I.

REPORT

OF THE

ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

The Committee met in January 2008 to consider items relating to the forthcoming General Assembly, in particular the following:

1. Representation of Presbyteries in the General Assembly

The Committee decided that Presbytery representation at the Assembly, based on one third representation, be as follows, Presbyteries to be notified accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presbytery</th>
<th>No. of Qualifying Charges</th>
<th>No. of Ministers Entitled</th>
<th>No. of Elders Entitled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh &amp; Perth</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow &amp; Argyll</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverness, Loch. &amp; Ross</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skye &amp; Wester Ross</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Isles</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt. Lakes &amp; W. Canada</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Committee gave consideration to the inclusion of Uig, Bernera, in the calculations for the Western Isles Presbytery. It was decided that the Committee should write to the Presbytery of the Western Isles recommending that they take steps to unite Uig with another congregation and that the united charge have one Kirk Session. The Committee also agreed to recommend the same to the Northern Presbytery with regard to the charge of Tongue, Farr, Strathy and Halladale which presently operates with more than one Kirk Session and therefore qualifies as two charges for the purpose of Assembly representation.

2. Moderator’s Reception and Lunches

The Committee decided to continue the practice of the past few years of holding the Moderator’s Reception outwith the College premises. The Committee also agreed to continue the arrangement to provide lunches for Assembly personnel, delegates and observers over the three full days of the Assembly.

3. Assembly Hall

The Committee is grateful to the St. Columba’s Deacons’ Court for the further renovation of the Assembly Hall so as to comply with disability regulations. This has included a new sound system and electronic screens which can be utilised for Assembly sessions as well as for congregational use. The Committee agreed to meet half the costs of this upgrade from their own budget and also agreed to arrange for new lecterns, precentor’s stand and clerks’ tables. These should be in place by the time the Assembly meets.

4. Assembly Programme

The Committee has again given consideration to the matter of how more public interest in the proceedings of the Assembly might be stimulated. It was decided to recommend to the Assembly that for the 2008 Assembly a psalm-singing item be included along the same lines as that held during the last Assembly, as this had been widely appreciated by both commissioners and members of the public. The Committee had also been informed that the Church of Scotland General Assembly was due to end on Wednesday 21st May 2008, which affected the timing of the visit of the Lord High Commissioner to the Free Church Assembly. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Assembly that the visit of the Lord High Commissioner be arranged to take place on Tuesday 20th at 12 noon.

5. Media Officer

The Committee noted with regret that Rev. Alex J. MacDonald had submitted his resignation as Media Officer for the Church and that the Assembly Arrangements Committee was required, under current legislation, to arrange for a replacement. It was noted that the legislation did not require the Committee to request nominations from Presbyteries. Consequently the Committee arrived at three names which were approached in order of preference. The outcome to this has been that Rev. M. Iver Martin has agreed to accept the nomination and the Committee is recommending that he be appointed Media Officer with effect from
the close of the 2008 Assembly. The Committee wish to record their appreciation of Rev. Alex MacDonald’s work as Media Officer, which has involved reporting on the 2004 Court Case, the meetings of the General Assembly, together with providing information, Press Releases and answers to questions from the Media throughout the course of each year he has been in the post.

Mr MacDonald provided the Committee with a draft Job Description for the post. Based on this the Committee approved the terms of a Job Description and this is set out in the Proposed Deliverance.

6. Assembly Officer The Committee received the resignation of the Assembly Officer, Mr Donald Maciver, with great regret and with grateful appreciation of all that he had done as Assembly Officer since his appointment in 2001. The Committee wishes him much blessing and good health for the remainder of his retirement. In considering the appointment of a replacement for Mr Maciver the Committee unanimously settled on Mr John Scoales, and on being offered the post Mr Scoales accepted, subject to the College Principal and the Chief Administrative Officer being willing to release Mr Scoales from his duties in the Church Offices and in the College during the week of the Assembly. The Committee is grateful to Principal Macleod and to Mr Morrison for their agreement in this regard. The Committee is also indebted to Mr Scoales himself for accepting the post.

7. Standing Orders In reviewing the 2007 Assembly the Committee concluded that additional details were required for the guidance of those occupying the Moderator’s chair, in particular as to leaving the chair, and that a Standing Order be drafted accordingly with a corresponding paragraph added to the Memorandum issued to Moderators Designate annually. This is set out in the Proposed Deliverance at paragraph 9.

8. Other The Committee continues to be grateful to Rev. William M. Mackay for acting as Hospitality Coordinator, to Mrs Sharon Fraser for her contribution to making arrangements for the Assembly and Assembly delegates, to the Offices staff for the processing of items relating to the Assembly, and to the students and others who man the doors and oversee the sound system for the Assembly. In addition Mr Scott Lauder has for many years provided a car for the use of the Moderator during the Assembly week and the Committee wish to record their thanks to him for this.

JOHN S. ROSS, Convener
DONALD SMITH, Vice Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Committee on Assembly Arrangements, and thank the Committee, especially the Convener.

2. The General Assembly thank the Committee for their diligence in attending to the various arrangements required for the running of the Assembly, in particular the arrangements for delegates, hospitality, lunches and transport.

3. The General Assembly thank the Committee for their concern to generate more interest in the Assembly’s proceedings. They welcome the inclusion of a psalm singing session in the Assembly programme and are grateful to Mr Evan Macdonald for his help in arranging the details.

4. The General Assembly commend the Deacons’ Court of St Columba’s Free Church and the Committee for the further upgrading of the Assembly Hall.

5. The General Assembly thank Rev. William M. Mackay for his diligence as Hospitality Coordinator for the Assembly.

6. The General Assembly thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald for all his work as Media Officer since his appointment in May 2002 and wish him well as he relinquishes the post.

7. The General Assembly appoint Rev. M. Iver Martin as Media Officer in terms of Act 1, Class 2, 2002 and endorse the following Job Description for the post:
1. The Media Officer shall be a minister or elder of the Free Church of Scotland.

2. The Media Officer shall be appointed by and be ultimately responsible to the General Assembly. He shall be appointed on the recommendation of the Communications Committee. The appointment shall be for a period of three years. At the end of this period the Communications Committee shall have authority to renew the appointment. The maximum term of service for the same individual in the post shall be nine years.

3. The Media Officer shall be an effective communicator, comfortable in dealing with members of the press and other media, and a competent writer in popular style.

4. The Media Officer shall be a consultant to every Assembly Committee and Board, with the right to attend their meetings, and shall report regularly to the Communications Committee, to whom he shall be immediately responsible.

5. The Media Officer shall work closely with the Communications Officer, the Assembly Clerks’ Department, the Church Offices, the Conveners and Chairmen of Church Committees and Boards, and the Editors of the Church’s magazines.

6. The Media Officer shall be responsible for responding to inquiries from the media (which should all normally be referred to him) either by dealing with these himself, or by referring them to people with suitable expertise or knowledge within the church. To this end, in consultation with the Communications Officer, he shall keep an up-to-date list of those who may be consulted on a variety of issues.

7. The Media Officer shall be responsible for receiving and obtaining news items from Congregations, Presbyteries, Boards and Committees, framing press releases and, in consultation with the Communications Officer, releasing these to the media.

8. The Media Officer shall attend the meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission. He shall issue press releases leading up to and during the General Assembly in order to communicate to the public matters of importance to the Church and society. He shall do this in consultation with Chairmen and Conveners of Boards and Committees. He shall liaise with members of the press during the Assembly. He shall also obtain details of the Moderator Designate (nominated normally in October) and issue a press release.

9. On any matters of a legal or disciplinary or other sensitive nature, the Media Officer shall consult with the appropriate Church officer or body before issuing any statement. In particular, where there may be any doubt about a matter, he shall consult with the Moderator, the Assembly Clerk, the Convener of the Board of Trustees and the Chief Administrative Officer.

10. The Media Officer shall be responsible for overseeing the Free Church Website and Forum (or other such message boards), in consultation with the Communications Officer, who shall be responsible for the design and updating of the Website.

11. The post shall carry a remuneration consistent with that of Committee Clerks. The expenses of the Media Officer in attendance at meetings of the General Assembly and Commission of Assembly, together with reasonable expenses, such as use of telephone, stationery and printer consumables, necessarily incurred in carrying out the work of Media Officer, shall be met out of the Communications Committee budget, on application to the Chief Administrative Officer.

8. The General Assembly thank Mr Donald Maciver for his work as Assembly Officer since his appointment to the post in May 2001 and wish him well as he relinquishes the post. The General Assembly welcome the appointment of Mr John Scoales as Assembly Officer and thank Principal Donald Macleod and Mr Rod Morrison for releasing Mr Scoales from his duties in the Free Church College and Church Offices respectively during the Assembly week.

9. The General Assembly ordain that except for comfort breaks the Moderator shall require the permission of the Assembly for absence from the chair during sittings of the Assembly. They further ordain that the Moderator shall not undertake visits on behalf of the Assembly without their prior authority. The General
Assembly instruct that these details be inserted into Standing Orders and into the Memorandum issued annually to Moderators Designate.

10. The General Assembly thank Rev. William M. Mackay for acting as Hospitality Coordinator, Mrs. Sharon Fraser for her contribution to making arrangements for the Assembly and Assembly delegates, the Offices staff for the processing of items relating to the Assembly, and the students and others who provide door duties and oversee the sound system for the Assembly. The General Assembly thank Mr Scott Lauder for his provision of a car for the use of the Moderator during the Assembly week.
II.

REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In its inaugural year following establishment by the 2007 General Assembly, the Board of Trustees dealt with a variety of issues covering finance, policy, pensions, strategy, compliance, risk management and personnel. The Board continued to monitor the legal activities of the “Free Church Continuing” and the threat that it posed to the ongoing work of the Church. The Board is greatly assisted in its work by its Sub-Committees, namely the Finance Sub-Committee, the Compliance, Audit and Risk Management Sub-Committee, the Strategy Sub-Committee, the Pensions and Personnel Sub-Committee and the Legal Group.

(A) FINANCE

1. Financial Overview As a result of the additional work required in consolidating the accounts of the Colegio San Andres and delays in the audit timetable in Peru, a final set of Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31st December 2007 was not available at the time of writing this Report. However, indications from the draft accounts are that the Church has had another good financial year and has been able to fund its spend programme. The Board is grateful to God for this provision. Indeed, as a result of considerable legacy income and the gain on sale of a number of properties, the Church is expected to record a substantial accounting surplus. The surplus recorded in the accounts will be increased further by the gain associated with a reduction in the Pension Scheme deficit and the gain recorded as a result of a revaluation of the Mound properties. Neither of these items have any cash benefit to the Church. Despite the accounting surplus, there remains a concern that, without these exceptional, non-recurring items of expenditure, the Church would have been unable to meet all its financial commitments out of underlying income. This has reinforced the commitment of the Board to pursue a new approach to congregational remittances and the financing of central activities in line with the remit handed down by the General Assembly in May 2007. Proposals for such a new system are outlined later in the Report.

In terms of financial prospects for 2008, the Board had significant concerns that underlying income (i.e. excluding exceptional items) would be insufficient to meet all expenditure plans presented by the various committees and boards. As a result, a proposal was made to the Commission of Assembly in October 2007 that a variety of reductions be made to budgets and that a number of other expenditure items be funded through the use of reserve funds. The Commission of Assembly approved this proposal and the Board believes that, with a modest increase in congregational remittances compared with 2007 and barring unforeseen items of income or expenditure, the outturn in 2008 should be close to break-even.

2. Legacies As mentioned above, the work of the Church was greatly aided in the past year by the receipt of several legacies. The Board acknowledges with grateful thanks the following legacies received during 2007:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legator</th>
<th>Fund Credited</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miss Jean R. Graham</td>
<td>International Missions Board</td>
<td>£15,347.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Catriona Maclean</td>
<td>International Missions Board</td>
<td>£32,440.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Helen Robertson</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>£337,183.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>£16,371.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Hughina Mackenzie</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>£1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Catherine S. MacDonald</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>£1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£403,842.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Investments The performance of the General Trust and Pension Fund investment portfolios was monitored throughout the year by a Joint Investment Committee comprising the Finance Sub-Committee and the Pension Scheme Trustees. The funds themselves were managed by Brewin Dolphin and the performance of each during 2007 is noted below.
General Trust
As a result of difficult trading conditions, particularly in the last quarter of the year, the portfolio showed only a modest increase in value during the year. The total value of the fund at 31st December 2007 was £4,186,813 compared with £4,130,409 at the same point in 2006. The income yield (interest, dividends, etc and excluding capital growth) was 3.6% during 2007. This income, of around £150,000, assists in financing the activities of central committees and boards, and, in some cases, produces income for congregations with funds invested with the Board. Overall, performance during 2007 was somewhat disappointing as a result of well publicised market difficulties, and indications are that 2008 will be a similarly difficult year. However, it should be remembered that the fund managers are geared towards longer term growth, managing the risk profile through a balanced mix of investments (not just UK equities).

The value of each unit in the share pool rose marginally from £4.58 in 2006 to £4.59 in 2007 and interest on the capital sums held for the major funds and committees of the Free Church was distributed at 19.0p per share compared with 18.5p per share in the previous year.

Pension Fund
The Pension Fund showed a larger increase during 2007 than the General Trust but this was largely due to additional contributions made to the Fund by the Church rather than as a result of growth in the investments. At 31st December 2007, the total value of the fund stood at £6,428,219 compared with £5,986,537 in 2006. Again, the income yield was around 3.6% but in the case of the Pension Fund, this is reinvested by the Fund Managers rather than being paid out to the Church. The underlying performance of the Pension Fund, and its prospects for 2008, are broadly similar to those for the General Trust.

