

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND AND THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

REPORT OF THE COVENANT COUNCIL TO THE CHURCHES

MEMBERSHIP

Church of Ireland

Rt Rev Harold Miller (co-Chair)	Rev Canon Ginnie Kennerley
Mr David Brown	Mr Cyril McElhinney
Ms Elva Byrne	Rev Brian Stewart
Mr Stephen Edgar	Rev Peter Thompson
Rev Canon Adrian Empey	
Rev Dr Maurice Elliott	

Methodist Church

Rev David Kerr (co-Chair)	Rev Don Ker
Rev Dr Edmund Mawhinney (Secretary of Conference)	Rev David Rock
Rev Andrew Dougherty	Mrs Irene McKeown
Rev Geraldine Gracie	Mr Kenneth Twyble
Rev Brian Griffin	Ms Gillian Kingston (Secretary)

The Covenant Council presents this, its first report to the Governing bodies with joy and gratitude to God for what has been accomplished in terms of relationship between our two Churches. The council wishes to place on record its particular gratitude to the members of the former Joint Theological Working Party, whose endeavours brought about the signing of the Covenant on Thursday, September 27, 2002.

The Council has met four times during the year, once in residential session. The membership represents a wide range of concerns within our churches and includes a small number from among those who had previously served on the Joint Theological Working Party.

As the Council has been occupied with establishing relationships within itself and in examining the Terms of Reference for its ongoing work, it was agreed that this first report should be in the nature of a holding report.

The Council sees it of first importance to establish protocols for joint schemes between our churches. To this end, it is engaged in examining in a general way both longstanding and more recent joint ventures and in identifying possibilities and difficulties. While not wishing to establish a principle of dealing with individual situations, the Council is aware that the Church of the Good Shepherd at Monkstown, Newtownabbey, is by way of being a 'special case'. The co-Chairs and the secretary have met with the Bishop and District Superintendent and the Circuit Superintendent to discern an appropriate way forward.

The Council is anxious to hear of examples of good practice to offer as encouragement to our churches at large; it would also like to hear of any difficulties experienced so that they may be engaged with in a manner helpful to the churches as a whole.

