poll of the voters shall be taken and if two-thirds who vote be in favour he shall be declared elected.
- 186. A vacancy in the Congregational Committee** during the appropriate term of office may be dealt with by the Committee, who shall have power to co-opt a qualified person to fill the vacancy.
- 187. Officials of the Congregational Committee shall -**
- (1) include a chairman to preside over and a secretary to record its proceedings and to keep its minutes and papers and a treasurer or treasurers to take charge of the congregational funds, such persons being appointed by the Committee from among its own members; and
 - (2) hold their appointments at the pleasure of the Committee; be responsible to it for the books, documents and funds with which they may be respectively entrusted; and shall deliver up such books, documents and funds, when required by the Committee; and
 - (3) conduct proceedings in line with the general provisions for the conduct of business in Church courts.
- 188. The quorum** for a meeting of the Congregational Committee shall be fixed by the Kirk Session at not less than one quarter of its membership.

SECTION IV - ELECTION OF MINISTERS

- 189. Vacancy Arrangements:**
- (1) **A vacancy in a pastorate occurs -**
 - (a) on the death of a minister in active duty;
 - (b) on his retirement with the leave of the Assembly;
 - (c) on his resignation from his charge;
 - (d) on the deposition or removal of the officiating minister from the pastorate, or his being declared no longer a minister of this Church, without appeal to a superior court; or
 - (e) when such deposition, removal or declaration, after appeal has been confirmed.
- 190.** (1) (a) **On the occurrence of a vacancy**, the Presbytery shall immediately assume responsibility for official notification of the vacancy in the congregation and for its supply with the preaching of the Word and with other Gospel ordinances. This shall be exercised through the appointment of a vacancy commission, with a ministerial member of Presbytery being appointed as convener and interim Moderator of the Kirk Session.
- (b) On notification of the forthcoming vacancy the Presbytery may proceed to appoint a vacancy commission to facilitate the congregation obtaining leave to call.

- (2) (a) A congregation in such circumstances shall be supplied only by ministers, licentiates, accepted students for the ministry or elders of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland or by ministers of sister Churches having regular arrangements for ministerial eligibility in this Church.
- (b) In all such cases the person so supplying must be appointed by the vacancy commission; and no one may so supply unless the commission is satisfied that he is not being considered as a candidate for the vacancy.
- (c) A member of the Presbytery who has been convener and interim moderator at any time during the vacancy shall not be eligible for Call to the vacant pulpit, except where the Union Commission shall deem it advisable for the union of two congregations or in the case of a minister installed in the Home Mission. In all cases the Presbytery shall be consulted.
- (3) (a) The fees to be paid by a congregation for the remuneration of a supplier shall be fixed in accordance with the scale for pulpit supplies sanctioned by the Assembly; or, where appropriate, by the Union Commission.
- (b) The Presbytery shall also fix the remuneration and expenses to be paid by the congregation to the convener in charge of the vacancy, after consultation with the Union Commission.
- (c) The income received during the period of the vacancy, either for stipend or from endowments for the benefit of the minister in active duty, shall be available for the foregoing purposes; but where local resources are insufficient the Union Commission shall have power to authorise grants in aid from central funds.
- (4) While the minister of a congregation is under temporary suspension, or during trial, or while any appeal against his deposition or removal or a declaration on his ministry in the Church remains undecided, the Presbytery shall have the congregation supplied with ordinances, the cost of which shall be a first charge on the minister's stipend. Should he be found innocent and be restored to his charge all such losses shall be restored to him by the congregation.

- 191.** (1) **The Presbytery shall ensure** that the Rules of the General Assembly's Union Commission are observed and that their questions are duly answered; and they shall advise whether the retiring allowance (if any) and the amount of stipend offered are proportional to the means of the people.
- (2) Until the foregoing rules have been complied with and the leave to call of the Union Commission obtained, the congregation shall not appoint any deputation to hear a candidate; nor shall the Presbytery nor their commission appoint any candidate to preach in the congregation, or allow the congregation to make out a call.
- (3) In the issue of leave to call a clause shall be included in all cases stating that the minister shall be available to undertake additional duties, if required by the Union Commission, after consultation with Presbytery, and that the congregation recognise this condition of call.
- (4) Such leave to call shall operate for one year from the date when it is given, after which it shall be reviewed by the Union Commission and its terms, if seen fit, amended before renewal.
- 192.** (1) **The vacancy commission** shall report to Presbytery, at their stated meetings, on the supply of ordinances in the congregation and progress towards a call.
- (2) Lists of voting members in the congregation shall be drawn up under supervision of the commission in accordance with Par. 176 at an early stage in the vacancy.
- (3) The adoption of candidates for a hearing shall be approved by the commission as a whole, which shall also supervise the election proceedings for a new minister.
- (4) Any call made out by the congregation shall be reported to the Presbytery to be sustained; and the Presbytery shall then decide whether the ordination or installation shall, as is preferable, be conducted by the Presbytery directly or be remitted to the same or another commission.
- (5) (a) The convener of the commission shall keep a minute book for recording the minutes of each meeting of the commission, such minutes to be attested in the usual way.
- (b) When the vacancy is ended the convener shall submit the minute book to Presbytery, to be retained by the Clerk for a period of twelve months after the ordination or installation of the minister.
- (c) The convener shall also see that all minutes of Kirk Session and congregational meetings, held during the vacancy, are recorded and attested in the minute book of the Kirk Session.

- (d) The convener of the vacancy commission shall take charge of the marriage and baptismal registers of the congregation during the vacancy; and shall assure himself that the title deeds of congregational property, their other records, and the objects of historic interest listed in the Session minute book are in proper custody.

193. Eligibility of Ministers

Ministers are eligible for call only if, at the date when their candidature is approved by the vacancy commission of Presbytery, they qualify as follows.

- (1) **For congregations having less than 350 families** on their books as published in the most recent statistics:-
- (a) (i) all ministers of the Church who have been ordained for two years, or for one year if over 32 years of age, except that an ordained assistant to the Moderator of the General Assembly shall be eligible to apply from 15th January of the qualifying year;
- (ii) all licentiates who have served the Church for two years after licence, or for one year, if over 35 years of age, and who have obtained a certificate from the Board of Christian Training that their period of probation has been completed satisfactorily. Those licensed in May, June or July shall be eligible from 15th May in the qualifying year.
- (b) ministers of other churches, if previously received by the General Assembly, provided they have completed any course of study and/or period of assistantship required by the Board of Christian Training.
- (c) Eligibility for certain congregations whose ministers' stipends are less than the current ministerial minimum may further be restricted by the Union Commission to candidates on a list of ministers who -
- (i) are over 55 years of age; or
- (ii) have served as ministers for not less than 25 years; or
- (iii) for whom the Commission believe that a change is desirable.
- (2) **For congregations having 350 families** or more on their books as published in the most recent statistics:-
- (a) all ministers of the Church who have been ordained for at least six years, or for three years if over 35 years of age; provided that they have not been serving in the congregation immediately prior to or at any time during the vacancy;
- (b) all ministers of other Churches who have been ordained for at least six years or for three years if over 35 years of age; provided that they fulfil the other conditions set out under sub-paragraph (1)(b) above.
- (c) and in congregations where associate pastorates have been authorised ministers shall be eligible for the second or associate pastorate on the same basis as for congregations having less than 350 families on their Books.
- (3) Should the application of the foregoing provisions in sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) give rise to serious difficulty the Union Commission shall have power, after consultation with the Presbytery, to determine eligibility.
- (4) **The following conditions** shall apply to a minister being called and inducted as an Associate Minister in a Congregation. The appointment shall be for a term of 3 years. This period of service may be extended by the Union Commission up to 7 years, after consultation with the Minister, the Associate Minister, the Kirk Session and the Presbytery. In very exceptional circumstances, the period of service may be extended beyond 7 years, in terms of up to 3 years each, following a full review by the Union Commission in consultation with the above parties.

An appointment as Associate Minister may, after twelve months service, be terminated by mutual agreement, or by two months notice given by the Presbytery or by the Minister of the Congregation, the Kirk Session, or the Associate Minister, subject to the approval of the Presbytery.

194. The Hearing of Candidates:

- (1) Only those shall have a hearing as candidates for a vacant pastorate who have been appointed by the vacancy commission of Presbytery or nominated by the Clerk of Assembly to officiate as candidates.

- (2) Ministers when applying for a hearing in a congregation shall do so on the form provided for the purpose. They shall not canvass for support in any vacancy, but may submit two testimonials with their application.
- (3) The right of selection of candidates for hearing belongs to the Kirk Session, supplemented by nominations made by the Clerk on behalf of the General Assembly. In the case of an Associate Ministry the assent of the Moderator of Kirk Session to candidates proposed shall be required.
- (4) (a) The right of hearing candidates belongs to the congregation, either directly or through a Committee.
- (b) Where a Kirk Session does not consider it expedient to hear a list of candidates in a vacant congregation it shall call a meeting of the congregation which, if it sees fit, shall appoint a representative committee to hear candidates as selected under Par. 194(3) and to report the result to the congregation to which it is responsible. In such cases the Hearing Committee shall be selected by secret ballot.
- (c) When appointed, the congregation may direct the Hearing Committee to recommend a sole nominee to be heard directly by the congregation before a call is decided on.
- (5) Any voter in a congregation who wishes for a particular minister to be heard as a candidate may propose his name to the Session.
- (6) the Session shall fix the number and select the candidates, not exceeding four, for whom they ask a hearing, and shall submit the list to the vacancy commission for approval and completion, before any hearing is commenced.
- (7) The convener of the commission shall send the list to the Clerk of Assembly, together with the names of all ministers who have applied officially for a hearing. The Clerk, in consultation with the Moderator and the immediate past Moderator of the Assembly and the Conveners of the Home Mission, shall have power to add to the list the names of not more than two ministers, taking into consideration -
- (a) such minister's service, if any, in Home Mission congregations;
 - (b) the frequency with which his name has appeared on lists;
 - (c) his suitability; and
 - (d) other relevant circumstances;
- and shall authorise the commission to proceed with arranging a hearing.
- (8) The vacancy commission shall arrange for the hearing of the completed list of candidates as follows.
- (a) They shall be heard in alphabetical order, provided always that when the hearing is begun in even numbered years the names of all candidates shall be from A-Z and in uneven numbered years from Z-A;
 - (b) each candidate shall at once be notified of the day upon which he is to officiate, and shall inform the convener whether he can officiate on that date;
 - (c) if any candidate cannot officiate on the appointed date, the services on that day shall be taken by a minister of the Presbytery who is not a candidate; and no alteration may be made in the order of hearing without the permission of the vacancy commission and the consent of the other candidates.
 - (d) Notice to the Congregation of the commencement of the hearing of candidates shall be given on two consecutive Sundays prior to the commencement of hearing. Such notice may, when appropriate, be given concurrently with the process of selection and approval of candidates, in which case the names of those under consideration will not be disclosed.

195. The Election Meeting:

- (1) When the hearing of the appointed candidates is completed, a congregational meeting shall be held under the supervision of the vacancy commission to ascertain whether the congregation desires to call any eligible minister.
- (2) Such meeting shall be held on a week-day, and notice of the time and place and purpose of it shall be given to the congregation at public worship on the two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. (See *App. 6B*)

- (3) On the day and at the time specified and after the hearing committee, if any, have reported, the minister presiding shall ascertain by a vote of the congregation whether they desire to propose that a call be issued to any candidate on the list.
- (4) The procedure set out in sub-paragraph (3) may also take place although no candidate has been heard.
- (5) Should a meeting of the congregation called for the purpose decide not to make out a call at that point it may ask that there be a re-hearing of one or more of the candidates, or for the hearing of one or more candidates in a supplementary list, without excluding thereby those already heard.
- (6) Should the meeting decide to propose a call and the congregation approve of any eligible minister, either unanimously or by a two-thirds majority, the call shall be drawn up, signed by as many voters and other members who wish to do so, and certified by the presiding minister. It may, if so decided by the commission, be retained by the Convener till the succeeding Sunday, when the officiating minister shall invite those who have not already signed it to do so, and he shall certify any additional signatures.
- (7) Should more than one candidate be proposed and seconded, a secret ballot shall be taken of those listed as qualified voters and repeated until only one candidate remains.
- (8) A secret ballot shall be taken on this candidate, for and against. If he shall secure at least two-thirds of the recorded vote he shall be declared elected, the call drawn up and signed and certified as in the case of Par 195 (6). Should he fail to obtain two-thirds of the recorded vote, the meeting may proceed to vote upon other candidates whose names were on the list.
- (9) The call cannot be made unless carried by two-thirds of those who vote. After the vote is taken no one shall be allowed to record his vote unless he can show that he has not had an opportunity to do so; but in no case shall a vote be accepted after the state of the poll has been declared by the presiding minister.
- (10) Any candidate who fails to receive two-thirds of the votes cast when he is voted on separately, for and against, and apart from the other candidates, shall thereupon cease to be eligible as a candidate for the congregation in the vacancy then existing, unless the rules have been violated in the taking of the vote.
- (11) A call by a congregation to a minister shall include -
- (a) a promise on the part of the congregation to pay an amount of stipend at least equal to the sum fixed by the Union Commission, with increase as defined in the rules, apart from the income to which the minister may be entitled from any other source;
 - (b) an undertaking to contribute their qualification to the Central Ministry Fund according to the Assembly's rules for the time being;
 - (c) a stipulation that the minister shall reside in the manse or other official residence during his active ministry, and that this with the glebe (if any) shall be provided free of rent, rates and taxes.
 - (i) Where there is no manse an undertaking shall be given, acceptable to the Presbytery and the Union Commission, for the payment of an allowance in lieu thereof.
 - (ii) The glebe, which is to be given to the minister free of rent, rates and taxes, is understood to be any small area around the manse, not exceeding five acres.
 - (iii) Where there is a farm, outside the glebe area, for the use of the minister, defrayment of rent, rates and taxes is not necessarily undertaken;
 - (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, and for one week in-service training for every three years served in the congregation.
- (12) The call may also contain a promise on the part of the congregation to pay a fixed annual sum from investment income over which the congregation or their Session, Committee or Trustees have power of disposal, or such other payments of expenses, etc., as do not violate the general law or rules of the Church.
- (13) If no call to a minister be carried, the congregational meeting may ask the commission to arrange for a further hearing of a candidate or candidates or to begin again the procedure for selection of a second list for hearing.

196. Sustaining the Call:

- (1) Should any voter in the congregation be dissatisfied with a decision or proceedings of the vacancy commission with respect to the procedure or call, and protest against it, he shall have the right of appeal to the Presbytery at its first meeting, when the commission shall report and all its proceedings shall be before the Presbytery.
- (2) When the report of the commission, with the call, is submitted to the Presbytery they shall consider any appeal from a voter, or complaint from a member of commission or from a candidate as to the proceedings of the commission; and they shall decide whether the proceedings have been regular and whether the call be valid. They shall also determine whether in all the circumstances of the case the call be sustained.
- (3) If an appeal is lodged against a decision of Presbytery over whether or not a call be sustained, the appeal shall stand referred to the Judicial Commission, who shall have Assembly power to issue the matter.
- (4) No Presbytery shall sanction a call from a congregation to a minister unless the terms of call meet the conditions prescribed in these rules.
- (5) If the call be found invalid, the proceedings in reference to the call shall begin anew.
- (6) If the call be sustained, the Presbytery shall take steps to present the call to the minister concerned, after assuring themselves that, should he be a minister in a pastorate, his congregation has been previously notified, and that representatives have been given the opportunity to be in attendance to present any observations relevant to the circumstances.
- (7) If the minister-elect be not a member or under the care of the Presbytery involved, they shall certify and forward the call to the Presbytery concerned, which shall take steps to present the call to him, provided his congregation has been notified as in the previous sub- paragraph.
- (8) The Presbytery, after hearing all parties, shall decide whether the call be presented.
- (9) When a call is presented it may be accepted, declined or retained for consideration; but if neither accepted nor declined within 14 days from the day of presentation, it shall be held to be declined.
- (10) Where the minister-elect accepting a call is in a charge, he shall be loosed from it as from the day preceding installation in his new pastorate. Where this lies outside the bounds of his present Presbytery, they shall give him credentials of transference to the Presbytery having jurisdiction. Arrangements shall be made by the Presbytery having jurisdiction for his installation.
- (11) The minister's emoluments from the congregation shall commence on the date of his installation. The Presbytery shall be responsible for ensuring the payment of all suppliers until the same date.

197. Calls to Licentiate:

A licentiate shall not normally be eligible for ordination until after six months from licensure subject to the following provisions:

- (a) Persons licensed in the months of May, June, and July shall all become eligible from the 15th of January in the following year.
- (b) A licentiate called to be assistant to the Moderator of the General Assembly shall be eligible without any six months qualification.
- (c) A licentiate shall be eligible for calls to special work as prescribed in Par. 199(1).
- (d) In circumstances not covered by the foregoing provisions, the Union Commission shall have power to decide on eligibility for call.

198. The following conditions shall apply to a licentiate being called and ordained as an assistant minister in a congregation.

- (1) The call to become an assistant minister shall be given by the Kirk Session, on the recommendation of the minister, with the advice and consent of the Assignment Committee of the Board of Christian Training and, where central funds are involved, of the Allocation Committee of the Union Commission.
- (2) The appointment shall be for a period 12 months, at least. After the completion of this year, or, for ministers ordained in January or February, the 15th January, any who have attained the age of 32 years and have completed satisfactorily the Post-College courses prescribed by the Board of Christian Training,

shall thereupon be eligible as candidates for call to a congregation. All others, in addition to satisfactory completion of the Post-College Courses, shall be required to serve one additional year's assistantship in that congregation or elsewhere after which, or for ministers ordained in January or February the 15th January, they shall be eligible as candidates for call to a congregation.

- (3) An assistant minister who changes his field of labours from one congregation to another shall be inducted in the second congregation, where he shall again serve for a period of at least twelve months.
- (4) An appointment as assistant minister may, after twelve months' service, be terminated by mutual agreement, or by two months' notice given by the minister of the congregation, the Session or the assistant minister, subject to the approval of the Presbytery and of the Assignment Committee.
- (5) Ordination as assistant minister shall be conducted by the Presbytery having jurisdiction over that congregation. It shall carry with it the authority to dispense the sacraments and to celebrate marriage, and shall give a right to a seat in Presbytery and General Assembly. The Presbytery shall from time to time while an assistant minister is a member of these courts appoint an additional elder as corresponding member.
- (6) An assistant minister serving in a congregation shall be ex- officio a member of the Kirk Session; but he shall not have the right to take the Moderator's place at a meeting of Session in the latter's absence, unless expressly invited to do so by the Moderator or, in special circumstances, so appointed to act by the Presbytery.
- (7) As assistant minister he shall be subject to the general jurisdiction of the Presbytery of the bounds, and subject in all matters relating to his work in the congregation to the direction of the minister of the congregation in which he labours.
- (8) If instead of being called as an assistant minister in a settled congregation, he is called to serve in a vacant congregation as assistant with the convener in charge, this shall be done the call being given by the Kirk Session(s) with the advice and consent of the Assignment Committee and, where central funds are involved, of the Union Commission. His ordination or induction shall be carried out by the local Presbytery, of which he thus becomes a member; and thereafter he shall be subject in all matters relating to his work in the congregation to the direction of the convener and interim Moderator of Kirk Session.
- (9) (a) During the period following ordination his emoluments shall be fixed by the Union Commission on an incremental scale based on the minimum ministerial income.
- (b) Expenses and house allowance shall similarly be fixed by the Union Commission; or, if a house is provided, its use shall be free of rent, rates and taxes.
- (c) The assistant minister shall be subject to the same rules as other ministers regarding work undertaken outside his congregational duties and to the financial arrangements applying to such ministers as are on augmented stipends.
- (10) His emoluments shall be paid to him monthly by the central funds of the Church; and the allocation between local sources and the central funds, together with their method of payment, shall be fixed by the Union Commission on the recommendation of its Allocation Committee.

199. Calls to Special Work:

Licentiatees or ministers serving their period of assistantship who may be called to special work are subject to the following conditions.

- (1) A licentiate or ordained assistant minister called to the overseas Mission field, or a licentiate who has served the Church for six months after licence, or who at the end of that period shall have satisfied his Presbytery that such service was not available for him, is, if in good standing with his Presbytery, thereupon eligible for ordination or installation on receiving a call -
 - (a) to a theological professorship in this Church; or
 - (b) to be a missionary of the Church; or
 - (c) to become a chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces; or
 - (d) to undertake such special work as may from time to time be approved by the General Assembly.
- (2) Every licentiate so ordained or minister inducted shall be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery which ordained or inducted him.

(3) A licentiate ordained or an assistant inducted to a chaplaincy or in other special work shall not become eligible for a call to any congregation until he has completed two years' ordained service.

200. (1) Calls to ministers to special work include appointments under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly.

(2) Calls to work under the Assembly may be made directly by the Assembly, following report by their Nomination Board, or remitted to their General Board to act on the same basis on behalf of the Assembly. Such calls and appointments shall be certified to the Presbytery with which the minister is to be associated as a member, who shall if appropriate forthwith arrange for his installation or induction. (*This applies particularly to Church House and College appointments*).

(3) Other calls to special work may be made by Boards of the Assembly charged with responsibility for the work concerned and as authorised by the Assembly. The call by the Board shall be dealt with on lines similar to a call by a congregation, to be sustained by the Presbytery of the bounds, if any, and presented through the Presbytery of which he is a member or minister without charge. They in turn shall, if necessary, give him credentials of transference to the Presbytery which shall install or induct him and exercise oversight over him thereafter as a member.

(4) Calls to ministers of other Churches, accredited by their Church for a term of service with the Church in Ireland, may be made by the appropriate Assembly Board without prejudice to the minister's continuing relationship to his home Church, on condition that satisfactory ministerial credentials are received and the arrangement approved by the Assembly's Reception Committee.

CHAPTER XIII - ORDINATIONS, etc.

SECTION I - THE COMMISSIONING OF DEACONESSES AND OTHERS

201. (1) Candidates for appointment as missionaries, deaconesses and lay agents of the Church must be approved in respect of character and ability, and have received training for their special work, in accordance with the decision of the appropriate supervising Board or agency of the General Assembly.

(2) Each candidate, when qualified, may be called by the appropriate Board; and the Presbytery concerned shall be requested to arrange for a public commissioning or induction service in the work to which they have been appointed.

(3) Presbyteries should not act except at the call of a Board on the authority of the General Assembly.

202. The order of service shall be as follows:

(1) After opening worship, including praise, prayer and the reading of the Word, a sermon shall be preached on a suitable theme.

(2) (a) The Presbytery shall then be constituted publicly by prayer.

(b) A representative of the supervising Board or agency shall then present the candidate to the Presbytery and formally request for the commissioning or induction.

(3) The Moderator shall make the following Declaration -

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, realising the place to be given in the work of the Church to dedicated men and women in various fields of service, has authorised the appointment of missionaries, deaconesses and lay agents under the oversight and direction of their appropriate Boards and Agencies.

We rejoice in your call to be a fellow worker in the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church we, (a commission of) the Presbytery of are met to (commission and/or induct) you as a, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Standards of this Church, including the Rule of Faith, are set out in the Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Chapter I, paragraphs 10-14 which I call upon the Clerk to read."