For accounting purposes, the Church is obliged, under the Financial Reporting Standards (FRS 17), to provide an updated valuation of the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme assets and liabilities. Watson Wyatt, the Scheme Actuary, has carried out this valuation for the year ended 31st December 2007. This shows that the total assets of the Scheme (including bank cash deposits) were £6.525m, an increase of around £300,000 on the previous year, while liabilities reduced to £9.312m (£10.048m in 2006). The combined effect has been to reduce the accounting deficit in the Scheme by just over £1m in the year. As noted above, a key driver in this reduction has been the high level of contributions to the Scheme from the Church under the Schedule agreed with the Pension Scheme Trustees. Information on a change to these arrangements is provided later in this Report.

The Joint Investment Committee has begun an exercise to review its policy with respect to ethical restrictions placed on the Fund Managers. At present, restrictions are applied with respect to companies that have significant interests in pornography, tobacco, gambling or weapons’ manufacture. It is expected that this review will be completed during 2008.

4. Partick
The Board was approached by the Deacons’ Court of the Partick congregation with regard to the ownership of the congregation’s temporary manse. The Deacons’ Court reported that the congregation was unable to meet the full costs of servicing the Trustee loan taken out to fund the acquisition of the property and enquired as to whether or not the Board would be prepared to purchase the property. The Board considered that the property represented a secure form of investment and agreed, in principle, to acquire the property from the congregation at market value. It is intended that the proceeds of sale would be used to settle the outstanding loan with the balance paid to the congregation. The congregation would then rent the property at an appropriate market rental.

Although the proposed transaction is somewhat unusual in that ownership would transfer from the congregation to the central Church, it was agreed that, since the property is held under the Model Trust Deed, General Assembly approval should be sought.

5. Colegio San Andres
In its 2007 Assembly Report, the Stewardship and Policy Committee reported on significant financial and administrative issues being faced by the Colegio San Andres. In the intervening period, the Board has, through the Working Group set up for that purpose, worked alongside the senior staff in the school and the International Missions Board to address the issues surrounding the operation of the school. This has led to a new set of financial procedures being implemented and more regular financial reporting to the staff in the Church Offices. In addition, the Board agreed to a request from the IMB that, in light of the serious financial pressures being faced by the school, a loan of £35,000 made to the school in 2007 be written off against the reserves of the IMB. The Board is encouraged that these steps, together with the efforts of staff in the school appear to have had a positive impact. While the situation remains fragile, there are
indications that the school is now operating on a more sustainable footing and this has been assisted by a small increase in student numbers for the current academic year.

The Working Group is continuing with its work on reviewing the governance arrangements for the school including preparation of new constitutional documents. Progress in this area has not been as swift as might have been hoped as focus has been very much centred on the financial difficulties facing the school. However, the Board is committed to working with the IMB and the Working Group in ensuring that more satisfactory arrangements are put in place for the long-term ownership and governance of the school. The Board proposes that the Commission of Assembly be empowered to consider proposals that it may bring forward in relation to these governance arrangements, including a proposed constitution, in order that matters may be progressed expeditiously.

6. South African Properties

When the Free Church in Southern Africa was established in 1976, there was an understanding that, over time, all the church properties would be transferred into its name. During the year, the Board considered and supported a proposal from the International Missions Board to effect such a transfer. The majority of the properties are held by means of a Certificate of Permission to Occupy since, in the past, black South Africans were not permitted to hold title to property. However, a process now exists to allow these Certificates to be changed into formal title deeds. The first stage in this process is to transfer the Certificates (currently held in the name of the Free Church of Scotland) into the name of the Free Church in Southern Africa. In order to achieve this, an Affidavit must be signed by a person authorised by the Church. The Board proposes that a minister or missionary be authorised to sign the Affidavit.

There are four properties held under formal title deeds and it is again proposed that these be transferred into the name of the Free Church in Southern Africa. In addition, there appear to be other properties used by the Free Church in Southern Africa where no documentation is held by the lawyer acting for the International Missions Board. It will be necessary to establish the basis under which the Church occupies such properties and ensure that any deficiencies in documentation are rectified so that, if appropriate, these too can be included in the transfer process.

Following these transfers, it is the Board’s understanding that the only properties in South Africa left in the name of the Free Church of Scotland will be those occupied by Free Church missionaries.

7. 2009 Budgets

In light of the restructuring of committees and boards to take effect at this year’s General Assembly, the Board is working towards recasting budget information in order that draft budget schedules can be made available to committees and budget holders in advance of their first meetings following the General Assembly. Following a consultation exercise with committees, the Board will then draw up final recommendations for a balanced budget in light of anticipated income, and present these to the Commission of Assembly in October for final approval.

8. Stipend

Following receipt of correspondence from the Sustentation and Ministry Committee, the Board agreed to include a figure of £18,500 for stipend in the 2008 Budget and this was presented to the Commission of Assembly in October 2007. However, the Board’s Report also suggested that the Sustentation and Ministry Committee should be charged with identifying ways of financing the resultant increase in costs. This suggestion was approved by the Commission of Assembly which instructed the Committee to identify ways to increase income or reduce overall costs. With this backdrop, the Committee and the Board are in agreement that the stipend should increase to £18,500 from April 2008.

(B) FINANCIAL POLICY

At the General Assembly in May 2007, the Board of Trustees was instructed to develop detailed proposals for a “more efficient and biblical scheme” for congregational remittances and present these to the 2008 Assembly. Following lengthy and detailed discussion, the Board has arrived at a set of proposals which were presented to all Presbyteries earlier this year and for which it now seeks the approval of the Assembly. The Board is grateful to its Finance Sub-Committee for the considerable effort expended in pursuit of this particular aspect of the Board’s remit.

1. Background

Act XXI, 2006 described the current percentage levy system as being “unworkable” and suggested that it “may be harmful to the cause of the Gospel.” The Stewardship and Policy Committee was instructed to “develop a more efficient and biblical method of organising the denomination’s finances.” In response to this remit, the Committee submitted a detailed Report to last year’s Assembly exploring some
biblical guidelines, analysing the weaknesses of the current arrangements and outlining some principles to underpin a possible alternative system. This Report does not seek to reiterate all that was contained in the previous Report and should be read as building on that Report. However, in summary, the principles outlined were:

- Congregations should take primary responsibility for meeting the costs of local ministry.
- All congregations should contribute towards the “fixed” overhead costs of the denomination.
- Central committees and boards should become more pro-active in promoting their work and raising funds for their activities.
- Presbyteries should undertake audits of the smaller congregations within their bounds and consider unions or linkages where possible and closures where necessary.

The General Assembly responded in support of the work undertaken to date by instructing the Committee (now the Board of Trustees) to fulfil its remit by preparing detailed proposals for presentation to this year’s Assembly along the lines of the principles set out above.

2. Why Change? Analysis of remittance information for 2007 reveals that only 20% of congregations are considered to be “aid giving” and those congregations contribute 50% of all remittances to central funds. More worrying is that almost 25% of remittances are received from just five congregations and that around 35% of congregations with a full-time ministry do not remit sufficiently to central funds to meet the costs of employing that minister. These statistics are simply an illustration of the fact that the Church has a small number of larger congregations who are asked to provide the necessary finance to support a large number of congregations that are small and in many cases weak and declining. These larger congregations are also expected to provide the bulk of the finance to support the central activities of the Church. The result is that the percentage of income levied on these congregations to provide this financial support is substantial.

At one level, the Board accepts that it right and proper for those that have been blessed with much to assist those that have less. However, it believes that the current arrangements are actually having an adverse impact on the larger congregations and are therefore proving detrimental to the Church as a whole. It is apparent that they are meeting with increasing levels of disillusionment and not insignificant levels of non-compliance. The Board suggests that the weaknesses of the current system can be summarised as follows:

- Deacons’ Courts have little incentive to take direct responsibility for payment of ministers’ stipends. Similarly, central committees and boards have little incentive to share information relating to their activities with the wider Church. In both cases, there is a tendency towards a dependency culture.
- The lack of communication with the wider Church in respect of Home and International Missions projects diminishes ownership of these projects across the Church and fails to engender a spirit of generosity. The Board accepts that many of our people are extremely generous but contends that such generosity is in spite of, rather than promoted by, our procedures.
- The substantial percentage levies applied to congregational income stifle the ability of congregations to grasp opportunities for growth through local initiatives for outreach and ministry.
- Increasing numbers of congregations find it difficult to remit in accordance with the required levy while simultaneously meeting local overhead costs.

3. Proposals Given this analysis of the current arrangements, the Board considered a range of options for an alternative scheme that would address the identified weaknesses and follow the principles set out above. It settled on a system with three key elements which can be summarised as follows:

- **Ministry Costs** Congregations with a settled ministry would be expected to meet the full costs of that ministry. At present, this is estimated to be around £23,000. In situations where a congregation fails to meet this requirement, if the Presbytery of the bounds believed that there were strong grounds for maintaining a full-time ministry in the congregation, it would need to make a compelling case to the Home Missions Board which would then decide if it was willing to support such an application. The Home Missions Board would be tasked with meeting income shortfalls in marginal situations and in situations where special concessions are made.

- **Administration & Training Levies** Congregations would pay, on a sliding scale in accordance with income, a levy to cover the central overhead costs of the Church. In addition, a training levy would also be
charged to cover the costs of training students in the Free Church College. This would replace the current student levy collected by Presbyteries.

- **Central Projects** After payment of ministry costs and levies, and after applying an income retention allowance (currently estimated at £25,000, with an additional allowance in the case of congregations with an assistant minister), congregations would contribute a percentage of any remaining income towards central projects at home and abroad. Such “projects” would include support for weaker congregations where the Home Missions Board approves applications from Presbyteries to sustain full time ministries in such congregations. The contributions levied on congregations under this element of the proposals would typically be lower than under the current system and would be reduced gradually over a three-year period. By the third year of operation, only 50% of funding for Home and International Missions projects would be raised through levies. The necessary additional funding would be raised by the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board through project led fundraising.

The Board believes that such a system would have a number of important benefits. First, it would give a number of congregations greater control over their resources and enable them to exploit opportunities for local ministry and outreach. Second, the Church centrally, and at Presbytery level, would be forced to improve the stewardship of its resources through a more realistic assessment of ministries that are not financially viable. Third, the culture of dependency will be challenged at local level and at the Church centrally and therefore, expenditure budgets will be subject to greater pressure, promoting enhanced efficiency. Finally, committees and boards will need to become much better at communicating to the wider church with regard to their work. The Board believes that this improved communication should give rise to enhanced support for the work both in terms of financial support and prayer support.

The Board wishes to stress that the elements of the proposals relating to project led financing of home and international missions should not be seen in any way as diminishing the value placed on the Church’s mission activities. The Board wishes to make clear its own support for the mission work of the Church and proposes that an explicit encouragement be given by the General Assembly to congregations to support this work as a priority when considering the utilisation of resources.

4. **Possible Risks** In consideration of a variety of options for change, the Board did not come across any that were without risk. A number of possible risks were considered in respect of the proposals outlined above.

The first possible objection considered was that the proposals could be seen as departing from a strongly held belief in the Church that the strong should help the weak. The Board maintains that there remains a substantial element in the proposed arrangements of stronger congregations providing support to those that are weaker. However, the proposals do challenge the view that ministries should be maintained at all costs even if that is to the detriment of the supporting congregations. The Board believes that unless a more realistic approach is taken to unsustainable situations, those congregations that are stronger at present will be at risk of becoming weakened by the level of support that they are asked to provide. At a time when the Church has such a small number of larger congregations, the Board believes that it is imperative that steps are taken to prevent such decline.

Following on from this, the Board considered the possible objection that the Church is being led down a “business driven” path by assessing congregational viability on financial grounds. In this regard, the Board suggests that much can be learned from the business world as we seek to improve the way that the Church utilises its resources. Businesses are typically accountable to shareholders for the use of shareholders money. The Church is accountable to God for the stewardship of resources that He has provided. However, the Board acknowledges that to assess a congregation’s viability on purely financial grounds would, in many cases, lead to extremely short sighted decisions and therefore, the proposals do not suggest that this is the only criterion that should be used. Nonetheless, the burden of proof would lie with Presbyteries to demonstrate that there is a compelling case for the ongoing maintenance of a non-financially sustainable ministry.

If we do arrive at a situation where unsustainable ministries are to be brought to an end, the Board accepts that such decisions will be difficult and painful. It also accepts that creative and sensitive options will need to be developed to deal with the consequent personnel issues. Related to this is the possibility that the proposals may lead to increased levels of ministerial stress in small and struggling congregations. However, while acknowledging the risk, the Board believes that the current system creates a false appearance of security, thereby bringing its own pressure to ministers who might be painfully aware that their position is not sustainable but see no exit options.
Finally, there is likely to be a fear that central committees and boards will fail to raise sufficient funds to meet committed expenditure, particularly as local congregations might choose to pursue more local initiatives. While accepting this as a risk, the Board contends that the provision of enhanced information to congregations and to other potential donors could lead to an increase in overall income and therefore enhance opportunities for growth both locally and centrally. However, in recognition of the risks, the Board is suggesting that the proposals should be implemented in a phased manner, beginning in January 2010.

5. Further Work

The Board recognises that there is further work to be done before these proposals come into effect. Firstly, central committees and boards do not, at present, have the resources to undertake a programme of communication around the Church. Therefore, the Board recommends that the Communications Committee, in consultation with the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board, develop proposals for how enhanced communication might be achieved and report back on this to the 2009 General Assembly. Such proposals are likely to have some budgetary implications and in this regard, the Boards should consult with the Finance Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Board believes that there will also need to be further development of some of the detail underpinning the proposed new arrangements. For example, the Finance Committee will need to work with congregational treasurers to ensure that there is shared understanding of how remittances requirements would be calculated in practice and how these remittances would then be made on an ongoing basis.

