V.

REPORT
OF THE

BOARD OF MINISTRY

The Board of Ministry is tasked to supervise applicants and candidates for the Ministry and to oversee the training of all recognised students. The Board also has a role in providing training opportunities for serving ministers and in providing support and pastoral care to ministers and their families. The work of the Board is mainly taken up with personal interaction with ministry candidates and with interviews. The Board thanks God for all the candidates under our care, particularly the large number about to complete their studies in 2017. It is a pleasure to work in close partnership with the dedicated staff at Edinburgh Theological Seminary (ETS). The Board of Ministry also works closely with the Seminary Board, the Mission Board and with our Presbyteries and congregations. Increasingly we see the value of partnership with local churches where ministry apprenticeships and ministry placements take place.

We thank Dr Bob Akroyd for arranging ministry placements and advising the Board on many matters. He will be leaving the Board at this Assembly to take up other responsibilities. The Board of Ministry expresses our sympathy to our Clerk, Rev. Dr David Ford, who was bereaved of his dear wife Olwen in March 2017.

(A) MINISTRY AS A DANGEROUS CALLING

Part of the remit of the Board of Ministry is the Pastoral Care of Ministers and their families. The need for such care is constantly demonstrated by the trials and difficulties of ministry life. The Board identified the need to reinvoke the Panel of Pastoral Care under new leadership with a more proactive remit to care for ministers and their families. To that end the Board is pleased to report that Rev. Alex J. MacDonald is willing to be appointed as a Pastoral Support Worker. In that role he will convene a renewed Panel of Pastoral Care along with Dr John Nicholls. The actions of the Panel will be strictly confidential. In our deliverance the Board asks the General Assembly to appoint Rev. Alex J. MacDonald as Pastoral Support Worker and as Convener of the Panel of Pastoral Care, established under the oversight of the Board of Ministry, with powers to co-opt a Panel of men and women suited to offer pastoral care and advice to ministers and their families. The Board has written to the Board of Trustees seeking approval to finance a small honorarium and travelling expenses for the new worker.

This year the Board has chosen to address the spiritual welfare of ministers and their families under the title Ministry as a Dangerous Calling. In this section we reflect on the dangers faced by all involved in Christian ministry. There is a high rate of attrition from the ministry. We estimate that more than 10 per cent of those who have been ordained in recent decades have left ministry because of resignation, burnout or moral failure.

In January 2017 the whole church was deeply distressed to learn of the sudden death of one of our most accomplished serving ministers, Rev. Dr Iain D. Campbell, at the age of 53. It is now acknowledged that he died in hospital following an attempt to take his own life. Subsequently the local Presbytery investigated allegations of improper conduct and concluded that “elements of Dr Campbell’s moral conduct were contrary to, and censurable by, the Word of God, and seriously inconsistent with that expected of a Christian minister.” These events were completely unforeseen and have caused deep distress and shock. It would be inappropriate for this Report to comment on the particular details of this tragic set of circumstances or the hurt and damage that has been caused. The Board expresses our deep sorrow and profound sympathy to Mrs Anne Campbell and the immediate family, the churches and all individuals who have been directly affected by this dreadful circumstance. Their anguish is incalculable. We weep with those who weep and entrust all who are hurting and grieving to God’s mercy and to the love and prayers of the Christian family. Those who provide on-going pastoral care and support to those affected deserve a particular place in our prayers and in our thanks.

Several ministry families, in a number of Christian denominations, have been shaken by this series of events. The Board is aware of ministers who have been left with questions and fears about their own calling and their longevity in ministry. Satan, our spiritual adversary, is adept at making a bad situation worse. Our desire is to do the opposite. By listening to the Lord we pray that we may redeem something out of this tragedy and learn to walk before our God more perfectly as pastors and elders. Despite all the challenges and difficulties of ministry it is the greatest honour, blessing and privilege to serve God as a pastor-teacher. God’s grace is sufficient for every situation and for each moral and spiritual danger. Paul’s advice to Timothy is always relevant: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Tim. 4:16).
As part of our response the Board proposes to hold a Closed Session at the 2017 General Assembly as set out below. This is not in order to discuss an individual or any particular set of circumstances but rather to respond to the dangers faced by all in ministry. This is an appropriate time for the church to listen to the voice of the Lord in his Providence and in Holy Scripture. We pray for grace to respond appropriately to recent sad events and to the many other pressures faced by all our ministers. The purpose of the Closed Session at the Assembly is to help the Church to redouble her efforts to assist all our pastors in leading a holy and healthy life of ministry, dealing with dangers and temptations faithfully and biblically.

All those in positions of leadership need to be helped and supported. They also need to be held accountable to others before God for their life and conduct. Much of ministry life, like the whole Christian life, is a life of steady and humble repentance. Accordingly ministers must be accountable to others for their life and conduct no matter how high profile or how senior their position in the church.

In previous reports to the General Assembly the Board have warmly commended Paul David Tripp’s book, Dangerous Calling, where the author describes his struggles with sinful heart-attitudes commonly experienced by those in ministry. As a seminary teacher and a person involved in counselling ministry candidates, ministers and their families through times of crisis, Tripp describes some of the pitfalls that can cause a moral failure or a spiritual crisis. He describes dangerous behaviours, temptations and attitudes such as the neglect of God and prayer, neglect of spouse and family, outbursts of anger or jealousy, abuse of power, love of money, adultery and various forms of sexual sin, addiction to substances or to pornography, self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, loneliness and a lack of proper accountability.

No one serving as a Free Church minister is immune from the spiritual dangers described by Paul David Tripp. Every Christian church should regularly examine its pastoral culture for weaknesses, threats and deficiencies. It is helpful for ministers to know themselves well and ask honestly if there is a gulf between their public persona and the private man? In assessing their own hearts many ministers may need to admit that they are but a few steps away from disaster. Dangerous Calling is a sobering reminder that too many ministries end in failure, avoidable harm and preventable suffering. Ministry is a dangerous calling both because of our malicious spiritual enemy and because of the weakness and sinfulness of our hearts. The book is a wake-up call to any minister merely going through the motions of prayer, preaching and Bible study, without a real and growing love for Christ and his people.

Paul David Tripp observes, “Because sin blinds, God has set up the body of Christ to function as an instrument of seeing our lives, so that we can know ourselves with a depth and accuracy that would be impossible if left on our own.” It is clear that sinful attitudes and patterns of life must be addressed and repented of. We are a Presbyterian church. Our inter-connected church structures should support a growing quality of spiritual life in our local churches and help us promote and maintain a healthy pastoral culture. We will find warnings and solutions about pastoral culture authoritatively in scripture and in the lived-history of the church down through the ages.

If our Presbyterianism is only formal, professional and impersonal we risk tolerating and accommodating pride and a host of other dangerous sins and attitudes that should be actively resisted and overcome. Do we really know ourselves? What are we doing to get to know our fellow presbyters at a deeper level? In a healthy pastoral culture we would expect to find mutual ministry and accountability taking place. No minister should be above question or unaccountable to others. No minister should be left isolated and without friends. We should expect ministers to pastor, coach and mentor one another in both formal and less formal ways. This must include honest confession of our weaknesses and faults, measures to maintain spiritual progress and maturity, supported by a network of prayer. Ministers need to preach the gospel to themselves and live in accordance with the renewing grace of God. A healthy pastoral culture will produce hearts that grow more tender and loving; ever more in awe of Christ, more in love with holiness and more deeply committed to seek the glory of God in the church. The alternative is misery, moral failure or the premature ending of a valuable ministry.

