

Statement on relations with the PCI – as read at Assembly 2018 Sunday, 8 July 2018

The following statement on United Reformed Church Relations with the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was delivered by Bernie Collins, convenor of the mission committee, on behalf of the committee, on Sunday afternoon.

‘Members of Assembly may have seen media coverage of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, a month ago. One piece of business concerned us directly. The Assembly decided that it would bring to an end the practice that we believe dates from 1843, and would no longer be formally represented at our Assembly nor invite representation from us at their Assembly. The particular concern that has prompted this is the resolution on the marriage of same-sex couples, taken by our URC Assembly at Southport in 2016.

‘Kevin Watson, who as Moderator represented us in Belfast, received this news with courtesy, although there is reason for regret that a partnership which has done much for our two churches is now significantly weakened. The PCI remains open to informal opportunities for collaboration with us, and although we do not work extensively with them, Kevin was able to say very clearly that continuing contact is important. While the two churches are currently some way apart in our approaches to a variety of questions, there remain matters in which we can gain from keeping communication open.

Further we have many people in our churches and some in our ministry who have moved from Ireland to the lands where we serve. We value these people highly, and we shall continue to welcome members of the PCI who wish to worship with us, either as occasional visitors, or during student years, or after moving to settle here.

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