Finally, as suggested in section 4 above, there is a need to develop creative and sensitive options for dealing with the impact on personnel of unsustainable ministries being brought to an end. In this regard, the Board suggests that it works alongside the Personnel Committee to develop a set of such options and report back on this to the 2009 General Assembly.

The Board suggests that with this further work complete, the new arrangements should be implemented from January 2010. The Board believes that this gives sufficient time to committees, boards, congregations and Presbyteries to make necessary arrangements for implementation of the proposals.

6. Conclusions

Clearly, these proposals represent a significant shift in the Church’s approach to raising finance. The Board acknowledges that there are risks involved but believes that the risks associated with the status quo are even greater. The Board believes that these proposals shift the balance from obligation to voluntary giving, increase opportunities for local ministry without which the Church cannot survive, create a mechanism to increase support for central projects, and enhance efficiency at local and central level. The Board also believes that successful implementation of the proposals will be aided by some aspects of its strategy work as outlined in the following section of the Report.

(C) STRATEGY

1. Strategy Update

The Board commends the hard work undertaken by its Strategy Sub-Committee over the year. The Sub-Committee has built on the themes identified in the Stewardship and Policy Committee’s Report to the last General Assembly.

The Board believes that as a denomination we need to refocus our energy on the work of local congregations to enable and equip them to carry out the work of mission and discipleship. Often we seem to operate on the premise that the purpose of local congregations is to prop up the existence of the Free Church of Scotland as a denomination. The Board contends that this point of view needs to be turned on its head – we need to understand that the denomination exists in order to support the work of local congregations at home and abroad.

Over the past year the Sub-Committee has worked to produce a three-year plan for the denomination as directed by the 2007 General Assembly. The main focus of this plan is to ensure that all the resources and structures of the denomination can be made to work together to support local congregations in mission and discipleship. We hope to end a situation where many of our structures function simply to maintain an administrative cycle that fails to engage the wider church and rarely produces positive and practical responses to the needs of church and society. The Sub-Committee aims to meet with each Presbytery in order to explain the detail of the three year plan. It is hoped that this process will be followed up with a national gathering where all interested ministers and office bearers can come to discuss our strategy for Scotland and how it can be implemented.

To implement this plan, the Board proposes that, in conjunction with the Home Missions Board, much of the initial work will be focused on a number of hub congregations, perhaps 15, in order to see these congregations
developed in terms of leadership, multi-member ministry, outreach and discipleship. These congregations would then be asked to mentor other congregations through the same process. The aim is to equip leaders and members of local congregations for the work of the Great Commission. It is hoped that this programme will be piloted in three congregations from August 2008.

The Board is aware that when it comes to the strategy process there has been much talk but little action. The response to this is twofold. First of all, the Board urges all believers in the denomination to be proactive in outreach and not to wait for instructions from a committee. It also urges all congregations to make use of the excellent Handbook for Office Bearers produced by the Training of the Ministry Committee as it believes this will produce immediate benefits to the leadership of congregations.

Secondly, the Board is seeking the support of the General Assembly for a small number of initial steps to be actioned immediately:

- The Board wishes to reinstate something similar to the Free Church School in Theology in order to encourage well developed theological responses to the particular challenges faced by the Free Church in 21st Century Scotland. Rev. David Meredith was approached with regard to this role and has indicated his willingness to undertake this task.
- The Board proposes that a suitable minister be seconded to the Home Missions Board in order to develop mission in local congregations, especially in Church Extension and Redevelopment charges and ‘hub’ congregations. The new HMB has a heavy work load and a wide ranging remit and a full time worker will be essential to fulfilling that remit. The Board proposes that this secondment should be made, in the first instance, for a one-year period with a view to moving towards a permanent appointment. The Board recommends that the Home Missions Board be tasked with developing a set of criteria against which to measure the contribution of the appointee and to assess the longer term worth of the post.
- The Board proposes that the General Assembly initiate a review of its own format and functions in order that it might become a more engaging, inclusive and productive body. The Board sees this as being central to renewing our vision and focus as a denomination. At a later date the Board hopes to ask that a similar review be carried out in regard to Presbyteries.

Finally, the Board wishes to thank everyone who has engaged with the Strategy Sub-Committee over the last number of years. The Sub-Committee takes great heart from the fact that wherever its representatives have visited, they have been given ample evidence that the Free Church of Scotland is blessed with many people who have a great desire to see God’s kingdom extended, and lost and broken people made whole through the gospel. The Board believes that the strategy process must not simply be a defensive one – how we deal with decline – but that it should be a visionary process – how we can reach our nation and others with the good news of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and exalted.

(D) PENSIONS AND PERSONNEL

1. **Closure of Defined Benefit Scheme**

The Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme closed to future accrual of benefits on 31st December 2007. The closure of the Scheme followed a decision taken by the General Assembly in May 2006 that, in the face of an increasing and unsustainable deficit, the Scheme should be closed. The Board commends its Pensions and Personnel Committee for the considerable work that went into the closure arrangements.

As reported in the Stewardship and Policy Committee’s Report to the 2007 General Assembly, this involved, in the first instance a restructuring of the Trustee arrangements which saw the establishment of a new Company to act as Trustee of the Scheme. The first task of this new Trustee body was to oversee the nomination and selection of Member Nominated Directors. Following this process, Rev. D. Meredith and Mr C. Douglas were nominated and appointed as Directors of the Trustee Company. These changes were particularly important since, under the Rules of the Scheme, the Church could not unilaterally decide to cease contributions to the Scheme. This required the consent of the Scheme Trustee and therefore, the Trustee needed to act independently of the Church when considering whether to consent to the cessation of contributions.

Following the establishment of the new Corporate Trustee, the Board’s Pensions and Personnel Sub-Committee entered into dialogue with the Trustee to consider proposals for closure of the Scheme. Both parties were guided through the complex process by actuarial and legal advisers.
As part of a closure agreement, the Pension Trustees were advised by their legal and actuarial advisers that in order to protect themselves from potential regulatory intervention and criticism, they should not agree to the Church’s request to close the Scheme unless a standard security over some of the Church’s assets was provided in favour of the Scheme to ensure that the accrued benefits were at least partially protected. Although reluctant to offer such a security, the Board recognised the exposure that the Pension Trustees faced, and in order to reach an agreement over the closure arrangements, agreed that they would be willing to grant a security as part of Recovery Plan package for the Scheme funding. As a result of some ambiguity in the Board’s powers to grant a security over the Church’s assets, the Commission of Assembly in October 2007 was asked to grant such authority. Having received authority from the Commission of Assembly, a standard security was subsequently granted over the Mound Buildings although this was framed in such a way that the Pension Trustee is obliged to discharge the security once the Scheme Funding reaches 100% of the liabilities. The other main component of the Recovery Plan for the Scheme is that the Church has agreed that in 2008 a payment of £300,000 (inclusive of all fees) will be made to the Scheme and this sum will be paid annually, increasing in line with RPI (capped at 5%) until the deficit is paid off.

Recognising that the closure of the Scheme had some undesirable consequences in respect of member benefits, the Board, working with the Pension Trustees and their legal advisers, agreed to change the Scheme Rules in two respects. These changes were incorporated in a Deed of Amendment which also provided for a change in the Rules to allow the Church to close the Scheme to future accrual of benefits (i.e. allow closure). The first change in respect of member benefits was to provide for payment of spouses’ benefits in the event of death in service; the second provided for the payment of an ill-health retirement pension. These changes were necessary as, prior to amendment, the Rules would have treated all members as having “Deferred” status following closure of the Scheme and neither of these benefits are applicable to Deferred Members. Therefore, a new category of member called “Closure Member” was introduced (defined as those in pensionable service at the point of Scheme closure and still in service at the time of death or serious ill-health). In both cases, the benefits are based on pensionable service and pensionable salary at the point of closure of the Scheme.

2. Scheme Finance and Membership

As part of the closure process, a full actuarial valuation of the Scheme was carried out as at 31st December 2006. This valuation, carried out on a different basis to the valuation required for accounting purposes as referred to in section A of this Report, revealed a funding shortfall of £3.31m. It was against this backdrop that the Recovery Plan discussed above was agreed between the Church and the Pension Trustee.

Membership of the Scheme at 31st December 2007 (just prior to closure of the Scheme) was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>1st Jan 2007</th>
<th>New Members</th>
<th>Retirals</th>
<th>Deaths &amp; Leavers</th>
<th>31st Dec 2007</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active members</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred members</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Money Purchase Scheme

A new Defined Contribution (or Money Purchase) Pension Scheme came into operation on 1st January 2008 to replace the Defined Benefit Scheme following its closure. The new arrangement is operated by Standard Life and is open to all ministers, professors and other employees of the Church. In advance of the new Scheme coming into operation, Standard Life held information sessions in Stornoway, Inverness and Edinburgh to provide details on the way that the Scheme works, the funds in which members can invest and the potential benefits from participation in the Scheme. In addition, this information was made available on a website and in information packs for those unable to attend the face to face meetings.

The Board agreed that the Church’s contribution on behalf of members should be set initially at 10% of pensionable salaries. This is comparable with the contribution rate under the previous arrangement. In addition, members have the opportunity to make personal contributions into their fund and a number have chosen to do so.

Following receipt of pension projections provided by Standard Life, concern has been raised by some members as to their likely pension benefits under the Scheme. The Board recognises that Standard Life is constrained by criteria laid down by the Financial Services Authority as to the assumptions it employs in providing pension projection but feels that the projections provided may be overly prudent. The Board is committed to working with Standard Life to identify ways of providing information that may alleviate concerns that members have
over their likely retirement benefits. In this regard, the Board is also committed to keeping the Church’s contribution rate under review in conjunction with the Personnel Committee.

4. **Group Life Cover**

Recognising that the closure of the Defined Benefit Scheme meant that a lump sum death in service benefit was no longer payable, the Board, through its Pensions and Personnel Sub-Committee took steps to put in place an alternative provision. Following a process to obtain quotes for Group Life Cover, the Board agreed to proceed with a scheme provided by Canada Life. This will pay a death in service benefit of three times salary which compares favourably with the benefit of 2.5 times salary payable under the old Scheme. Unfortunately, the Board was unable to find an insurance provider that was willing to cover overseas personnel at economic rates. Therefore, the Board will work with the IMB to assess whether local, individual arrangements can be made for overseas personnel and, in the meantime, the Church has little option but to self-insure against this risk.

5. **Pastoral Care of Ministers**

During the year, in recognition of the pressures facing ministers and several instances of ministers suffering from stress related illnesses, the Board wrote to Presbyteries in relation to the pastoral care given to ministers and their families. The Board sought to establish whether or not more could be done in this area and whether or not the Board could provide assistance to Presbyteries. Responses were received from all Presbyteries with no clear consensus emerging. However, there seemed to be at least some feeling that this area was outside the remit of the Board. Therefore, the Board proposes that these responses be passed to the new Personnel Committee with the Committee being asked to progress this issue.

**(E) COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Board was assisted throughout the year by its Compliance, Audit and Risk Management (CARM) Sub-Committee which in turn owes a debt of gratitude to Mr Colin MacDonald for his willing and informed contribution to the work of the Committee and in developing policy documents, particularly in the areas of Child Protection and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups. The work of the Board in this area covered a range of topics.

1. **Risk Management**

Through its various committees and boards, the Church monitors the risks it faces on an ongoing, but largely ad hoc, basis. Therefore, prompted by comment from the Church’s external Auditors during the audit of the 2006 accounts, the Board decided that it was necessary to formalise this process through the development of a Risk Register for the Church. The Board, through its CARM Sub-Committee took steps to identify the main risks faced by the Church in a variety of areas. This led to production of a Risk Register that the Board will now keep under review and will update as necessary.

2. **Child Protection**

Based on information gathered from an audit, the Board is encouraged by the level of compliance with the Child Protection Policy throughout the Church. However, this is an area that must remain under review as should the contents of the Policy itself. In this regard, the Board is particularly grateful to Mr Colin MacDonald for his tireless efforts.

One aspect of the Child Protection Policy that was added to in the past year was the procedure for transporting children. Although this has caused some controversy and concern, the Board consider that it is important to follow best practice procedure for the safety of the children placed in the care of the Church. Therefore, it was decided that transportation of children should be limited to drivers between the ages of 25 and 70 with a maximum of three endorsement points on their licence. The Board recommends that if there is to be any deviation from this best practice guidance, a formal and documented risk assessment should be carried out giving clear reasons for why the leader responsible believes it is appropriate to deviate from the guidance and outlining the steps taken to mitigate any identified risks.

3. **Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

For understandable reasons, the Church’s efforts in relation to the protection of vulnerable persons has, to date, been focused on Child Protection. However, we must recognise that it is not just the children in our care that may be vulnerable to abuse of varying kinds and the new Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 recognises this by making reference to vulnerable adults. This legislation is unlikely to take effect before the latter part of 2009 but already, Disclosure Scotland issues Enhanced Disclosures for those working with individuals described as Adults At Risk. This is a term used in Regulations arising from the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Scotland).

The Board believes that it is important that the Church takes steps now to prepare for the new legislation coming into force. More importantly, it believes that we should take very seriously our responsibility to provide a safe
and caring environment for all those with whom we come into contact as a Church, and particularly the more vulnerable members of society. In this regard, the Board intends to develop a draft Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy over the coming months and to present this to the Commission of Assembly for its adoption. This Policy will be based on the following principles:

- The Free Church of Scotland is committed to protecting vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being; it acknowledges that they can be the victims of abuse, neglect and discrimination of a physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial or material nature, and seeks to provide a safe and caring environment for vulnerable adults;
- The Free Church of Scotland recognises that vulnerable adults have a right to privacy, the protection of the law, to be able to choose how they lead their lives, to be treated with dignity and respect, and all regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age and religious or cultural background.
- It is the responsibility of each individual who acts on behalf of the Free Church of Scotland to help prevent these forms of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that is discovered or suspected to the relevant authorities;
- The Free Church of Scotland recognises that it is unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might contribute to any form of abuse;
- The Free Church of Scotland undertakes to adopt safe recruitment procedures, and to provide supervision and training for all those working with Adults at Risk within the Free Church of Scotland;
- The Free Church of Scotland undertakes to support those who have been affected by abuse in the Church;
- The Free Church of Scotland undertakes to maintain good links with the statutory authorities and other relevant organisations.