Paul David Tripp observes that a healthy walk with God is “a community project.” New Testament spirituality, filled with awe for God, genuine repentance and heart-humility, is rooted and nurtured in the church through living fellowship and healthy relationships. In a healthy pastoral culture glory and fear is given to God alone. Fear should not be given to the pastor nor should a pastor render fear to a domineering personality in the congregation. However, we have allowed a pastoral culture to develop where many ministers are lonely and detached from fellowship and close working relationships with their fellow elders and fellow presbyters. If we are to “exhort one another daily” (Hebrews 3:13) we must know one another well, worship together and bear one another’s burdens. Friendships, accountability structures, and well run Kirk Session and Presbytery meetings should support a healthy pastoral culture. Pastors must be open to receive a timely intervention from a wise fellow Christian to prevent a drift into sin, complacency or self-deception. Where there has been sin it should be dealt with biblically with a view to healing and
restoration rather than merely getting rid of a problem or excluding a problem person. Ignoring or covering up a problem is never the correct solution.

In the history of the church various models have been adopted to help ministers overcome dangers and temptation in the “war-zones” of Christian ministry. In the 17th century several Puritan ministers recorded personal covenants with God to strengthen faith and promote holiness. These covenants were sometimes verbal and often written down on paper and signed. Some covenants were periodically renewed. Perhaps the best known is the personal covenant signed by Thomas Boston in 1699. Other examples include William Guthrie’s defence of the practice in *The Christian’s Great Interest* (1668), and covenants or vows recorded by Richard and Joseph Alleine (in volumes dated 1664, 1666 and 1674). Ebenezer Erskine made several personal covenants while studying for the ministry and as a pastor. John Willison, the 18th century evangelical minister of Dundee, linked the practice to the proper use of the sacraments of baptism and communion. Many will be familiar with the 70 Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards. These seem to have been composed over several years and collected together in 1722 and 1723. Edwards reviewed his resolutions on a weekly basis.

In some traditions New Year was taken as an opportunity to renew vows to God, including those vows taken at baptism, marriage and for ministers, those vows taken at ordination. Within Methodism, the practice arose of ministers and people renewing their covenant with God on the first Sunday of the New Year. In many provinces of the Anglican and Episcopalian Churches the clergy renew their ordination vows before their bishop at a communion service held in the week before Easter. In our tradition there is no formal renewal or recommitment to ordination vows. Every five years the Presbytery Oversight Visit should come alongside each congregation. During their visit they should help each minister to reflect on his ministry and his walk with God. In reality very few ‘quinquennial’ visits have focussed on spiritual struggles and the spiritual growth and vitality of the minister. This is a pastoral and structural weakness that ought to be addressed and remedied.

Many ministers find it helpful and challenging to reflect on their ordination promises when they attend the ordination and induction of a fellow presbyter. Ordinands make solemn promises in answer to searching questions such as: “Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ, and desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy ministry, and not worldly designs and interests?” “Do you engage, in the strength and grace of Jesus Christ... to rule well your own family, to live a holy and circumspect life, and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of Christ?”

Some of the spiritual practices of previous centuries were probably too individualistic and inward looking. However, we cannot fault our ancestors for taking sin and holiness seriously. We can learn from their passion for holiness and join that passion to a biblical emphasis on a holy church with a holy ministry where the benefits of fellowship and the body-life of the church are stressed.

To a large extent pastor-teachers are called to manage their spiritual and moral self-care. Acts 20:28 serves as a summons for pastors to watch over themselves as well as over their flock with diligence and care. “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders (NLT).” Part of self-care is looking after physical health, taking appropriate rest, sharing and delegating tasks and working closely with fellow elders and fellow presbyters to share the responsibility of leadership and pastoral care. Humility and Biblical teaching makes the need for fellowship, friendship and accountability to others an essential addition to self-care. Acts 20:28 is addressed to the Ephesian elders in the plural. As Presbyterians mutual-care is always a companion to self-care, a component that we must insist upon.

In the body of the church we are called to help one another to grow in Christ, encouraging each other to keep our promises to God and to maintain a holy and fruitful life. Ministers need prayerful support and our pastoral culture in the local, regional and national church must be pervaded by prayer. It may be helpful for future generations of ministers if the church now takes the time to study the language we use at ordinations and inductions and further reflects on ways to help all our ordinands to maintain their commitment to Christ to live for his glory. The Board will also consider if ministers would benefit from a periodic renewal and rededication of themselves to their holy calling.

In the light of the dangers faced by those called into ministry, the Board of Ministry offers the following practical steps to support a healthy pastoral culture in the Free Church of Scotland. These suggestions are reflected in the proposed deliverance.
1. Each Presbytery should adopt a pastoral culture of mutual accountability and mentoring. Without being prescriptive about the way to achieve this, the Board will communicate to each Presbytery the “Friendship Mentoring” model practiced by the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross as an example of good practice. The Board thanks Rev. Joe Barnard and Dr Alan Fraser for their work producing this model. The Board recommends that each Presbytery should review their practice and ensure that ministers are mentored, supported and held accountable in a meaningful way. A review of the effectiveness of Mentoring and of Presbytery Pastoral Panels is also being carried out.

2. The Board of Ministry’s Panel of Pastoral Care should be reinvigorated under new leadership with a more proactive remit to care for ministers and their families. Rev. Alex J. MacDonald should be appointed as a Pastoral Support Worker for the denomination and should convene a renewed Panel of Pastoral Care along with Dr John Nicholls. The actions of the Panel will be strictly confidential. The Panel of Pastoral Care shall have powers to co-opt men and women suited to offer pastoral care and advice to ministers and their families and shall report to the Board of Ministry.

3. Following the shock and sorrow recently experienced by many in church leadership, the Board recommends that the 2017 General Assembly include a Closed Session for all commissioners, and for all ministers, probationers and candidates for the ministry who may wish to attend, where an expert panel will assist our church leaders in responding to spiritual dangers and temptations and in processing and learning from recent events. The session will not speculate or comment on any specific incident or case. Rev. Steve Midgely, director of Biblical Counselling UK and minister of Christ Church, Cambridge, has been invited to convene this Closed Session at the General Assembly. The Board recommends that this take place in the Assembly hall from 10.00am on Wednesday 24th May 2017.

4. The Board of Ministry undertakes to study and review the practice and procedure followed in ordinations and inductions, the commitments required of ordinands, and the way in which that commitment may continue to be expressed and confessed with a view to upholding and supporting ministers of the gospel in their calling to live a holy and watchful life while they faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully carry out their ministerial work to build up the body of Christ. The Board will consult other Boards and Presbyteries as may be required and if necessary will make recommendations to a future General Assembly.