(4) The Clerk shall accordingly read Chapter I, Section III, paragraphs 10-14 of the Code.

(5) Then the Moderator shall say -

“Having heard the Declaration of the Presbytery and the Statement of the Standards of this Church I ask you to testify to your faith and integrity of purpose by answering the following questions -

- I So far as you know your own heart, are love to the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire to commend Him by word and life, your chief motives for accepting this opportunity of service?
- II Do you believe in one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and do you confess anew the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, according to the Scriptures?
- III Do you believe the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- IV Do you accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Statement read by the Clerk, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; as such do you acknowledge it as the confession of your faith; and do you approve of the Catechisms compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and received as the Catechisms of this Church?
- V Adhering to the fundamental doctrines of the faith, set forth in the Standards of this Church, and accepting also the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, do you promise to adhere to and to support the same and to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church?
- VI Do you engage, in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, to walk worthy of your calling, to discharge faithfully and diligently the duties of your office, and to seek the furtherance of the Kingdom of God?
- VII In cases certified by the Board of Mission Overseas, where the spouse is to be commissioned with the person being inducted, the following question shall be asked of the spouse “Do you desire to be a partner with your husband/wife in the missionary service to which he/she is being appointed?”

(6) The Moderator shall then say -

“As you have promised, may God grant that you keep your vows. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church we commission/induct you as; and we commend you to the grace of God in the discharge of all your duties.”

Alternative form to be used in cases certified by the Board of Mission Overseas.

The Moderator shall then say -

“As you have promised, may God grant that you keep your vows. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of Church we commission you together with your wife/husband as missionaries ... and we commend you to the grace of God in the discharge of your duties.”

(7) The Presbytery and people shall engage in prayer for the deaconess, missionary or lay agent, after which the Moderator shall extend the right hand of fellowship in the name of the Presbytery.

(8) A suitable charge may be given at this point to the person commissioned or inducted and to the people.

(9) The service and the meeting of the Presbytery shall conclude with the Benediction.

203. (1) **A careful record** shall be kept in the minute book of Presbytery of all such commissioning or induction services.

(2) The Clerk shall without delay notify the Clerk of Assembly of the commissioning or induction, with all relevant details.

SECTION II - THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF RULING ELDERS

204. **The ordination or installation of ruling elders** shall be conducted by the Presbytery, or a commission thereof, who shall appoint ministers to officiate at the service.

205. **The order of the service** shall be as follows -

(1) After opening worship, including praise, prayer and the reading of the Word, a statement shall be made or a sermon preached on the calling of the ruling elder, with the Scriptural warrant for the office.

(2) (a) The Presbytery shall then be constituted publicly by prayer.

(b) The Moderator shall then make a Declaration on the following lines -

“In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, who gives gifts for the edifying of the Church, the Body of Christ, we are met here as a (commission of) Presbytery for the (Ordination/Installation) of as ruling elders.

The Clerk, as required by the Law of the Church, will now read the Statement of the Standards of the Church, including the Rule of Faith, as set forth in the Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland”.

(3) The Clerk shall accordingly read Chapter I, Section III, paragraphs 10-14 of the Code.

(4) Thereafter the Moderator, naming the elders-elect severally, shall put to them the prescribed questions as follows -

“Having heard the Declaration of Presbytery and Statement on our Standards and Rule of Faith you are now required to answer the following questions -

Firstly, on your personal sense of calling -

I So far as you know your own heart, are zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and desire for the salvation of souls and the upbuilding of the Church, your chief motives in entering upon the office of ruling elder to which you have been called?

Secondly, three questions on the Rule of Faith and Standards of the Church -

II Do you believe the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

III Do you accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Statement from the Code, read by the Clerk, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; as such do you acknowledge it as the confession of your faith; and do you accept the Catechisms compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and received as the Catechisms of this Church?

IV Are you resolved, through God’s grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the faith set forth in the said Confession and Catechisms so long as you remain an elder of this Church?

Finally, two questions on the discharge of your duties as a ruling elder in this Church -

V Do you believe the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; and do you promise to adhere to and to support it, and to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church?

VI Do you pledge yourself as a member of Kirk Session to work together with the minister in the oversight and government of this congregation, for the upbuilding of God’s people in spiritual fruitfulness and holy concord, and for the extension of Christ’s Kingdom?”

(In the case of elders called to special work this question shall be -

“Do you pledge yourself in the work to which you have been called to seek as a ruling elder of the Church for the upbuilding of God’s people in spiritual fruitfulness and holy concord, and for the extension of Christ’s Kingdom?”)

(5) The Moderator shall then say -

“You have confessed your belief that the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is under that supreme standard, which alone is final, that this Church holds its subordinate standards. (See * below).

“This being understood, are you now prepared to subscribe in terms of the General Assembly’s formula - ‘I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith’?”

The elders-elect shall then subscribe the formula in the minute book of the Kirk Session.

*In congregations of the former Munster Presbytery, the elders-elect shall be invited to make a declaration of their faith according to the Standards of the Church by each personally writing out and presenting for retention among the records of Presbytery the following -

"I,, do hereby declare that I believe the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I declare it to be the confession of my faith."

(6) (In cases certified by the Board of Mission Overseas, where the spouse is to be commissioned with the person being ordained or installed, the following question shall be asked of the spouse; "Do you desire to be a partner with your husband/wife in the missionary service to which he/she is being appointed?")

(7) The ruling elder or elders-elect shall then be ordained with prayer and the laying on of hands of the Presbytery, or installed with prayer, as the case may be -

(a) In the prayer, such words as the following shall be used :-

"We beseech thee, almighty God, to grant thy Holy Spirit unto us, the Presbytery of, and to thy servants whom we do now with prayer (and the laying on of our hands ordain to the office of the Ruling Eldership, and) install to oversight in this congregation." (Adaptation shall be made and the words in brackets omitted depending on whether ordinations and/or installations are involved).

(b) In the case of elders called to special work, the final six words of the formula should be replaced by - "install as a Ruling Elder in the service of the Church in work as" (and in cases certified by the Board of Mission Overseas: "..... and do commission together with his/her wife/husband to be partners together in the work.")

(c) Not less than three nor more than seven members of Presbytery should take part in the laying on of hands. Other members, and members of the Kirk Session, wishing to signify their assent may stand and raise the right hand. In services of ordination only the elder-elect shall receive the laying on of hands."

(8) The right hand of fellowship shall be given by the Moderator of Presbytery to the ruling elder or elders, ordained or installed: and their names shall be inscribed in the minute book of the Kirk Session.

(9) A suitable charge shall be given to those who have been ordained or installed, and to the people.

(10) The service and the meeting of Presbytery shall conclude with the Benediction.

206. (1) A record shall be kept in the minute book of Presbytery of all such ordination or installation services.

(2) The Clerk shall without delay notify the Clerk of Assembly of the ordinations or installations, with all relevant details.

SECTION III - THE LICENSING OF PROBATIONERS

207. (1) A licentiate is one who has been officially licensed as a probationer, by the Presbytery under whose care he is, to discharge the duties of a minister, except for the administration of the sacraments.

(2) The Presbytery shall not license a student under their care until they have received a certificate from the Board of Christian Training that he has fulfilled all its requirements.

(3) (a) Before licensing him the Presbytery shall prescribe to the student one of the following pieces of trial -

- (i) an exposition of a portion of Scripture, or
- (ii) a discussion of a controverted question in theology, or
- (iii) a sermon on a selected text.

(b) The Presbytery shall criticise the piece of trial privately, in the presence of the student, that he may profit by their judgment and, if required, give explanation of his statements.

(3) When the student has met these requirements and signified his desire to be licensed the Presbytery shall, directly or through a commission or some other body commissioned by them, arrange to license him at a public service in the congregation to which he belongs or at some other suitable place.

208. (1) In this service at an appropriate place it is suggested that the Moderator shall declare -

“In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, we are met here as a (commission of) Presbytery to license as a Probationer for the Ministerial office.

The Standards of the Church, including the Rule of Faith, are stated in Chapter I, paragraphs 10-14, of the Code, which I now ask the Clerk to read.”

(2) After the reading of the prescribed Section, the Moderator shall put the following questions to any seeking license -

- I “So far as you know your own heart, have you been induced to seek the office of the ministry from love to God and from a sincere desire to win souls to Christ and to promote God’s glory?”
- II Do you believe the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- III Do you accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the statement from the Code, read by the Clerk, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; as such do you acknowledge it as the confession of your faith; and do you accept the Catechisms compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and received as the Catechisms of this Church?
- IV Are you resolved, through God’s grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the faith set forth in the said Confession and Catechisms, and to teach and defend them to the utmost of your power against all error?
- V Do you believe the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; and do you promise to adhere to and support it, and to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church?”

(3) In token of the affirmations made the Moderator shall invite any seeking license to subscribe, in the minute book of Presbytery, the General Assembly’s formula, namely -

“I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith.”

(4) This being done, the Moderator shall declare -

“In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, we, the Presbytery of, do hereby license you, to preach the Gospel publicly as a probationer for the ministerial office.”

(5) The Presbytery and people shall engage in prayer for the probationer and an appointed minister shall address him on his responsibilities and duties.

209. When a student has been licensed, the Clerk of Presbytery shall forthwith notify his name, age, place of birth, home address, and the date of his license to the Clerk of Assembly.

SECTION IV - THE ORDINATION, INSTALLATION AND INDUCTION OF MINISTERS

(Note: Installation is the preferred usage for permanent appointments, and induction for terminable appointments).

210. In appointing a day for the ordination of a licentiate, or for the induction or installation of a minister, the Presbytery shall -

- (1) appoint ministers to conduct the service;
- (2) send a member to give official notice thereof to the congregation where the service is to be held, at least eight days before the day of ordination or installation;

(3) consider prior to the ordination or installation any objections laid before them by the Moderator or claims which may have been lodged with him; and the Presbytery shall deal with such objections or claims, the parties concerned having been previously notified by the Moderator;

(4) ensure, prior to an ordination or installation in a pastoral charge, that all congregational debts to Presbytery, or to the preceding minister or the incoming minister of the congregation, or for the supply of ordinances, are settled or discharged; and that the manse (if any) is being put into suitable condition for the use of the minister;

(5) see that all congregational books and records and other congregational property in the custody or control of the previous minister, are available for handing over to the incoming minister.

211. Before proceeding with any ordination or installation service, the Presbytery (or Presbytery commission in charge) shall -

(1) receive the credentials of the minister-elect;

(2) be assured that the Clerk of Presbytery has inspected the birth certificate of the minister-elect;

(3) where the minister-elect is a licentiate, or a minister who has been ordained within five years (not including such period of subsequent study and probationary service as may be required to qualify for ministry in the Church) and where he is not yet a member of the Presbyterian Widows' Fund Association or the Southern Association Widows' Fund, require him to hand in to the Clerk of Presbytery a signed undertaking in the prescribed form. Till this undertaking is handed in the Presbytery shall not proceed to ordain or install. The Clerk shall, after the service, forthwith transmit the undertaking to the Financial Secretary of the Church, who shall have it duly stamped and preserved;

(4) be satisfied that notice has been duly published in the congregation and that there is no remaining impediment to the ordination or installation.

212. The order of service shall be as follows -

(1) After opening worship, including praise, prayer and the reading of the Word, an appropriate sermon, or an address dealing with the principles of the Church, its ministry and government, shall be delivered.

(2) The Presbytery shall then be constituted publicly by prayer; and the Clerk shall report that all is in order and that there is no impediment to proceeding to the ordination or installation.

(3) The Moderator shall then make a Declaration on the following lines -

"In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church who gives gifts for the edifying of the Church, the Body of Christ, we are met here as (a commission of) the Presbytery of, for the (Ordination and Induction)/(Installation)/(Induction) of (to the office of the Holy Ministry, and to induct him as (associate minister/assistant minister) in this congregation)

or (to the oversight of the congregation of))

or (to the chair in this College to which he has already been appointed)

or (to missionary service in))

or (as a minister in recognised service to the Church in his appointment as) etc.

I call upon the Clerk, as required by the Law of the Church, to read the Statement of the Standards of the Church, including the Rule of Faith, as set forth in the Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland."

(4) The Clerk shall accordingly read Chapter I, Section III, paragraphs 10-14 of the Code.

(5) Thereafter the Moderator shall put to the minister-elect the prescribed questions as follows -

"....., having heard the Declaration of Presbytery and the Statement on our Standards and Rule of Faith, I require you to answer the following questions -

Firstly, on your personal sense of calling -

I So far as you know your own heart, have you been induced to seek the office of the Christian ministry through the call of God, from love to Him, from a sincere desire to promote God's glory and to win souls to Christ through the Holy Spirit?

Secondly, three questions on the Rule of Faith and Standards of the Church.

- II Do you believe the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- III Do you accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Statement from the Code, read by the Clerk, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; as such do you acknowledge it as the confession of your faith; and do you accept the Catechisms compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and received as the Catechisms of this Church?
- IV Are you resolved through God's grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the faith, set forth in the said Confession and Catechisms, and to teach them and defend them to the utmost of your power against all error, so long as you remain a minister of this Church?

Finally, two questions on the discharge of your ministry in this Church

- V Do you believe the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God; and do you promise to adhere to and support it, and to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church?
- VI Having accepted - (*Here follow as the case may be.*)
- **the call to become (associate minister/assistant minister)** in this congregation, do you undertake to retain your appointment for a period of not less than twelve months, in support of the minister; and do you promise through God's grace, to make full proof of your ministry among them, preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, visiting the people, catechising and instructing the young, visiting the sick, aiding in the government of the Church, and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?
 - **the call of this congregation**, do you promise, through God's grace, to make full proof of your ministry among them, preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, visiting the people, catechising and instructing the young, visiting the sick, aiding the government of the Church, and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?
 - the appointment of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, to make full proof of your ministry **in the chair to which you have been called**, and in all the other duties and opportunities falling to you as a minister of Jesus Christ?
 - the call of the Board of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace to make full proof of your ministry **in the field allotted to you** (etc., as may be appropriate)?
 - the call of the Board of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, as a **minister in recognised service** to the Church in your appointment as to make full proof of your ministry, discharging your duties and using your opportunities of witness and of service with all diligence and faithfulness as a minister of Jesus Christ?"

(6) The Moderator shall then say -

"You have confessed your belief that the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is under that supreme standard, which alone is final, that this Church holds its subordinate standards. (* See below).

"This being understood, are you now prepared to subscribe in terms of the General Assembly's formula - 'I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith'?"

The minister-elect shall then subscribe the formula in the minute book of the Presbytery.

*In congregations of the former Munster Presbytery the minister-elect shall be invited to make a declaration of his faith according to the Standards of the Church by personally writing out and presenting for retention among the records of the Presbytery the following -

"I,, do hereby declare that I believe the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I declare it to be the confession of my faith."

(7) In cases certified by the Board of Mission Overseas, where the spouse is to be commissioned with the person being ordained or installed, the following question shall be asked of the spouse; "Do you

..... desire to be a partner with your husband/wife in the missionary service to which he/she is being appointed?"

(8) (a) The minister-elect shall then kneel for the prayer of ordination or installation, and the congregation shall stand. Not less than three members of Presbytery, or more than seven, shall take part in the laying on of hands at an ordination.

(b) The Moderator shall make the prayer of ordination or installation, including the following, or such like petition -

"We beseech thee to grant thy Holy Spirit unto us, the Presbytery of, and unto thy servant, whom we, in thy name, do now with prayer (and the laying on of our hands ordain to the Holy Ministry of the Church Universal, and) - (*as may be*)

- induct as (associate minister/assistant minister) in this congregation."

- install to the pastoral oversight of the Church in this place."

- install in the chair of to which he has been appointed by the General Assembly."

- install to missionary (or other) service in the field to which he has been called" and in cases certified by the Board of Mission Overseas add "and whom we commission with his/her wife/husband to be partners in this work".

- induct as a minister in recognised service to the Church in his appointment as"

(c) In services of ordination only the ordinand shall receive the laying on of hands.

(9) The minister then standing up, the Moderator shall say -

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, we the Presbytery of do hereby declare you,, to be (ordained to the office of the Christian ministry, and) - (*as may be*)

- appointed as (associate minister/assistant minister) in this congregation.

- appointed to the oversight of the Church in this place.

- installed in the chair of in this College.

- appointed to missionary (or other) service in the field to which you have been called (and in cases so certified by the Board of Mission Overseas), add and together with your wife/husband to be commissioned for this task.

- inducted as a minister in recognised service to the Church in your appointment as"

and in token thereof I, as Moderator, extend to you the Right Hand of Fellowship."

(10) A suitable charge shall be given to the minister ordained, inducted or installed, and to the people.

(11) The service and the meeting of Presbytery shall conclude with the Benediction.

213. (1) The proceedings shall be recorded in the minute book of the Presbytery.

(2) The Clerk shall without delay notify the Clerk of Assembly of the ordination, installation or induction, with all relevant information.

CHAPTER XIV - THE MINISTRY

SECTION I - STUDENTS FOR THE MINISTRY

- 214. In seeking nomination as a candidate** for the ministry each applicant shall observe the following rules.
- (1) The applicant shall obtain an Application Form from the Director of Ministerial Studies, and shall return the form not later than 15th September in any year.
 - (2) The applicant shall forward to the Director of Ministerial Studies, with the Application Form, written confirmation of Communicant Membership and a Certificate of Health provided by his/her doctor.
 - (3) The applicant shall inform the Presbytery, through his/her minister, and present himself/herself for interview by the Presbytery, as required.
 - (4) The applicant shall present himself/herself for interview by the Board of Christian Training, as required.
 - (5) On acceptance, he/she shall undertake in writing to observe faithfully the laws and rules of the Church including, in particular, all relevant regulations as from time to time laid down by the General Assembly, the Board of Christian Training and the College concerned.
 - (6) He/she shall notify the Clerk of Presbytery of his/her progress before 1 September each year.
 - (7) He/she shall inform the Director of Ministerial Studies of his/her graduation and, if studying theology at a college other than Union College, shall submit details of courses passed at the end of each academic year.
- 215. (1) In the Presbytery is vested the right of nominating** for the approval of the General Assembly persons desiring to undertake the work of the ministry; of co-operating, through their representatives, with the Board of Christian Training, in accordance with Par. 285(2)(a), in recommendation of their acceptance; of receiving them under their care, when approved as students for the ministry; and of licensing them to preach the Gospel. Both men and women shall be eligible for nomination as students for the ministry and for ordination on the same conditions.
- (2) In seeking to determine if they will nominate a candidate the Presbytery shall observe the following rules.
 - (a) They shall require confirmation from the Kirk Session of the congregation to which he/she belongs, stating that –
 - (i) he/she is a member of that Church in full communion, and
 - (ii) he/she has given evidence of personal character and of gifts for the office of the ministry.
 - (b) They shall interview him/her at a convenient time, making such enquiries as to
 - (i) his/her sense of call,
 - (ii) his/her character and gifts, and
 - (iii) his/her agreement with the central teachings and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as they consider necessary to satisfy themselves that he/she is a suitable person for nomination.
 - (3) The Presbytery may decline to nominate for the approval of the General Assembly those applicants who in the light of (2) they consider are not suitable persons for nomination.
 - (4) Where intimation is given that a Presbytery nomination has not been sustained by the Board of Christian Training, the Presbytery concerned, after consultation with the Board may, if desired, lodge an appeal with the Clerk of the General Assembly within 28 days.
 - (5) On receiving from the Clerk of Assembly notification that the nomination has been approved by the Assembly, the Presbytery shall at their next meeting formally receive the candidate as a student for the ministry under their care.

- (6) When a student under the care of the Presbytery applies to be transferred to another Presbytery, the Presbytery with which he/she is connected shall, on sufficient cause being shown, give him/her credentials to that other Presbytery and shall notify the Board of Christian Training accordingly.
- (7) (a) The Presbytery shall co-operate with the Board of Christian Training in supervising the life, conduct and work of the students under their care. Each Presbytery shall satisfy itself annually as to the continuing fitness of each student under its supervision to continue as a Candidate for the ministry.
 - (b) Where the life, conduct and work of a student are considered unsatisfactory, the Presbytery, with four Assessors from the Board of Christian Training, shall deal with the matter and may admonish him/her, censure him/her, suspend him/her or terminate his/her candidature.

216. The duties of the Board of Christian Training shall include:

- (1) To receive from the Presbyteries nominations of candidates for the ministry and to receive from each student a Communicant certificate and a satisfactory certificate as to his/her fitness for the ministry in respect of health, furnished by his/her doctor.
- (2) (a) To interview each candidate and confer with him/her on his/her motives for seeking the office of the ministry, such interview to take place prior to the March/April meeting of the Board in order to provide for appeal, if desired, by Presbytery to the following General Assembly in accordance with Par. 215(4).
 - (b) In conferring with the candidate, it shall put the following questions –
 - (i) “So far as you know your own heart, have you felt your need of a personal Saviour, and have you been persuaded and enabled by God’s Spirit to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to you in the Gospel?”
 - (ii) “So far as you know your own heart, have you been induced to seek the office of the ministry from love of God and a desire to promote His glory in the salvation of sinners?”
- (3) To recommend, after interview, from the list of those who have been nominated by the Presbyteries, suitable candidates for approval by the Assembly and to inform the respective Presbyteries immediately after the Board’s decision as to the names of those candidates not being recommended for acceptance with sufficient information for the purpose of pastoral care and counselling.
- (4) To lay down the academic requirements for students for the ministry, under the directions of the Assembly.
- (5) To ensure that every student shall be instructed in the Scriptures and the Subordinate Standards of the Church, as determined by the Board of Christian Training.
- (6) To certify for license to their respective Presbyteries students who have passed their final examinations and fulfilled all the requirements of the Board.
- (7) To co-operate with the Presbyteries in supervising the life, conduct and work of all students, and where the life, work and conduct of a student are considered unsatisfactory, to provide four assessors to deal with the matter by way of admonishment, censure, suspension or termination of candidature.

217. The academic requirements to be met by students for the ministry presently are –

- (1) **For candidates under 30 years of age** on 15 September in the year of their application
 - (a) *Either* (i) A University degree (other than a degree in Theology), acceptable to the Board of Christian Training, from any University or Faculty in the United Kingdom or Ireland incorporated by Royal Charter or by Act of Parliament or by the Oireachtas, or from any University or Faculty in another country which is of an academic standard equivalent thereto.

This Primary Degree will be followed by three years Theological Studies acceptable to the Board of Christian Training.

Total post-matriculation Course of Study – six years, at least.

Or (ii) A degree in Theology acceptable to the Board of Christian Training, from any University or Faculty in the United Kingdom or Ireland incorporated by Royal Charter or by Act of Parliament or by the Oireachtas, or from an American University or Seminary that has full ATS accreditation, or from a University or Seminary in another country which is of an academic standard equivalent thereto.

This Primary Degree in Theology will be followed by two years General and Pastoral Studies, together with such other requirements as the Board of Christian Training may determine.

Total post-matriculation course of study – five years, at least.

(b) In addition to the foregoing the following are also required of students following either course of study -

- (i) A Qualification in Elementary Greek recognised by the Board of Christian Training.
- (ii) A Qualification in Elementary Hebrew recognised by the Board of Christian Training.
- (iii) An appropriate Course in Elocution.
- (iv) Study of the Scriptures and the Subordinate Standards of the Church, as prescribed by the Board of Christian Training.