4. **Compliance Officer** The 2007 General Assembly asked the Board to assess the merits of appointing someone to oversee the complex area of legal compliance on behalf of the Church. After considerable deliberation, the Board decided that given the extensive and complex legislative framework under which the Church operates, it was imperative that steps be taken to protect the Church’s position. Therefore, it was decided to seek an appointment for a Compliance and Risk Management Officer to undertake duties including:

- Monitoring legislative and regulatory developments
- Providing advice and guidance to the Board of Trustees and other Committees and Boards of the Church
- Drafting policies and providing advice to encourage legal compliance throughout the Church
- Monitoring and updating the Church’s Risk Register and overseeing actions identified to mitigate the risks
- Developing a network of internal and external contacts with relevant skills and expertise in compliance & risk management

The Board prepared a job description and have advertised the post. However, in recognition of budget constraints, it was decided that the post should be advertised initially on a part time basis for a one year fixed term period. The Board felt that this would allow time to assess the merits of the post before deciding whether there was a need to make a full time, permanent appointment.

**(F) GOVERNANCE**

At the General Assembly in May 2007, the Stewardship and Policy Committee presented proposals for a revised committee system. These proposals were approved, in principle, by the Assembly which led to the creation of the Board of Trustees. The Board was tasked with assuming the remits of both the Stewardship and Policy Committee and the General Trustees. The Board feels that this arrangement has worked well and although the workload has been considerable, the lines of responsibility have been cleared up allowing more focused decision making. The Board also feels that an increase in the number of meetings, greater flexibility with respect to timing and location of these meetings and increased use of technology such as telephone conferencing has greatly enhanced the ability of Board members to participate and the efficiency with which business can be progressed.

1. **Board Name** The Board was asked by the 2007 Assembly to consider a “description which reflects more appropriately the full range of its remit.” After consideration, the Board agreed that the current name, Board of Trustees, would be well understood in the wider charitable sector and through time, would become similarly well understood throughout the Church. Therefore, the Board proposes that it should continue to operate under the name Board of Trustees.
2. **Age Restrictions** In its Report to the 2007 Assembly, the Stewardship and Policy Committee recommended that the restriction on service as a Trustee beyond the age of 70 should be lifted. However, this recommendation was omitted in error from the Supplementary Report on Governance and the subsequent Assembly Deliverance. The Board wishes to remedy this by proposing that the Assembly moves this year to lift this restriction.

3. **Board of Trustees and Sub-Committee Membership** Following the presentation to last year’s Assembly of proposals for revision of the Committee system, a Committee of the House was appointed to nominate personnel for the Board of Trustees and its sub-committees. This Committee suggested that the Board give consideration to adjusting the membership of the Board to thirteen members with the Assembly Clerk being a member of the Board *ex officio*. The Board are in agreement with this suggestion and propose that the membership be so adjusted.

The Committee also recommended that the direction in Act XXIII, 2007 “Each Presbytery shall have at least one representative on the Board” should be clarified (a) in respect of elders who are not members of Presbytery and (b) to ensure that Board membership is not be disrupted as a result of Trustees moving outside the bounds of the Presbytery from which they were appointed as a representative, e.g by translation, if a minister, or by change of address, if an elder. The Board considered this and agreed to propose that Section 1 of Act XXIII, 2007 should be amended by removing the sentence referred to above and incorporating the following in its place:

“Board members shall be appointed in order that at least one Board member comes from within the bounds of each Presbytery in Scotland. If a Board member should move outside the bounds of the Presbytery from which he was appointed as a representative, he shall continue to serve on the Board for the remainder of his term of office. On the occasion of subsequent vacancies in Board membership, the Nominations Committee shall act to adjust the Presbyterial balance.”

The Committee further observed that the finding of the Assembly made no reference to the term of service of additional members appointed to the sub-committees of the Board of Trustees by the General Assembly. In this regard, the Board proposes that the Nominations Committee should make arrangements to ensure that initial appointments provide for a phased programme of retirement from service.

4. **Memoranda of Procedures** The Board was instructed by the 2007 General Assembly to develop Memoranda of Procedures for all committees and boards established under the new arrangements. Draft memoranda have been prepared and these will be made available to the committees and boards at their first meeting after May 2008. It shall subsequently be the responsibility of each board and committee through its secretary or clerk to ensure that its Memorandum of Procedure is reviewed annually.

5. **Designated Religious Charity Status** During the year, the Church was invited to submit an application to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) for Designated Religious Charity (DRC) status. The Board is pleased to report that OSCR viewed the documentation submitted in support of the application favourably and awarded the Church DRC status. This status affords a number of exemptions from the provisions of the Charities & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, particularly in relation to governance and disciplinary matters. The Church was able to satisfy OSCR that its internal procedures in these areas are sufficient to preclude the need for intervention by OSCR under the terms of the Act.

On a related note, OSCR also carried out a review of the Church’s charitable status during the year. Following this review, OSCR confirmed that the Church had been able to demonstrate that it provides “public benefit” and therefore, meets the “charity test”. The Board is encouraged by this recognition from the civil Regulator of the Church’s contribution to the public good through the performance of its various activities.

**(G) LAW AND ADVICE**

1. **Legal Group Update** The Board was advised and supported by its Legal Group which continued to focus on issues arising from the actions of the “Free Church Continuing” (FCC).

The Legal Group was particularly active in meeting with and seeking to provide support and advice to congregations that have properties currently under occupation by the FCC. The Board is pleased to note that some progress appears to be being made in arriving at negotiated settlements in certain situations. This is in line with one of the principles set out in the Stewardship and Policy Committee’s Report to the 2007 General Assembly.
Assembly, namely that “encouragement will be given to local initiatives which seek to resolve property disputes by discussions and negotiations at a local level.” Unfortunately, the Board still believes that any centrally agreed settlement on property issues is unlikely to be achieved. Therefore, it is encouraged by this apparent progress at local level.

During the year, the Board’s Legal Group also met with representatives of the Partick Free Church congregation and were informed that the Kirk Session, Deacons’ Court, local property trustees and the congregation itself had reached the point where they could see no alternative but to commence legal proceedings to recover their property. The congregation was dispossessed of its church building, manse and considerable cash deposits in January 2000 and considers that its ability to function effectively has been severely compromised by the lack of suitable facilities. They have received no encouragement from the Partick FCC congregation that any negotiated settlement will be achievable and therefore, made a formal approach to the Legal Group for support in commencing legal action. While the Board regrets the lack of any progress towards an amicable settlement of the dispute in Partick and is wary of the implications of pursuing legal action, it concludes that, in the circumstances, it should support the wishes of the Partick congregation and take the necessary steps to assist the congregation in recovering its assets.

The Board continued to monitor developments in relation to the legal action initiated by the local trustees at Broadford, and raised in the name of the Moderator and Principal Clerk of Assembly, to seek a declarator from the Courts that they are indeed the rightful owners of the properties at Broadford. Mr Heriot Currie, QC was appointed as Senior Counsel to act on behalf of the Church in this matter and he is supported by Ms Ruth Charteris as Junior Counsel. The Legal Group has responded to a variety of information requests from the Church’s Law Agents and from Counsel in connection with this action. The Board understands that the matter has now reached the stage where the written summaries of each party’s case are complete and the case is proceeding to a legal debate. It is possible that the case could be determined at this stage in favour of either party without need for further procedure. It is likely that it will take a number of months for an appropriate diet of debate to be allocated in the Court of Session.

2. **Legal Action in Peru**

   The Board regrets to report that it has been notified of an action taken in Peru against the Colegio San Andres and the Church, as the school’s sponsor, by the parents of one of the two boys who were tragically killed in a motor accident in Inverness in July 2006. The action for damages alleges negligence on the part of the school and the Church in respect of the arrangements made for the visit of students from the school.

   The Church’s Law Agents have instructed solicitors in Lima to act on our behalf and an initial defence has been lodged with the Court. The Board value the prayers of the Church for wisdom and sensitivity in dealing with this matter and for all those bereaved as a result of the accident.

**(H) CUSTODY OF TITLES**

Eleven Petitions for the sale of property have been received, together with two Petitions for access to funds. All Petitions have supporting documents from congregations and presbyteries which are in order. The comments of the Law Agent have been received and the proposed deliverances have been drafted in the light of these comments.

1. **(1) Back**

   Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the petition of the Deacons’ Court of Back Free Church humbly showeth that:

   1. Whereas there is need for a new hall to facilitate the work of the Gospel in Back Free Church;
   2. Whereas the congregation presently holds title to a large glebe, part of which is surplus to the requirements of the congregation;
   3. Whereas it is possible to identify two plots of land which would be suitable for the erection of dwelling houses;
   4. Whereas the cost of the new hall could be reduced by the sale of congregational land;
Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration and authorise the sale of two plots of land adjacent to School Road, Back, the transaction to take place through the Church’s Law Agent, and the proceeds to be lodged with the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation to be released in order to reduce the cost of the new hall building. And your petitioners will ever pray.

A. J. Macleod, Clerk

(2) Mull

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Mull Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the current Manse at Tobermory has been retained in the hope of future settlement;
2. Whereas this is no longer a viable proposition;
3. Whereas the manse is now surplus to the requirement of the congregation;
4. Whereas the congregation is desirous of the disposal of the manse at Tobermory;

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly grant authority to sell the said manse building and direct that the proceeds of the sale be invested on behalf of Mull Free Church and the income made available to the Deacons Court of Mull Free Church or do otherwise as in their wisdom they deem best. And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Donald A. Macleod, Clerk

(3) Greyfriars and Stratherrick (a)

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Greyfriars and Stratherrick Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the Congregations of Duthil-Dores and Greyfriars were consolidated by the General Assembly in 2005 to form the congregation of Greyfriars and Stratherrick;
2. Whereas the congregation owns property at Carrbridge, and Farr which is surplus to requirements or in need of substantial repair beyond the means of the congregation, and alternative meeting places are available for the purposes of the congregation;
3. Whereas the congregation has been consulted and has expressed the view that the church hall at Carrbridge, and the church building at Farr should be sold, and the Deacons’ Court, with the support of the Kirk Session and congregation has agreed to petition the General Assembly for authority to dispose of the said properties, the funds to be held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation of Greyfriars and Stratherrick, the interest being added to the capital and the interest and capital being made available to the Deacons’ Court for congregational purposes upon application;

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly take these premises into consideration and ordain that:

The General Assembly receive the petition of the Deacons’ Court of Greyfriars and Stratherrick Free Church and grant its crave. They grant authority for the sale of the Free Church hall at Carrbridge, and the church building at Farr with adjoining grounds, directing that the proceeds of sale be lodged with the Board of Trustees, the interest being added to the capital, and the interest and capital being made available to the congregation for congregational purposes.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may deem best, and your petitioners will ever pray.

David Livingstone, Clerk
Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Greyfriars and Stratherrick Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the Manse at 3 Abertarff Road, Inverness is currently occupied by the minister of Inverness Free Church Continuing (FCC);

2. Whereas cordial negotiations have resulted in a proposed settlement with respect to this property;

3. Whereas the General Assembly in 2007 affirmed its support of locally negotiated settlements in a manner which is just and reflects that the assets seized are in fact the assets of a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland and do not belong to another group;

4. Whereas the congregation of the Free Church Continuing are hoping to acquire suitable alternative accommodation;

5. Whereas the negotiated settlement would entail the sale of the property with vacant possession by the Trustees of Greyfriars Stratherrick Free Church of Scotland and after the deduction of all marketing and legal costs the division of the proceeds equally between Greyfriars Stratherrick Free Church and the Inverness congregation of the Free Church Continuing;

6. Whereas the proposed settlement would further the progress of the Gospel by the removal of a scandal;

7. Whereas the proposed settlement is supported by the Kirk Session, Deacon’s Court and the Congregation;

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration and authorise the sale of the Manse at 3 Abertarff Road and the division of the proceeds equally between Greyfriars Stratherrick Free Church and the Inverness congregation of the Free Church Continuing, and having formally agreed that the transaction should proceed, the transaction be carried out through the Law Agent of the Free Church of Scotland, and further that any proceeds be lodged with the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation, the interest in the meantime to be added to the capital.

Or do as in their wisdom may seem best. And your petitioners will ever pray

David Livingstone, Clerk

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas all properties pertaining to the Congregation were professionally surveyed in March 2007;

2. Whereas both the Church buildings at Grimsay and at Sollas are deemed unsuitable for purpose and are both in need of extensive repair;

3. Whereas the Grimsay Mission House is on the same site as the Grimsay Church building and is deemed unsuitable for purpose as a Manse;

4. Whereas the Presbytery has recommended that more suitable accommodation be provided for the congregation;

5. Whereas the cost of resolving the above issues is beyond the current means of the congregation;

Or do as in their wisdom may seem best. And your petitioners will ever pray

David Livingstone, Clerk
6. Whereas the Congregation of North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray has been dispossessed of its main properties at Knockintorran since January 2000;

7. Whereas the Deacons’ Court unanimously wishes to sell the above buildings and adjoining land;

8. Whereas the Deacons’ Court unanimously wishes to use the funds raised to provide more suitable accommodation for the congregation on one site in North Uist;

9. Whereas it would seem more prudent stewardship for the congregation to be accommodated on one site rather than on several;

10. Whereas the Congregation has been duly consulted according to The Practice of the Free Church of Scotland and has given approval to the proposal to sell these properties;

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly grant authority to sell the said buildings and adjoining land, and direct that the proceeds of sale be applied to the funds of the congregation, or do otherwise as in their wisdom they deem best. And your petitioners will ever pray.