**(B) CARE OF MINISTERS - REMIT OF 2015 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

In addition to the above section on *Ministry as a Dangerous Calling*, the Board took up a remit from the 2015 General Assembly to consult as to how a more effective and practical support can be provided for ministers and their families during periods of long-term absence from work through ill health. They further instruct the Board to formulate a policy on the pastoral care of ministers, on the completion of the said consultation, showing (1) the role of the Panel in relation to the Presbytery’s Pastoral Support Committees; (2) a plan for the pastoral care of ministers and their families; (3) how such a plan will be implemented; and (4) how the implementation of that plan will be monitored, assessed and reviewed.

The Board has taken consideration of this matter over the last two years. A policy document, *Care for Ministers*, is being prepared and will be circulated to Presbyteries following the General Assembly.

The Board recognises that the oversight of pastoral care for our ministers and our care for those suffering illnesses in the ministry requires constant review, and will keep this as a routine aspect of its remit. The Board will report annually to the General Assembly on assessment and review of pastoral care and will include reports from the Pastoral Support Worker and the Panel of Pastoral Care.

**(C) PATHWAYS INTO MINISTRY AND BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY TRAINING**

The 2016 General Assembly authorised the Board to consult the Mission Board and the Presbyteries of the Church on appropriate pathways into ministry and on the position of non-ordained resident supply, part-time or auxiliary ministers. The Board continues to reflect on the position of part-time or auxiliary ministers and makes the following recommendations particularly on the position of candidates serving in churches and locally appointed resident supply.

*Locally appointed resident supply* The Board believes that great care should be taken over the appointment of non-ordained resident supply and that it will be helpful to the church to have a protocol in place to guide all our congregations and Presbyteries. The Board advises that no long-term arrangement for pastoral care of a congregation should be made without the agreement and approval of the Presbytery or a relevant committee of Presbytery. Presbytery should have particular regard to ensure that those appointed are of good character, are able to teach God’s word, are subject to appropriate oversight and discipline and that they will uphold the teachings of the Reformed
faith. The Board recommends that Presbyteries should liaise with the Board of Ministry before approving any local arrangement placing a non-ordained person over the care of a local church. This will permit the Board to offer their opinion on the proposed arrangement and make recommendations for such training and support as the church worker may require. The involvement of the Board of Ministry will also safeguard the interests of the denomination at large.

Pathways into ministry In recent years a significant number of candidates for the ministry have benefited by gaining ministry experience through a Ministry Apprentice pathway or by serving as Leader in Training in an established training post. The Board values apprenticeship as a good preparation for full-time theological study. Some Free Church ministry candidates and some private students at ETS have benefited from working as ministry associates or leaders in training with Cornhill Scotland, Chalmers Church (Edinburgh), St Andrews Free Church, the Tron Church (Glasgow) and through similar local arrangements in a number of other Free Church congregations. The Bonar Trust is to be commended for investing in a number of leaders in training, several of whom are now serving in the Free Church or preparing for such service.

The Board is aware of six students who are presently working part-time for a Free Church congregation while they study at ETS. Two are serving alongside a minister and we are aware of similar arrangements being proposed from September 2017 in other congregations. Four of our candidates are serving in vacant Free Church congregations (Garry Brotherston in Bishopbriggs; Peter Turnbull in Burghhead; John Caldwell in Dunblane; and Alick Stewart in Lennoxtown). Unfortunately, bi-vocational workers in a vacant charge can be expected to receive limited support and supervision for their pastoral work. The Board is aware of the challenges and tensions faced by candidates who must balance their call to be a student with their call to care for a local church. The Board recognises that a bi-vocational pathway into ministry suits the circumstances of some candidates and local churches very well. This pathway offers significant opportunities to the candidate to learn and gain experience through practical service and this can benefit their studies. Distance learning is of value to candidates who are also caring for a local church but can also create its own problems. There is an obvious benefit to local churches who obtain regular ministry and pastoral care when they may not be able to support a full-time ministry. The challenge of this pathway is to identify the difficulties and to work with the candidate to provide meaningful support and oversight from Presbytery, the Mission Board who may have an interest in the congregation, the Board of Ministry and the teaching staff at ETS. The Board would like to see candidates gaining appropriate credit towards their ETS degree for some of the pastoral work they undertake. The Board is concerned that undertaking part-time studies over a prolonged period will inevitably place strain on a candidate. The Board is studying the length and content of part-time studies and reflecting on the best way to proceed. We will report to a future General Assembly on the suitability and sustainability of this training method.

Similarly to our advice for Locally Appointed Resident Supply, the Board wishes to be involved at an early stage in any discussion to appoint a Free Church Candidate in to a local arrangement involving part-time pastoral work. We ask that Presbyteries work with the Board of Ministry and the candidate’s Director of Studies at ETS to obtain approval of any proposed arrangement so that the balance of study and ministry is manageable. Depending on the amount of study some part-time students will qualify for their fees paid by the Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS). However, the terms and conditions for any part-time ministry appointment should be fair and reasonable to the candidate, as part-time students will not qualify for a student loan from SAAS. The Board makes a small financial contribution to help with travelling costs in such cases.

A policy document, Candidates in Ministry, is being prepared and will be circulated to Presbyteries following the Assembly. The chief considerations of this policy are:

- The role of Presbyteries in overseeing long-term supply arrangements for congregations and identifying workers with suitable training and experience for these roles.
- Managing the expectations and burdens placed on ministry workers to enable them to complete courses of study.
- Developing reasonable expectations of the timeframe for training towards ordination under these circumstances.
- The importance of mentoring and supporting candidates working in ministry settings.

(D) NON-ORDAINED AUXILIARY MINISTERS/STUDENT MINISTERS AND THE SACRAMENTS

Representations have been made to the Board about the position of elders (including ministry students) who regularly preach, who may be employed in a pastoral capacity, or who may be in a leader in training position, regarding their eligibility to dispense sacraments. Concerning personnel not yet ordained as ministers, it has been argued that it is unhelpful to authorise these individuals to preach while forbidding them from administering sacraments, since this may tend to imply that the ministry of the word is less significant than the ministry of word and sacrament joined together. The Board is grateful to the individuals who contacted us separately about this matter. Workers in this category serve a number of congregations in the Glasgow and Argyll and Edinburgh and Perth Presbyteries with one
serving in the Inverness, Lochaber and Ross Presbytery. Some local pastoral difficulties have been encountered regarding dispensing of sacraments. The Board was sympathetic to these local situations. However, after discussion the Board decided not to make any recommendation for a change in regulations on this matter to the General Assembly. Chapter 27 of the Westminster Confession of Faith includes the following: There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospels, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but a minister of the Word, lawfully ordained. The Board did not consider the matter to be sufficiently troublesome to congregations, urgent, or ripe for debate such that a change in legislation or a Declaratory Act expounding the above confessional statement is necessary. At this time the Board of Ministry has determined to pass from the matter.