(2) **For candidates over 30 but under 40 years of age** on 15 September in the year of their application.

Either (a) Full Course as under (1);

Or (b) Shortened Course (three years, at least) for candidates who have not commenced a degree in Theology prior to application, consisting of a University degree in Theology acceptable to the Board of Christian Training, from any university or Faculty in the United Kingdom or Ireland incorporated by Royal Charter or by Act of Parliament or by the Oireachtas, or from an American University or Seminary that has full ATS accreditation, or from a University or Seminary in another country which is of an academic standard equivalent thereto.

Qualifications in Greek, Hebrew, Elocution, Scriptures and Subordinate Standards shall be as in (1).

(3) **Candidates over 40 years of age** on 15 September in their year of application will be required to complete a course of, at least, two years Theological Studies.

Qualifications in Elocution, Scriptures and Subordinate Standards shall be as in (1).

(4) In these and all courses prescribed for students for the ministry, students shall attend classes and do all the work and pass all the examinations, as required by the Board of Christian Training.

(5) (a) Studies for a Theological Degree at Queen's University may be taken concurrently with the normal course of Theological Studies at Union Theological College, which provides the recognised classes for these degree courses.

(b) Studies for a Degree of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland, may also be taken concurrently. These are not normally taken by anyone who is studying for, or eligible to study for, a Queen's University Degree in Theology.

(6) (a) Any individual exceptions or modifications in the courses prescribed for students for the ministry shall be granted only by the Assembly, following report and recommendations by the Board of Christian Training on any Memorial submitted by the candidate.

(b) Any such Memorial shall be submitted at least one month before the meeting of the Assembly. The Clerk of Assembly is directed to forward a copy to the Convener of the Board upon receipt of any such Memorial, and the Board is empowered to take cognisance of, and make recommendations on, any such Memorial in their report to the Assembly.

(7) (a) Students failing to pass any of the examinations set in the prescribed subjects (but who have obtained at least 25 per cent of the total marks in any subject in which the student has been unsuccessful) or students prevented by any cause deemed sufficient by the Board of Christian Training from presenting themselves thereat, may have a supplementary examination under similar conditions before the opening of the following session.

(b) (i) For each of the sessions of the Theological Course students shall undertake practical work under the supervision of the Professor of Practical Theology.

(ii) Students who attend one or more sessions at other Theological Colleges approved by the General Assembly shall be required to satisfy the Board of Christian Training that they have engaged in adequate practical work.

(8) (a) The General Assembly sanctions attendance of a student for part of his/her Theological Course at any fully-equipped Theological College of a Church whose teaching is in harmony with the standards of this Church: provided he/she sends to the Director of Ministerial Studies a statement of the classes he/she proposes to take during the following session and receives the consent of the Board. This statement must reach the Director of Ministerial Studies not later than the 1 September in any year.

(b) Any subject not covered to the satisfaction of the Board will have to be taken during a final year at Union Theological College.

(c) The Board of Christian Training may withdraw either permanently or temporarily its approval of attendance at any college or any class therein which they may have approved hitherto.

(d) (i) For the purpose of these Rules the academic merit of degrees awarded by a university or college not normally recognised under the law of the Church shall in each case be considered by a Qualifications Committee consisting of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and Convener of the Board of Christian Training ex-officio, three members appointed by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland, and three members of the Board of Christian Training. The Convener of the Board shall convene the Committee as required.

(ii) Only such degrees or other academic awards as are approved by the Qualifications Committee shall be recognised for the requirements or official records of the Church.

(9) All students shall be required to take their final year at Union Theological College, Belfast.

218. (1) Upon entering their theological course students for the ministry shall become trainees of the Church.

(a) As trainees, all their practical work shall be directed and supervised by the Professor or Lecturer of Practical Theology in the College which they are attending.

(b) Students who are accepted as trainees shall receive payments under such scheme and arrangements as the General Assembly or the Board of Christian Training shall from time to time resolve.

(2) All appointments to regular student assistantships while in attendance at Union Theological College shall

(a) be arranged through the Assignment Committee of the Board of Christian Training; and

(b) require approval as to the conditions of employment, from the Assignment Committee, which Committee may refuse to sanction, or may terminate, such employment on the report of the College Academic Board.

(3) (a) A student assistantship shall be interpreted to mean any work in a congregation or other appointment which is paid or which requires more than three hours per week.

(b) The prior claims of academic work shall be respected in appointments to student assistantships, unless in cases judged exceptional by the Assignment Committee.

SECTION II - LICENTIATES AND MINISTERS WITHOUT CHARGE

219. (1) Licentiates and ministers without charge, though not themselves members of Presbytery, remain under the care of Presbytery for oversight and discipline unless or until -

(a) credentials of transfer are given to another Presbytery; or

(b) their names are removed officially from the Church's current records.

(2) (a) Credentials in favour of licentiates, or ministers without charge, shall be granted by the Presbytery only and shall be signed by the Moderator and Clerk (*See App. 4 B*).

(b) Such credentials shall be held to be presented to a Presbytery when they are transmitted to the Clerk.

(3) (a) On accepting a full-time appointment which is not under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, a licentiate or minister without charge shall be deemed to have resigned from his position in the Church, except as hereafter provided; his resignation shall be reported by his Presbytery; and his name shall be removed from the Church's current records.

(b) (i) This rule does not apply to anyone called to a ministry in recognised service to the Church so long as he continues in the work to which he was called; or to anyone employed on a full-time temporary

basis in the service of a member Church of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, so long as he continues in good standing and in the work thus recognised.

(ii) The Presbytery shall exercise its jurisdiction over such licentiates and ministers in association with the appropriate Assembly Board, as prescribed in the Code, paragraph 74.

- (c) (i) Should the Presbytery see reason for his retention as a recognised licentiate or minister without charge they shall seek authorisation of this from the General Board or their appropriate committee.
- (ii) It shall be a condition for retention as a recognised licentiate or minister without charge that he reports regularly to Presbytery as required, not less than annually, on his life and work, especially involvement in congregational life and Church work, in preaching, administration of the sacraments and conduct of marriages.
- (iii) On this basis Presbyteries shall report each year to the Assembly through the General Board on the circumstances of each licentiate or minister without charge under their care and the Assembly shall be asked to resolve on the retention on the Church's current records of those who should be continued as recognised licentiates or ministers without charge.
- (4) (a) A former licentiate or minister without charge of this Church whose name was removed from the records under the foregoing sub-paragraph, and who wishes to be restored to his former status, shall produce to his former Presbytery credentials of health and character, together with his reasons for wishing to be so restored.
- (b) On his doing so, the Presbytery may, if in all the circumstances of the case it is satisfied, refer the case to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licensates, who shall have Assembly powers -
- (i) to restore him to his former position; or
- (ii) to refer his case to the General Assembly.
- (c) In the case of a minister who may have been engaged in ministerial work outside of Ireland, having previously been a minister or licentiate of this Church and having received his credentials from this Church not more than five years before the date of his application, the Presbytery shall have power, on his presenting satisfactory credentials of his standing, to receive him at once under its care as a minister without charge.
- (5) Previous to receiving any licentiate or minister without charge under its care according to the provisions of the foregoing sub-paragraphs, the Presbytery shall require such licentiate or minister to sign the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly's formula recorded in the minute book of the Presbytery.

- 219A** (i) A licentiate may be appointed to serve an assistantship in a congregation. Such an appointment shall be made by the Kirk Session with the approval of the minister and the Assignment Committee.
- (ii) A licentiate assistant shall be subject in all matters relating to any work in the congregation to the direction of the minister of the congregation.
- (iii) An appointment as a licentiate assistant may be terminated by agreement, or by two months notice given by the licentiate assistant, the minister or the Kirk Session, subject to approval of the Assignment Committee.

SECTION III - RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS

- 220.** (1) **A minister seeking to resign or retire** from active duty in any appointment shall apply to Presbytery to be released from his charge.
- (2) (a) Should a member of Presbytery who is a minister of a congregation, or is serving in special work under appointment or recognition by the General Assembly, resign from active duty in his appointment without the sanction of the Assembly, or the appropriate Assembly Board or the Presbytery, or be suspended or deposed from his office, he shall cease to be a member of Presbytery.

- (b) During temporary suspension from office, while a charge against a minister is under investigation, he shall cease to act as a member of Presbytery.
- (c) In all such cases a minister's emoluments shall cease from the date of such resignation or suspension, but if the accused minister is ultimately acquitted after temporary suspension, his emoluments shall be restored as from the date of his suspension.
- (3) (a) Where it is made to appear to the Presbytery that a minister has acted in contravention of the foregoing sub-paragraphs, or that he has otherwise abandoned his charge, he may be summoned to attend before and explain his conduct to the Presbytery. If for any reason this summons cannot be delivered to him personally, it shall be sufficient to deliver the summons by posting a copy of the summons to his last known address. In any case the summons shall be delivered and where so required posted to the minister not less than seven clear days before the meeting of the Presbytery.
- (b) If such a minister does not attend at the time and place named on the summons and thereupon undertake to discharge his duties as a minister and submit himself to the censures of the Church, he shall (unless the Presbytery expressly find that a reasonable excuse for his non-attendance has been submitted to them on his behalf) thereupon be deemed to have ceased to be a minister of the Church and to have forfeited all his rights and privileges as such.
- (c) A person who has ceased to be a minister of the Church by virtue of the foregoing sub-paragraph may be restored to the office of minister by the Assembly.
- (4) When a minister's resignation from his congregation, or of his appointment to special work, is accepted, or he is loosed from his charge, his name shall be removed from the roll of the Presbytery; and he shall, if he so desire and the Presbytery deem him worthy, either -
 - (a) become a minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery, or
 - (b) receive credentials to another Presbytery, or Church court, of his ministerial standing as a minister without charge. (Such credentials shall be ordered only at a stated meeting of the Presbytery, or at a special meeting of the Presbytery expressly appointed therefor) (*See App. 4*).

221. A Presbytery shall not -

- (1) accept the resignation or retirement of a minister unless he shall, at the same time, offer to resign any chaplaincy which he may hold; nor
- (2) grant leave to a minister to retire early, nor transmit the request of a minister for leave to retire early from the active duties of his office, without affording the congregation, at a meeting duly convened for the purpose, an opportunity of expressing their views on the subject.

222. (1) When, from illness, the minister of a congregation becomes unfit for a time for ministerial work, the Presbytery shall confer with the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee to ensure provision for the supply of the pulpit during his illness.

- (2) When, through illness or infirmity, it appears that a minister may have become permanently unfit for his work, the Presbytery shall inquire into the matter and confer with him, and shall take such further action as it sees fit in the interests of the minister and of his charge.
- (3) When, from illness or infirmity, a minister becomes permanently unfit to discharge the duties of his office, and is medically so certified, he shall apply to Presbytery for leave to retire; and the Presbytery may, but only after full investigation and by a unanimous vote of the Committee on Retirements and Pensions, grant him the desired leave upon such terms as the Rules of the Retired Ministers' Fund or the General Assembly may decide.

(4) Nothing in this or the next succeeding rule shall prejudice or affect the operation of paragraph 224.

223. (1) A minister who reaches 65 years of age is entitled to retire from the active duties of the ministry, with the emoluments accruing to a retired minister from the funds of the Church, if:

- (a) when applying to retire, he is a minister in good standing, and
- (b) the congregation affected by his proposed retirement engage to pay to the Central Ministry Fund according to the rules applicable to his case.

(2) The Presbytery shall have power, in the name of the General Assembly, to grant leave to retire to a minister who has reached 65 years of age.

(3) Other ministers in congregations, including those who have reached 64 years of age, may be granted special leave to retire by the General Assembly, upon terms to be determined by the Assembly after recommendation to the Board of Finance and Personnel by the Committee on Pensions and Assessments.

(4) Ministers retiring from special work shall do so in accordance with the terms of their appointment, and with the consent of their Presbytery and the appropriate Assembly Board. Such retirement shall not entitle the minister to emoluments accruing to a retired minister from the funds of the Church, apart from such arrangements as may specifically have been made under the terms of his appointment.

(5) In any event a minister shall retire not later than his 70th Birthday.

224. (1) **Where a minister** may have placed himself in a position where it is impossible for him satisfactorily to discharge the duties of his charge, or where it is publicly reported that a minister's usefulness has been seriously impaired, the Presbytery shall inquire into the matter, confer with him and take such steps as it sees fit.

(2) In such cases, the Presbytery may, if it considers it advisable:

- (a) conduct a special visitation of the congregation in which such questions as they deem right shall be put;
- (b) loose the minister from his charge without further obligation and declare the congregation or charge vacant; or
- (c) (i) in circumstances where it is satisfied that there is a situation or case for further investigation, refer the matter to the Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, which may loose the minister from his charge and, if appropriate, declare the congregation vacant, and/or make such other arrangements as it sees fit.

(ii) In so acting, the Judicial Commission shall have power to fix a retiring allowance, if any, according to the rules for the time being, of the General Assembly, or to fix an allowance for a temporary period.

(3) Should the Presbytery as a result of its enquiries conclude that the usefulness of the minister has been seriously impaired by any officebearer or member, it shall find accordingly. In such a case the Presbytery may

- (a) remove such officebearer from office in the congregation,
- (b) decide that disciplinary proceedings under Chapter XIX be initiated,
- (c) take such other action as it deems appropriate,

(4) The Judicial Commission may exercise any of the powers of Presbytery mentioned in the foregoing sub-paragraph (3).

225. When a minister of a congregation has been permitted to retire in the usual way, the minister shall –

- (1) cease to be a member of the Kirk Session (unless the General Assembly declare otherwise);
- (2) cease to receive the benefit of all the general endowments for the minister of the congregation unless specifically allocated to the minister emeritus by the terms of the trusts on which they are held;
- (3) (a) if ordained and appointed to a pastoral charge after 5th June, 1935, cease to have any right to the continued use of the manse or glebe, from the day when he avails himself of the leave given, and cease to be "the minister for the time being" of the congregation in respect of their manse, glebe or farm, without affecting any of the rights of such a minister which do not relate to the use of any such manse or glebe;
- (b) if ordained and appointed to a pastoral charge before 5th June, 1935, retain all rights to the continued use of a congregation's manse, glebe or farm, as he was possessed of prior to that date.

226. (a) **When a minister**, instead of retiring in the usual way, on account of old age, infirmity, sickness or other cause recognised as adequate by the Presbytery, voluntarily resigns the pastoral charge of his congregation and the resignation has been accepted by Presbytery, he may, if the Presbytery so propose and the Assembly decide, have his name enrolled as Minister-Emeritus of the congregation; and shall in virtue of such enrolment be a member of the superior courts of the Church. As such he shall continue under the jurisdiction of Presbytery and shall be subject to the provisions of these rules regarding the acceptance of paid appointments applying to ministers in active duty or ministers without charge.

- (b) In such cases of voluntary resignation there shall be no entitlement to a retiring allowance from Assembly funds, before qualifying normally, nor shall there be any entitlement to an allowance for a temporary period, unless where a special arrangement is made by the Union Commission after consultation with the Judicial Commission.

CHAPTER XV - CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

SECTION I - FORMATION, Etc., OF CONGREGATIONS

- 227.** **Provision for areas within its bounds** which may lack adequate ministrations of the Church is the responsibility of Presbytery, advised and supported in the formation of new congregations by the General Assembly's Church Extension Committee under the Board of Mission in Ireland, which may initiate discussions.
- 228.** (1) **Before agreeing to the formation of a new congregation** the Presbytery shall consult the Kirk Session of congregations who may be immediately affected and hear their observations.
- (2) If, after this has been done, the Presbytery decide that no action shall be taken, the Assembly Committee, through its appropriate Board, shall have the right of appeal to Assembly.
- 229.** (1) **When Church Extension work is decided upon** by the Presbytery, with the concurrence of the Board of Mission in Ireland, to begin in any area, an interim Kirk Session and provisional bounds shall be appointed forthwith, provided -
- (a) the Session shall consist of a minister or ministers of the Presbytery and a ruling elder or elders under its jurisdiction, with the Moderator of interim Session being appointed by the Presbytery until he be succeeded by a minister appointed to the charge; and
- (b) the provisional bounds are approved at subsequent meetings of the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (2) No Church Extension charge shall be constituted by Presbytery a full congregation of the Church, nor bounds finalised, until the approval of the General Assembly obtained to a Memorial seeking such action.
- (3) If it is decided that Church Extension work shall be begun or developed in some form of co-operation with other Churches, the provisions of this and subsequent paragraphs may be modified to allow for such co-operation according to arrangements approved by the General Assembly.
- 230.** (1) **Sites** for potential Church Extension work shall be acquired by the Board of Mission in Ireland, subject to the approval of the Presbytery.
- (2) **Grants** towards the provision of suitable buildings for the carrying on of the work shall be made by the Board of Mission in Ireland, from such funds as may be at their disposal for expenditure incurred with their approval, on such terms as may be fixed by the Board, provided that plans have been approved by the Church Architecture Committee and Presbytery.
- (3) (a) All sites acquired and buildings erected shall be vested in the Education Board of the Synod or Presbytery.
- (b) Sites which may subsequently prove redundant may be sold and the proceeds paid to the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (4) Promises of grants to a Church Extension charge are always assumed to be conditional on the necessary funds not being otherwise available from large benefactions from interested friends, or from other sources, unless the contrary is expressly stated.
- (5) (a) Church Extension charges participating in joint projects with other Churches may apply to the Board of Mission in Ireland for assistance with the purchase of property or other approved expenditure, upon such terms as shall be determined by the Board having regard to the provisions of the appropriate scheme approved by the Assembly.
- (b) In joint projects the acquisition and use of the property and approval of plans may be affected in such manner as shall satisfy the participating Churches.
- 231.** (1) **The call of a minister** to serve in a Church Extension charge shall be at the initiative of the Board of Mission in Ireland, following such procedure for inviting applications and interviewing candidates as the Board sees fit, provided that the interim Kirk Session be represented in any interview and recommendation for call.
- (2) (a) After the call has been sustained and presented in the usual way, the Presbytery of the bounds shall proceed with ordination or induction and appointment to the charge.

- (b) Appointments to Church Extension charges shall be under the Home Mission Development Scheme.
- (3) Upon appointment a minister shall become Moderator of the interim Session, be responsible for all the duties of the pastorate, for which he shall be answerable to Presbytery, and be a member of the superior courts of the Church.
- (4) (a) Financial provision for the support of a Church Extension minister shall be made from local and central funds of the Church as the Union Commission shall from time to time determine.
- (b) The finances of a Church Extension charge shall be organised on congregational lines from the beginning so as to provide for all its ordinary expenses and assessments due.
- (c) The interim Kirk Session shall encourage the formation of a Working Committee as soon as possible from among those who have joined the new charge, to co-operate with them in all financial matters in the undertaking.
- (d) A Church Extension charge shall submit annually, or as requested, a statement of all its finances to the Union Commission. (Such statement should normally be presented by 1st February each year).

- 232.** (1) **If it should appear that a Church Extension charge is incapable** of such development as shall lead to its being fully constituted, the Board of Mission in Ireland shall consult with the Presbytery and Union Commission and shall make recommendations of other arrangements for such work as it is desirable to continue in the area.
- (2) Should the Presbytery be unwilling to accept recommendations approved by the Board of Mission in Ireland and/or Union Commission, these may appeal to the higher courts of the Church. An appeal by Presbytery in corresponding circumstances lies to the General Assembly.
- (3) On the termination of a Church Extension charge by the Union Commission -
- (a) the interim Kirk Session and provisional parish boundaries shall be held to be discharged;
 - (b) the minister, should he be ineligible for retirement, shall become a minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery; and his income shall be continued from central funds until such time as he shall be placed in other work under the Home Mission Development Scheme or shall receive some other call; and
 - (c) any assets remaining from the charge shall fall to the Board of Mission in Ireland, which shall also be liable for any lawful debts outstanding.
- 233.** (1) **When a Church Extension charge** has been fully constituted as a congregation of the Church it shall be deemed vacant.
- (2) The Presbytery shall appoint a commission in charge and take steps to prepare a list of qualified voters, to obtain the Union Commission's leave to call, and to proceed with the call and appointment of a minister for the congregation and the election of a regular Kirk Session. The procedures for leave to call and the publication of the necessary lists may be completed before the congregation is fully constituted. The Commission, in consultation with the Interim Kirk Session, shall fix the number of Ruling Elders.
- (3) When a Church Extension charge has been fully constituted as a congregation trusts shall be declared for the property according to the Assembly's prescribed terms.
- (4) While the Union Commission is appointed and authorised by the Assembly to arrange for unions, stated supplies and portings of congregations, no established congregation shall be dissolved by Presbytery or merged with another to lose its ecclesiastical status without the direction of a specific resolution of the General Assembly.
- 234.** (1) **Each congregation of the Church**, upon its being fully constituted, shall assume full responsibility for the maintenance of its property and the payment of rates, taxes and insurance premiums thereof and any rents payable thereon (except for ground rent of the Church property for which a fixed annual contribution of £40 shall be paid to the Board of Mission in Ireland).
- (2) A former Church Extension charge, upon its being fully constituted, shall be deemed to have relinquished all claims on Church Extension funds in respect of its existing buildings or future renovations or extensions except insofar as may be agreed and minuted by the Assembly at the time of authorising its being fully constituted.
- (3) (a) During the period of fifteen years after its being fully constituted each congregation so constituted shall lie under assessment to the Church Extension Fund at the rate of £1.50 per family subscribing at

least £5 to congregational funds annually. This figure shall be considered additional to the amounts contributed for ground rents and for the United Appeal.

- (b) If, in the judgment of the Union Commission, fully constituted congregations during this period are able to pay more, a Target of Honour shall be set for them by the Union Commission.
- (4) Notwithstanding any of the previous provisions, an established congregation moving its centre of worship, together with its assets to serve a recognised Church Extension area (i.e., "porting") may apply to the Board of Mission in Ireland for assistance towards the purchase of property, the erection of buildings and other approved expenditure. Any assistance given by the Board shall be on such terms and conditions as it sees fit.