David Kirk, Clerk

(6) North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray (b)

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons' Court of North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas all properties pertaining to the Congregation were professionally surveyed in March 2007;

2. Whereas the Church building at Knockintorran is now unsuitable for purpose and in need of extensive repair;

3. Whereas the Manse building at Knockintorran will need increasing funds spent to keep it well maintained;

4. Whereas the Congregation of North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray has been dispossessed of both of the above properties since January 2000;

5. Whereas the Presbytery has recommended that more suitable accommodation be provided for the congregation;

6. Whereas the cost of resolving the above issues is beyond the means of the congregation;

7. Whereas the Deacons’ Court unanimously wishes to sell the above buildings and adjoining land;

8. Whereas the Deacons’ Court unanimously wishes to provide more suitable accommodation for the congregation on one site in North Uist;

9. Whereas it would seem more prudent stewardship to be accommodated on one site, rather than on several;

10. Whereas the Congregation has been duly consulted according to The Practice of the Free Church of Scotland and has given approval to the proposal to sell these properties;

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly grant authority to sell the said buildings and adjoining land, and direct that the proceeds of sale be applied to the funds of the congregation, or do otherwise as in their wisdom they deem best. And your petitioners will ever pray.

David Kirk, Clerk
(7) Ardnamurchan

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Ardnamurchan Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the congregation is now vacant;
2. Whereas there is little prospect at present of having any resident ministry;
3. Whereas the continued upkeep of the manse will require substantial ongoing expenditure;
4. Whereas the financial resources of the congregation are severely restricted;
5. Whereas the rental option has been exhausted.

Wherefore, it is humbly requested that the General Assembly take these premises into consideration and grant permission to sell the Free Church Manse and site in Kilchoan, the proceeds of the sale to be invested with the Board of Trustees and the interest to be made available to the congregation for congregational purposes.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may see fit. And your petitioners will ever pray

Gordon Mair, Clerk pro tem

(8) Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland appointed to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the Free Church congregation in Strathglass ceased meeting in 1999, and the Free Church building at Beauly has been under the control of those who left the Free Church in January 2000, and there is now no functioning Free Church congregation in the district formerly served by Kilmorack and Strathglass Free Church;
2. Whereas the small number of communicants of the Kilmorack and Strathglass congregation who remained in the Free Church transferred their membership to neighbouring Free Church congregations;
3. Whereas the Strathglass building, at Fasnakyle, is held under the Model Trust Deed, and is in a derelict and dangerous condition, and may be a liability to the Church if it is not disposed of;
4. Whereas the Presbytery, noting historical and geographical links between the congregations, have appointed the Kirk Session of Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus Free Church as assessors to the courts of the congregation of Kilmorack and Strathglass, under the interim-moderatorship of Rev. John A. M. Mackay;
5. Whereas local property Trustees for Kilmorack and Strathglass have been appointed by the Kirk Session;
6. Whereas the Presbytery has petitioned the General Assembly requesting that Kilmorack and Strathglass be consolidated with Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus;
7. Whereas the congregations of Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus and of Kilmorack and Strathglass (through the members of the courts appointed as assessors to Kilmorack and Strathglass) have agreed to Petition the General Assembly for authority to sell or otherwise dispose of the church building and grounds at Fasnakyle;

Wherefore your Petitioners request, with the concurrence of the Kirk Session, Deacons’ Court and Congregation of Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus, and with the approval of the Courts appointed as assessors to act on behalf of the former Kilmorack and Strathglass Free Church, that the General Assembly empower the Deacons’ Court
of Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus Free Church to sell or otherwise dispose of the Church building and
grounds at Strathglass (or Fasnakyle), any proceeds to be lodged with the Board of Trustees and the interest and
capital being made available upon application for the maintenance of congregational properties and for
congregational purposes.

May it please your Venerable Court to grant the aforesaid authority; or do otherwise as in your wisdom you may
deeb best; and your Petitioners will ever pray.

Angus MacRae, Clerk

(9) Urray

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland appointed to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May
2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Urray and Strathconnon Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas an offer for the present car park has been tentatively made by the Developer of a New Housing
Estate being built on Broomhill Farm adjacent to the Church and Hall;

2. Whereas the proposal would involve the sale of the present car park on agreed suitable terms;

3. Whereas this new car park would obviate the present necessity of all car users crossing the busy West Road;

Wherefore your Petitioners have resolved to seek permission of the General Assembly to dispose of the present
car park, or do otherwise as in their wisdom may seem best. And your Petitioners will ever pray.

John O. Sutherland, Clerk

(10) Dowanvale

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May
2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Dowanvale Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the Govan church building is in need of extensive repair and the cost of repairing is
prohibitive;

2. Whereas the church building owned by the congregation at Briton Street is surplus to the requirement
of the congregation.

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly grant permission for the sale of the church building
in Govan and direct that the proceeds of the sale be applied to the funds of the congregation.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom deems best. And your Petitioners will ever pray.

C. Redman, Clerk

(11) Burghead

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May
2008, the Petition of the Finance Committee of Burghead Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the main church building, held under the Model Trust Deed, is over one hundred and sixty years
old and is in need of major refurbishment well beyond the current means of the Congregation.
2. Whereas the building heating is antiquated and inefficient.
3. Whereas the windows are in need of replacement.

4. Whereas several of the ceiling timbers supporting the plasterwork over the gallery are suffering from serious infestation of wood boring insects necessitating removal of that part of the ceiling for major repairs. This defect has health and safety implications.

5. Whereas the wall plasterwork is suffering from damp resulting in unsightly patches in the plasterwork and wall finishing. Remedial work would involve stripping the plaster and laths from the walls to facilitate proper investigation and repair.

6. Whereas the sanctuary lighting needs to be replaced.
7. Whereas the heavy plaster cornice work is becoming detached from the ceiling and falling to the floor causing a serious health and safety hazard.

8. Whereas the existing halls and vestry are adequate for the present needs of the Congregation and could be developed into excellent facilities with funds released from the possible sale of the church building.

9. Whereas the church building is only being used for accommodating funeral services and any future use could be severely restricted or even denied by health and safety issues.

10. Whereas the Quinquennial Visitation Committee to Burghead Free Church on 4th April 2007 recommended that the ‘Main worship hall’ be sold to remove a ‘Huge financial burden from the Congregation’.

11. Whereas it would seem more prudent stewardship to focus on maintaining the halls used regularly rather than on an ageing, tired building used only for funerals.

12. Whereas the Congregation is particularly committed to supporting the ministry of the Rev. James C. Abernethy and funds directed towards costly repairs are being wasted. The Congregation cannot properly maintain the Ministry and all existing accommodation.

13. Whereas there exists the perennial problem of storm damage to the church roof and tiles. In January 2005 an insurance claim for over eleven thousand pounds resulted from gale damage to the belfry masonry work. In November 2005 gales caused a further twelve hundred pounds in repairs to the church roof. During 2007 church and manse repairs exceeded eight thousand pounds. This burden on the Congregation cannot be sustained.

14. Whereas the Congregation is unanimous in agreeing with the proposed sale.

Wherefore your Petitioners have resolved, with the concurrence of the Kirk Session, and of the congregation and of the Presbytery of the bounds, to apply to your Venerable Court for power to sell the main Church building and use the proceeds to develop and modernise the existing halls and vestry. Any remaining balance being held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation and being made available upon application for the maintenance of congregational properties and for congregational purposes.

May it therefore please your Venerable Court to grant the aforesaid authority; or do otherwise as in your wisdom you may deem best; and your Petitioners will ever pray.

Christopher D. Harris, Clerk

(12) Arran

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Arran Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the church building at Bennecarrigan is in need of extensive repairs.
2. Whereas the congregation is not in a position to raise the funds required for these repairs.
3. Whereas the building is now surplus to the requirement of the congregation. Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly grant authority to sell the said building and direct the proceeds of the sale be applied to the funds of the Deacons Court of the congregation, so that the monies are easily accessible for congregational purposes. Or do otherwise as in their wisdom deems best. And your Petitioners will ever pray.

C W McAllister, Clerk

(13) Park

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 22nd May 2006, the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Park Free Church humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the congregation have agreed to proceed with the building of a new church hall adjacent to the church building at Park;

2. Whereas the funds from the sale of Cromore Mission House are held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation;

3. Whereas the congregation desire to apply the funds from the sale of Cromore Mission House towards the cost of building the new hall, thereby making it easier for the congregation to meet its remittances to Central Funds;

4. Whereas access to the said funds is restricted by the terms of Act XVI, 2001, to the purpose of maintaining congregational property;

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into their consideration and agree to amend the terms of Act XVI, 2001, to enable the congregation to have access to the funds from the sale of the Cromore Mission House for the erection of a new hall with any surplus to be made available for the maintaining of congregational property. And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Roderick J. Mackenzie, Clerk

JAMES M. FRASER, Chairman

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) FINANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Chairman, Conveners of Sub-Committees, members of the Board, the Chief Administrative Officer and his staff for their work.

2. The General Assembly acknowledge with humility and thanksgiving the provision made by the Lord for the work of the Church. They thank those who gave in a regular, responsible and liberal manner in support of that work and record their appreciation for legacies received during the year.

3. The General Assembly approve the sale of the temporary manse in Partick with title to be transferred to the Board of Trustees. They direct that the transaction be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent with the proceeds to be used to offset the congregation’s outstanding loan and the balance applied to congregational funds.

4. The General Assembly note the work undertaken to address financial and administrative issues in the Colegio San Andres. They instruct the Board to continue to work with the International Missions Board and the Working Group set up for that purpose to bring forward a scheme of governance that will pass the school to local control. The General Assembly empowers the Commission of Assembly to take up and dispose of a Report from the Board in relation to proposals for such a scheme.
5. The General Assembly approve the transfer of the properties in South Africa listed in Appendix 2, and such additional properties as may be identified by the International Missions Board, to the Free Church in Southern Africa. In this regard, the General Assembly authorise the Board of Trustees to designate a minister or missionary to sign an Affidavit transferring Certificates of Permission to Occupy to the Free Church of Southern Africa.

6. The General Assembly instruct the Board to prepare draft budget schedules for circulation to committees and boards before their first meeting following the General Assembly with a view to approving the 2009 budget at the October meeting of the Commission of Assembly. The General Assembly empower the said Commission of Assembly to take up and finally dispose of a Report from the Board on this matter.

7. The General Assembly instruct the Home Missions Board to identify income generating or cost saving measures to fund an increase in stipend to a level of £18,500 from April 2008.

(B) FINANCIAL POLICY

1. The General Assembly commend the work of the Finance Sub-Committee and thank its Convener, members and advisers.

2. The General Assembly endorse the analysis of the shortcomings of the current remittance system and share the concerns of the Board that the current situation whereby a small number of larger congregations are expected to support a large number of smaller congregations is unsustainable.

3. The General Assembly support the proposals for a new remittance system and instruct the Board to take steps to implement these proposals from January 2010. The new system shall have the following elements

   (1) Congregations with a settled ministry shall remit to central funds the full costs of that ministry as advised by the Church Offices (such costs to include contributions in respect of Pension and National Insurance costs). If a congregation fails to meet this requirement, the Presbytery of the bounds shall consider whether or not there are sufficient grounds for presenting a case to the Home Missions Board for the ongoing support of a full-time ministry in the congregation. The Home Missions Board shall consider the merits of any such application and if the application is approved, it shall take steps to raise such additional finance as is required to meet the shortfall in remittances.

   (2) All congregations shall pay an Administration Levy to cover central overhead costs and a Training Levy to cover the costs associated with training students for the Free Church ministry. These levies shall be applied on a sliding scale in accordance with congregational income and shall be set by the Board of Trustees Finance Sub-Committee. In the case of the Training Levy, this shall be set in consultation with the Board of Ministry.

   (3) Congregations with income remaining after remitting funds to cover ministry costs and the levies referred to in (2) above, and after an income retention allowance is applied, shall remit a percentage of such remaining income to central funds as a contribution towards the costs of financing the work of Standing Committees and Boards. The Board of Trustees Finance Sub-Committee shall set the level of income retention allowance and the remittance percentage to be applied to remaining congregational income. These shall be set in such a way that, in the first year of operation of the new remittance system, 70 per cent of the budgeted expenditure of the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board as well as the total budgeted expenditure of other committees and boards will be met through required remittances. In the second year this will reduce to 60 per cent of budgeted expenditure and by the third year of operation, 50 per cent of the budgeted expenditure of the Home and International Missions Boards will be met from required remittances.

   (4) The Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board shall raise such additional funding as is necessary to meet budgeted expenditure through project led fundraising activities.

In supporting these proposals, the General Assembly acknowledge that there are risks involved but they consider that the new system provides an opportunity to increase opportunities for local ministry, creates a mechanism to improve communication of, and support for, the work of the Church centrally, and provides a platform for enhanced efficiency at both congregational and central level.

4. The General Assembly instruct the Home Missions Board, in consultation with the Finance Sub-Committee, to bring forward draft legislation to the 2009 General Assembly in relation to arrangements for
centrally supported congregations. Such draft legislation shall stipulate the number of congregations that can reasonably be supported by the Church and the levels of support that can be provided, and shall, as far as possible, be consistent with current legislation governing Church Extension, Redevelopment and Special Arrangements charges.