(E) CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT DAYS

The Board informed the 2016 General Assembly that it intended to pilot a Candidate Assessment Day to provide a more rigorous assessment of ministry candidates and their capabilities. A successful pilot was held in Edinburgh on Saturday 6th August 2016 when five candidates or enquirers participated in a number of individual and group tasks and in-depth interviews. The Board particularly thanks Rev. Ivor MacDonald, Mrs Louise MacMillan and Mr Nathan Olson for their input. Candidates were assessed in areas such as Mental Resilience, Leadership Skills, World View, Spiritual Discipline, Theological Views, and matters of Personality and Character. In the light of the pilot, and as provided for by Act 19 (2016) (1.1;2.3) the Board recommends that in future all candidates should normally be required to participate in and satisfy the requirements of a Candidate Assessment Day. An Assessment Day is now being planned for June 2017. Candidates granted provisional recognition by the Board but who miss attendance at an Assessment Day may commence studies at ETS with the permission of the Board. Their candidacy shall be regarded as provisional until they have complied with this requirement or are exempted from it. The Board is considering how to incorporate medical and psychological assessment into the application process. This will require care to ensure that our process is non-discriminatory and that any information is used and retained in an appropriate and helpful way. There are practical difficulties in requiring all ministers and probationers applying from other churches to participate in an Assessment Day. However, the Board reserves the right to require this process if deemed necessary particularly in any case where the applicant has less than five years of service as a minister in another denomination.

(F) REVIEW OF ETS CURRICULUM

The Board has undertaken to take up a process of continuous review of the content of the ETS Curriculum to ensure that there are good lines of communication between Course Organisers and Lecturers and the Board as representatives of the Church. Our aim is to ensure that the training needs of the church are being met effectively. The Board has a particular desire to see that leadership skills and preaching skills are well developed by the time candidates complete their training. This includes all aspects of training both in a classroom setting and in practical placements. The Board is committed to work collaboratively with ETS with whom we enjoy excellent relationships. In 2017 the Board will begin a review of the curriculum for Greek and New Testament studies. Other subject areas will follow in years to come. The degree course is a validated course and as such any recommended changes in content or methodology will occur gradually. The aim is to strive for continued improvement and to take out any areas of duplication or overlap in the course.

The work of students is examined by teaching staff, by external markers having regard to academic standards and by Presbyteries who take final year students on trials for licence. A further tier of external marking seems onerous. Accordingly the Board proposes discontinuing the previous practice of having External Examiners appointed by the Board to remark coursework. Instead this will be replaced by our commitment to work closely with ETS on an annual basis, by reviewing Course Handbooks and by regular dialogue with teaching staff and students on the development of the curriculum.

(G) RECOGNISED CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY

The Board congratulates all those who have completed their studies and have been or are preparing for licence to enter the ministry including Rev. Andrew Robertson who was recognised as a candidate towards the end of his studies at ETS. This year we are delighted to see ten men coming to the end of their studies including Mr Garry Brotherston, formerly a curate and trainee minister in the Church of England. Given his past training and experience in ministry the Board has agreed with the consent of his Presbytery to treat him as a Probationer seeking admission to the ministry with that status. Mr Brotherston has studied at ETS for two years to cover some gaps in his training. His application to be received as a Free Church Probationer, eligible to be taken on trials for licence or ordination, will be taken up in private by the General Assembly. Mr Isaac Speirs was unwell during part of the past year. We anticipate that he will complete the final elements of his training over the summer and will seek licence from his Presbytery in autumn 2017.
Since the Board reported to the last General Assembly recognition has been given to the following candidates for the ministry: Mr Craig Anderson, Mr Garry Brotherston, Mr Calum Cameron, Mr Robin Gray, Mr Nick Mackison, Mr Alick Stewart and Mr John Wilson. The Board expects to meet with at least one other applicant before the next academic year commences. The complete list of recognised candidates for the ministry, at April 2017, is given below with the present year of study at ETS where relevant:

**Pre-Seminary**
(Commencing September 2017): Craig Anderson, Donald MacLeod, John Wilson (LTh student)

**First Year (part-time):**
Calum Cameron, Robin Gray

**First Year (full-time):**
Alister N. MacInnes, Peter Turnbull, Alick Stewart (LTh student)

**Second Year (part time):**
John Caldwell (LTh student)

**Second Year (full time):**
Stephen Allison, Duncan Murchison, Nick Mackison, Iain MacRitchie

**Third Year:**
David MacDonald, Andrew C MacLeod (LTh student), Mark MacLeod, Innes MacSween, Iain Morrison, Paul Murray, Isaac Speirs, Ali Sewell, Benjamin Wilks (LTh student)

Mr Garry Brotherston is on an Individual Study Programme.

The Board meets with candidates during each academic session at ETS to listen and respond to any concerns and general requests that the students may raise. Board members will gladly meet with individual candidates on an annual basis or as required by their circumstances particularly with a view to guiding candidates as they prepare for specific ministries. The Board occasionally gives additional support to candidates experiencing financial hardship.

The Board commends the Seminary Board and the Principal and staff at Edinburgh Theological Seminary for their diligent and faithful teaching and the quality of pastoral care shown to candidates.

**(II) MINISTERS ADMITTED FROM OTHER CHURCHES**

The admission of ministers and probationers is regulated by Act 19, 2016. Since the last General Assembly, the Commission of Assembly in October 2016 has exercised its authority to admit Rev. Donald Martin (formerly Church of Scotland) and Rev. David Randall (retired, formerly Church of Scotland). In March 2017, the Commission exercised its authority to admit Rev. James MacDonald (retired, formerly Church of Scotland) and Rev. Trevor Kane (formerly a Probationer in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland). The Board anticipates bringing a Supplementary Report to the 2017 General Assembly with an application to enter the Free Church ministry from a Probationer. We continue to receive a number of enquiries from ministers in other churches. The Board and the Mission Board were pleased to arrange a forum meeting on 9th May 2017 open to all ministers recently admitted to the Free Church from the Church of Scotland.

**(I) IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

The Board thanks Rev. David Court, our new In-Service Training Coordinator, and all who contributed to the usual week of training held in January 2017, using the excellent facilities of ETS and the MacDonald Holyrood Hotel. The Board has agreed that future training conferences will include sessions helping ministers in areas of leadership, preaching, spiritual health and self-care. The Board notes that the cost of hosting the conference in Edinburgh has grown significantly in recent years. Charges have increased for accommodation, meals and use of a meeting room. In-Service Training is regulated by Act 37, 2006, which is fairly prescriptive about the timing, duration and location of the event. The Board believes that the coordinator should be free to negotiate the timing, duration and location of the event to ensure best economy and use of resources. An amended Act Anent In-Service Training is included in the deliverance. It may be that another location or a less expensive MacDonald Hotel’s venue could be considered for a residential conference. A small number of missionary society personnel, mainly from SASRA, have attended our training week at their own expense.

**(J) POST-GRADUATE AND APPRENTICE FUNDING**

The Board invites applications for partial funding from individuals wishing to take part in a Ministry Apprenticeship Programme. The Board can advise individuals and congregations interested in organising an apprenticeship and can also point to other sources of funding.

The Board invites applications for partial funding of Post-Graduate Studies from ministers applying to study for an MTh or PhD.
Application forms for both the above grants can be requested from the Clerk, Dr David Ford (davidecford@hotmail.com), and should ideally be submitted by 1st July in each year. Completed forms may be submitted electronically. It is expected that apprentices and post-graduate students will obtain the majority of their funding from other sources.

The Board reminds ministers that they may take Sabbatical Study Leave, under Act 4, 1994 and Act 30, 2006, for a research or writing project or as part of study for a post-graduate qualification. ETS can arrange for a course of Sabbatical Studies which could involve guided reading under the direction of a member of the faculty. The Board encourages ministers to obtain post-graduate qualifications such as an MTh at ETS, for which some grant funding may be available.