SECTION II - CONGREGATIONAL FINANCES

- 235.** (1) **Within the total income of a congregation** certain items are designated income from "Specified Sources," to include contributions in respect of -
- (a) Weekly Freewill Offering;
 - (b) Stipend;
 - (c) Central Ministry Fund;
 - (d) Sunday and other collections for general congregational purposes.
- (2) Money received by way of repayment of Income Tax on a contribution shall be treated as part of that contribution.
- (3) Other income not under Specified Sources may include collections for building and repairs, repayment of debts, and other designated objects, monies raised in Sunday School or Church organisations (other than for general congregational purposes), collections for the United Appeal or other religious and charitable objects, endowment income, etc.
- Where a congregation adopts the Weekly Freewill Offering method, the Congregational Committee shall provide envelopes and appoint a W.F.O. Secretary to supervise their distribution and return.
- 236.** (1) **In a congregation's call** to a minister, the promise of stipend "with increase" shall be interpreted as meaning that the minimum stipend to be paid in each year shall be the stipend promised in the call together with the annual percentage increases fixed by the Board of Ministry and Pensions.
- (2) Should the application of this rule give rise to serious difficulty, or as part of a seven year review, the Union Commission shall have power to vary the amount payable so that an equitable arrangement may be made.
- 237. Payments towards ministerial expenses** may be made by a congregation which has fulfilled its promise to pay stipend with increase, as follows.
- (a) A minimum contribution to expenses, as agreed with the Union Commission, shall be paid, together with such other payments or increases as may be authorised from time to time by the Congregational Committee and are vouched for and approved by Presbytery.
 - (b) Payments for travel, telecommunications expenses, towards the lighting, heating and cleaning of the manse or towards the upkeep of manse grounds are among recognised ministerial expenses, along with other items as authorised by the Union Commission.
 - (c) All ministerial expenses received shall be included and published in the appropriate statistical returns.
- 238.** (1) **Supply fees** shall be paid by a congregation, or a union of congregations, having temporary supply of their pulpit during a vacancy or ministerial holiday, at a standard rate.
- (2) Similar fees shall be paid by the minister to a supply engaged by him on other occasions.
- (3) The rate for the Supply Fee shall be £2 for each £500 or part thereof of the basic minimum ministerial income, or as may be determined from time to time by the Union Commission. Where only a single service is supplied in one congregation, the fee shall be at the rate of 2/3 of the full fee.
- (4) Travelling expenses shall be paid in accordance with the rates for travel by car fixed for attendance at Assembly Boards, or be based on second class rail or bus fares.

- 239.** (1) **The encouragement of contributions by the people**, in a spirit of generous and responsible stewardship for the work of the Church, both within the congregation and through the Assembly, shall be the duty of the Congregational Committee. It shall include making known the place the funds of the Church (such as the Central Ministry Fund, the Retired Ministers' Fund, the Ministers' Pension Scheme Fund and the Widows of Ministers' Fund, together with the United Appeal for the Missions, etc., of the Assembly) take in the life of the Church.
- (2) Instructions shall be given to the Congregational Treasurer or Treasurers, out of the specified sources, to pay in full the annual congregational assessment for the C.M.F., the R.M.F., the M.P.S.F., the W.M.F. and the Incidental Fund of the General Assembly, along with any other assessment ordered by the Assembly, as well as the fees payable by the congregation to the Clerks of Presbytery, and any assessment made by the Presbytery for general purposes within its bounds.
- (3) Arrangements shall be made that the congregation is constantly informed of the work of the Church, at home and abroad, for which their contributions are sought; and the Congregational Committee shall, by example, exhortation and such scheme of contribution or collection as is locally suitable, endeavour to have the congregational share of the Assembly's United Appeal (as transmitted by Presbytery) met in full before the end of each financial year.
- 240.** (1) **A full statement of the congregational accounts**, including those of organisations under the control of the Kirk Session, shall be prepared each year by the Congregational Committee, and duly audited by auditors appointed by the congregation or, failing them, by the Congregational Committee.
- (2) Congregational Committees should adopt the 31st December as the closing date of their financial year.
- (3) A list of all contributors to the stipend or weekly freewill offering and to the Central Ministry Fund, with the respective accounts paid by each, shall be similarly prepared; provided that -
- (a) the names of those contributors who wish to remain anonymous may be omitted from the lists and their contribution identified by number; but
- (b) in order to preserve the status of such anonymous contributors, their names and numbers shall be held in the joint custody of the Clerk of Kirk Session and the F.W.O. Secretary of the congregation.
- (4) Copies of the audited accounts, including those of congregational organisations, and lists of contributors and, if required, the minute book and records of receipts and disbursements of the Congregational Committee, shall each year be submitted to Presbytery, not later than its stated meeting in March.

SECTION III - CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY

(See also Pars. 53-60 and App. 7)

- 241. Trustees appointed** to receive and hold the property of the congregation may be three or more voting members of the congregation, but -
- (a) the Assembly recommends that the Education Board of the Presbytery or Synod should be appointed the congregational trustee except where the trusts on which the property is held prohibit such appointment;
- (b) where the only trustees are individuals and their number falls below three, the congregation shall at once proceed to appoint an additional trustee or trustees, taking legal advice on procedure;
- (c) wherever the trusts enable, an individual congregational trustee should be removed from his position as a trustee upon his ceasing to be a member of the congregation;
- (d) a congregational trustee shall not be appointed or removed except by the congregation at a congregational meeting held in accordance with rules and, except as provided by paragraph (c), no trustee may be removed without the prior sanction of the Presbytery;
- (e) in the event of the congregation ceasing to acknowledge the authority of, and remain in connection with the General Assembly, and to profess and maintain the Rule of Faith and Standards of the Church as contained in the Code of the Church for the time being in force, the power of removing

and/or appointing new trustees and of declaring new trusts shall devolve on the Presbytery of the bounds.

- 242.** (1) **The choice and appointment of a new trustee or trustees** shall, if no express condition is applicable, be made at a meeting of the congregation and a formal memorandum and memorial thereof executed, in the form set out in the schedule to the Trustee Appointment Act 1850 (13 and 14 Vict. c. 28).
- (2) By virtue of the Trustee Appointment Acts 1850 and 1890, a memorandum executed with respect to any lands to which those Acts may apply and attested by two or more credible witnesses operates to vest the land specified in the memorandum in new trustees, but it is also necessary to have the memorandum duly stamped within thirty days and -
- (a) if the land is unregistered land in Northern Ireland, to have a memorial of the memorandum, in a form which complies with Schedule 1 to the Registration of Deeds Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 lodged with the memorandum of registration in the Registry of Deeds; and
- (b) if the land is registered land in Northern Ireland, to have the title of the new trustees registered in the Land Registry pursuant to schedule 8 part II paragraph 1 to the Land Registration Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 (c.18); and
- (c) if the land is in the Republic of Ireland, in addition to executing the form of choice and appointment prescribed by 13 and 14 Vict. c. 28, to take the necessary steps to have the document stamped and registered in the Registry of Deeds or the Land Registry, whichever is applicable, in accordance with the laws then in force.
- (3) A Memorandum in the form scheduled to the Trustee Appointment Act 1850 applies to certain estates and interests in land only. As regards other property (including Government stock and other securities) it will be necessary for the old trustees to execute, stamp and appropriately register a transfer of the property from the old trustees to the new or to rely on a deed of appointment to which sections 35 and 39 of the Trustee Act (Northern Ireland) 1958 (c. 23) or corresponding provision of the law of the Republic of Ireland apply.
- (4) New trustees should satisfy themselves, upon legal advice, that all necessary steps have been duly taken to complete their title to all property in respect of which they are to act as trustees.
- 243.** (1) **Congregational property for which trusts have not been formally declared** shall be declared by deed to be held upon trust in accordance with paragraph 54 of the Code.
- (2) Such deed shall provide that -
- (a) the property shall be held by the trustees in trust for the congregation so long as it shall remain under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and acknowledges their authority and professes and maintains the Standards of the Church as contained in the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the time being in force, and thereafter for such members of the Church as shall remain under and acknowledge such jurisdiction and profess and maintain such Standards.
- (b) the congregation from time to time may remove any of the individual trustees for the time being, or appoint a trustee or trustees to fill a vacancy or as an additional trustee or trustees;
- (c) in the event of the congregation ceasing to acknowledge the authority of, and remain in connection with the General Assembly and to profess and maintain the Standards of the Church as contained in the Code of the Church for the time being in force, the power of removing and/or appointing new trustees and declaring new trusts shall devolve on the Presbytery of the bounds, together with the powers specified in sub-paragraphs (d) and (e);
- (d) whenever, with the consent of the Presbytery, the congregation so decide the trustees for the time being may sell, lease, mortgage, charge or otherwise dispose of the said property or any part thereof according to such consent and decision; and
- (e) the trustees for the time being (if they are also trustees for monies or securities of the congregation) will hold any money or securities with the interest, whenever paid to or vested in them or their successors, to be applied as the congregation from time to time may direct in accordance with the trusts relating thereto.
- (3) Legal advice should be sought on the drawing up of such deed of trust and on what registration and stamp duty may be required. (See also Appendix 7 for model form of trust deed).

- 244. All title deeds and securities** of the congregation should be deposited by the congregation's trustees for safe custody in the strong room provided for the purpose at Church House, Belfast, or such other place as may be described by the Presbytery, and the trustees shall give a copy of every security and deed by which property is vested in the Church to the Congregational Committee.
- 245. (1) Where any manse property is not required**, following the union of two or more congregations, for the immediate use or occupation of the minister, the trustees of the property may, subject to sub-paragraph (2), apply the income therefrom or the proceeds of sale thereof in or towards the acquisition, repair or upkeep of a manse for the minister.
- (2) Sub-paragraph (1) shall not have effect if -
- (a) the manse property is held on trust providing for its application in the event of a union of congregations, or prohibiting its application for the purposes mentioned in the sub-paragraph;
 - (b) the minister was installed before 10th June, 1960, and has not consented to the application of the sub-paragraph;
 - (c) the approval of the Presbytery has not been obtained; or
 - (d) the manse property is property of a Home Mission congregation, to which special rules apply.

SECTION IV - VISITATION OF CONGREGATIONS

- 246. (1) Each congregation** and Church Extension charge, in succession, shall receive an official visitation by Presbytery once, at least, in ten years.
- (2) A special visitation of a congregation, or Church Extension charge, may also be held when the Presbytery consider it to be necessary.
- (3) Normally there should not be a visitation of a congregation within twelve months immediately succeeding the appointment of a minister.
- (4) A Presbytery may, if it think right, appoint a commission consisting of not less than seven members, five to be a quorum, to conduct a visitation. Additionally, two or more women's representatives or deaconesses should be invited to sit and deliberate with the visitation commission.
- 247. (1) The purpose of visitation** of congregations by Presbyteries is to seek the improvement of Church life and work in the congregation and area concerned, by inquiry into all matters affecting the congregation, by the encouragement of members in their Christian witness and service, and by advice or correction in anything found amiss. It should be seen as a vital part of the Presbytery's continuing responsibility for oversight on behalf of the whole Church.
- (2) The essential stages in visitation are: Notification, Inquiry, Finding and Report. The same forms may not all be as relevant or effective with different types of congregation, and may be adapted by Presbyteries within the authorised guidelines to achieve as far as possible the purpose indicated.
- (3) Guidelines on procedures and questions for visitations shall be authorised by the General Board from time to time.
- 248. Notification**
- (1) Congregations shall be given formal notice by Presbytery of the intended visitation and the proposed procedures being followed not less than two months previous to the public visitation.
- (2) A notice shall be sent to be read to the congregation by their minister on a convenient Sunday, with an invitation to members to forward any particular matter which they wish to bring to the Presbytery's attention concerning the congregation or the cause of Christ in their district.
- (3) With the Presbytery's notice there shall be sent preparatory questionnaires to be answered in writing by the minister, Kirk Session and Congregational Committee and returned one month prior to the public visitation. These answers shall eventually be filed in an appendix to the Presbytery's minute book.
- (4) Notice of the intended visitation shall also be sent by Presbytery to the Union Commission with a statement of congregational accounts for the last financial year, and comments thereon invited.

(5) The Presbytery shall also notify the congregation of representatives appointed to examine its records and deeds prior to the public visitation. These shall include -

- (a) the minute books of its Kirk Session and Congregational Committee;
- (b) the roll of its communicants and its register of baptisms and marriages;
- (c) the inventory of Church property and articles of historic interest, if any;
- (d) the title deeds of its property, or certificate of their safe custody; and
- (e) the documents regulating any endowments belonging to or held in trust for the minister or the congregation.

249. Inquiry

(1) Prior to the public visitation -

- (a) preparatory meetings shall be held, separately and privately, by the Presbytery or its representatives with the minister (ordained assistant and deaconess), the Kirk Session and the Congregational Committee; and also, if seen fit, with various Church organisations and concerned members;
- (b) discussion at the preparatory meetings shall deal with matters referred to in the questionnaires already returned, and with other matters particularly concerning the life, work and ministry of the congregation.

(2) At the public visitation -

- (a) initiative should be shown in seeking to make the occasion as meaningful and helpful as possible to the congregation, so that they may be aware of the interest of the wider Church in their particular circumstances, their achievements, difficulties and opportunities, and their part in the life and work of the whole Church;
- (b) proceedings may include -
 - (i) Opening worship
 - (ii) Introductory explanation by the Moderator of the purpose and plan of the visitation.
 - (iii) Report by the Visitation Convener that the preliminaries have been duly completed, with any observations thereon.
 - (iv) Summarised reports on significant answers returned by the minister, Kirk Session and Congregational Committee with selected or supplementary questions being put and further questions or comment thereon offered by members of the Presbytery or of the congregation.
 - (v) A special address or demonstration may also be given on some aspect of the congregation's or of the Assembly's work.

250. Finding

(1) Subsequent to the public visitation the Presbytery, or its visitation commission, shall reach an official finding. The minister and representative elders of the congregation, being interested parties, shall not be present at the consideration of this, but the finding shall thereafter be read to them in private. Unless there is an appeal, the finding as adopted shall be published.

(2) A minute of the procedure followed and the finding adopted shall be inserted in the Presbytery minute book; and a copy of the finding shall be furnished to the Kirk Session for retention in their minute book.

(3) The Presbytery shall appoint a minister to exchange with the minister of the congregation on a convenient Sunday and -

- (a) either publicly read the finding and address the people thereon, or
- (b) preferably, the finding having been circulated to the congregation, address the people thereon.

(4) Should the Presbytery, as a result of its enquiries, conclude that the congregation might be dissolved, merged with another congregation, or that its centre of worship and activities be moved to another area (i.e., "ported"), it shall forthwith report its findings to the Union Commission and the Board of Mission in Ireland.

251. Report

- (1) Within twelve months after the visitation of a congregation, the Presbytery shall enquire of the minister or representative elder how far the recommendations of Presbytery have been carried out.
- (2) In case of neglect to give effect to its recommendations, or at the desire of the minister or representative elder, the Presbytery shall again send a member to address the congregation; or it shall take such other action as it sees fit.

CHAPTER XVI - RECORDS AND REPORTS

SECTION I - GENERAL

- 252.** (1) **A minute book** shall be kept by each Church court, commission, board or committee for the record of proceedings under the authority of its Clerk, Convener or Secretary.
- (2) The minutes of proceedings shall include the date and place of meeting, the fact that it has been opened and closed with prayer, the attendance of those present, what minutes have been confirmed, all motions moved and seconded and the decisions taken thereon.
- 253.** (1) **Minutes of proceedings** at each meeting shall be presented at the close of the meeting or at a subsequent meeting, either by being read or, preferably, by being circulated to members, to be corrected if found to be inaccurate and confirmed -
- (a) either by the signature of the person presiding at the time of their confirmation, or
- (b) in the case of the General Assembly by the attestation of the Clerk after the close of the Assembly.
- (2) In correcting minutes before confirmation, no alteration shall be made in any resolution which was passed or rejected by a court or committee.
- (3) No change shall be made in the minutes of an inferior court or committee after their confirmation without the direction of a superior court or supervising board; and such change shall be effected by the Clerk of the superior court or Convener of the supervising board, or as such court or board may direct.
- (4) Official extracts from the minutes of proceedings, under the hand of the Clerk, shall not be given, except to a superior court or supervising board, without the leave of the court or committee concerned, or of their Moderator and Clerk or Chairman and Convener as the case may be. Such extracts shall be accepted as authoritative evidence.
- 254.** (1) **The custody of minute books** shall be the responsibility of the Clerk, Convener or Secretary involved, while remaining the property of the Church body concerned which may require them of him at any time. It shall be his duty to ensure their preservation and prompt transfer to successors in office.
- (2) Upon the dissolution of any Church court, commission, board or committee, the minute book shall become the responsibility of the superior court or supervising board, to be disposed of only at the direction of such court or board.
- (3) No minute book or records of historic significance shall be disposed of without prior consultation with and advice from the Clerk of Assembly.
- (4) All minute books of Presbyteries or Assembly commissions or boards no longer required for the business of the body concerned shall be lodged with the Clerk of Assembly for safe custody and preservation.

SECTION II - CONGREGATIONS

- 255.** **The official records** of a congregation include both the current and disused Baptismal and Marriage Registers, Communion Rolls, Minute Books of the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee and Legal documents relating to the properties of the congregation.
- 256.** (1) A list of official records shall be kept in the current minute book of Kirk Session and regularly kept up to date, specifying also the dates at which each volume begins and ends and in whose custody they are lodged, furthermore including lists of -
- (a) the bequests and endowments of the congregation, together with a statement of the purposes to which each is to be devoted; and
- (b) all other Church property of historic interest, including sacramental vessels, communion tokens, collecting ladles and ancient books, and in whose custody they are lodged.

(2) The minute book containing this inventory shall be produced to Presbytery at each visitation of the congregation or change of ministry and assurance given of the due preservation of the items listed, by their production to Presbytery or otherwise as it may require.

(3) Upon amalgamation or dissolution of a congregation the Union Commission shall also ensure that adequate steps are taken to safeguard all such Church property.

- 257.** (1) **Annual reports**, including a financial statement, from each organisation in a congregation, shall be presented to the Kirk Session and, at the Session's discretion, transmitted to a meeting of the congregation.
- (2) (a) The annual report of the Congregational Committee shall include a full statement of accounts, which shall be submitted to the congregation for approval.
- (b) The statement of accounts, together with a list of all contributors to the weekly freewill offering, or stipend and C.M.F., shall be printed and circulated to the congregation in such form as the Presbytery shall decide and individual contributors shall be notified of their contributions either by publication in the report or individually. Where individual contributions are not published a statistical analysis of contributions shall be published in the Committee's annual report.
- 258. Statistical returns** of the persons and finances connected with the congregation, as ordered by the Assembly, shall be transmitted annually through Presbytery to the appropriate Assembly body as follows.
- (a) Ministers shall have the Statistical Sheets sent them clearly filled up with an answer to each question and duly signed.
- (b) Ministers and congregational Treasurers, when forwarding the completed Statistical Sheets to Presbytery, shall submit with them a full statement of the congregational accounts, duly audited, together with those of congregational organisations. (Where printed congregational Reports are not available at the date when the sheets are due to be furnished, Presbyteries shall accept manuscript copies of the financial statements, provided that such statements are in no wise altered afterwards).
- (c) The Statistical Sheets when so completed shall:
- (i) be presented to the Presbyteries at their stated meetings in February or March each year, to be examined and certified by them; and
- (ii) when so certified, be forwarded by the Clerks of Presbyteries to the Financial Secretary, Church House, not later than 10th March.
- (d) The Presbytery shall not certify the annual statistical returns from a congregation unless -
- (i) it is satisfied of their completeness;
- (ii) the congregation has taken up and forwarded all the collections directed to be taken up by the Assembly or included in its United Appeal or given a satisfactory explanation of its default in each case;
- (iii) the congregation has made payment of the fees payable by it to the Clerks of Presbytery, and of the assessments to the Incidental Fund of the Presbytery and the General Assembly.

SECTION III - PRESBYTERIES AND SYNODS

259. Minute books of Presbyteries shall be submitted to the General Assembly for annual examination.

260. Each Presbytery shall report annually to the General Assembly -

- (a) the name of its Moderator;
- (b) the names of ministers or missionaries who, since its last annual report, have died, retired from active duty, resigned their charges, or have been installed, inducted, ordained or licensed by Presbytery, with the respective dates;
- (c) the names of ministers without charge or licentiates under the care of the Presbytery, or who have been furnished with credentials, with the respective dates;

- (d) the names of ministers or missionaries who, since its last annual report, have resigned the office of the ministry, or have been suspended or deposed, or have been declared to be no longer ministers of the Church; and of licentiates from whom licence has been withdrawn;
- (e) the names of candidates for the ministry placed under its care together with the name of any student whose candidature has been terminated during the year;
- (f) the names of congregations which have been constituted by order of the General Assembly; and the names of congregations which have been ported, united, amalgamated or dissolved;
- (g) the names of congregations which have been visited during the year;
- (h) the names of congregations which have given no replies, or replies which were defective, to the annual Statistical Sheet; and the names of congregations which have not sent to the Church's Financial Secretary the amounts in full of each Assembly assessment or which have not contributed either to the Assembly's United Appeal or to each mission or committee listed therein;
- (i) that the financial reports of the congregations have been, or are being, printed in pamphlet form;
- (j) the numbers voting for and against any overture sent down by the Assembly for its judgment; and
- (k) any other matter upon which the General Assembly directs it to report.

No other matter than those above specified shall be dealt with in the Presbytery's annual report, which shall be sent to the Clerk of Assembly immediately after its adoption by Presbytery.

261. Annual returns shall also be made by Presbytery -

- (1) To the Clerk of Assembly listing-
 - (a) The congregations and Church Extension charges in the Presbytery with their times of stated Sunday Services.
 - (b) The names of ministers, retired or in active duty, showing the degree or degrees held by each, the charges which they hold, their postal addresses and telephone numbers.
 - (c) The names and addresses of licentiates or recognised ministers without charge under its care.
 - (d) The names and addresses of students for the ministry under its care and the stage reached in their studies.
 - (e) The names of persons nominated to various Assembly boards.
 - (f) The names of those nominated to serve as Moderator of Assembly for the ensuing year.
- (2) To the Financial Secretary of the Church, the separate Statistical Query Sheets relating to the numbers of ministers, retired ministers, licensures, etc., to be returned not later than March 10th each year.

262. When a Presbytery desires formally to bring any matter before the General Assembly, not covered by its report or returns it shall present it in the form of an overture on legislation or a memorial setting out the reasons for the action being requested.

263. (1) The Clerk of Presbytery shall notify to the Clerk of Assembly forthwith on their occurrence, with the dates thereof, all licensures and ordinations, with the dates of birth of those involved, all ministerial changes and all changes in the eldership, including retirements and deaths.

(2) In the case of ministerial ordinations and changes, the Clerk of Assembly shall be responsible for transmitting the information also to the Financial Secretary and the Secretaries of the Widows' Funds.

(3) The Clerk of Presbytery shall also confirm, within one year of ordination, that each minister has qualified for membership in one of the Widows' Funds.

264. – 265. (deleted)

SECTION IV - ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS

266. (1) Minute books of each Assembly commission, board or committee not under a supervising board shall be submitted annually to the Assembly for examination.

(2) Committees under the supervision of a board shall submit their minute books to the Convener of the board for examination before each annual meeting of Assembly.

267. (1) The convener of each commission, board or committee shall submit to the Clerk of Assembly not later than March 15 each year a provisional report to the Assembly.

(2) Final amendments to reports, together with suggested resolutions arising from the reports shall be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly not later than April 30.

(3) A comprehensive printed volume of reports with appended resolutions shall be published and circulated to members of Assembly not later than one week before each annual Assembly.

(4) Supplementary reports and resolutions from commissions, boards or committees may be submitted only where matters could not have been dealt with at the time of the regular reports. These must be received before the opening of the Assembly and made available to members as an appendix to the daily minutes.