5. The General Assembly instruct the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board to consult with one another in relation to options for enhancing their communication and fundraising capabilities and to bring forward proposals to the 2009 General Assembly in relation to these matters. Where such proposals have budgetary implications, the Boards shall consult with the Finance Sub-Committee.

6. The General Assembly endorse the Board’s support for the home and international missions work of the Church, remind local congregations of their responsibilities to support this work and encourage congregations to make such support a matter of priority when considering the utilisation of congregational resources.

7. The General Assembly instruct the Finance Sub-Committee to work with congregational treasurers to develop a clear set of procedures for the practical implementation of the new remittance system.

8. The General Assembly instruct the Board to consult with the Personnel Committee with a view to bringing forward proposals to the 2009 General Assembly for a set of creative and sensitive options for dealing with the personnel impact of bringing unsustainable ministries to an end.

(C) STRATEGY

1. The General Assembly commend the work of the Strategy Sub-Committee and thank its Convener, members, advisers and clerk and endorse its plan for a renewed focus on mission and discipleship through local congregations.

2. The General Assembly instruct the Strategy Sub-Committee to arrange meetings with Presbyteries in order to provide them with an opportunity to review its three year plan in greater detail. They further instruct the Sub-Committee to invite all ministers and office bearers to a Church-wide discussion of the plan and its implementation and instruct the Board to bring forward a report incorporating the detail of the three year plan for approval by the October 2008 meeting of the Commission of Assembly. The General Assembly empower the said Commission of Assembly to take up and dispose of such a Report.

3. The General Assembly instruct the Board to work with the Home Missions Board in taking all necessary steps to provide for the secondment, for a one year period on a full-time basis, of a suitable minister to act as Development Officer for the work of the Home Missions Board. They further instruct the Home Missions Board to assess the long term worth of the post and to bring forward proposals in relation to a permanent appointment to the 2009 General Assembly.

4. The General Assembly instruct the Home Missions Board to facilitate the provision of training in leadership, preaching and multi-member ministry to willing and suitable hub congregations through setting criteria for qualifying congregations and by developing a suitable curriculum and a clear mechanism for delivery. The General Assembly direct that this process be piloted in three congregations beginning in August 2008.

5. The General Assembly endorse the proposal for a new Free Church School in Theology and empower the Board to appoint a suitably qualified minister to put this into effect.

6. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Arrangements Committee to undertake a review of the format and functioning of the General Assembly in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness as a representative body providing supervision and direction to the work of the denomination. They direct that the Committee consult with the Strategy Sub-Committee in carrying out such a review and report to the 2009 General Assembly with its findings and any recommendations for change including those relating to the procedures, format, working, powers and activities of the General Assembly.

(D) PENSIONS AND PERSONNEL

1. The General Assembly commend the work of the Pensions and Personnel Sub-Committee and thank its Convener, members and advisers.
2. The General Assembly endorse the steps taken by the Board and its Sub-Committee in closing the Defined Benefit Scheme to future accrual of benefits.

3. The General Assembly note the arrangements that have been put in place for a replacement Defined Contribution Pension Scheme. They instruct the Board to keep the level of “employer” contribution under review in consultation with the Personnel Committee in order to ensure that this is maintained at an appropriate level.

4. The General Assembly endorse the steps taken to provide death in service benefits to ministers and other employees of the Church. They instruct the Board to work with the International Missions Board to assess the possibilities for Purchasing such cover for missionaries.

5. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Pastoral Advice to consider ways of improving the pastoral care of ministers and their families and in this regard, instruct that it takes into account the responses received by the Board from Presbyteries.

(E) COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

1. The General Assembly commend the work of the Compliance, Audit and Risk Management Sub-Committee and thank its Convener, members and advisers.

2. The General Assembly note the production of a Risk Register for the Church and instruct the Board to keep this under review.

3. The General Assembly thank Mr Colin MacDonald for his work in reviewing, developing and communicating a Child Protection Policy for the Church.

4. The General Assembly endorse the position taken by the Board in relation to the transportation of children. They instruct the Home Missions Board (and any other Committees and Boards as may be required) to follow the best practice guidance on transportation of children as outlined in the Child Protection Policy and also encourage local congregations to follow this guidance. They further instruct that if there is to be any deviation from the guidance, a formal and documented risk assessment shall be undertaken providing clear reasons as to why it is appropriate to deviate and outlining the steps taken to mitigate any identified risks.

5. The General Assembly note the legislative developments in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults and echo the Board’s commitment to providing a safe and caring environment for all vulnerable people brought into contact with the Church. They instruct the Board to bring forward to the October 2008 Commission of Assembly a draft Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy along the lines of the principles set out in the Board’s Report. They empower the said Commission of Assembly to take up a Report from the Board on this matter with a view to adopting the Policy.

6. The General Assembly endorse the Board’s decision to appoint an individual to oversee the areas of legislative and regulatory compliance and risk management.

(F) GOVERNANCE

1. The General Assembly support the Board’s view that it should continue to be known as the Board of Trustees.

2. The General Assembly enact that there shall be no restriction on individuals over the age of 70 serving as a Trustee. They amend Act II, 1979 by removing from paragraph 2 the words “provided always that Trustees appointed after the close of 1979 General Assembly be required to retire on attaining the age of 70 years.”

3. The General Assembly appoint the Principal Clerk of Assembly as a member ex officio of the Board of Trustees.

4. The General Assembly amend Act XXIII, 2007 by removing from section 1 (in relation to “Membership”) the sentence “Each Presbytery shall have at least one representative on the Board” and replacing it with “Board members shall be appointed in order that at least one Board member comes from within the bounds of each Presbytery in Scotland. If a Board member should move outside the bounds of the Presbytery from which he was appointed as a representative, he shall continue to serve on the Board, and its sub-committees
where relevant, for the remainder of his term of office. On the occasion of subsequent vacancies in Board membership, the Nominations Committee shall act to adjust the Presbyterial balance.”

5. The General Assembly amend Act XXIII, 2007, by replacing section 2.5 with the following, “The termination of appointment of any member of the Board of Trustees or its Sub-committees by death, resignation, or discipline, shall be reported as soon as possible after the event to the Nominations Committee by the Board of Trustees. Upon notification the Nominations Committee shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the Committee shall report on the same.

6. The General Assembly further amend Act XXIII, 2007 by adding to the final sentences in the sections on Membership in paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 the words “for a period of four years.” They instruct the Nominations Committee to make arrangements to ensure that initial appointments provide for a phased programme of retirement from service.

7. The General Assembly note that the Church has been awarded Designated Religious Charity Status and thank the Board for its efforts in this regard.

(G) LAW AND ADVICE

1. The General Assembly commend the work of the Legal Group and thank its Convener, members and advisers. They also express their thanks to Mr John Miller of the Church’s Law Agents and to the Church’s Counsel, Mr Herriot Currie, QC and Ms Ruth Charteris.

2. The General Assembly endorse the Board’s support of the actions proposed by the Partick congregation to recover its properties.

3. The General Assembly empower the Board of Trustees to take such steps as they think fit to engage in dialogue with the FCC with a view to removing the reproach to the cause of Christ caused by the dispute and seeking the settlement of local difficulties in a manner which is just and reflects the fact that the assets seized are in fact the assets of congregations of the Free Church of Scotland and do not belong to another group.

4. The General Assembly note with regret the legal action taken in Peru against the Church. They endorse the actions taken to date by the Board through legal advisers and commend this issue to the Church as a matter for prayer.

(H) CUSTODY OF TITLES

1. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Back Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the two plots of land adjacent to School Road, Back, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s law Agent. They direct that the proceeds of sale be held by the Board Trustees on behalf of the congregation, with interest being added to capital, and that the whole funds (capital and interest) be made available to the Deacons’ Court upon application for the purpose of financing a new hall building.

2. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Mull Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the manse building at Tobermory, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent. They direct that the proceeds of sale be held by the Board of Trustees and invested on behalf of the congregation, with the income to be made available upon application to the Deacons’ Court of the congregation.

3. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Greyfriars-Stratherrick Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the Free Church Hall at Carrbridge and the church building at Farr with adjoining grounds, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s law Agent. They direct that the proceeds of sale be held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation, with interest being added to capital, and that the Deacons’ Court have access to the whole funds (capital and interest) for congregational purposes upon application.

4. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Greyfriars-Stratherrick Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the Manse at 3 Abertarff Road, the division of the proceeds to be divided equally between Greyfriars Stratherrick Free Church of Scotland and the Inverness...
congregation of the Free Church Continuing, the transaction to be carried out through the Church’s Law Agent. The General Assembly direct that the proceeds be lodged with the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation, the interest in the meantime to be added to the capital.

5. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray Free Church and grant its crave. They grant authority to sell the Mission House and church building at Grimsay, the church building at Sollas, together with adjoining land, the transactions to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent. The General Assembly direct that the proceeds of sale be held by the Board of Trustees and applied to the funds of the congregation, with interest being added to capital, and that the Deacons’ Court have access to the whole funds (capital and interest) for the provision of a manse and a more suitable place of worship on one site.

6. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray Free Church and grant its crave. They grant authority to sell the manse and church building at Knockintorran, together with adjoining land, the transactions to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent. The General Assembly direct that the proceeds of sale be held by the Board of Trustees and applied to the funds of the congregation, with interest being added to capital, and that the Deacons’ Court have access to the whole funds (capital and interest) for the provision of a manse and a more suitable place of worship on one site.

7. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons' Court of Ardnamurchan Free Church and grant its crave. They grant authority to sell the manse and church building at Kilchoan, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that the proceeds of sale be invested with the Board of Trustees with the interest to be made available to the congregation for congregational purposes upon application.

8. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross and grant its crave. They empower the Deacons’ Court of Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus Free Church to sell or otherwise dispose of the Church building and grounds at Strathglass (Fasnakyle), the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that any proceeds of sale be lodged with the Board of Trustees with interest being added to capital, and that the whole funds (interest and capital) be made available to the congregation of Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus upon application for purposes approved of by the Presbytery of the bounds.

9. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Urray and Strathconnon Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the disposal of the present car park, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that any proceeds of sale be lodged with the Board of Trustees with interest being added to capital, and that the whole funds (interest and capital) be made available to the congregation upon application for the provision of an alternative car park.

10. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Dowanvale Free Church and grant its crave. They grant permission for the sale of the church building in Govan, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that the proceeds of sale be applied the funds of the congregation.

11. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Finance Committee of Burghead Free Church and grant its crave. They grant permission for the sale of the church building in Burghead, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that the proceeds of sale be lodged with the Board of Trustees with interest being added to capital, and that the whole funds (interest and capital) be made available to the congregation upon application for the development and modernising of the existing halls and vestry. The General Assembly further direct that any remaining funds be held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation, these to be made available to the congregation upon application for the maintenance of congregational properties and for congregational purposes.

12. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Arran Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the church building at Benbeculter, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent. They direct that the proceeds of sale be held by the General Trustees on behalf of the congregation, with interest being applied to the funds of the congregation, and that the Deacons’ Court have access to the whole funds (capital and interest) for congregational purposes upon application.
13. The General Assembly receive the Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Park Free Church and grant its crave. They amend Act XVI, 2001, paragraph 4, final sentence, to read, “They direct that the Deacons’ Court of Park Free Church have access to these funds for the erection of a new church hall with any surplus to be made available for the maintainance of congregational property.”

(I) SYNODS

1. In accordance with the requirements of Act V, 2002, paragraph 2.1, the General Assembly appoint the Northern Presbytery as Assessor Presbytery to the Western Synod; the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross as Assessor Presbytery to the Southern Synod; and the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth as Assessor Presbytery to the Northern Synod. The General Assembly remind the North American Synod that such cases as require either of the two Presbyteries comprising that Synod to be at the bar of Synod should be forwarded directly to the General Assembly, or Commission of Assembly, whichever is the more appropriate.