(K) CANDIDATES IN NORTH AMERICA

Our sister churches in North America recently appointed a minister in Prince Edward Island who carried out the majority of his studies for Free Church ministry in North America with an element of teaching by distance learning from Scotland. Since God may call other candidates to meet the needs of our churches in North America, and given the costs and family implications of moving to Scotland for an extended period, the Board recommends to the General Assembly that such instances be treated on a case-by-case basis. Where appropriate, the Board may agree to arrangements for theological training in North America with supplemental material (such as the Free Church ministry module) being taught by distance learning. This will not prevent a candidate from electing to study or undertake a placement in Scotland if this is deemed appropriate.

(L) STUDENT LOAN DEBT REPAYMENT

The Board thanks the Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross for communicating their concerns about the burden of student debt. At present the church repays, on behalf of serving ministers, that part of a student loan debt accrued during their training as a recognised candidate for the ministry, but the candidate is responsible for paying off older student debts. Some anomalies are created by the different levels of debt accrued by some students through previous studies and the way in which the Student Loan Company operate their processes and repayment timetable. The Board is committed to look again at how it funds the training of ministers and interacts with student debt in a fair and reasonable manner that is affordable by the church. There may be tax implications and other anomalies to consider if we change our existing practice. The Board will report more fully to a future General Assembly.

(M) CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

1. The following changes in Personnel (January to December 2016) are brought to the attention of the General Assembly:

Deaths
None

Retirements
Rev. Alasdair Macleod Gairloch, Kinlochewe and Torridon 30th June 2016
Rev. Iain T. Campbell Gravir 26th August 2016

Resignations
Rev. Gavino Fioretti Leith 27th June 2016

Mr Fioretti resigned to take up mission work in Italy.

The Board apologises for failing to inform the 2016 General Assembly of the resignation of Rev. D. Allan MacLeod, Toronto (Ontario) in October 2015. Mr MacLeod continues as minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Toronto. He now carries out his ministry under the St. Lawrence Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

Translations
Rev. Iain MacAskill from Rosskeen to Church Planter, Stirling 27th February 2016
Rev. James Maciver from Knock to Stornoway 23rd March 2016
Rev. James Ross from Associate, Glasgow City (S.O.S.) to Buccleuch and Greyfriars 28th May 2016
Rev. Calum M. Smith from Dumfries to North Uist 18th June 2016
Rev. Calum MacMillan from Assistant, Rosskeen to Rosskeen 9th September 2016
Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod from Lochbroom and Coigach to Smilthon-Culloden and Nairn 10th December 2016

**Inductions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John Marker</td>
<td>Thurso and North Coast</td>
<td></td>
<td>25th June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Alberto Almeida de Paula*</td>
<td>Broughty Ferry</td>
<td></td>
<td>28th June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. David C. Meredith</td>
<td>Mission Director</td>
<td></td>
<td>28th June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Donald N. Martin*</td>
<td>Gardenstown New Church</td>
<td></td>
<td>14th November 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Andrew MacMillan, Alberto De Paula and Donald Martin were each admitted from the Church of Scotland. Their inductions were to congregations recently admitted into the Free Church and took place in terms of their previous inductions to these existing pastoral charges.

**Ordinations and Inductions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Allan Shearer</td>
<td>Assistant, Glasgow City</td>
<td></td>
<td>13th August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Chris Davidson*</td>
<td>Church Planter, Edinburgh – Cornerstone</td>
<td></td>
<td>26th August 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Christopher Davidson was ordained to work at Cornerstone Church, but not inducted to a seat on Presbytery. This anomaly should be corrected by Petition to the General Assembly.

**Admitted from other denominations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John Marker</td>
<td>admitted from Avoch Congregational Church</td>
<td>21st March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Alberto De Paula</td>
<td>admitted from Church of Scotland</td>
<td>23rd May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Donald N. Martin*</td>
<td>admitted from Church of Scotland</td>
<td>5th October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. David Randall (Rtd)</td>
<td>admitted from Church of Scotland</td>
<td>5th October 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Register of Ministers without Charge available for Call**

Contact details are available from the Principal Clerk, or relevant Presbytery Clerk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Presbytery</th>
<th>Date of Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Ricky Macdonald</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>30th June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Ruairidh Maclean</td>
<td>Glasgow and Argyll</td>
<td>30th June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John T. Mann</td>
<td>Inverness, Lochaber and Ross</td>
<td>7th October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Malcolm R. Macleod</td>
<td>Western Isles</td>
<td>7th October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. James Patterson</td>
<td>Edinburgh and Perth</td>
<td>7th October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Robert M. Walker</td>
<td>Glasgow and Argyll</td>
<td>7th October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. David Parker</td>
<td>Glasgow and Argyll</td>
<td>23rd May 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Register of Probationers**

Contact details are available from the Principal Clerk, or relevant Presbytery Clerk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Presbytery</th>
<th>Date of Licence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. William Paterson</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>2nd July 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rev. Suraj Kasula was licenced by Edinburgh and Perth Presbytery in October 2015. His name will no longer appear on this register as he has been ordained to work with a church in Nepal.
(N) PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee considers models of best practice that affect the working conditions of ministers. The Sub-Committee consults with Mr Scott Matheson and Mrs Catriona Cazaly whom we thank for their support and guidance. In the coming year the Sub-Committee expects to look at the level of supply fees. They will also keep under review any statutory changes affecting Ministers’ Working Conditions, the Student Finance Scheme, and general issues affecting Minister’s Expenses.

(O) PROPOSED ACT ANENT CATEGORIES OF MINISTER

At the 2016 General Assembly it was agreed to review and update legislation on Ministerial Categories to clarify some anomalies. The task of carrying out this review fell upon the Assembly Clerks’ department, whom we thank for their care and diligence. The proposed new Act Anent Ministerial Categories is contained in the deliverance.

(P) BIBLE EXAMINATIONS AND PRESBYTERY OVERSIGHT

The Board is generally satisfied with the arrangements in place for Scripture Examinations (held at ETS when classes resume in January) and with Presbytery oversight of candidates. Good and timely communication of arrangements for Presbytery oversight exams assists the students in their preparation and will avoid disappointing marks. The Board will work with ETS and our candidates to promote a good knowledge of scripture among all our candidates.

(Q) MINISTRY AND MISSION

The Board is glad to work with the Mission Board and other Boards to advance the mission and growth of the Free Church under God’s hand of blessing. We are grateful for opportunities to discuss our shared objectives in the Forum for Board Chairmen and through the recent Mission Board Strategy consultation. The Board of Ministry commends the Mission Board for their vision and leadership. The decades to come offer a profound challenge and opportunity to the Free Church to revitalise and grow by creating and supporting many new ministries around Scotland and beyond. The Board commends new entrants into the ministry to the prayers of the church even as we pray for God to continue to call men into pastoral ministry and church planting. We pray that God will continue to provide the Church with gifted and Christ-like workers for His harvest.

ANGUS MACRAE, Chairman
IVOR MACDONALD, Vice-Chairman

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, especially the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and the Clerk.