CHAPTER XVII - ASSEMBLY AGENCIES

SECTION I - BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- 268.** (1) **Commissions and Committees** of the General Assembly may be either standing or occasional.
- (2) Standing committees, generally known as boards, each having supervisory responsibilities over a broad field of work for which they are answerable to the General Assembly, may
- (a) include a number of official working committees or specialist agents or directors appointed by the Assembly to promote particular aspects of work under the supervision of the board, and
 - (b) from time to time appoint particular sub-committees or agents, answerable to the board for work remitted to them.
- (3) Occasional commissions and committees may be appointed for specific purposes, independently of boards, subject to annual renewal.
- (4) For administrative purposes the standing commission and Boards may be grouped into four divisions as follows:
- (a) General: including the General Board, Judicial Commission, Union Commission, Business Board, Board of Communications;
 - (b) Mission: including the Inter-Church Relations Board, Board of Mission Overseas, Board of Mission in Ireland and Board of Social Witness;
 - (c) Evangelism and Education: including Board of Youth, Board of Education, Board of Christian Training;
 - (d) Finance: including Board of Trusts, Board of Finance and Personnel, United Appeal Board. This division shall act in association with the Trustees of the General Assembly.
- 269.** (1) **The membership of an Assembly Board** shall be appointed in accordance with this section from representatives of the Church, nominated by Presbyteries, together with ex-officio members and persons having special contributions to make to the work of the board or its committees, on the nomination of the Business Board.
- (2) (a)(i) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly shall be members of all commissions, boards, committees or sub-committees, ex-officio.
- (ii) Where the Clerk of Assembly is ex-officio, the Deputy Clerk shall be permitted to attend in his place, if necessary.
- (b) The Convener and, for a period of not more than one year, immediate past Convener shall be members ex-officio of their respective commissions, boards or committees, and the Convener of a board similarly a member of all its working committees.
 - (c) Any other members, ex-officio, not specified in rules, shall be appointed only after recommendation by the Business Board.
 - (d) The number of official working committees in connection with any Board shall be appointed after report and recommendation by the Business Board.
 - (e) Full-time Secretaries, Officers or Advisers appointed by the authority of the General Assembly, together with the Financial Secretary, shall have the standing of Convener, in particular for ex-officio appointments to Boards, Committees, etc.
- (3) In addition to their ex-officio members, a working committee shall normally consist of not more than twelve members, at least one half of whom shall be drawn from the Presbytery nominees to the Board and the others nominated by the Business Board on the recommendation of the committee's Convener.
- (4) Presbyteries and the Business Board should seek that their nominations provide, so far as is reasonably practical, that
- (a) there are an equal number of ministers and other members of the Church;
 - (b) no one is nominated a member of more than three boards, unless serving ex-officio, and

- (c) Presbytery agents be included to sit on the appropriate Assembly boards.
 - (5) (a) Presbyteries should consider the wider Church membership, both men and women, when choosing representatives.
 - (b) Presbyteries should make adequate arrangements for their representatives to report back from Assembly Boards and Committees.
 - (c) Presbyteries should set up a sub-committee to consider and recommend names to be presented for appointment. The submission of possible names should be requested and the willingness of individuals to serve be ascertained.
 - (d) Lists of nominations to be made to Boards and Commissions should be circulated to members of the court.
 - (6) Annual nominations by Presbyteries shall be forwarded to the Clerk of Assembly before 31 March each year, except those for the Business Board, which shall be forwarded before 10 March.
 - (7) In case any nominations are neglected, the retiring members shall be deemed re-nominated.
 - (8) The Financial Secretary may act in an advisory capacity to all Boards and Committees.
- 270.**
- (1) (a) **The Assembly shall appoint** its commissions, boards, etc., with their Conveners, after a report from the Business Board on nominations made or received.
 - (b) In the appointment of Conveners of Boards and Committees the Board shall set up a sub-committee to consider the appointment and inform the Board or Committee that names may be submitted.
 - (2) In the event of an oversight in the appointment of an Assembly commission or committee which has not been discharged, it shall be deemed reappointed with its previous membership.
 - (3) The period of appointment
 - (a) for members shall generally be for three years, and not exceeding nine years, after which they shall not be eligible for re-appointment for three years. Approximately one-third of the members shall retire each year though eligible for re-appointment; (This period shall not apply to the Judicial Commission, the Special Commission or Business Board).
 - (b) for honorary Conveners shall be for not more than seven years.
 - (4) Any member who, without giving due reason, has failed to attend any of the meetings of his commission, etc., for a year or for three successive meetings, whichever be the longer period, shall be deemed to have retired from membership.
 - (5) Where the quorum of any commission, etc., has not been fixed by the Assembly it shall be one quarter of the total membership, or the number nearest one quarter, though in no case shall the quorum be less than three.
- 271.**
- (1) **Meetings of Assembly commissions**, boards or committees shall as far as possible, be summoned only during those weeks which are designated by the Business Board.
 - (2) Second class rail or bus fare or a petrol allowance, on such conditions as the Assembly may from time to time determine, shall be paid quarterly to members attending the Assembly and meetings of its commissions, boards, etc., during the designated weeks, or at other times at the discretion of the Business Board.
- 272. General Board of the Assembly**
- (1) The General Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, who shall be Convener, the preceding three Moderators, the former Clerks, the Clerks of Presbyteries and one minister and two elders nominated by each Presbytery, all Assembly Conveners of Commissions and Boards, and those members of working committees under the supervision of the Board together with not more than twenty members directly nominated by the Business Board, of whom at least ten shall be women.
 - (2) The Board shall on behalf of the Assembly deal with such exceptional matters affecting public interest or the general work of the Church as may arise and require action between meetings of the General Assembly; and may either directly or through its authorised committee issue statements on such matters on behalf of the Church.

- (3) The Board shall deal with any matters not falling within the terms of another Board or which may relate directly to two or more Boards.
- (4) The Board shall supervise the work of committees charged with -
- (a) preparing general Church policy or statements on doctrine for submission to the Assembly;
 - (b) advising the Moderator on matters in which he would wish to share a measure of responsibility and in the provision of assessors to sit with any lower court that may invite their help in cases of difficulty;
 - (c) all approaches to Heads of State, their representatives, ministers and Governments and other public functionaries by address, memorial or deputation on behalf of the Church in matters of public interest (except as these may be wholly within the remit of some other Assembly commission or committee);
 - (d) granting leave to call for ministries in recognised service to the Church.
 - (e) conferring with other Churches; Councils of Churches and other ecumenical and confessional organisations approved by the Assembly, and advising on relations with them.
- (5) The Board itself, or through its appropriate Committee, is authorised
- (a) to be the recognised medium of communication between the Church and Governments;
 - (b) to submit nominations for the offices of Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Theological Professors and College Principal.
 - (c) to encourage the study of and response to global issues, including race relations; peace and peacemaking; and the environment.
- (6) To this Board shall stand referred at once all applications from students, licentiates or ministers of other churches to be received under the care of the Church and no application shall be dealt with by the Assembly until a report has been received thereon. The Board, directly or through a Committee on Reception, shall investigate all such applications and shall act thereon as follows:-
- (a) Ministers and licentiates of other branches of the Christian Church shall apply to the Convener of the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates by 15 December in any year.
 - (b) Each applicant shall be interviewed and a report brought to the spring meeting of the Committee which shall make a recommendation to the spring meeting of the Board which shall have power to issue and may approve or reject any application.
 - (c) The names of those ministers and licentiates who have been approved by the Board and received as ministers or licentiates eligible for call, subject to paragraph (d) below, shall be reported to the General Assembly.
 - (d) A minister or licentiate who has been received in this way shall not be eligible for call until he/she has completed any studies and/or assistantship required by the Board of Christian Training.
 - (e) A successful applicant who has not begun his/her required course of study and/or assistantship by 1 October in the year following his/her reception by the General Assembly shall cease to be eligible.
 - (f) In cases where the reception of a minister is being sought to facilitate the work of a Board of the General Assembly or where a vacancy commission seeks to approve the placing of a minister of another denomination on a list for hearing, the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates may make special interview arrangements and the General Board shall have power to issue or to refer the matter to the General Assembly.
 - (g) Ministers and licentiates whose applications are rejected by the General Board may appeal by memorial to the General Assembly.
- (7) The Board may call ministers appointed to work under Inter-Church auspices or Inter-denominational fellowships, to be ministers in recognized service to the Church in such full-time appointments, provided that those who become members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.

273. Judicial Commission - see Code Par. 127.

274. Union Commission - see Code Par. 128.

The Union Commission shall operate in accordance with the following rules.

- (1) Upon knowledge of a vacancy arising in a congregation it shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of Presbytery forthwith to notify this in writing to the Convener of the Commission and to inform the congregation of the rules governing vacant pastorates and preliminaries to any call.
- (2) Where there is not a vacancy in a congregation, but a Presbytery following the visitation of a congregation, or a congregation of their own initiative, refer a case to the Commission, or the Commission itself deem it appropriate, the Commission shall have power to examine the circumstances and take appropriate action.
- (3) Every candidate for a vacant pastorate shall be deemed to have satisfied himself before accepting a call as to whether the Commission has dealt with the congregation under these rules (and he is advised to confirm the matter with the Convener of the Commission).
- (4) Where a congregation or union of congregations which has become vacant should, in the opinion of the Commission, be continued and agreement has been reached on the terms for a new ministry and the Commission is satisfied that the Manse (if any) is being put into suitable condition for the use of the Minister:
- (a) leave to call shall be issued by the Commission on behalf of the Assembly, but
- (b) this leave shall be operative for 12 months only, after which, should the vacancy not have been filled, it shall be referred back to the Commission for the whole arrangement to be reconsidered.
- (5) Where it is not expedient formally to unite a congregation, in the opinion of the Commission, and yet such congregation in itself does not provide sufficient work for a normal appointment, or is otherwise in special circumstances, the Commission shall have power to:-
- (a) classify such congregation as a Restricted List charge upon the following terms:
- (i) when a vacancy arises, the Commission shall have power to limit the list of candidates to those who, in its opinion, may reasonably be suited to such work, or may become available for service under subsequent rules;
- (ii) where a congregation so designated receives no application from eligible candidates within twelve months of classification, the whole arrangement shall be reconsidered by the commission.
- (b) arrange for the appointment of a Stated Supply to provide for the work of the ministry in the congregation or mission station upon the following terms:
- (i) appointments shall be made by Presbytery on the nomination of, and on terms settled by, the Union Commission;
- (ii) appointment shall not of itself qualify for membership in the courts of the Church;
- (iii) the appointment shall be terminable on two month's notice given, after consultation among them, by the supply, the Presbytery or the Union Commission, or otherwise by mutual arrangement.
- (c) arrange for a Reviewable Tenure appointment upon the following terms:
- (i) the form of Leave to Call shall provide for the appointment to be reviewed and/or terminated after a specified time or in specified circumstances;
- (ii) If the congregation concerned is subsequently united with another congregation, and the minister is accepted by that congregation also as its settled minister, the Reviewable Tenure provisions shall be deemed to have lapsed;
- (iii) except as provided for in sub-paragraph (5)(c)(ii) above, the outgoing minister shall not be eligible to apply for the united charge;
- (iv) the appointment shall not be terminated without six months notice in writing given by the Union Commission to the minister, the congregation and the Presbytery;
- (v) after termination of the appointment the minister shall be eligible for salary and pension contributions at the rate of the appropriate ministerial minimum as a charge upon CMF until the minister receives another Call, or for a period not exceeding twelve months, whichever is the sooner. During such period suitable work may be offered to the minister by the Union Commission. Should such minister at any time refuse to perform the duties thus assigned, without giving reasons deemed satisfactory by the Commission, this financial arrangement shall cease;
- (vi) the provisions of Code Par. 274(8)(b)(ii) shall not apply;

- (vii) where a congregation granted a Reviewable Tenure appointment receives no application with twelve months the whole arrangement shall be reconsidered by the Union Commission.
- (6) (a) Where in the opinion of the Commission, the pastorate of two or more congregations may be united, with the agreement of the representatives of the congregations concerned, terms of union shall be fixed, a date for its commencement set and such action reported in due course to the Assembly.
- (b) The same action may be taken to facilitate a porting; but no congregation shall be dissolved or amalgamated, with loss of its identity, except by authorisation from the Assembly.
- (c) In every case the Commission, having consulted with the congregation, the Presbytery and the Assembly's Church Extension Committee, shall be the final authority as to the area of porting or the union to be effected.
- (d) When any congregation is considering a proposal for dissolution, amalgamation or union with another congregation, no arrangements regarding the sale of its properties and distribution of the proceeds or the income therefrom shall be made without first obtaining the agreement of the Commission.
- (7) When congregations belonging to different Presbyteries are being united or a congregation is ported to a new area the Commission shall have power to remove congregations and ministers from one Presbytery to another.
- (8) For the purpose of effecting a union of congregations, or a porting or dissolution, where there is still a minister in active duty involved,
- (a) he may be retired by the Commission on such terms as may be agreed, or
- (b) where he is prepared voluntarily to resign, he shall, notwithstanding, continue to remain a member of the Assembly and subject to its jurisdiction on the following terms.
- (i) Suitable work shall be offered him by the Commission, or by the Board of Mission in Ireland on application of the Commission, and if appointed as Stated Supply he shall be a member of the Presbytery concerned.
- (ii) Provision shall be made in conjunction with the Central Ministry Fund, that until he becomes eligible to retire his official income (including any payment in lieu of manse) shall be at least equal to that which he surrenders, from and after which time he shall be in the same financial position as an ordinary retired minister of a congregation.
- (iii) Should such minister at any time refuse to perform the duties thus assigned to him, without giving reasons which shall be deemed satisfactory by the Commission, the above financial arrangement shall become null and void.
- (9) When in the opinion of the Commission and of the Presbytery or the Board of Mission in Ireland, the work of a congregation whose minister receives a grant from the Home Mission, or from any other Assembly fund for the augmentation of ministerial income, can be adequately performed by the minister of a neighbouring congregation, or can be adequately arranged for otherwise:
- (a) the grant to such minister shall cease;
- (b) the Commission is empowered to direct Presbytery to release him from his charge;
- (c) upon such release other work shall be offered and financial provision made as set out under subparagraph (8)(b) above.
- (10) When a congregation is opposed to dissolution, or union, or porting, on the terms fixed by the Commission, but a minister is nevertheless allowed to be appointed,
- (a) he shall not receive from the Central Ministry Fund in any year any sum greater than the amount paid into the Fund by the congregation for that year, and
- (b) he shall not receive any grant from any other fund of the Assembly.
- (11) When any congregation which has been dealt with by the Commission shall make default in carrying out the terms and conditions which the Commission has fixed for it, the minister of such congregation, while such default continues,
- (a) shall not receive from the Central Ministry Fund in any year any sum greater than the amount paid into the Fund by the congregation for that year, and

- (b) shall not receive any grant from any other fund of the Assembly, and the Assembly shall have the powers to determine the future status of the congregation.
- (12) The Commission shall have power to dissolve a union between two congregations where, in its opinion, it would be better to unite each or either of the congregations with another congregation, or where other developments render such action desirable.
- (13) When the Minister of a congregation, which becomes united with another congregation, is accepted by that congregation also as its settled minister, the Presbytery shall arrange for an installation service in this second congregation.
- (14) Any request to vary the application of the rules about the provision of a Manse and residence therein (as set out in Par. 195 (11)(c) and Appendix 5A of the Code) shall be referred to the Union Commission, which shall have power to issue after consultation with the Presbytery, congregation and minister (if any).

275. Business Board

- (1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, who shall be convener, the Moderator-Designate, the former Clerk, the preceding three Moderators, all Assembly Conveners of Commissions and Boards, and one minister and ruling elder nominated by each Presbytery, the ruling elder being one who is commissioned to the next meeting of Assembly, together with members of working committees under the supervision of the Board.
- (2) The Board shall enter on their year of office on 15th March preceding each annual Assembly; and at each Assembly a resolution shall be submitted appointing the Board for the following year in accordance with these rules.
- (3) The Board shall deal with all bills to the Assembly, deciding whether they may properly be presented to the court. In doing so they shall
 - (a) license, amend and license, or reject notices of motion or resolutions received, overtures for legislation or memorials which it is desired to present; and
 - (b) examine all letters to the Assembly or its Moderator, all reasons for appeal in cases of appeal to come before the Assembly, and all intended petitions to Parliament, to decide whether such letters, reasons, or petitions should be laid before the court.
- (4) Before licensing any bill for the Assembly, the Board shall
 - (a) have power to require the appearance of the promoter, or a commissioner on his behalf, who must be a member of the Church, to support its prayer;
 - (b) point out any clerical errors, unbecoming language, expressions unnecessarily reflecting on character or irrelevant matter, and require the promoter or commissioner to remove all such from the bill, which, if he refuse, the Board may then reject; and
 - (c) require that any overture to add to or alter existing laws shall be presented in proper legislative form and specify the relevant paragraph or paragraphs of the Code. (cf. Code, paragraph 112 (2)).
- (5) The Board shall refuse to license
 - (a) all bills relating to matters that do not legitimately come under the jurisdiction of the Assembly;
 - (b) unless in special circumstances, any memorial, overture or resolution directed to the work of an Assembly commission, board or committee, of which prior notice of at least three days has not been given to the Convener concerned;
 - (c) a memorial from a congregation which has not previously been read in the congregation and licensed by Presbytery, or licensed by a Commission of Assembly in charge of the congregation;
 - (d) a memorial from a person or persons in a congregation, of which a copy has not been furnished to the Kirk Session of the congregation at least ten days before the meeting of Assembly and unless the memorial has been licensed by Presbytery; but a memorial from Presbyterians on a subject which has no special reference to congregational or local affairs, or from persons not officially under the care of any court of the Church, may come directly, without previous license, to the Board.
- (6) Before licensing reasons for appeal against a sentence or decision of a subordinate court, the Board shall
 - (a) require that these first be licensed by that court, but

- (b) should such license be refused by the subordinate court and the appellant then apply directly to the Board, it shall inquire into the case and, after consultation with the subordinate court, if it see cause, it shall have power to transmit the reasons.
- (7) Should the Board refuse to license a bill, it shall be competent for any member of Assembly, when the report of the Board is submitted to the Assembly, to move that the bill be licensed; but every such motion shall be made, considered and disposed of in private, and the member moving it shall be liable to rebuke if the Assembly consider his procedure groundless or vexatious.
- (8) All overtures, resolutions, references, appeals and memorials to the Assembly shall be forwarded to the Clerk at least one day before the opening meeting of the Assembly; and no document which shall not have been forwarded shall be considered until all the other business of the Assembly has been disposed of, unless with the unanimous approval of the Assembly on the recommendation of the Board.
- (9) The Board shall present recommendations for
 - (a) the business which should be allotted to each session during the Assembly's meeting;
 - (b) the order in which the various items of business shall be taken up, including set times if it should seem expedient so to appoint or restrict a particular item; and
 - (c) what should be considered in open Assembly and what in private.
- (10) The Board shall supervise the making of all arrangements that may be necessary for the accommodation and discharge of the business of the General Assembly (and of subordinate courts, committees, etc., which may be permitted during its meeting). In this it is empowered
 - (a) to issue tickets of admission to the Assembly, both to the members thereof and to others attending,
 - (b) to regulate the conditions of admission, and
 - (c) to make such reservations of seating and accommodation as may be required.
- (11) The Board shall nominate -
 - (a) Conveners and members for commissions, boards and committees of the Assembly, and
 - (b) Corresponding Members and Delegates to Churches with which the Church holds fraternal relations.
- (12) The Board shall have examined the records of all the Presbyteries, and of all Assembly commissions, boards and occasional committees and shall report whether they have been correctly kept.

276. (*Formerly Nomination Board*).

277. Board of Communications

- (1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and Assembly Convener, two persons nominated by each Presbytery, at least one of whom shall not be a minister, the members of each working committee under its supervision and not more than fifteen persons, the majority of whom shall be women, nominated by the Business Board, together with the editors of the Church's magazines and officers of its Publications and Information services.
- (2) The Board shall supervise -
 - (a) the publications and general information services of the Church, having direct responsibility for the official periodicals of the Church and other general publications and advising and assisting with publicity and publications promoted by other Assembly boards or committees; including, subject to the right of appeal to the Assembly, the modification or withdrawal of printed or audio-visual material intended by a board or committee for circulation under their auspices;
 - (b) the development of use in and by the Church of modern means of communication, such as television, sound broadcasting and other audio-visual aids;
- (3) The Board shall provide for the examination of all plans and proposals for the building, alterations, renovation or demolition of all or part of Churches, Church halls and manses, as well as all proposals and designs for memorials, windows and artificial lighting, and for the seating and furnishings requisite for the conduct of public worship, observing the following conditions:
 - (a) All such plans, proposals and designs shall be submitted to a working committee on Church Architecture at an early stage.

- (b) The consent of the committee and of the Presbytery shall be obtained prior to the making of any contract or agreement for the execution of the work, such consent to be given by endorsement of the papers submitted.
- (c) Where, for any reason, agreement cannot be reached the matter shall be referred to the full Board for an agreed decision, failing which the matter shall stand referred to the next meeting of the Assembly.

In carrying out their duties the committee may call into consultation specially qualified persons.

(4) The Board shall provide representation of the Church's interest in the Presbyterian Historical Society according to the following provisions:

- (a) The custody of various manuscripts and published records of the past of the Church together with relics of historical value may be entrusted to this Society, in terms of its constitution.
- (b) The Society is also charged with promoting historical study and appreciation and with compiling accounts of Church life and of those who have played any significant part in its work.
- (5) The Board may call ministers appointed to work in religious broadcasting or religious journalism to be ministers in recognised service to the Church in such appointments provided that:-
 - (a) at least two thirds of their time is concerned with broadcasting or journalism of such religious nature;
 - (b) in the event of such work occupying less than two thirds of his time he shall be deemed to have resigned from the service to which he was called;
 - (c) ministers who become members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.

278. (*Formerly Inter-Church Relations Board*).

279. Board of Mission Overseas

- (1) The Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of the Assembly, the Convener and Secretary of the Board, the Personnel Officer (Overseas), the Finance Officer (Overseas), the president, Overseas Vice-President and General Secretary of Presbyterian Women, the Convener of the Church Relations Committee, the Deputy Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, one Board of Mission in Ireland representative, one Youth and Children's Ministry Board representative, together with three persons, including at least one woman, nominated by each Presbytery, five representative members of the Central Committee of Presbyterian Women and the Assembly Conveners and members of working committees under the supervision of the Board.
- (2) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,
 - (a) supervise the Overseas Mission of the General Assembly, including the interests of the individual missions listed in Par. 115 of the Code;
 - (b) encourage study of, and response to, the issues of aid, relief and world development;
 - (c) select and call missionaries and allocate them to their sphere of labours; and
 - (d) call ministers appointed to serve the Board in full-time administration;
 - (e) in association with the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction they are, exercise a general supervision over the Church's missionaries in life and work in accordance with Mission rules.
- (3) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,
 - (a) take means to secure such financial support from the Church as a whole as may be requisite, from time to time, for the work overseas entrusted to it by the General Assembly;
 - (b) have prepared estimates for the various overseas missions for the appropriate financial year and authorise their submission to the United Appeal Board and/or Finance Committee of Presbyterian Women;
 - (c) authorise expenditure of the funds received from congregations and the Presbyterian Women and other monies accruing for mission work overseas;
 - (d) make grants to other Churches and Societies for missionary purposes; and
 - (e) maintain from funds received, missionaries and mission agents, defray expenses and pay their retiring allowances.