APPENDIX 1 – CONGREGATIONAL REMITTANCES

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<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 2007</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GROUP I – AID GIVING CHARGES

| 1  | Stornoway                               | 300,253 |
| 4  | Aberdeen – Bon Accord                   | 121,457 |
| 2  | Inverness – Free North                 | 118,731 |
| 3  | Glasgow – Dowanvale                    | 106,000 |
| 5  | Back                                   | 102,714 |
| 6  | Smithton Culloden                      | 85,308  |
| 7  | Edinburgh – Buccleuch and Greyfriars   | 75,000  |
| 9  | Rosskeen                                | 67,951  |
| 10 | Greyfriars and Stratherrick            | 64,025  |
| 8  | Cross                                  | 60,335  |
| 13 | Lochs                                  | 55,550  |
| 11 | Knock                                   | 54,580  |
| 12 | Glasgow – St Vincent St – Milton        | 52,400  |
| 16 | London City                            | 50,447  |
| 15 | Callanish                              | 46,473  |
| 14 | Kintoch                                | 45,280  |
| 18 | Urray and Strathconon                  | 43,500  |
| 20 | Shawbost                                | 42,120  |

GROUP II 'SELF SUPPORTING CHARGES'

<p>| 25 | Dundee – St Peter’s                    | 40,171  |
| 22 | Point                                  | 38,729  |
| 17 | Dingwall and Strathpeffer              | 38,500  |
| 26 | Tain                                   | 37,780  |
| 36 | Kilmallie                              | 36,989  |
| 24 | Carloway                               | 36,932  |
| 21 | Poolewe and Aultbea                    | 36,901  |
| 19 | Barvas                                 | 35,701  |
| 30 | Resolis and Urquhart                   | 35,329  |
| 23 | Knockbain                              | 35,000  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Congregation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>28 29</td>
<td>Maryburgh and Killearnan</td>
<td>£32,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 30</td>
<td>Edinburgh – Leith</td>
<td>£31,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 31</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>£30,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 32</td>
<td>Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort</td>
<td>£29,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 33</td>
<td>North Tolsta</td>
<td>£29,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 34</td>
<td>Ayr</td>
<td>£29,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 35</td>
<td>Edinburgh – St Columba’s</td>
<td>£28,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 36</td>
<td>Fortrose</td>
<td>£28,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 37</td>
<td>Lochbroom</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 38</td>
<td>Glasgow – Partick</td>
<td>£26,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 39</td>
<td>Dornoch</td>
<td>£26,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 40</td>
<td>Oban</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 41</td>
<td>Plockton and Kyle</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 42</td>
<td>Thurso and Reay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 43</td>
<td>Glasgow – Govanhill</td>
<td>£24,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 44</td>
<td>Campbeltown, Tarbert and Islay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 45</td>
<td>Lennoxtown</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 46</td>
<td>Kirkcaldy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 47</td>
<td>Perth and Pitlochry</td>
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<tr>
<td>54 48</td>
<td>Dunblane</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 49</td>
<td>Lochcarron</td>
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<tr>
<td>46 50</td>
<td>Portree</td>
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<tr>
<td>58 51</td>
<td>North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray</td>
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<tr>
<td>53 52</td>
<td>Burghhead</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 53</td>
<td>Scalpay</td>
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<tr>
<td>55 54</td>
<td>Coatbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>42 55</td>
<td>Livingston</td>
<td>£21,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>57 56</td>
<td>Bishopbriggs</td>
<td>£21,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GROUP III 'SUBSIDISED CHARGES'**

| 44 57       | Falkirk                                          | £20,973 |
| 48 58       | Duirinish                                        | £20,264 |
| 60 59       | Lochgilphead and Lochfyneside                    | £20,059 |
| 61 60       | Cumbernauld                                      | £20,000 |
| 59 61       | Golspie                                          | £19,500 |
| 70 62       | Dumbarton                                        | £19,109 |
| 62 63       | Fort William                                     | £18,000 |
| 64 64       | Olrig, Watten and Bower                          | £17,500 |
| 69 65       | South Uist and Benbecula                         | £17,385 |
| 63 66       | Sleat and Strath                                 | £16,771 |
| 67 67       | Fearn                                            | £16,140 |
| 73 68       | Clyne                                            | £14,783 |
| 74 69       | East Kilbride                                    | £14,630 |
| 77 70       | Harris                                           | £13,820 |
| 76 71       | Elgin and Forres                                 | £13,797 |
| 84 72       | London – Cobham                                  | £13,400 |
| 71 73       | Bracadale                                        | £13,062 |
| 66 74       | Wick and Keiss                                   | £13,041 |
### Enumeration Amount

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<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Glenurquhart and Fort Augustus</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kilwinning and Saltcoats</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badenoch</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assynt and Eddrachillis</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arran</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Andrews</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>Lybster</td>
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<td><strong>GROUP IV 'OTHER CHARGES'</strong></td>
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<td>Gairloch and Kinlochewe</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helmsdale</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonar Bridge</td>
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<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dumfries</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coigach</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paisley</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenelg and Arnisdale, Lochalsh and Glenshiel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lairg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mull and Coll</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenock</td>
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<td>Dunoon and Strachur</td>
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<td>Tongue, Farr, Strathy and Halladale</td>
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<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiltarlity and Kirkhill</td>
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<td>Rogart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raasay</td>
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<td>Nairn, Croy and Ardersier</td>
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<td>Glasgow – Shettleston</td>
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<td>Kilmorack and Strathglass</td>
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<td>Kiltearn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tarbat</td>
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<td>Evangelical Presbyterian Church</td>
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<td>Charlottetown</td>
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<td>Livonia</td>
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APPENDIX 2 – PROPERTIES TO BE TRANSFERRED TO FREE CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

1 Properties with Certificates of Permission to Occupy

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<td>Maciba</td>
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<tr>
<td>East London</td>
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<td>Kowani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiskammahoek</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Burnshill Res</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiskammahoek</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ngquwuya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentane</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Godidi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentani</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nqusi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cwencwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ebulembu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gwaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
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<td>Mxaxo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pirie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tyusha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Umdizini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's Town</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whiteville, Mbem's</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mdantsane</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mdantsane</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Macibimi, Amatola Basin</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Xukwane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middledrift</td>
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<td>Zihlahleni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qumbu</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gqunu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsolo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sidwadweni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsolo</td>
<td>35A</td>
<td>Ngcele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umtata</td>
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<td>Mbolompo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Umtata</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
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<td>Tabase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Umtata</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Jersey Farm</td>
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<td>Victoria East</td>
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<td>Egerton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zwelitsha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gqumahashe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Mamata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Properties with Title Deeds

Property at Erven 83, 82, 81 and 79 Keiskammahoek
Site at Mnyameni, Division of King William’s Town
Land in Jafita’s Location, Division of King William’s Town
Portion of Lot 4 in Umnxesha Valley, Division of King William’s Town
III.

REPORT

OF THE

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

In seeking to fulfil its remit to promote relations with other churches at home and abroad and to protect the interests of the Free Church of Scotland with respect to her place in the wider Church, the Committee was involved in a variety of meetings, discussions and correspondence with other denominations and Christian organisations since the last Assembly. In the more mundane and routine activities of ecumenical relations, and especially when carried out in the all too obvious reality of the splits, secessions, separations and conflicts which have given rise to a multiplicity of denominations and traditions, it is essential to keep sight of the one factor that must dominate all others, namely, that Christ has but one church of which he alone is the Head. The tension between denominational distinctives and the promotion of visible church unity in the world is notoriously difficult to handle and has itself been a source of conflict and division. The Committee has sought to balance the need to protect the interests of the Free Church in the wider ecclesiastical world with the need to promote visible church unity and thereby “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” The Committee is convinced that the Free Church, with her history of evangelism, church planting, mission and theological education, has today, as much as ever, a vital contribution to make to advancing the claims of Christ and biblical church unity.

1. Church Relations

1.1 Church of Scotland The last Assembly approved the Joint Statement produced by the working group from the Free Church and the Church of Scotland as a basis for ongoing discussions and consequently further meetings have been held. The Free Church representatives appointed by the Committee since the last Assembly are Rev. M. Iver Martin, Rev. Alex J. MacDonald, Rev. Dr. John S. Ross, Rev. David Meredith and Rev. Fergus A. J. Macdonald. The exchange of views at these meetings has been cordial although pursued with honesty and frankness by both sides. The Committee is seeking approval to continue these discussions for a further year with a view to exploring whether further areas of cooperation might be possible.

1.2 Reformed Church in South Africa The Committee, after correspondence and a meeting with representatives of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA), has given consideration to developments in London where the congregation of the RCSA at Canada Water and the Free Church congregations at London and Cobham have been working closely together for some time. The RCSA representatives were concerned to explore ways by which it might be possible to combine the resources of the RCSA congregation with those of the Free Church congregations. The Committee, while anxious to advance both the gospel and biblical ecumenism, was also aware of the need to maintain the Free Church’s distinctive witness in the London area. The RCSA representatives were themselves anxious to point out that they did not wish any diminution of the Free Church there. The Committee contacted Rev. David Strain and Rev. David Miller so that they might give the Committee their views on the situation and in reply it was stated that they were both somewhat apprehensive about the impact a coming together might have on the Free Church’s identity in London and on the distinctive witness of the Free Church’s witness there. The Committee has decided that further discussion with the RCSA should be undertaken by the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth which has jurisdiction over the congregations of London and Cobham, and to that end the Committee has passed this matter over to them.

1.3 United Free Church At the request of the United Free Church the Committee agreed to hold an informal exploratory meeting with representatives from that denomination. Rev. Alex Cowie and Rev. Finlay Mackenzie represented the Committee at a meeting held in Glasgow. This had been a very positive meeting, with the focus on potential cooperation between congregations which are fairly close together geographically and theologically. The Committee also agreed to appoint Rev. Kenneth Boyd to be a member of the group. The Committee is seeking the Assembly’s approval for further meetings between the two groups.

1.4 Canadian Reformed Churches In correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches (CRC) the Committee was given information of a decision by the CRC Synod at Smithers concerning the relationship of the CRC to both the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and the Free Church Continuing (FCC). The extract stated that the CRC Synod at Chatham in 2004 had acted in error when they decided to continue formal ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC when in fact such a relationship did not exist. The extract also stated that
Synod Smithers had concluded that the separation from the FCS which led to the formation of the FCC had not been scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28. The Committee noted this conclusion with interest and thanked the CRC for the information.

2. Visits

2.1 Iglesias Reformandas Espana The Committee appointed Rev. Angus Lamont as Free Church delegate to the Iglesias Reformandas Espana (IRE) in November 2007. Mr Lamont in his report of his visit to the Committee emphasised the small numbers in IRE congregations and consequently the difficulties faced by them in terms of human resources and finance. Nevertheless the IRE were positive and enthusiastic in their ministry of the gospel. The Committee is grateful to Mr. Lamont for undertaking the visit and by it furthering the positive and cordial relation between the Free Church and the IRE.

2.2 Baptist Union The Committee is grateful to Rev. Neil Macmillan who attended the opening session of the Baptist Union Assembly, at their invitation, in Glenrothes in November 2007.

2.3 PCA Assembly Rev. Dr. Malcolm Maclean managed a stall at the 2007 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA), representing the Psalmody Committee and the College Board as well as the Ecumenical Relations Committee. The Committee subsequently asked the PCA if they would be willing to invite a delegate from the Free Church so as to attend and address their next General Assembly, especially in view of the formal agreement between the Free Church and Mission to The World. This request has been officially accepted by the PCA and the Committee has appointed Dr. Maclean again to represent the church at the said Assembly.

2.4 United Free Church Rev. Alex J. MacDonald attended the opening session of the United Free Church Assembly and was well received. In his report to the Committee he suggested, in the interest of promoting cordial relations, that the Free Church might be able to set up a similar arrangement with denominations like the UFC so that they be asked to send a representative to the opening session of the Assembly at which they would be formally introduced but not speak. The Committee is asking the Assembly to approve this.

2.5 Associated Presbyterian Churches The Moderator of last General Assembly, Rev. Dr. John S. Ross attended the APC Assembly in Inverness and was very warmly received.

2.6 Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated) In response to an invitation from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) the Committee has appointed the Convener, Rev. M. Iver Martin, to attend the RCN(L) Synod from 27th - 31st May 2008 as a delegate from the Free Church.

2.7 Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia In response to an invitation from the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia the Committee has appointed Rev. Dr. Alistair Wilson, Dumisani, as Free Church delegate to attend their annual Synod in July 2008. Dr. Wilson was due to be in Australia in July and the Committee is grateful to him for agreeing to represent the Church in this way.

3. Other

The Committee in reviewing the list of organisations other than churches invited to send delegates to the General Assembly agreed to recommend restricting these places to two each year, decided annually by the Committee on a rotational basis from the Committee’s list of organisations considered suitable for invitation to the Assembly. The two issues which governed the Committee’s thinking were: (1) the increasing difficulty of finding sufficient space on the Assembly programme for all delegatory speakers; (2) the Committee’s desire to invite organisations which have not previously been invited but which are well supported throughout the Free Church. For the 2008 Assembly the Committee extended an invitation to the Christian Institute and CARE, and are pleased to report that both these organisations have accepted.

M. IVER MARTIN, Convener
ALEX COWIE, Vice Convener
PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

2. The General Assembly thank the Committee for its work in promoting the interests of the Free Church of Scotland and in seeking to maintain good relations with Churches and Christian organisations in the UK and abroad.

3. The General Assembly welcome the continuation of discussions with representatives of the Church of Scotland and approve further meetings between the two groups under the oversight of the Committee. They thank Miss Julie Farrar for her contribution as facilitator at most of the meetings which have taken place.

4. The General Assembly approve the transfer of discussions with representatives of the Reformed Churches in South Africa, involving the congregations of London and Cobham, to the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth.

5. The General Assembly note the initial informal exploratory meeting between representatives of the Committee and representatives of the United Free Church of Scotland. The General Assembly approve of further meetings between the two groups under the oversight of the Committee.

6. The General Assembly note the decision of the Canadian Reformed Churches at Synod Smithers, namely that the separation from the Free Church of Scotland which led to the formation of the Free Church Continuing had not been scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28.

7. The General Assembly approve the Committee’s recommendation that invitations to organisations other than churches invited to send delegates to the General Assembly be restricted to two each year, decided annually by the Committee on a rotational basis from the Committee’s list of organisations considered suitable for invitation to the Assembly. The General Assembly welcome the inclusion of the Christian Institute and CARE among those invited to this Assembly.

8. The General Assembly approve the recommendation that the Committee make selection annually of denominations which are not presently in the category of those invited to send delegates to the Assembly so that they be invited to send a representative to the opening session of the Assembly at which they would be formally introduced but not speak.


11. The General Assembly thank Rev. Dr. Malcolm Maclean for his attendance at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) in June 2007. They welcome the invitation extended to the Free Church by the PCA to send a delegate to their 2008 General Assembly.

12. The General Assembly thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald for attending the opening session of the United Free Church Assembly.

13. The General Assembly thank Rev. Dr. John S. Ross for his attendance at the 2007 Assembly of the Associated Presbyterian Churches in Inverness.
IV.

REPORT

OF THE

YOUTH COMMITTEE

(A) INTRODUCTION

The Youth Committee was again much encouraged by the quality and variety of the work among the youth of the Church over the last year, the main areas of which may be summarised as follows:

Sunday School Activities The new awards system is providing a useful framework for motivating our young people and it is encouraging to note that the overall number of youngsters participating in 2007 showed an increase on 2006. The high standard of work at all levels was also particularly encouraging. The new revised worksheets, professionally produced, were issued last August and the Youth Committee was greatly heartened by the uptake in our Sunday Schools. Another successful conference for Sunday School teachers took place in August of last year, in Stornoway on this occasion. Overall it was another good year.