2. The General Assembly give thanks to Almighty God that He continues to call and equip men for the ministry of the Church. They encourage congregations to be diligent in supporting prayerfully and practically all students and their families, and those entrusted with training.

3. The General Assembly appoint Rev. Alex J. MacDonald as a Pastoral Support Worker to supplement the work of Presbytery Pastoral Panels and to offer support and care to ministers and their families. They appoint Mr MacDonald as Chair of the Panel of Pastoral Care along with Dr John Nicholls as Vice-Chairman. They shall report to the Board of Ministry and co-opt a team of men and women to join the Panel.

The remit of the Pastoral Care Support Worker is as follows:

- The Pastoral Care Support Worker is to be proactive in befriending and encouraging ministers and their families – particularly those in difficult circumstances, nearing retirement, facing perplexing and demanding situations or in ministries that may be terminated.
- This remit is to be carried out by personal contact with ministers, not only by telephone and email, but also by face to face contact.
- The Support Worker has wide freedom to carry out this work as he sees fit, and particularly to contact all ministers to offer support and encouragement.
• The Support Worker may seek medical, counselling or other professional help for ministers who desire it.
• Strict confidentiality in this work is vital, the only exception being in situations which clearly involve church discipline.
• The Support worker will chair the Panel of Pastoral Care.
• The Support Worker will report once a year to the Board of Ministry, and be free to consult with the members of the Panel or the Board at any time.
• This is a non-salaried post, but all necessary expenses will be met under the Board of Ministry budget.

The remit of the Panel of Pastoral Care is as follows:

• The Panel of Pastoral Care will consist of four or five members in addition to the Support Worker who will Chair the Panel.
• The Panel will give all necessary support, help and advice to the Support Worker.
• The members of the panel will help with pastoral care situations when requested by the Support Worker.
• In addition they will be vigilant in bringing to the Support Worker’s attention any minister who may be experiencing difficulty.
• They will be careful to treat all such matters in the strictest confidence.
• The Panel will meet at least once a year and submit a short report to the General Assembly concerning their work in general terms through the Board of Ministry.

4. The General Assembly note the section of the Board of Ministry Report *Ministry as a Dangerous Calling*. The General Assembly remind each Presbytery to promote a pastoral culture of mutual accountability and mentoring and commend “Friendship Mentoring” to Presbyteries as an example of good practice. The General Assembly direct each Presbytery to review their practice and ensure that ministers are mentored, supported and held accountable in a meaningful way.

5. The General Assembly approve of arrangements to hold a Closed Session at the General Assembly for Commissioners, Ministers, Probationers and Candidates for the Ministry and thank Rev. Steve Midgely, Director of Biblical Counselling UK, for assisting the Free Church as it responds to the spiritual dangers and temptations facing ministers and congregations.

6. The General Assembly note the recommendation of the Board of Ministry and authorise the Board to consult Boards and Presbyteries as may be required and to study and review the practice and procedure followed in ordinations and inductions, the commitments required of ordinands, and the way in which that commitment may continue to be expressed and confessed with a view to upholding and supporting ministers of the gospel in their calling to live a holy and watchful life while they faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully carry out their ministerial work to build up the body of Christ, reporting any recommendations to a future General Assembly.

7. The General Assembly note and approve of the actions of the Board of Ministry in preparing and distributing a policy document, *Care for Ministers*, and a policy document, *Candidates in Ministry*.

8. The General Assembly note the advice of the Board of Ministry on the appointment of Locally Appointed Resident Supply including non-ordained persons, ministers of other churches and candidates for the ministry. The General Assembly direct that Presbyteries should approve of any arrangement proposed by a congregation for locally appointed resident supply and Presbyteries should liaise with the Board of Ministry before approving any local arrangement placing a non-ordained person or a minister of another church in charge of a pastoral ministry. Similarly no candidate for the ministry should be appointed to such a post without the agreement of the Presbytery and the Board of Ministry. Presbyteries shall have particular regard to ensure that those appointed are of good character, are able to teach God’s word, that their circumstances permit them to take on this appointment, that they are subject to appropriate pastoral oversight and discipline and that they will uphold the teachings of the Reformed faith.

9. The General Assembly note proposals for a process of continuous review of the training curriculum at ETS and agree to discontinue the practice of Board of Ministry appointed external examiners.

10. The General Assembly thank congregations and supervisors for their assistance with term time and summer placements. The General Assembly encourage congregations wishing to have a candidate on placement to contact Dr Akroyd at ETS.

11. The General Assembly thank Rev. David Court for co-ordinating the recent In-Service Training Course and thank ETS for hosting the event. The General Assembly thank Mr Donald MacDonald for his generosity in providing,
at reduced cost, accommodation and meals at the Holyrood Hotel. The General Assembly note the advice of the Board of Ministry on In-Service Training. The General Assembly enact as follows:

**Act anent In-Service Training for Ministers**

The General Assembly instruct the Board of Ministry to arrange for the on-going training of ministers as follows:

1. The Board of Ministry shall arrange for an In-Service Training Conference to be held each year. Ministers shall be required to attend once every three years.
2. Each Presbytery shall nominate attendees to ensure that all active ministers within its bounds attend once every three years with one third of such members attending each year. Resident Supply preachers and other auxiliary workers whose employment involves pulpit supply and work of a pastoral nature shall be eligible to attend on the same basis as ministers in a charge.
3. At their discretion, the Board of Ministry may arrange a separate programme for new entrants to the ministry or for particular categories of minister. This may be arranged in conjunction with annual In-Service Training Conference or separately.
4. The Board of Ministry shall appoint a Training Coordinator to organise an annual training conference. The Board may also appoint a deputy to arrange logistical elements of the conference.
5. The Board of Ministry shall arrange the content in conjunction with the Board of Ministry. Topics will support development in preaching and pastoral skills, theological and pastoral theology and practical matters. The conference will usually include teaching, discussion, and practical seminars or workshops.
6. While the preferred venue for the programmes shall be Edinburgh Theological Seminary the Coordinator shall have discretion to recommend to the Board of Ministry options for Post-graduate study, various interdenominational conferences in theological and historical studies and the option of Sabbatical Studies at ETS.
7. Those attending the Conference shall be reimbursed for accommodation and travelling expenses. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to make appropriate financial provision in the Board of Ministry Training Budget for this purpose.
8. The General Assembly encourage ministers to avail themselves of other opportunities to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills, including the resources and short courses offered at the ETS Mission Centre, and the option of Sabbatical Studies at ETS.

12. The General Assembly note the advice of the Board of Ministry on the training needs of candidates from North America. The General Assembly agree that such instances be treated on a case-by-case basis. Where appropriate, the Board of Ministry may agree to arrangements for theological training in North America with supplemental material (such as the Free Church ministry module) being taught by distance learning. If deemed wise, a candidate may undertake some or all of his theological study in Scotland or undertake a placement in Scotland.

13. The General Assembly note the advice of the Clerks’ Department and the Board of Ministry on Categories of Minister. The General Assembly enact as follows:

**Act anent Ministerial Categories**

The General Assembly ordain that the following categories and related stipulations shall apply to all ordained ministers of the Free Church of Scotland from the close of this Assembly.