- (4) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,
 - (a) give missionary information and make arrangements for Missionary Conferences and deputations throughout the Church, and
 - (b) generally promote the cause of missions and the work entrusted to it by the Assembly.

280. Board of Mission in Ireland

(1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the President, Home Vice-President and General Secretary of Presbyterian Women, the Irish Mission Superintendent, the Convener and Secretary of the Board of Social Witness, the Conveners of the Education, Christian Training, Youth and Inter-Church Relations Boards and the Union Commission and the Central Ministry Fund Committee, the Presbyterian Mutual Society Agent, two Youth Board representatives, two deaconess representatives, three persons, including at least one woman, nominated by each Presbytery, together with five representative members of the Central Committee of Presbyterian Women, the Convener and Secretaries of the Board, and the Conveners and members of working committees under the supervision of the Board.

- (2) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,
 - (a) supervise the work of the Home Mission;
 - (b) call ministers under the Home Mission Development Scheme, elders, deaconesses or lay agents to recognised Church work and allocate to them their sphere of labour;

and

- (c) in association with the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction they are, exercise a general supervision over their life and work in accordance with Mission rules.

(3) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,

- (a) take means to secure such financial support from the Church as a whole, as may be requisite from time to time, for the work of Church Extension and other Home Missions entrusted to it by the Assembly;
- (b) have prepared estimates for the various Home Missions for the appropriate financial year and authorise their submission to the United Appeal Board and/or Finance Committee of Presbyterian Women;
- (c) authorise expenditure of the funds received from congregations and the Presbyterian Women and other monies accruing;
- (d) make grants to congregations or other Churches and Societies for the encouragement of Church work and missionary purposes in Ireland; and
- (e) maintain, from funds received, deaconesses and lay agents, defray their expenses and pay their retiring allowances and assist in paying salaries and expenses of ministers in Church Extension and Home Mission charges.

(4) The Board shall

- (a) seek to provide for the work of evangelism, including evangelistic missions and literature sponsored by the Church, and with power to make grants to other Churches or Societies for similar work;
- (b) supervise the work of the Irish Mission in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures, and in evangelism, Christian training and education including the employment of agents, or other workers;
- (c) supervise the work of the Shankill Road Mission, except the congregational activities over which jurisdiction shall be exercised by the Presbytery of the bounds;
- (d) report annually on the state of religion in the Church;
- (e) provide for the Church's ministry in Divine Healing.

(5) The Board may call:

- (a) ministers appointed to serve the Board in full-time administration.
- (b) Ministers appointed to positions in evangelistic work to be ministers in recognised service to the Church in such full-time appointments, provided that those who become members of Church courts in

virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.

- (6) The Board shall provide information, arrange conferences and deputations, and seek generally to promote the work entrusted to it by the Assembly.

281. Social Witness Board

- (1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of the Assembly, conveners of the Board and working committees under its supervision, with their members, the superintendents of the Shankill Road and Kinghan Missions and three persons, including at least one woman, nominated by each Presbytery, the President, Home Vice-President and General Secretary of Presbyterian Women and five representative members of the Central Committee of Presbyterian Women;
- (2) The Board shall
- (a) concern itself with all questions affecting the social welfare of the members of the Church and the community, and all questions affecting Church and industry, except such as are otherwise provided for by the Assembly, and may undertake activities to further the Church's witness in these fields;
 - (b) concern itself with all matters relating to temperance and to gambling or other forms of addiction, reporting annually to the Assembly on the situation and taking such measures as may be advisable and practicable to promote the cause of temperance and to reduce the harmful addictions which may be practised in the community;
 - (c) supervise the working of the Presbyterian War Memorial Hostel and assure itself that its terms of trust are faithfully carried out;
 - (d) supervise the work of the Kinghan Mission in ministry to the deaf and dumb;
 - (e) relate the work of the Presbyterian Old Age Fund and similar funds or agencies to the general social witness of the Church;
 - (f) supervise the management of the Presbyterian Residential Trust;
 - (g) supervise the management of the Boys' Residential Club and other similar agencies;
 - (h) seek to uphold the Christian standards of Marriage and the Family, and provide advice in cases of difficulty involving marriage and divorce. The Business Board is empowered to nominate an additional four women to the membership of any working committee dealing with these matters;
 - (i) concern itself with all aspects of Child Protection and Good Safe Practice relating to the work with children and young people attending the Church and organisations; revise its guidelines on a regular basis and promote appropriate training.
- (3) The Board is authorised:
- (a) to call ministers recommended by their Presbyteries who have been offered full-time chaplaincies in HM Forces, or in hospitals, hospices, prisons, universities or colleges; and
 - (b) to nominate to the appropriate authorities ministers recommended by their Presbyteries as part-time chaplains with the Armed Services or Cadet Forces, prisons, hospitals, hospices, universities, colleges or public institutions, upon condition that Ministers called or nominated under the foregoing sub-paragraphs (a) or (b) report as follows:
 - (i) full-time chaplains shall report in writing on their work to the Board or to its appropriate Committee annually, or as may be required;
 - (ii) part-time chaplains shall report similarly to their Presbyteries for transmission to the Board or appropriate Committee; and
 - (iii) the Board shall report briefly upon all such chaplaincies to the General Assembly annually.
- (4) The Board may call:
- (a) ministers appointed to serve the Board in full-time administration.
 - (b) ministers appointed to positions in welfare work or social service to be ministers in recognised service to the Church in such full-time appointments, provided that those who become members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.

282. *(Formerly Evangelism and Christian Training Board).*

283. Youth and Children's Ministry Board

(1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Convener of the Evangelism and Christian Training Committee, the Education Board Secretary, the Sunday School Organiser, the University Chaplains, the Assembly conveners of the Board and working committees under its supervision, with their members, the Assembly's Youth Officer and two persons nominated by each Presbytery together with not more than twenty persons, the majority of whom shall be women, nominated by the Business Board. The Board shall also invite representatives from such youth organisations and bodies as it shall deem appropriate to sit and deliberate.

(2) The Board shall -

(a) Encourage the study of, and response to, the need of children and young people. It shall also facilitate local congregations in the work of evangelism, training and nurture of children and young people.

(b) Act on behalf of the General Assembly, where appropriate, in relation to relevant youth organisations and bodies, including the statutory Youth Service.

(3) The Board may call:

(a) ministers appointed to serve the Board in full-time administration.

(b) ministers appointed to positions in Youth service work to be ministers in recognised service to the Church in such full-time appointments, provided that those who become members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.

284. Education Board

(1) The Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Principal of the Church's Theological College, the university chaplains, the Sunday School Organisers, the Organisers of Religious Education in Day Schools, the Church's representatives on the Stranmillis Management Committee and Transferors' representatives on the N.I. Area Boards, the Assembly's conveners and secretaries of the Board or its associated working committees, with their members, and two persons nominated by each Presbytery together with not more than fifteen persons, the majority of whom shall be women, nominated by the Business Board.

(2) The Board shall -

(a) act in the name and in accordance with the instructions of the Assembly in all matters affecting education in Ireland;

(b) administer any funds that may be entrusted to it by the Assembly for educational work or work in educational institutions in Ireland;

(c) have particular concern for the Church's interest in the various branches of education, from primary to university standard both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;

(d) seek to promote the religious education of school children generally;

(e) nominate on behalf of the Assembly persons to serve on school Boards or statutory Committees or as chaplains to educational institutions other than third-level institutions.

(3) The Board may call ministers to serve for the Church in the following full-time appointments -

(a) Organiser or secretary of organisations, approved by resolution of the General Assembly, which are involved in religious education, or other religious work among children or young people.

(b) Chaplains to universities, colleges or schools;

(c) Teachers in day schools, together with Advisers on R.E., who are at least two thirds of the school week engaged in specialist religious teaching, on the condition that, in the event of such work occupying less than two thirds of their time, they shall be deemed to have resigned from the work to which they were called; provided that ministers who are members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.

285. Board of Christian Training

- (1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Professors in Union Theological College and two representatives of the ministry students from the College, one representative from the Boards of Mission in Ireland, Social Witness, Mission Overseas and Youth and Children's Ministry, the Director of Ministerial Studies, the Director of Christian Training, the Convener, Executive Secretary and Finance Convener of the Board and the Conveners of the working committees under its supervision, with their members, and two persons nominated by each Presbytery, together with not more than ten persons, the majority of whom shall be women, nominated by the Business Board.
- (2) The Board shall -
- (a) either directly or through committee co-operate with Presbyteries in the supervision of students for the ministry, including recommendation for acceptance and report on their studies;
 - (b) regulate the course of studies and the examinations prescribed for students for the ministry;
 - (c) include such Board or Committee as may be required by statute or the authority of the Church for the management of or superintendence over the Church's Theological College;
 - (d) have general oversight of a committee appointed to administer the Magee Fund Scheme as approved by the High Court (*See 1979 Reports, pp. 38- 40*).
 - (e) make provisions during their studies for the support of accepted students for the ministry, and for other approved students in preparation before acceptance by the Assembly. The offerings at services of Ordination, Installation and Licensing shall be for the work of the Students' Busary Fund.
 - (f) develop the training of church members for more effective work and witness.
- (3) The Board shall supervise the assignment of persons as assistants during their College studies, and as licentiates
- (a) operating through a committee for assignments;
 - (b) acting in consultation with the assistants and ministers directly concerned; and
 - (c) bearing in mind the claims of different areas of Church work.
- (4) The Board may call ministers appointed to serve the Board in full-time administration.

286. Board of Finance and Personnel

- (1) The Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk, the Financial Secretary, the Convener of the Union Commission, the Assembly Conveners of the Board and the working committees under its supervision, with their members, and two persons nominated by each Presbytery, not more than one of whom shall be a minister.
- (2) The Board shall:
- (a) be responsible for the management of all personnel employed by the General Assembly or under the control of the Assembly whether in Church House or in other related appointments, including the approval of all contracts of employment and amendments thereto. (In the appointment of the Financial Secretary, the Board, while retaining the power of appointment shall consult with the Executive Committee of the Trustees to permit the person to be also appointed Secretary to that Committee).
 - (b) ensure that all Boards and officials provide all information necessary for the review of staff matters.
 - (c) ensure that Boards and officials and all staff adhere to any regulations introduced by or with the authority of the Board for the welfare or the general efficiency of the staff or the property of the Church.
- (3) It shall be the duty of the Board to:
- (a) oversee the finances of the church, including the regulation of the systems for the control of all assets and funds of the Church, except those which are the responsibility of individual congregations or the Assembly Trustees.
 - (b) prepare and present the annual accounts to the Assembly and nominate auditors for appointment by the Assembly.

- (c) ensure that Boards and officials follow guidelines approved by the Board for the receipt, recording, retention, and payment of monies, and that they provide financial and other information as and when the Board shall require.
- (d) require Boards and officials to obtain the prior approval of the Board before adopting any policy or change of policy affecting the legal status of the Church, a Board, or an official of the Church.
- (e) require Boards and officials to take all steps considered necessary by the Board, for the protection of the assets of the Church against all classes of risk.
- (4) The Board shall, directly or by committee, superintend the administration of the Assembly's Incidental Fund, as directed by the Assembly:
 - (a) for the payment of travelling expenses, postage, printing and administrative costs in connection with the work of the General Assembly or any of its Boards and Committees.
 - (b) for the payment of any other grants or expenses as approved by the General Assembly.
 - (c) to obtain the necessary funds by means of an annual assessment levied on congregations, at a rate which shall be fixed by the Assembly annually.
 - (d) but shall not be chargeable with the expenses of any committee for which the Assembly has made other provisions, as through the United Appeal; nor of members of commissions, boards and committees other than conveners or secretaries, unless by special direction of the Assembly; nor of deputations beyond the limits of the British Isles without the directions of the Assembly or its General and Business Boards.
- (5) The Board shall, directly or by committee, be responsible for the regular compilation and publication of Church Statistics as follows:
 - (a) it shall prepare and issue annually a query sheet to congregations to ascertain their numerical strength and financial condition together with any additional matters which it may decide. It is the responsibility of each Moderator, or interim Moderator, of Kirk Session, to ensure that all questions are answered and that the query sheets are submitted to Presbytery in time for examination and certification at their stated meeting in March, after which they shall be forwarded to the Board without delay.
 - (b) the information thus obtained shall be tabulated and subsequently published by the authority of the Assembly as a supplement to its annual Minutes.
- (6) The Board shall, directly or by committee, superintend the management of the Church House and Assembly Hall, including the Fisherwick Buildings, caring for the fabric, effecting necessary repairs and improvements, arranging lettings of the various halls, rooms, and buildings and maintaining the order and cleanliness of the entire property and be responsible for all matters of health and safety within the buildings.
- (7) The Board shall directly or by committee:
 - (a) administer The Central Ministry Fund (see Pars 313ff)
 - (b) administer The Retired Ministers Fund (see Pars 321ff)
 - (c) administer The Widows of Ministers Fund (see Pars 324ff)
 - (d) administer The 1978 Ministers' Pension Scheme (see Pars 326ff)
 - (e) administer The Prolonged Disability Fund
 - (f) administer The Retired Ministers' House Fund
 - (g) appoint a committee to consider and report to the Assembly the cases of all ministers applying for special leave to retire from active duty. The committee shall have the right to issue a schedule of queries to be answered by the applicant.
- (8) The Board shall have the authority to deal with urgent matters of financial administration, outside the other powers of the Board, which may arise between meetings of the General Assembly.

287. United Appeal Board

- (1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, its Assembly conveners and one person nominated by each Presbytery together with not more than ten persons nominated by the Business Board. Except for ex-officio membership as indicated, no convener of a Board or Committee of the Church whose work is supported by the United Appeal shall be eligible for membership.
- (2) The General Assembly alone shall have power to include in, or exclude from, the United Appeal any mission, fund, or scheme of the Church, or of Funds or Societies recognised to be organisations of the Church. Such inclusion or exclusion shall follow notice of motion received and entered on the books at the Assembly twelve months previously. No mission, scheme or fund whose work is supported by direct assessment shall be included.
- (3) The United Appeal shall be prepared as follows:-
- (a) the accounts of the previous year or an estimate thereof, together with the revised budget for the current year and the budget for the succeeding financial year, shall be submitted to the Board on behalf of the relevant Boards and Committees before 1 March each year. The Board may also request that longer term projections be prepared where appropriate.
 - (b) the Board shall satisfy themselves, where necessary by interview with the conveners and others concerned, that the amounts so estimated are justified taking into account the General Assembly's guidelines on Priorities and shall have power to increase or reduce them;
 - (c) on the basis of the budgets submitted and approved, the Board shall prepare a United Appeal for the following financial year, for submission to the General Assembly in June of the current year.
 - (d) in so doing the Board shall endeavour to secure stability in the finances of organisations of the Church and may accordingly provide for a surplus which shall not exceed five per cent. of the total Appeal;
 - (e) the Board shall also submit to the Assembly proposals for allocation between the Presbyteries of such proportion of the Appeal as shall appear to the Board to be equitable.
- (4) After adoption by the Assembly of the United Appeal, with or without amendment -
- (a) it shall become the responsibility of each Presbytery to distribute its proportion of the Appeal equitably among the congregations under its jurisdiction;
 - (b) any congregation believing the amount allocated to it to be excessive may appeal to Presbytery;
 - (c) when a congregation raises a sum in excess of its allocation it may distribute the excess among the funds of the Church included in the Appeal in such proportion as it thinks fit;
 - (d) congregations shall endeavour to transmit all United Appeal contributions received, as soon as practicable to the Church's Financial Secretary and the total amount, in any case, before the 31st December following;
 - (e) in the event of the United Appeal not being fully contributed in any year the Board shall determine the extent to which each Board or Committee due to benefit shall receive funds for its work less than the amounts adopted by the Assembly;
 - (f) in the event of an emergency arising which necessitates a special appeal to congregations, the Board may grant permission for such an appeal to be made and state the conditions upon which it is to be made, but without such permission no special appeal shall be launched by any Board or committee participating in the United Appeal.

288. *(Formerly Ministry and Pensions Board).*

SECTION II - MISSION RULES

289. Mission Overseas

- (1) **The missionary enterprise** is to be regarded as an integral part of the life and nature of the Church. The policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to fulfil this purpose by working in association with Churches and Societies round the world, as mutually agreed from time to time.

(2) Individual missionary service springs from personal experience of the love of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which in obedience to the Lord's command desires to make this love known to others, win them to faith in Christ and to his service and, by his grace, to enlarge and build up some part of the universal Church.

- 290.** (1) **Candidates for appointment** to service overseas shall make application to the Board of Mission Overseas to be considered by its Personnel Committee, or by other appropriate means, such application to be accompanied by a commendation from the candidate's Presbytery.
- (2) Candidates when so accepted by the Board of Mission Overseas normally shall be required to have an appropriate period of training and preparation as determined by the Board of Mission Overseas before taking up an appointment.
- (3) Appointments normally shall be made only in response to the request of an overseas partner Church or Society and in the first instance for a single term of years. Such appointments may subsequently be extended after consultation with the Board of Mission Overseas and the partner Church or Society. The Board of Mission Overseas may also make short term appointments.
- (4) After approval by the Personnel Committee or other agency of the Board of Mission Overseas and completion of any necessary training and preparation, the candidate shall be eligible for call by the Board of Mission Overseas; and for appointment as missionaries of the Church by the Presbytery with which they are connected, in a service of ordination, installation or commissioning as the case may be. The appointment shall commence at the date of such service.
- (5) In the case of a missionary couple, where the spouse does not receive a call but desires to be recognised as participating in the work of mission, the Presbytery shall arrange that, at the service of ordination, installation, or commissioning, the spouse shall also be commissioned.
- (6) All missionaries of the Church are appointed on the understanding that they accept the policy set out in Par. 289(1) above and are willing to implement it in the place where they are appointed to serve.
- 291.** (1) **While overseas**, the location and work of missionaries shall be the responsibility of the partner Church or Society under which they are serving, in consultation with the missionaries and the Board of Mission Overseas.
- (2) Missionaries normally shall serve as members of the local Church concerned, and under its direction, discipline and control, but without prejudice to their relationship with the Board of Mission Overseas or to their continuing membership in a Presbytery of the Church in Ireland; and no decision of any Church court overseas affecting their ecclesiastical status shall take effect in the Church until confirmed by the General Assembly.
- (3) The ordination, installation, commissioning, resignation or retirement and any investigation of a complaint or action affecting the ecclesiastical status in Ireland of missionaries or full time workers of the Church serving overseas, shall rest with the Presbytery in whose membership or under whose care they have been placed after full consultation with the Board of Mission Overseas.
- 292. Conditions of service**, including length of tours, furlough arrangements, remuneration and allowances, retirement and pension arrangements and similar matters shall be determined by the Board of Mission Overseas from time to time.
- 293. In exceptional circumstances** the Board of Mission Overseas shall have the power in any matter to take emergency action outside these rules; but every such action shall be reported to the following meeting of the General Assembly.
- 294. – 299. (deleted)**
- 300. The Home Mission** (cf. Code, Par. 114(1))
- (1) Home Mission congregations are those which have been accepted as such by the Board of Mission in Ireland, with the following being generally eligible -
- (a) congregations situated wholly or mainly in the Republic of Ireland which, in the opinion of the Board by reason of their geographical situation or financial condition, require grants from Home Mission funds;

- (b) congregations situated mainly or wholly within Northern Ireland, the membership of which is dispersed in areas where Presbyterians are a small minority and which, in the opinion of the Board, require grants from Home Mission funds.
 - (c) congregations in urban situations which, in the opinion of the Board by reason of their locality and/or membership require grants or loans from Home Mission funds. Such a congregation may be designated as an 'Urban Mission Congregation under the Home Mission Development Scheme'.
 - (d) new congregations or development congregations which, in the opinion of the Board require grants or loans from Home Mission funds towards the establishment of the cause.
- (2) Congregations seeking designation as a Home Mission or Urban Mission congregation shall obtain the approval of Presbytery and of the Union Commission before applying to the Board. Presbytery approval shall be sought before a new church plant is commenced within its bounds, and the Presbytery shall apply to the Board for appropriate status.
- (3) A Home Mission congregation or Urban Mission congregation shall retain the right to terminate its connection with the Home Mission so long as systems of governance are in place that are in conformity with the Presbyterian form of Church government as defined in the Code and that Presbytery approves the proposed change of status; in which case the Board shall have power to require that a proportion of grants paid to the congregation from Home Mission funds over the previous five years shall be repaid.
- (4) When the sale or other disposal of Church property which was held in connection with the Home Mission, has been duly sanctioned and decided, the net proceeds, whether principal or income, of such sale or disposal, shall, subject to the trusts relating thereto, be sent to the Financial Secretary of the Church and placed to the credit of a Home Mission Repairs Fund account from which grants may be made from time to time towards the acquisition or repair or improvement of Church or manse property held in connection with any congregations or charges under the Board.
- (5) No programmes of refurbishment, development or purchase, the total expenditure of which is greater than the prevailing basic Ministerial Minimum, or employment of additional personnel, may be undertaken by a Home Mission Congregation or an Urban Mission congregation without the prior consent of the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (6) Where a manse or residence is provided for a minister in a Home Mission congregation or Church Extension charge, the minister shall reside in the manse or residence on the same terms as if he had received the call of a congregation according to rules; and the minister's obligation so to reside is owed to the trustees of the manse or residence on behalf of the Board.
- (7) Congregations and Church Extension charges served by the Home Mission shall make such contributions to the central funds of the Church as the Union Commission shall decide; and the remuneration of those so serving shall be determined also by that Commission, who shall allocate appropriate contributions among the various funds of the Church.

- 301. (1) Ministers or others who offer themselves for service** with the Home Mission, in congregations or in special work, shall accept an obligation to serve as and where called by the Board of Mission in Ireland, which shall endeavour to see that the various fields of service entrusted to the Home Mission are adequately staffed.
- (2) No individual appointment shall be made to a congregation without the consent of the congregation.
- (3) Ministers called by the Board of Mission in Ireland shall be inducted to their work by Presbytery; and shall have the rights, privileges and responsibilities in Kirk Session, Presbytery and Assembly as ministers called in the usual way. Ministers serving in congregations shall be eligible for payments from the Central Ministry Fund.
- (4) Presbytery shall exercise normal supervision over Home Mission congregations and ministers in their life and work; and the Home Mission shall be associated with them in such supervision.
- (5) Ministers or others who have served the Home Mission for an agreed period shall be free to take up other work for which they may be eligible.
- (6) Years of service with the Home Mission shall qualify ordained ministers on the same basis as years of service in a congregation, with the necessary payments to pension funds, etc., made by the congregations served or by the Mission, and the Mission shall also be responsible for appropriate provision for others not eligible for such pensions.