The Principal Clerk of Assembly shall maintain a complete record comprising the names of all those listed in the categories below. He shall produce the complete list annually and shall report the same to the General Assembly through the report of the Board of Ministry. Presbytery Clerks and Clerks of Boards and Committees of the Church are responsible for informing the Principal Clerk in all instances specified below.

For the sake of clarity, the following points should be noted:

(a) the names of all Free Church ministers serving in a charge (i.e. a congregation, a mission field, or a position equivalent to a charge such as full-time appointments by induction in the Edinburgh Theological Seminary) will be held on the appropriate Roll of Presbytery, as will the names of other ministers who have been granted a seat in a Presbytery of the Church. All other names of Free Church Ministers in good standing must appear on one or other of the lists specified below.

(b) Ministers who resign their charge and become ministers in another denomination cannot remain under the
jurisdiction and discipline of two denominations concurrently, so their names must be removed from Free Church listings. Should such ministers wish to re-enter the Free Church ministry they must petition the General Assembly through the Board of Ministry.

1. **Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call**
The *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call* shall comprise all ordained ministers (for Probationers see 5 below) of the Free Church in good standing who are in a position to receive a Call. Only those whose names are placed on this Roll shall be available for a call, and placement on this Roll shall be taken to imply an individual’s sincere readiness to accept a call in appropriate circumstances. Congregations may only address calls to ministers already in a charge, or whose names are on this Roll, or whose names appear on the Roll of Probationers.

1.1 Ministers on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call* who become unavailable for call must inform their Presbytery, who shall in turn direct the Principal Clerk to transfer their name to whichever category is relevant to their circumstances. While remaining on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call*, ministers shall not be eligible for a seat in Presbytery or to membership of Assembly-appointed Boards and Committees of the Church.

1.2 In no case shall the name of a minister remain on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call* for more than three years from the date of inclusion in the Roll unless application for a further period of three years be made to the Presbytery within whose bounds he is resident before the expiry of the initial three-year period. Should he have taken up residence outwith the bounds of a Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland, his application for retention on the Roll shall be made to the Presbytery within which he last resided. In no case shall a name remain on the Roll for more than six years, after which names shall be transferred to the *Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call*.

1.3 Ministers on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call* shall be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds they are resident. If a minister takes up residence outwith the bounds of any Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland, while on this Roll, he shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds he last resided.

1.4 The General Assembly direct that each Presbytery of the Church shall maintain a list of ministers on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call* who are under their jurisdiction, and shall inform the Assembly Clerk accordingly at the beginning of each calendar year. This annual review shall include due investigation that they continue to associate with the Free Church of Scotland. Should the Presbytery find otherwise regarding any minister on this Roll, the Presbytery may declare that he is no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and, after due intimation to the individual concerned, may thus order his name to be removed from the Roll if appropriate grounds are found. The Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly accordingly.

2. **Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call**

The *Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call* shall comprise all ordained ministers of the Free Church in good standing who are not in a position to receive a Call but who are not retired or have not resigned their charge.

2.1 Ministers on this Roll who wish to be available for Call must petition the General Assembly through the Board of Ministry, with support from the relevant Presbytery, for transference to the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call*.

2.2 A minister on this Roll who wishes a seat on the Presbytery in which he resides, may petition the General Assembly, through the Presbytery on condition that (a) he is engaged in work which may be deemed by the Presbytery to be analogous to a pastoral charge; and (2) he can demonstrate to the Presbytery’s satisfaction that this work is of benefit to the Presbytery or to the wider Free Church. He shall continue to be a member of the Presbytery for the duration of the period in which he is engaged in this work and should he cease this work his membership of Presbytery shall lapse and his name shall be placed on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call*, or the *Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call*, whichever is the more appropriate. The Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly accordingly.

2.3 Ministers on the *Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call* shall be eligible for election as Ruling Elders of the congregation to which they belong, provided they have not resigned from this charge previously, but they may not be elected, as Ruling Elders or appointed as Assessor Elders, either to represent the Kirk Session at Presbytery and Synod, or as Commissioners to the General Assembly.
2.4 Ministers on the Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call shall be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds they reside. A minister on this Roll who takes up residence outwith the bounds of any Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds he last resided.

2.5 The General Assembly direct that each Presbytery of the Church shall maintain a list of ministers on the Roll of Ministers without Charge not Available for Call who are under their jurisdiction, and shall inform the Assembly Clerk accordingly at the beginning of each calendar year. This annual review shall include due investigation that they continue to associate with the Free Church of Scotland. Should the Presbytery find otherwise regarding any minister on this Roll the Presbytery may declare that he is no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and, after due intimation to the individual concerned, may thus order his name to be removed from the Roll if appropriate grounds are found. The Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly accordingly.

3. Roll of Retired Ministers

The Roll of Retired Ministers shall comprise all ordained ministers of the Free Church in good standing who have retired but do not have a seat in Presbytery, including those who have been received from other denominations since retiring. Retirement in this sense, whether by a minister in a pastoral charge or otherwise, should be seen as distinct from a minister choosing to receive certain retirement benefits prior to actual retirement.

3.1 A minister may apply for permission to retire on attaining the age of 65 years.

3.2 Applications for earlier retirement on the grounds of ill health shall be subject to the rules of the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme or the rules of such other pension arrangement(s) as may be in place at the time.

3.3 Those ministers with qualifying service in the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme shall address applications for payment of retirement benefits to the Trustees of the Scheme. Applications for payment of pension benefits in respect of service after 31st December 2007 shall be directed to the third party administrator. All ministers are encouraged to seek independent financial advice when considering options for retirement.

3.4 All applications for retirement from ministers in a charge must be supported by extract minutes from the relevant Kirk Session and Presbytery and these must show that the applicant has agreed to resile from his rights of active participation in the courts of the congregation - his right to respond to a specific request from the Moderator or Interim Moderator of the congregation being unchanged. Retirement shall involve the surrender of the emoluments of the Charge, and the vacation of the manse unless the Deacons’ Court permits continuing occupation for a period; the congregation shall be deemed to be and declared to be vacant by order of the Presbytery after the specified retirement date has been reached.

3.5 Ministers retiring upon attainment of retirement age, or on the grounds of ill health, may petition the Presbytery within whose bounds they are to reside, for a seat in that Presbytery. Should their request be granted their name will be added to the Roll of Presbytery and the Clerk of Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly and he shall remove their name from the Roll of Retired Ministers. Upon relocation to another Presbytery they may apply for a seat in that Presbytery by petition, otherwise their names shall be added to the Roll of Retired Ministers. In the case of ministers who take up residence in a Presbytery other than that receiving their application to retire, an extract minute from the Presbytery receiving their application to retire in support of the Petition for a seat shall be obtained.

3.6 All ordained ministers of the Free Church retiring through attainment of retirement age, or for health reasons, or from service in international mission fields where this has been under the supervision of the Mission Board, may similarly petition the Presbytery within whose bounds they are to reside, for a seat in that Presbytery. In this case the supporting extract minute shall be provided by the Board.

3.7 Ministers serving under the oversight of the Mission Board, who at retirement choose not to apply for a seat in a Presbytery, shall continue to be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds they are resident and their names shall be held on the Roll of Retired Ministers.

3.8 Retired ministers, unless granted a seat in a Presbytery, shall not be eligible to serve on Assembly-appointed Boards and Committees of the Church.

3.9 For disciplinary purposes a retired minister is accountable to the Presbytery within whose bounds he resides.

3.10 Retired ministers, unless granted a seat in a Presbytery, shall be eligible for election as Ruling Elders of the congregation to which they belong, provided this be not their last charge before retirement, but they may not be elected
as Ruling Elders or appointed as Assessor Elders either to represent the Kirk Session at Presbytery and Synod or as Commissioners to the General Assembly.

3.11 The General Assembly direct that each Presbytery of the Church shall maintain a list of ministers on the Roll of Retired Ministers who are under their jurisdiction, and shall inform the Assembly Clerk accordingly at the beginning of each calendar year. This annual review shall include due investigation that they continue to associate with the Free Church of Scotland. Should the Presbytery find otherwise regarding any minister on this Roll the Presbytery may declare that he is no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and, after due intimation to the individual concerned, may thus order his name to be removed from the Roll if appropriate grounds are found. The Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly accordingly.

4. Roll of Resigned Ministers
The Roll of Resigned Ministers shall comprise all ordained ministers of the Free Church in good standing who have resigned their charge and have not become ministers of another denomination.

4.1 This list comprises the following:

(a) Ministers who resigned their charge due to a breakdown in health;
(b) Ministers whose resignation is due to non-censurable incompatibility with a congregation;
(c) Ministers whose resignation is required for secondment by a responsible Board or Committee of the Free Church to other pastoral or para-pastoral work.
(d) Ministers who resigned their charge and are employed by other agencies and are financially supported by the Free Church but not seconded by a Board or Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, provided they have not become ministers of another denomination.
(e) Ministers who resigned their charge and are employed by other agencies but are not financially supported by the Free Church, provided they have not become ministers of another denomination.
(f) Ministers whose names by order of the General Assembly, other than for reasons in (a)-(e) above, are to be held on the Roll of Resigned Ministers.

4.2 When a minister’s resignation of his charge has been accepted by his Presbytery, the Clerk of Presbytery (or, in the case of a Mission Board Charge, the Secretary of the Mission Board) shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly by Extract Minute. The Extract Minute shall include the resolution of the Presbytery to place the name of the minister on the Roll of Resigned Ministers. If the Presbytery resolve to place the name on the Roll of Ministers without Charge Available for Call, they must minute positive reasons for such placement on it, or subsequent continuance on it, and the Extract Minute furnished to the Principal Clerk shall contain these reasons.

4.3 If a minister whose name has been placed on the Roll of Resigned Ministers shall be admitted to the ministry or other full-time employment of another Church other than by secondment, his name shall be removed from the Roll.

4.4 A minister whose name is placed on the Roll of Resigned Ministers is required to notify the Clerk of Presbytery of any change of address. If a minister takes up residence within the bounds of another Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland, he shall also inform the Clerk of that Presbytery of his address and thereafter he shall come under the jurisdiction of that Presbytery. In such a case the Presbytery Clerk shall advise the Principal Clerk of Assembly.

4.5 A minister whose name is on the Roll of Resigned Ministers and who desires to have his name transferred to the Register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call shall petition the General Assembly through the Presbytery within whose bounds he is resident at the time. The Petition shall give positive reasons for transference to it otherwise it shall not be deemed competent.

4.6 A minister, who has resigned his charge to accept an appointment outside the Free Church of Scotland, and who seeks a seat on the Presbytery in which he resides, may petition the General Assembly, through the Presbytery. He shall continue to be a member of the Presbytery for the duration of the period in which he holds the appointment on the basis of which he is granted his seat; and on ceasing to hold such an appointment his membership of Presbytery shall lapse and his name placed on the Roll of Resigned Ministers.

4.7 Ministers whose names are held on the Roll of Resigned Ministers shall be eligible for election as Ruling Elders of the congregation to which they belong but they may not be elected, as Ruling Elders or appointed as Assessor Elders, either to represent the Kirk Session at Presbytery and Synod, or as Commissioners to the General Assembly

4.8 Ministers on the Roll of Resigned Ministers shall be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds they are resident. If a minister takes up residence outwith the bounds of any Presbytery of the Free Church of
Scotland, he shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds he last resided.

4.9 A request by an individual whose name is on the Roll of Resigned Ministers to have his name removed therefrom shall be dealt with by the Presbytery within whose bounds he resides. That Presbytery after due investigation and on due grounds shown (such as, the individual concerned no longer associates with the Free Church of Scotland) may declare him to be no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and order that his name be removed from the Roll.

4.10 The General Assembly direct that each Presbytery of the Church shall maintain a list of ministers on the Roll of Resigned Ministers who are under their jurisdiction, and shall inform the Assembly Clerk accordingly at the beginning of each calendar year. This annual review shall include due investigation that they continue to associate with the Free Church of Scotland. Should the Presbytery find otherwise regarding any minister on this Roll the Presbytery may declare that he is no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and, after due intimation to the individual concerned, may thus order his name to be removed from the Roll if appropriate grounds are found. The Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly accordingly.

5. Roll of Probationers
The Roll of Probationers comprises all Probationers in good standing licensed by the Free Church of Scotland and who are available for Call. Probationers who no longer wish to be available for Call shall inform their Presbytery specifying the reasons. If their request to be removed from the Roll of Probationers is granted the Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly by extract minute authorising him to remove their name from this list.

5.1 A Probationer is a candidate for the ministry who has completed the course of studies required by the Board of Ministry and has been licensed to preach by a Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland.

5.2 Clerks of Presbyteries shall send the names and addresses of all who have been licensed by them as Probationers, with dates of licence, within one week thereafter, to the Principal Clerk of Assembly with a copy to the Clerk to the Board of Ministry.

5.3 The Principal Clerk shall prepare and maintain a Roll of all Probationers of the Free Church according to date of licence and shall provide the Board of Ministry annually with a list of all the names and addresses on the Roll, and the Board shall incorporate the list into its report to the General Assembly.

5.4 A Probationer’s name shall remain on the Roll of Probationers for six years, before the end of which he may petition the General Assembly, through the Presbytery within whose bounds he resides, to have his name retained on the Roll for a further three years. In no case shall a name remain on the Roll for more than nine years, after which names shall be removed.

5.5 A Probationer is not eligible to conduct Marriage Services or dispense the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

5.6 Probationers are subject to the oversight of the Presbytery within whose bounds they reside, though the Presbytery may choose to exercise pastoral care through the Kirk Session of the congregation of which he is a member. The Presbytery has a responsibility to meet with Probationers under their oversight regularly and shall meet in private for this purpose.

5.7 A Kirk Session shall not issue a Disjunction Certificate to a Probationer awaiting a call without prior reference to the Presbytery.

5.8 Where a Disjunction Certificate is granted to a Probationer, the Presbytery Clerk shall forthwith inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly; and likewise when the Probationer subsequently comes under the pastoral oversight of another Presbytery, the Presbytery Clerk shall inform the Principal Clerk so that the Probationer’s name be continued on the Roll of Probationers.

5.9 If when granted a Disjunction Certificate, a Probationer does not lodge it within six weeks with another Free Church congregation he shall be deemed to have removed his name from the Roll of Probationers.