302. Irish Mission (cf. Code, Par. 116 (1))

- (1) (a) Irish Mission Workers under the call of God, are pledged to the special service of Jesus Christ and His Church, having been received, duly trained and commissioned thereto in conformity with the doctrine and the discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (b) Irish Mission Workers shall exercise a Church-based or Church Planting Christian ministry in the sphere of evangelistic outreach, Bible teaching, Christian education and visitation under the direction of the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (c) To be considered as a candidate for the office of Irish Mission Worker application shall be made to the Executive Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (2) The qualifications of an Irish Mission worker shall be ;
 - (a) Communicant membership in a congregation of the Church.
 - (b) A sense of vocation for the office, a required standard of education and medical fitness.
 - (c) Acceptance by the Board of Mission in Ireland as a candidate for the office under the care of Presbytery.
 - (d) Satisfactory completion of a course of training as approved by the Board, followed by a period of probation subsequent to commissioning as an Irish Mission Worker.
 - (e) The Board shall be responsible for the training fees and allowances to candidates upon such scale and conditions as the Board shall determine.
- (3) (a) Immediate responsibility for the direction and supervision of the work of Irish Mission Workers shall rest with the Executive Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland. The Board shall exercise a general responsibility. Irish Mission Workers shall report annually on their work.
- (b) The placing of an Irish Mission Worker shall be decided by the Board after consultation with the Presbytery, the Worker and any other appropriate body.
- (c) Irish Mission Workers shall be invited to sit and deliberate at meetings of the General Assembly and Presbytery, and may be invited to sit and deliberate at Assembly Boards and Committees as appropriate.
- (4) (a) The scale of salaries for Irish Mission Workers shall be determined by the Board of Mission in Ireland and reported to the General Assembly. Payment shall be made monthly. National Insurance shall be paid according to law.
- (b) Upon appointment an Irish Mission Worker may enter into a Pension Scheme as approved by the Board.
- (c) Annual leave shall be as determined by the Board.
- (d) Irish Mission Workers shall normally retire at 65 years of age.

303. Deaconesses (cf. Code, Par. 114 (2))

- (1) A deaconess in the Church is one who has, under a call from God, pledged herself to the special service of Jesus Christ and his Church; and who has been received, trained and commissioned thereto, in conformity with the doctrine and discipline of the Church.
- (2) The work of a deaconess is to exercise a ministry, complementary to the ministry of Word and Sacraments, in the spheres of pastoral counselling, education, social work, mission outreach, etc. She may also have some share in the leadership of worship.
- (3) A deaconess may be called to serve in a congregation, in special work under the Board of Mission in Ireland, or may be seconded to some institution or area of outreach approved by a Court of the Church.
- (4) Qualifications of a deaconess are -
 - (a) communicant membership in a congregation of the Church;
 - (b) a sense of vocation for the office, a required standard of education and medical fitness;
 - (c) acceptance by the Board of Mission in Ireland as a candidate for the office under the care of Presbytery; and

(d) satisfactory completion of a course of training, as approved by the Board in consultation with the Board of Christian Training.

- 304.** (1) **To be considered as a candidate** for the office of deaconess application shall be made, in the form and with the information specified, including commendation from the Presbytery with which she is connected, to the Executive Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (2) Candidates approved by the Home Board after interview shall complete the professional training course for a deaconess and such additional courses of in-service training as the Board may determine.
- (3) Presbyterian Women together with the Board of Mission in Ireland shall be responsible for the training fees and allowances for candidates, upon such scale and conditions as the Board shall determine.
- (4) A period of probation, as determined by the Board, shall be served before a candidate is eligible for call and commissioning as a deaconess of the Church.
- 305.** (1) **The appointment of deaconesses** shall be as decided by the Board of Mission in Ireland, after consultation with the parties concerned; and any congregation or Board of the Church wishing for the services of a deaconess shall make official application to the Executive Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (2) The Board shall call to each appointment for service as a deaconess in connection with Presbyterian Women, and shall thereupon forward the call to be sustained by the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction it is proposed that she shall work. When sustained, the call shall be presented, either by that Presbytery if the deaconess is already under its care, or certified and forwarded to the Presbytery then having jurisdiction for the issue of credentials. A call may be retained for consideration for fourteen days after presentation, but if not then accepted shall be deemed to be declined. If the call is declined the Board of Mission in Ireland shall reconsider the matter in the light of Par. 305(1). Without such call a deaconess shall not change her appointment.
- (3) The Presbytery shall conduct a service of commissioning and/or induction to her appointment for the deaconess. Commissioning shall be regarded as an authoritative appointment to the office of deaconess in the Church, to be administered once only; but there shall be a formal induction to each particular appointment.
- (4) Deaconesses are appointed on the provision that after at least a three year period or other term as agreed with the Board of Mission in Ireland they may apply for or be offered a transfer to another appointment.
- (5) In the event of a vacancy in the pastorate of a congregation in which she is serving, one month's notice offering resignation shall be given upon the installation of a new minister though, upon the request of minister and Session and with the consent of the deaconess, the appointment may be renewed by the Board of Mission in Ireland. In the event of the appointment not being renewed, the deaconess shall be retained on the records of the Presbytery and her income continued from central funds, for a period of not longer than one year or, if sooner, until she becomes eligible for retirement, receives another Call or is placed in other work by the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (6) Special leave of absence may be granted by the Board of Mission in Ireland for further studies or in the case of illness or other emergency, and appropriate financial arrangements may then be made. In such cases the standing of the deaconess within the Presbytery shall not be affected.
- (7) A deaconess, on voluntarily resigning from her appointment for further studies or in the case of illness or other emergency, may apply to be retained on the records of the Presbytery for a period of not longer than two years and, if approved, she shall report to Presbytery, not less than annually, on her life and studies or other responsibilities.
- (8) An appointment as a deaconess may, after twelve months' service, be terminated by mutual agreement, or by two months' notice given by the deaconess, the minister of the congregation, the Session (or in the case of a deaconess in special work by the Board of Mission in Ireland Personnel Committee) subject to the approval of the Presbytery and of the Board of Mission in Ireland. In such cases a deaconess may apply to be retained on the records of Presbytery for a period of not longer than one year but she shall have no entitlement to special support from central funds, though the Board of Mission in Ireland may make a special arrangement.
- (9) The normal retirement age of a deaconess shall be sixty but her appointment may be extended on an annual basis with the approval of the Board of Mission in Ireland.

(10) Calls to deaconesses to work in Church Extension Charges shall be under the same conditions as Call to Ministers to such charges and the appointment of deaconesses shall terminate on the charge being fully constituted as a congregation. In such cases deaconesses shall be retained on the records of the Presbytery and their income continued from central funds for a period of not longer than one year or, if sooner, until they become eligible for retirement, receive another Call or are placed in other work by the Board of Mission in Ireland.

(11) When a deaconess, having placed herself in a position where it is imperative that she does not remain in her appointment, does not resign voluntarily, the Presbytery, having conducted an investigation in consultation with the Board of Mission in Ireland Personnel Committee, shall have power to loose her from her appointment, without further financial obligation, and to decide whether or not she is to be retained on the records of the Presbytery for a period of not longer than one year. The Board of Mission in Ireland may grant allowance for a temporary period after consultation with the Judicial Commission.

(12) A former deaconess, whose name has been removed from the records of Presbytery for any reason and who wishes to be restored to the office of deaconess, shall make application to her former Presbytery which, if satisfied with all the circumstances concerning her character, health and reasons for wishing to be restored, shall refer the case to the Board of Mission in Ireland.

- 306.** (1) **A deaconess is responsible** to Presbytery for her life and doctrine; and at visitations enquiry should be made about her work.
- (2) Immediate responsibility for the direction and supervision of her work shall rest with the minister or Board having charge; while Presbyterian Women shall exercise a general responsibility. Each deaconess shall submit an annual report on her work to Presbyterian Women, and to the Board or minister concerned if required.
- (3) Deaconesses shall be invited to sit and deliberate at meetings of Assembly, Presbytery and Kirk Session and, as appropriate, may be invited to sit and deliberate at meetings of the Congregational Committee or Assembly Boards or Committees relating to their work.
- 307.** (1) **The scale of salaries** for deaconesses shall be as determined by the Board of Mission in Ireland and reported to the Assembly. Payment shall be made monthly; but grants in aid may be made quarterly by Presbyterian Women and by the Home Mission. National Insurance shall be paid according to law.
- (2) A deaconess may, upon appointment, enter into the Pension Scheme approved by the Board of Mission in Ireland.
- (3) The Board of Mission in Ireland shall fix at regular intervals a realistic allowance for expenses incurred in the course of duty. Reports on expenses shall be made to the Board as required.
- (4) Each deaconess shall have one month's annual holiday with pay and one week's holiday with pay at both Christmas and Easter.
- (5) The cost of a deaconess's uniform up to an agreed amount shall, in the first instance, be provided by the Board of Mission in Ireland; this uniform to be worn when carrying out the duties of the office. An annual grant will thereafter be provided towards renewal.

SECTION III – PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CONSTITUTION

- 308.** (1) **Name:** The name of the organisation shall be *Presbyterian Women*, incorporating the former *Presbyterian Women's Association* and the former *Young Women's Groups*, and hereinafter referred to as PW.
- (2) **Motto:** The motto of PW shall be: Living for Jesus.
- (3) **Mission Statement and Aims:**
Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ.
Presbyterian Women aims to highlight the need for –
- (i) Love and unity
 - (ii) Obedience to God

- (iii) Christian living and spiritual maturity
- (iv) Service using gifts, time and money
- (v) Local and global mission

(4) **PW Groups:**

Where possible a group shall be formed in each congregation to bring together women at a congregational level, encourage them to become disciples of Jesus Christ and work to fulfil the aims of PW. Each group shall operate under the authority of the Kirk Session. Stated meetings shall be held and membership shall be open to all women who accept the aims of PW.

(5) **PW LINK (Living, Inspiring and Nurturing for the Kingdom):**

There shall be in each Presbytery a PW Committee known as the PW LINK to bring together members of PW.

Constituent members:

Three members from each PW Group, at least one of whom should be an Office Bearer. Each member to serve for three years, unless:

- (i) elected to serve on the PW Central Committee, the PW Forum or the PW LINK Planning Committee, or
- (ii) appointed to represent PW at the General Assembly, Boards or Presbytery.

In these circumstances membership of the PW LINK shall be extended until the additional responsibilities end.

(6) **PW Forum:**

There shall be a PW Forum to bring together PW LINK representatives at a central level.

The PW Forum shall be made up of:

- (a) members of the PW Central Committee and its Sub-Committees;
- (b) five representatives from each PW LINK:
 - (i) the three serving PW LINK Office Bearers i.e. Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer; and
 - (ii) two others from each PW LINK, appointed to attend for 3 years.

The following may also be invited to attend: four members of the Deaconess Association; missionaries on home assignment and others, as appropriate.

(7) **PW Central Committee:**

There shall be a Central Committee of PW which shall be the decision making body of the organisation.

Constituent members:

- (a) one representative elected from each PW LINK for a period of seven years;
- (b) the President, the Home Vice-President, the Overseas Vice-President and the General Secretary of PW.

The Editor of "Wider World" and, where appropriate, the wife of the Moderator of the General Assembly shall be invited to sit and deliberate. In exceptional circumstances the PW Central Committee reserves the right to co-opt additional members to meet specific needs for a period of 1 – 2 years.

- (8) **Finance:** The financial year of PW shall end on 31st Decmber. A statement of income and expenditure shall be submitted to the PW Annual Meeting. A report and statement of annual accounts shall be submitted to the PW Central Committee, the General Assembly and, if appropriate, the relevant Boards. Each PW Group will receive a copy of an Annual Report including a Financial Supplement.

SECTION IV – THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

(cf. Code Pars. 118-121 App. 16, 17)

- 309.** (1) **The Assembly's normal direction and control** of its Union Theological College shall be exercised in general through its Board of Christian Training and in particular through the Committee of Management as prescribed in the governing statute. This Committee consists of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and the Principal of the College and ten other members appointed by the Assembly, three of them on the nomination of the Faculty and one on the nomination of the Trustees.
- (2) The Assembly shall discharge its rights and responsibilities in appointments to academic office in the College by such procedures and in such form as it considers desirable. A minister in a charge elected and appointed to a chair or full-time lectureship shall resign his charge and all emoluments arising from it before taking up his duties.
- (3) Each professor or lecturer appointed by the Assembly, before his appointment shall subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly's formula; and he shall, on presentation of his credentials of ministerial standing, be ordained and installed or installed by the Presbytery with which his congregational connection lies. Such service shall be held in the College with the Moderator of Assembly and Principal also taking part.
- (4) Part-time or temporary lecturers shall be appointed by the College Management Committee as occasion may require. Should a vacancy in a chair occur during the College session, the Committee, on the recommendation of the Faculty, shall make provision for discharge of the duties.
- (5) A professor who retires with the leave of the General Assembly shall be known as Professor-Emeritus; and he shall continue as before retirement to be a member of Presbytery and Assembly.
- 310.** (1) **The Faculty shall report** annually to the College Management Committee on the attendance, diligence, proficiency and conduct of the students in all classes, and on any matters which it may desire to bring to the attention of the Assembly.
- (2) Any complaint or appeal arising from the exercise of discipline or in the discharge of its duties by the Faculty shall in the first instance come to the College Management Committee.
- (3) The income of the College available for the purposes of incidental expenditure, including the residential fees of the students and grants authorised by the Committee shall be under the control of the Faculty and an audited annual statement of accounts submitted annually to the Assembly through the Committee.

CHAPTER XVIII - MINISTRY AND PENSIONS FUNDS

SECTION I - CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND, Etc.

- 311.** (1) A Central Ministry Fund shall be maintained by the Assembly, to which shall be paid and from which shall be distributed, in accordance with Rules, moneys intended for the support of ministers and agents engaged in the pastoral work of the Church.
- (2) The property and assets of the Central Ministry Fund shall be held by (and on behalf of) the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (as defined in Par. 122 of the Code).
- (3) The administration of the Fund (including the administration of the Church's Commutation, Sustentation and Augmentation Funds, together with any other special Funds or Trusts, accrued to, or which may fall within the objects of the Central Ministry Fund) shall be supervised by the Assembly's Board of Finance and Personnel through its Pensions and Assessments Committee.
- (4) This Board shall also be responsible for the administration of:-
- (a) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Ministers' Pension Scheme, 1978, as approved by the National Occupational Pension Board (in these Rules referred to as the "1978 Pension Scheme");
 - (b) contributions to be made in respect of Ministers' National Insurance;
 - (c) arrangements for the payment centrally of ministers' salaries throughout the congregations of the Church.
- (5) The Treasurer of the Fund shall be the General Assembly's Financial Secretary.
- (6) Two secretaries of the Fund shall be appointed annually by the Board of Finance and Personnel from among its members.
- 312.** (1) No amendment of the Rules of the Fund shall be made unless notice of such amendment has been received by the preceding Assembly and the proposed amendment thereafter approved by the Assembly.
- (2) If any dispute shall arise as to the interpretation of any of the Rules of the Fund, this shall be determined by the Pensions and Assessments Committee; and its decision shall be binding, subject only to review by the supervising Board and the next Assembly.
- (3) No change in financial assessments for the support of the Fund, and no memorial making any pecuniary claim upon the Fund, shall be decided by the Assembly until a report thereon has been received from the administering Board or Committee.
- 313. Funds received by the C.M.F. Committee shall include:-**
- (1) Contributions from the congregations of the Church assessed 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, at a rate which shall be determined annually by the Assembly on the advice of the Board of Ministry and Pensions.
 - (2) Assessments due from ministers and agents of the Church in payment of National Insurance and 1978 Pension Scheme contributions.
 - (3) Income from investments and trust funds, including the Commutation, Sustentation and Augmentation Funds; and other income to which the Central Ministry Fund is, or may become, entitled.
 - (4) All donations or bequests for the benefit of the objects of the Fund shall,
 - (a) where so directed by the donor or testator, be permanently invested by the Trustees and the income paid to the Fund; and
 - (b) in the absence of such direction, for donations or bequests valued at over £100, be placed in a special Tenths Fund or reserve account, out of which one-tenth of the sum so accumulated shall be transferred annually to the Central Ministry Fund.
- 314.** It shall be the duty of the Board of Finance and Personnel each year, on the recommendation of the Pensions and Assessments Committee made in the light of moneys available in the Fund or reasonably to be expected, to set a Basic Ministerial Income for ministers of the Church in active duty in congregations.
- 315. The income of the Central Ministry Fund shall be applied as follows:-**

- (1) to pay the expenses of administering the Fund, including its proportion of the expenses of Trustees;
- (2) To pay (in the first place out of income received from the Sustentation Fund) to every qualified minister a monthly sum of £30 together with an annual bonus of £300 plus £2.50 for every £50 or part thereof of the Basic Ministerial Income for the incoming year which is in excess of £4,300 or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board.
- (3) to provide such supplemental payments in respect of qualified ministers for whom local sources and other contributions may be insufficient to pay for the Basic Ministerial Income or appropriate retirement pension: on condition that for assistant ministers their income shall be fixed at 85%, 90%, 95% and 100% respectively of the Basic Rate for the years succeeding ordination; and for ministers of more than 5 years service, or of more than 10 years service, or of more than 15 years service, or of more than 20 years service, 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;
- (4) to pay (in the first place out of income received from the Augmentation Fund) family grants to qualified ministers, at rates and on conditions fixed from time to time by the Board, in respect of each child under the age of 16, or in full-time attendance at a recognised educational institution provided that post secondary level studies are towards a primary degree, or other recognised third level qualification, as determined by the Board; that the student is not in receipt of income above the level to be determined annually by the Board and that these studies are commenced not later than 31 December following the student's 21st birthday. Children shall qualify in terms of their age and circumstances at the beginning of each financial year and payment be made only upon application on the Board's official form, received by the Financial Secretary before the close of the same year; and
- (5) to pay special grants to ministers or agents of the Church such as may be authorised from time to time by the Assembly or its Union Commission.
- (6) to pay grants (including family grants) to licentiates of the Church serving in congregations.

316. For the purpose of the preceding paragraph:-

- (1) A qualified minister shall mean a retired minister, minister, colleague minister, associate minister, assistant minister of a congregation or Church Extension charge which has, by the 15th of February, May, August and November (or the first banking day thereafter) each year, paid to the C.M.F. Committee all moneys due under Rules, including:-
 - (a) in respect of the C.M.F. assessment, a sum not less than one-quarter of the annual sum due according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly;
 - (b) a sum equal to one-fourth of the annual assessment in respect of the congregation's or charge's contribution to the minister's National Insurance and the Minister's Pension Scheme; and
 - (c) in respect of stipend, where there is a minister in active duty, a sum equal to at least one-fourth of the total congregational stipend paid in the preceding financial year; or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacant pastorate; or, in the case of a Church Extension charge, of the sum fixed annually by the Union Commission.
- (2) In reckoning the supplemental payment, required where local sources and other contributions are not sufficient to provide for the Basic Ministerial Income, account shall not be taken of
 - (a) special payment for additional work undertaken, as determined by the Union Commission;
 - (b) payments, from central funds of the Church, of travelling expenses or family grants;
 - (c) a sum not exceeding £500 (or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board) being income from endowments for the benefit of the minister received during his ministry in the congregation;
 - (d)
 - (i) a sum not exceeding £2,500 (or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board), being income earned from Clerkships, Chaplaincies, Licenserships, Convenerships or other Church appointments, or Church-nominated appointments;
 - (ii) a sum not exceeding £1,500 (or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board) being income earned from any other work outside his congregation;
 - (iii) the total sum to be disregarded under sub-sections (i) and (ii) shall in no case exceed £2,500 in all (or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board);

(e) a sum not exceeding £300 per annum (or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board) being income from any or all of the following, the Commutation Fund, the Sustentation Fund or the Central Ministry Fund.

(3) Where it may appear that exceptional circumstances have arisen or exceptional hardships have been created, either the minister or the congregation may, with the approval of Presbytery, memorialise the Pensions and Assessments Committee. The Committee shall have power, subject to review by the supervising Board and the Assembly, to diminish the assessments due during the current financial year, or to make such other change as appears desirable in the circumstances of the case. In all such cases the action taken shall be fully reported to the Union Commission and the Assembly.

317. The Board shall maintain such central banking account or accounts as it may think necessary for the payments:-

- (a) on behalf of the congregations, funds, ministers and agents of the Church, as may be applicable, of contributions in respect of National Insurance and the 1978 Pension Scheme; and
- (b) of the regular salaries of ministers and agents of the Church, including stipends received from congregations as may be determined by Congregational Committees subject to the laws of the Church.

318. (1) **It shall be the duty of every congregational treasurer and minister**, jointly, to make a full return to the Assembly's Financial Secretary, not later than 10th February each year, of:-

- (a) the rate of estimated stipend for the incoming year and all payments (including allowances, bonus payments and endowments) being made by the congregation to their minister or ministers; and
- (b) all other income and payments (including allowances, bonus payments, fees and endowments) except those from the congregational treasurer, received by the minister or ministers either directly or indirectly on account of their ministerial office; and to notify the Financial Secretary within one week of any change in these items occurring during the course of the year.

(2) Any failure to make the foregoing returns or notifications and any failure to transmit the quarterly moneys which may be due, either from a congregation or a minister, shall result in:-

- (a) suspension of all payments from the Fund to the minister or ministers concerned until the information or moneys are received;
- (b) immediate reference of the case to Presbytery, which shall be under obligation to take such action as it may deem necessary to ensure that the information is supplied or moneys paid up without delay; and
- (c) the withholding of leave to call being given by the Union Commission to a vacant congregation which remains in default to the Central Ministry Fund.

1978 MINISTERS' PENSION SCHEME FUND

318(A)(1) The object of the 1978 Ministers' Pension Scheme Fund shall be to provide the appropriate funds for the contribution to be made by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978).

(2) (a) The property and assets of the Fund shall be held by (and on behalf of) the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (as defined in Par.122 of the Code).

(b) The administration of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) shall be supervised by the Assembly's Board of Finance and Personnel through such Committee or officers as the Board, with the approval of the Assembly, may determine.

318(B)(1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations together with bequests, donation and endowment income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund 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, at a rate which shall be determined from time to time by the General Assembly on the advice of the Board.

(3) If any congregation shall be in default of the contribution to the Fund for which it has been assessed according to the Rules:

- (a) (i) The Financial Secretary shall report the default to Presbytery; and
 - (ii) The Presbytery concerned shall be under obligation to take such action as it may deem necessary to ensure that the contribution is paid up without delay.
- (b) No leave to call shall be given by the Union Commission to a vacant congregation which remains in default to the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978).

318(C)(1) No change in general financial assessments for the support of the Fund and no memorial making any pecuniary claim upon the Fund shall be considered by the Assembly until a report thereon has been received from the administering Board.

(2) No amendment of the Rules of the Fund shall be made unless notice of motion has been received by the preceding Assembly and the proposed amendment thereafter is approved by the Assembly.

SECTION II - RETIRED MINISTERS' FUND

319. (1) The object of the Retired Ministers' Fund (formerly called the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund) shall be to provide the appropriate annuity to be paid from central funds to ministers of the Church retired from active duty according to Rules, in respect of service given before 1st April, 1978, or as otherwise may be required to complement payments under The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978.

(2) The property and assets of the Fund shall be held by (and on behalf of) the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (as defined in Par. 122 of the Code).

(3) The administration of the Fund shall be supervised by the Assembly's Board of Finance and Personnel by such Committee or officers as the Board, with the approval of the Assembly, may determine.

320. (1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations, together with bequests, donations and endowment income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund 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, at a rate which shall be determined annually by the Assembly on the advice of the Board.

(3) If and when the Fund shall be no longer required to complement pensions accruing under the 1978 Pension Scheme, any remaining assets shall be transferred to assist with contributions towards the retirement pensions provided by that Scheme.

321. (1) **The retirement pension**, inclusive of the designated payment under the Central Ministry Fund in respect of service given in this Church before 1st April, 1978, to which every Minister while in good standing shall be entitled, whether he has been serving in Congregation or in special work accepted for such purpose, shall be at the rate of one-half of the current Basic Ministerial Income or at such other percentage which may be determined by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Pensions and Assessments Committee of the Board of Finance and Personnel.

(2) This pension shall be paid to:-

- (a) ministers who have completed 40 years' service in this Church since ordination;
- (b) ministers attaining 70 years of age who have completed 30 years' service; and
- (c) ministers given leave to retire on medical grounds, who have completed 30 years' service.

(3) Ministers who have reached 65 years of age who are granted leave to retire, shall, on the recommendation of the Board, receive a pension equal to one thirty-fifth of the full pension for each year's service in this Church prior to 1st April, 1978, on condition that the sum thus calculated shall not exceed the full retirement pension.

(4) Ministers retiring after 1st April, 1978, shall, in line with the foregoing provisions, receive a proportionate pension for the number of years served, not exceeding thirty-five, which are not then covered by the Ministers' Pension Scheme.

(5) A minister demitting his charge after at least two years' ordained service in this Church may, upon application to the Board, be granted a pension equal to one fortieth of the full retirement pension for each year served in this Church, completed before 1 April, 1978, beginning at age 65 or on his date of retirement, if later, or on becoming permanently incapacitated for duty. No back payments shall be made for more than one year from the date of application.

(6) A minister retired under special arrangements, other than for reasons of health, shall not be entitled to any benefit from the Fund until he has reached 65 years of age, save as permitted by Par 223(3); but the Assembly shall have power, on the recommendation of the Board, to authorise ex gratia payments in cases of particular hardship.

(7) In cases of hardship caused by the introduction of the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) the Assembly shall have power, on the recommendation of the Board, to authorise ex gratia payments in the case of particular hardship.

322. If any congregation shall be in default of the contribution to the Fund for which it has been assessed according to Rules:-

(1) (a) the Financial Secretary shall report the default to Presbytery; and

(b) the Presbytery concerned shall be under obligation to take such action as it may deem necessary to ensure that the contribution is paid up without delay.

(2) No leave to call shall be given by the Union Commission to a vacant congregation which remains in default to the Retired Ministers' Fund.

323. (1) No change in general financial assessments for the support of the Fund and no memorial making any pecuniary claim upon the Fund shall be considered by the Assembly until a report thereon has been received from the administering Board.

(2) No amendment of the Rules of the Fund shall be made unless notice of motion has been received by the preceding Assembly and the proposed amendment thereafter is approved by the Assembly.

SECTION III - WIDOWS OF MINISTERS' FUND

324. (1) The object of the Widows of Ministers' Fund (formerly called the Supplemental Widows' Fund), shall be to make provision for widows and widowers of qualified ministers who are not fully provided for by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978).

(2) The property and assets of the Fund shall be held by (and on behalf of) the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (as defined in Par. 122 of the Code).

(3) The administration of the Fund shall be supervised by the Assembly's Board of Finance and Personnel by such Committee or Officers as the Board, with the approval of the Assembly, may determine.

325. (1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations, together with bequests, donations and endowments income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund assessed on the stipend to the minister in the preceding financial year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy, at a rate which shall be determined annually by the Assembly on the advice of the Board.

(3) If and when the Fund shall no longer be required to complement pensions accruing under the Ministers' Pension Scheme, any remaining assets shall be transferred to assist with contributions towards the widows' pensions provided by that Scheme.

326. (1) (a) **Qualified ministers for the purposes of this Fund** shall be those who have served the Church in a congregation, or in special work accepted for such purposes and not otherwise provided for, and who at their deaths are ministers in good standing in this Church.

(b) Widows whose names were added to the roll of widows on or before 9th June, 1995, shall receive an equal dividend at the rate of 27.5% of the current Basic Ministerial Income, proportionately diminished by one-fortieth for every year which was served after 6th April, 1978, and not provided for from the

Ministers' Pension Scheme. This provision shall be for widows of qualified ministers during the period of their widowhood.

- (c) Widows of qualified ministers whose names were added to the roll of widows after 9th June, 1995, and not entitled to death-in-service benefits provided under the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978), shall receive an annuity of one four hundred and twentieth of 27.5% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum for each complete month of ministerial service in this Church from the day of ordination until 6th April, 1978, this annuity to be payable for life.
- (d) In cases of hardship caused by the introduction of sub-paragraph (c) above the Assembly shall have power, on the recommendation of the Board, to authorise ex gratia payments in the case of particular hardships.

(2) Special provision from this Fund, as determined by the administering Board, may be made for widows who are not qualified to receive benefit from National Insurance.

(3) Special arrangements, at the direction of the administering Board, may be made so that payments from the Fund to beneficiaries may be distributed through the Presbyterian Widows' Fund Association.

327. If any congregation shall be in default of the contribution to the Fund for which it has been assessed according to Rules:-

- (1) (a) the Financial Secretary shall report the default to Presbytery; and
- (b) the Presbytery concerned shall be under obligation to take such action as it may deem necessary to ensure that the contribution is paid up without delay.
- (2) No leave to call shall be given by the Union Commission to a vacant congregation which remains in default to the Widows of Ministers' Fund.

328. (1) No change in general financial assessments for the support of the Fund and no memorial making any pecuniary claim upon the Fund shall be considered by the Assembly until a report thereon has been received from the administering Board.

(2) No amendment of the Rules of the Fund shall be made unless notice of motion has been received by the preceding Assembly and the proposed amendment thereafter is approved by the Assembly.

CHAPTER XIX - SPECIAL PROVISIONS AS TO DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

(For Administrative Inquiries, Appeals and References see Pars. 161- 174)

SECTION I - INITIATION OF PROCEEDINGS

(See App. 11 for Model Forms)

- 329.** First steps for the exercise of disciplinary jurisdiction in any matter with respect to which such jurisdiction is vested by the Code in a Church court shall be taken by that court, save that -
- (a) upon neglect or failure to take such steps a superior court may direct an inferior court to take them;
 - (b) any case within the jurisdiction of a Kirk Session which is a case of special difficulty or importance or involves the severest censures of the Church may, and every charge of heresy coming before a Kirk Session shall, be referred by the Session to the Presbytery.
- 330.** Offences cognisable by an inferior court shall not come before a superior court except by reference or on appeal; except that an offence committed in the presence of any court may be tried and determined by that court either immediately or subsequently.
- 331.** (1) A preliminary enquiry as authorised by paragraph 161 shall be made if the court has reason to believe an alleged offence may have occurred or where a public rumour of an offence ("fama clamosa") has arisen.
- (2) If a charge be made or a fama clamosa arise concerning the doctrinal views, moral conduct or official duties either of a minister who is a professor, or of an overseas missionary, or of a ruling elder in special work, a preliminary enquiry under this rule shall be conducted;
- (a) in the case of such a minister, by the College Management Committee appointed to superintend the College of which he is a professor;
 - (b) in the case of such a missionary, by the Board of Mission Overseas or in the case of such a ruling elder in special work other than as an overseas missionary by the appropriate Assembly Board;
- provided that in any of the cases designated in this sub-paragraph, paragraph 161 (with the omission of sub-paragraph (a) thereof) shall apply to the committee or Board concerned as it applies to a Church court.
- (3) On the basis of a fama clamosa a court may initiate a preliminary enquiry under this rule by conferring privately with the alleged offender. Should such rumour appear groundless, the court shall take effective steps to discredit it and to counteract any harm it may have done. If, however, further proceedings are required the alleged fama shall be specifically set out.
- (4) Before considering any charge brought against any person in a court, the court shall in the first instance consider whether the charge may properly be entertained by it or should be prepared for a superior court.
- (5) Subject to paragraph 19(4) of the Code, all courts shall, in exercising disciplinary jurisdiction, avoid unnecessary publicity.
- 332.** (1) **A Church court shall not entertain proceedings** for an alleged offence unless some person or persons (in these rules referred to as the complainants) undertake to prosecute the charge or unless the court finds it necessary by reason of fama clamosa or for the ends of discipline to investigate the alleged offence.
- (2) Where the court so finds it necessary, it shall appoint such person or persons, being ministers or ruling elders of the Church, as it may think proper to prosecute a charge for the alleged offence, and it shall be the duty of the person or persons so appointed conscientiously and fairly to do so.
 - (3) The subsequent provisions of these rules may apply to the persons so appointed as if those persons were complainants.

(4) A member of the court shall not act as such member in relation to any charge if he is a complainant or an accused.

(5) A court may find it necessary to proceed in accordance with this and subsequent rules by reason of fama clamosa or for the ends of discipline in a case where a complainant withdraws his charge, and in that event, may summon him as witness.

333. (1) **The charge for an offence** must, in every case, be reduced to writing and a copy thereof served on the accused whether the charge be brought before the court by another party or be made by the court itself.

(2) Before a copy is served on the accused in accordance with this paragraph, a charge shall be signed by each complainant in the presence of the Clerk of the court or of a deputy, being a minister or ruling elder, appointed by the Clerk to attest such signing; and a copy of the charge, signed and attested in a like manner, shall be left with the attestor who shall arrange for it to be duly served on the accused.

(3) Such service shall be effected not less than fourteen days before the sitting of the court at which the charge is to be considered.

(4) Upon service of a charge pursuant to this rule, the accused shall be informed in writing that he has the right to cite witnesses in his defence provided he sends to the Clerk of the court, within at least seven days before the sitting of the court at which the charge is to be considered, the correct names and designations and postal addresses of the witnesses known and available whom he desires to be so cited.

(5) The court may also, if it sees fit, require the complainant to furnish to it and to the accused a further statement, specifying in such detail as the Court may indicate, the nature of the evidence to be offered against the accused.

334. (1) **The charge must -**

(a) set forth the nature of the alleged offence;

(b) narrate the facts alleged to constitute the commission of the offence by the accused, specifying as far as possible, the time, place, and circumstances in which it is alleged to have been committed; and

(c) give the names and designations of the witnesses, known and available, who are to be cited in support of the charge together with a list of any documents to be cited in its support.

This shall not prevent the production of any additional witness or documents if notice of their intended production is given at least two days beforehand.

(2) Charges for more than one offence may be made in the same document but only if the offences are alleged to be founded on the same facts or form part of a series of offences of the same or a similar character.

(3) Where it appears proper to the court, the court may try separately charges included in the same document. In every case, the court shall separately record the final disposal of each charge.

(4) A charge of heresy must state the doctrine which the accused is alleged to have impugned, or the false doctrine which he is alleged to have taught contrary to the Word of God and the subordinate standards of the Church; and must set forth the statements from the teaching of the accused, or the quotations from his writings, which are relied upon to establish the charge.

(5) In all cases of alleged personal and private wrongs the charge must be accompanied by a written averment that the course prescribed by our Lord, in Matthew xviii, 15-17, has been followed.

SECTION II - CITATION, ETC., OF PARTIES AND WITNESSES

(See App. 11 for Model Forms)

335. (1) **A court, having resolved to proceed to trial** in a case of discipline, must cite the following to appear before it, namely:-

(a) the complainant;

(b) the accused;

- (c) the witnesses to be called upon the application of the complainant; and
- (d) the witnesses to be called upon the application of the accused.
- (2) A citation may be oral or written; and
 - (a) an oral citation is made by authority of the court through its Moderator or Clerk when the parties or witnesses to be cited are present in court. It specifies the time and place of the meeting of court at which the persons cited are to appear;
 - (b) a written citation must -
 - (i) be issued in the name of the court.
 - (ii) specify the time and place of the meeting of the court at which the persons cited are to appear,
 - (iii) set forth the nature of the charge to be tried, and
 - (iv) be signed by the clerk of the court.
- (3) The issue of every citation must be recorded in the minutes.
- (4) The time allowed, after citation has been served, for the appearance of a party or witnesses is determined by the court, with proper regard to the circumstances of the case, and must not be less than three clear days.
- (5) A written citation is duly served upon a party or witness when delivered to him personally by the hand of some one authorised by the court, or by a registered or recorded delivery letter addressed to him at his last known place of residence.
- 336.** (1) **Members of the Church, when duly cited by a court to appear**, either as parties or as witnesses, are bound to obey the citation; and if, after a second citation, a member does not appear or furnish satisfactory reason for non-appearance, he shall be dealt with as contumacious.
- (2) The citation of witnesses who are not members of the Church can only take the form of a request from the court to appear and give evidence.
- 337. Members of the Church refusing** without good cause to give evidence or to submit to examination as witnesses may be suspended indefinitely from membership; or, in grave cases, may be declared to be no longer a member of the Church.
- 338.** (1) **If a party in a case of discipline**, after being orally cited, or after written citation duly served upon him to attend two separate meetings of the court with not less than six clear days between them, does not appear or furnish satisfactory reason for his non-appearance, the court at the second meeting may either -
 - (a) treat him as having withdrawn from discipline, hold him liable to censure for contumacy, and subject to Par. 336 may declare him no longer a member of the Church or a holder of any office therein;
 - (b) suspend him from the communion of the Church until he submits to the jurisdiction of the court and gives evidence of repentance for not having done so before; or
 - (c) proceed to trial and judgment in his absence and, subject to paragraph 339, may appoint some person to conduct his defence.
- (2) If the person found contumacious is not under the immediate jurisdiction of the court, it shall certify his contumacy to the Kirk Session of the congregation to which he belongs or if he is a minister, licentiate or ruling elder, to the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction he is, and the Kirk Session or Presbytery may suspend him from communion until he gives evidence of repentance.

SECTION III - PROCEDURE IN CASES OF DISCIPLINE

- 339.** If at any stage an accused admits his guilt, the court may forthwith proceed to consider the censure to be pronounced and the case shall conclude upon his submission to such censure.
- 340.** (1) A barrister or solicitor shall not be permitted to prosecute or defend an accused but, if an accused feels unable to state his case with advantage, he may ask a member of the Church not qualified as a lawyer to act with him and assist him in the case.

(2) If that member of the Church is a member of the court concerned he shall not have any vote on the case.

(3) If that member of the Church is not, as such, already under the jurisdiction of the court, he becomes so for all purposes connected with the case.

341. A court met to consider a charge shall proceed as follows:-

(1) announce the actual charge and by and against whom it is made;

(2) take evidence, if the facts are not admitted, of service of the charge and citations of the parties and the witnesses cited and of requests made to witnesses to attend;

(3) hear any preliminary objection from a party or a member of the court which -

(a) relates to the constitution or jurisdiction of the court or the sufficiency of the charge;

(b) relates to the order or regularity of the proceedings and, if sustained, would cause unfairness to any party;

(4) if the court consider any such objection justified, either -

(a) dismiss the charge; or

(b) permit amendments to the charge which do not alter the substantial character of the facts narrated therein and may, if satisfied that no party shall be prejudiced thereby, forthwith proceed, in accordance with the succeeding provisions of these rules, to try the charge as amended or try the amended charge at a later time and place specified by the court;

(5) if there is no such preliminary objection or if the court considers no such objection is justified, formally ask the accused whether he acknowledges the truth of the charge and -

(a) if he does, record that fact and after hearing any statement made by or on behalf of the accused (either then or later) consider and pronounce sentence as appears to the court to be required by the circumstances of the case and the laws of the Church;

(b) if he denies the charge, or does not acknowledge and confess it in a manner which the court finds satisfactory, record whichever of those facts is the case and if the accused is a minister, licentiate or elder, the court may then, if it thinks fit and if the parties agree, refer the case directly to the Judicial Commission of the General Assembly which shall have Assembly powers to issue it; but, where the court is not authorised by this sub-paragraph to make such a reference or where it decides not to do so, it shall proceed with the trial in accordance with these rules.

342. (1) A court, upon trial of a charge, shall proceed as follows:-

first: hear the complainant's opening statement;

second: afford the accused an opportunity, while not denying his conduct, to make a plea of justification for it;

third: should the court at this stage find that his plea is factually correct and not unreasonable and that his conduct was not sufficiently reprehensible in all the circumstances to require further proceeding on the charge, it may dismiss the charge either with or without giving him informal guidance as to, or requiring written assurances from him as to, his future conduct;

fourth: call the witnesses for the complainant and cause their evidence to be taken down, recorded and signed as required by Par. 345;

fifth: hear the opening statement of the accused;

sixth: call the witnesses for the accused and cause their evidence to be taken down, recorded and signed as required by Par. 345;

seventh: hear the parties in the case upon the evidence; hearing the complainant first then those against the evidence for the complainant;

eighth: privately consider and then in the presence of the parties announce and record its determination as to whether the charge should be dismissed or upheld and in the latter event also record its sentence;

ninth: when the decision of a court is announced to the parties the Court shall, at the request of any party, inform him as to his rights of appeal.

(2) While a temporary suspension ceases upon the dismissal of a charge, an appeal against any ruling of the court at an earlier stage shall not stay procedure.

- 343. If a person commits an offence in the presence of a court,** or comes forward as his own accuser, the court may, without trial, declare him guilty of the offences and pass sentence; but it shall not do so until it has given him an opportunity to be heard. In every such case, the record of the court must set out clearly the offence, determination and sentence; and, if the court be a subordinate one, appeal may be taken as in other cases.

SECTION IV - EVIDENCE

- 344. (1) Witnesses are examined** after a solemn affirmation administered to them by the Clerk of the Court. (See App. 11 (9)).
- (2) Witnesses are first examined by the party calling them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; then if desired re-examined by the party calling them but shall not be further examined without leave of the court. The court may disallow a question.
- (3) It is open to any member of the court to put questions to a witness.
- (4) The court may, if at any stage it sees fit, order the exclusion of witnesses or the recall of a witness for further examination.
- (5) The complainant and the accused may, if either of them choose, give evidence, on condition that they submit like other witnesses to cross-examination.
- (6) The court may admit any evidence, including hearsay evidence, which appears to be relevant and to possess probative value.
- (7) The court shall bear in mind that the weight to be attached to any particular evidence calls for due consideration of the nature of that evidence and of the circumstances relating to its admission by the court and its credibility.
- (8) The evidence of one witness shall not be sufficient to establish a charge unless it is supported by other evidence.
- (9) A member of the court who gives evidence in a case is thereby disqualified from voting on it.
- (10) Where the evidence is so conflicting that the court cannot form an opinion as to whether a charge should be upheld or dismissed, or referred to a superior court, it may adjourn the case sine die and record the reason for such adjournment.
- (11) A case so adjourned may be reconsidered by the Court upon motion of any party or at the instance of a member of the court, but such motion shall not be made more than five years after the date on which the court first adjourned the case under the preceding sub-paragraph.
- (12) Subject to this rule, the court decides all questions as to the admissibility, relevance or weight of any evidence.
- 345. (1) Note shall be taken of the evidence** of each witness and a certified summary preserved among the records of the court in such form as may permit its being destroyed by a direction of the court after the expiry of ten years.
- (2) The evidence of witnesses unable, because of ill-health, infirmity, or other sufficient reason, to appear, may be taken by a committee of two or more persons. Such evidence is taken according to the rules followed by the court itself, and when so taken, is laid before the court as part of the evidence in the case.
- (3) No member of the court may vote as a judge in the case unless he has been present throughout the hearing.
- (4) The evidence in a case, properly attested by the Moderator or clerk of the court by which it has been taken, shall be received as valid evidence by every other court including a superior court to which the case may be appealed.

(5) In dealing with questions of evidence, the superior court must form its judgment from the record of the evidence transmitted by the Clerk of the inferior court with due attention to the pleading of the parties when before the superior court.

(6) If any irregularity or defect is found in the proceedings of the inferior court a superior court may correct it.

- 346.** (1) **If in the prosecution of an appeal new evidence** is proffered which, in the judgment of the superior court, has an important bearing on the case, it may either refer the whole case to the inferior court for a new trial, or, with the consent of the parties, take this evidence and then hear and determine the case.
- (2) If, after a trial before any court, new evidence is discovered, which is alleged to be important to the exculpation of the accused, he may ask a new trial, and the court may grant the request, if justice seems to require it; so, however, that if the court is an inferior one, and the case has been appealed from it, such application shall be made to the superior court.
- (3) A new trial shall not be granted, without the authority of the General Assembly, in any case in which a minister or licentiate has been sentenced to be suspended or deposed from office.
- (4) A new trial shall commence in the court of first instance, or, if a superior court order it to commence in another court, in that other court.

SECTION V - CHURCH CENSURES AND CONSEQUENCES

(See App. 11 for Model Forms)

- 347.** (1) **When a court has decided**, after judicial trial, that a charge has been proved it shall consider what sentence should be pronounced upon the accused by way of censure authorised by paragraph 133 of the Code.
- (2) When a court has determined what censure is due in a case of discipline, it shall call upon the accused to appear, and on his appearance the Moderator, in the name and in the presence of the court, shall pronounce sentence, and address him in terms befitting the nature and circumstances of the case.
- (3) If, when duly cited, the offender does not attend to receive censure, the sentence shall be pronounced by the Moderator in his absence, and a copy of it, and of the judgment upon which it is based, shall be transmitted to him by the Clerk.
- (4) Sentences shall be published in the court by which they have been passed, or in the superior court if an appeal has been carried to it; and, when it shall appear to be for edification, they shall be published in the congregation to which the accused belonged, in such manner as the court passing sentence may direct.
- (5) Sentence respecting proceedings of an inferior court shall be pronounced only in the superior court unless the interests of the Church require greater publicity.
- 348.** (1) A minister's suspension or deposition shall be from office and emoluments; and his right to emoluments from the congregation or any of the funds of the Church and to the possession of the manse or glebe, shall cease from the date of the sentence of suspension or deposition unless the court imposing the sentence otherwise directs.
- (2) When a minister, after trial and determination of a Church court is suspended or deposed without appeal, or when the sentence of suspension after appeal is confirmed by such a court, his congregation shall be declared vacant.
- (3) Anyone suspended from, or deprived of, Church privileges is, ipso facto, suspended or deposed from office in the Church; but an offence may be such as to necessitate suspension or deposition from office and not deprivation of Church privileges.
- 349.** (1) Every sentence shall continue in force until it is reversed, or until the court passing the sentence has satisfactory evidence of repentance submitted to it.
- (2) It is the duty of Church courts and congregations to pray for persons under censure, and to use every means which Christian love and prudence may suggest to bring them to repentance.

(3) When satisfactory evidence of repentance is submitted to the sentencing court by a party suspended from, or deprived of, Church privileges, he shall, subject to these rules, be restored to such by that court.

(4) Thanksgiving shall then be offered to God for having brought the offending brother or sister to a credible profession of repentance.

350. (1) **Restoration** to the privileges of full communion does not carry with it restoration to office. Restoration to office shall not take place, however satisfactory may be the evidence of repentance, unless it is clear to the court that the cause of Christ will be advanced and not injured by restoring the offender.

(2) Except in the case of suspension for contumacy by summary censure (e.g. Par. 154(2)), etc. a minister or licentiate suspended, or deposed, shall not be restored to the functions or office of the ministry unless by the authority of the General Assembly; and before such restoration the Assembly must be satisfied, not only that the repentance of the applicant has been evidenced by an appropriate and sustained period of consistent Christian conduct, but that his restoration will be acceptable to the Church.