Youth Work Activities The Committee is most appreciative of the excellent work done by Mrs Donna Matheson in her last year as the Church's National Youth Work Coordinator, which finishes at the end of April 2008. The Youth Work Strategy, put together by Mrs Matheson, has helped to provide an overall vision for youth work in the Church, as well as helping to make other organisations more aware of youth work within the Free Church. With regard to the youth workers in the Church at large, Mrs Matheson fulfilled an effective advisory and support role which was much appreciated by the youth workers as well as by the Youth Committee. She also represented the Free Church in the wider Scottish Christian youth work arena by networking and developing good relationships with other Christian organisations that work with young people. Once again, we are happy to report a successful Youth Conference last year, as well as another excellent Youth Camp programme.

Publications The Instructor had another good year, as did Free magazine, and we are indebted to the editors, Mrs Irene Howat and Mrs Chris Nicolson, for their continuing commitment and enthusiasm.

Working Party on Christian Schools The Working Party completed the task given to it by the General Assembly of 2006 – to investigate the potential of developing Christian schools and to report back to the Assembly. A full report is contained in Section (H) of this Report and it is proposed that the Committee now seek to take the matter forward in the wider political arena, in such ways as the Youth Committee may decide are appropriate.

Working Party: Support for Parents of School Pupils The Working Party deliberated on the best way forward in this matter and came to the view that the most effective action would be to seek to work more closely with CARE (Christian Research and Action in Education) Scotland, with a view to making CARE materials more readily accessible to parents of school pupils in our Church. A recommendation to this effect is contained in Paragraph 12 of the Committee’s Deliverance.

All in all it was another year of good progress in the youth work of the Church, for which we are most thankful to the Lord.

(B) SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK

1. Awards System The number of youngsters participating in the Awards system in 2007 showed an increase on 2006. From 39 participating Sunday Schools, a total of 505 – an increase of 41 – young people completed Records of Achievement as follows: Infant Grade – 169; Junior Grade – 234; Bible Class Grade – 102. A total of 89 Explorations, an increase of 13, on The Life of Gideon were submitted as follows: Infant Grade – 18; Junior Grade – 55; Bible Class Grade – 16. As in the previous year the standard of work produced was very high, in completing Exploration pages in The Instructor and the additional work for Infant and Junior Grades. Several of the Bible Class Grade candidates, whose assignment involved individual research, submitted
work of an exceptionally high standard. For 2008, for all Grades, the topic is *Exploring How the Bible Came to Us*.

2. **Review of Free Church Material**  In August 2007 the first set of new revised worksheets were produced in full colour, professionally printed by Woods of Perth. Sets of ten lessons were sent out at intervals during the year. Revised Teachers’ Notes were also provided. The number of orders submitted was encouraging and the number of worksheets ordered went up substantially over the year. Work on the 2007-2008 Sunday School materials is already advanced. The response to the new material has been very positive. Work on the 2008-2009 materials has already begun. The Committee is most grateful for the committed and enthusiastic leadership of Mrs Irene Howat in coordinating and collating this work.

3. **Conference for Sunday School Teachers**  A successful Conference was held in Stornoway on 11th August 2007. Those who attended felt that they benefited greatly from all the items on the programme. The attendance was reasonable, given that other things were going on. The Youth Committee would like to see more Sunday School teachers benefiting from such conferences.

4. **Regulations for the Organisation and Supervision of Sunday Schools**  These have been revised as follows:

1. All Sunday Schools are under the supervision of the Kirk Session which shall take a particular interest in them and use every possible means to improve their efficiency.
2. The formal appointment of Sunday school teachers shall be made by the Kirk Session and be duly recorded in the minutes of the Session.
3. No person shall be considered for appointment as a Sunday School teacher unless the Kirk Session is satisfied as to his or her qualifications and suitability. Ordinarily, they should be a member of the congregation.
4. Every Sunday School teacher shall have Child Protection clearance and be advised of their responsibilities before they commence their teaching duties.
5. The minister shall make every effort, where possible, to visit the Sunday School and take an active interest in its life and work.
6. The Kirk Session shall consider appointing an elder with specific responsibility for oversight of the Sunday School.
7. The Kirk Session shall appoint an overall leader for the work of the Sunday School, and that person shall be responsible to the Kirk Session through the elder where such is appointed in terms of 6 above.
8. It is recommended that Sunday Schools make use of the Free Church syllabus, or at least its core material, in the year to year curriculum.
9. The Kirk Session shall ensure that the Deacons’ Court are aware of the practical needs of the Sunday School and that they do all in their power to meet these needs.

(C) CAMPS

*Supervisor’s Report*  Our annual Thanksgiving Service held at the end of August was a reminder of all the blessings that we had received during the year. Many young people had been encouraged in their faith and others had professed faith for the first time. We were conscious of the Lord watching over us and providing for our needs. We would encourage congregations to make the first Sunday in September a time for thanksgiving.

Sixteen camps took place, one at Easter and fifteen in the summer. There were five boys’ camps, three girls’ camps and nine mixed camps. The total number of campers was 392 slightly down on the previous year. There were no Peruvian campers. A total of 125 children attended camp for the first time. The total number of leaders and cooks was 160. All the reports indicate that the young people enjoyed a good holiday and there was much evidence that the Lord was at work. The leaders were impressed by the calibre of many of our young people.

A variety of training was provided and we continue to look at ways to equip and prepare those who staff our camps. One initiative planned is to hold regional training events.

The Big Free Rally was held in September and the young people enjoyed a full and varied programme. We continue to explore ways to make this a day to remember.

The Sponsorship Fund was well supported this year and we would welcome applications from those who would like to encourage young people to attend camp.
One new venture for this year will be a Discipleship camp for the 18 - 30 age range.

We are grateful to all who support the work of the camps in whatever way they can. We look to the Lord for his blessing.

Camps Supervisor The Committee notes with regret the resignation of Mr Ross A. R. Finlay as Camps Supervisor for the past five years. The Committee is nominating to the Assembly the name of Rev. Colin Morison, Elgin, for the position of Supervisor.

(D) THE INSTRUCTOR

Mrs Irene Howat continues to edit The Instructor to a very high standard. After the celebrations of The Instructor’s Centenary year, 2007 seemed a little quiet by comparison. However, the work of The Instructor goes on month by month, and every single month brings its encouragements.

Once again the middle page spread of magazine has carried materials that contribute to the Church’s Award System. In 2007-8 children explored the history of the Bible from its earliest writings to the present day.

In 2007, the Youth Project, which is administered through The Instructor, raised £12,196 for the work of Dwelling Places in Kampala, Uganda. Over the last eleven years, Youth Projects have raised the magnificent sum of £106,977 for missionary work in India, Kenya, Peru, Cambodia, Southern Africa, Moscow, Tearfund’s relief work and now Uganda.

Membership of Friends of The Instructor stands at 58 and the Editor is most grateful to them for their prayerful and financial support. Miss Anna Macdonald, Edinburgh, now administers Friends of The Instructor.

The Editor wishes to thank the Youth Committee for its support and wise advice over the year, those who contribute to the magazine and the ladies who help with the Youth Project. Above all she gives thanks to the Lord for his great goodness.

(E) FREE

Mrs Nicolson is now coming to the end of her second year in post. She has worked hard to develop the work of Free and meets the challenge of making the magazine relevant to young people in the Church and beyond.

Content A great many people have contributed to Free in the past year, and the Editor would like to express her thanks to all who have helped in any way - in particular, Mr Matt Ford, whose series of Bible studies will be coming to an end towards the end of the summer, after a loyal run of two years. His input has been greatly appreciated, and it is hoped his association with the magazine will continue. The Editor is also most grateful for Rev. Derek Lamont’s contributions to each issue. A good relationship has been built up with the Good Book Company’s representative, Emily Robertson, who has been extremely helpful and is an excellent source of material.

Un-commissioned contributions are welcomed and the Editor would like to ask those with connections with the Church’s youth to keep Free in mind - any news from youth groups around the country will be gratefully received. The Editor is keen to advertise and promote any events that may be of interest to readers of Free.

Readership The Editor feels that efforts to reach the younger teens within the Church have been successful. Reader contact has increased through our Bebo page, where we now have 142 ‘friends’. Comments have been positive, and readers seem to appreciate the fact that they can have access to the magazine and the ‘Free team’ online. It also gives us a useful way of touching base with readers. Although most readers’ features have to be commissioned by the Editor, a number of young readers have written offering to write or review for Free, which is encouraging.

Design and production Mrs Catherine Pearson (Design and Layout) and the Editor continue to work well together and are constantly finding new ways to improve and standardise procedure. Mrs Dayspring MacLeod has recently joined ‘the team’ as a proof reader and contributor. The Editor would like to thank Mrs MacLeod, Mrs Donna Matheson, the Youth Committee, and the office staff in Edinburgh for their support.

Despite a few initial teething problems with regard to distribution, the relationship with Woods of Perth is a good one. The current print run is 1450 copies and a typical issue of Free is 20 pages, with an increase to 24
pages at certain times of year – e.g. to include summer camps reports. The Editor is pleased to report that subscriptions remain steady; if anything they are up slightly.

Promotion The Editor feels there is still an untapped readership out there, and would be very grateful for input from anyone with the necessary marketing skills and enough time on their hands to promote Free, both within and beyond the Church.

Finally, the Editor would like to say how much she enjoys Free and how conscious she has been of the Lord’s help in the past year. Thank you for your continued prayers. It is a privilege to do this job.

(F) NATIONAL YOUTH WORK COORDINATOR

The Committee notes with regret that Mrs Donna Matheson’s three year contract as National Youth Work Coordinator has come to an end and wishes to record its appreciation of the excellent work done by her. The following report informs the General Assembly of work undertaken by Mrs Matheson during the three year post that began on 1st May 2005 and ended on 30th April 2008.

1. Research/Strategy The initial stages of the post involved a considerable amount of research and gathering of information about the youth work in the Free Church in order to ensure that the National Youth Work Co-ordinator could make the right provision to meet those needs. Having conducted this research it was recognised that there was little cohesion, vision or framework for youth work throughout the church. In response to this the first task of the National Youth Work Co-ordinator was to develop a youth work strategy for the Free Church – the purpose of the strategy was to provide an overall vision for youth work in the church and also to make other organisations aware of youth work within the Free Church. The strategy highlighted areas of work the church needed to build on and initiate. It was hoped that the strategy would inspire people, help them think of different types of youth work they could provide, encourage them to pray and give some sort of direction for the youth work of the church. This strategy was new to the Free Church and in itself would not achieve anything, but if people were willing to take it on board and use it, then that would be an achievement in moving forward. There was an overall positive response to the strategy and people throughout the church seemed to be happy with it. It has already been used by some people to develop youth work in their congregations.

2. Youth Workers In terms of youth workers, the National Youth Work Co-ordinator tried to have an advisory and support role as far as possible. This has been a difficult task due to the way that youth workers are employed – either locally in a congregation or by a presbytery. These youth workers already have their own line managers and committees to whom they report. They are also very busy with the work they are involved in. The National Youth Work Co-ordinator has sought to raise awareness of training events, helped with administrative issues relating to legislation, offered support as required and involved workers as much as possible in central activities provided by the Church.

It is impossible to have any co-ordination role over the youth workers because of the way that the church employs and funds workers at a local level.

Mrs Matheson has kept the central Youth Committee informed about youth workers and their work and provided updates on any changes. The number of employed youth workers has fluctuated over the past three years. As the National Youth Work Co-ordinator has now left post it is hoped that the Youth Committee will have more direct contact with local youth workers.

3. Networking/Training/Resources The National Youth Work Co-ordinator has as much as possible tried to represent the Free Church in the Scottish Christian youth work arena. This has been achieved through networking and developing good relationships with many other Christian organisations that work with young people. She was a member of the Scottish Christian Youth Workers Forum – a forum that represents a wide range of Christian youth organisations throughout Scotland. This forum has provided a variety of successful youth training events for Christian youth workers in Scotland. All of these events have been advertised throughout the Free Church and some youth workers in the Free Church have attended. The Free Church membership and representation on this forum will be continued by a newly appointed person.

It has been part of the remit of the National Youth Work Co-ordinator to provide information about youth resources for the Free Church. She has identified a number of recommended youth resources for youth volunteers/ workers and has made this information available on the Free Church website. The National Youth
Work Co-ordinator has responded to numerous requests that have come from congregations regarding resources and has endeavoured to recommend suitable resources as requested.

4. Support and Supervision/Line Management The support and supervision provided by a line manager in this post was crucial to its development and effectiveness. The line manager (Rev. Derek Lamont) provided ongoing support for the National Youth Work Co-ordinator on a regular basis. During these meetings there was an opportunity to reflect and evaluate on past work, to look at future work and to discuss any frustrations/problems arising with the post. These meetings were a great source of encouragement to the National Youth Work Co-ordinator and kept her focused and directional.

The National Youth Work Co-ordinator would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Lamont for all of his support and encouragement in what has been a challenging three years.

5. Apprenticeship in Christian Living Programme The National Youth Work Co-ordinator has assisted Mr Matt Ford in setting up the Free Church programme - ‘An Apprenticeship in Christian Living’. This is a gap year type programme originally proposed by Mr Ford who himself is involved in a similar programme. Mrs Matheson has brought this programme to the attention of the central church and has helped with all administrative aspects of it. This is currently being piloted successfully in the Stornoway congregation and is in its sixth month. It is hoped that this programme will be rolled out through the wider church and that other congregations will recognise its benefits and seek to adopt it. The Youth Committee will continue overseeing this programme in consultation with Mr Ford.

6. Free The National Youth Work Co-ordinator has at different times when required assisted in different aspects of helping the editorial team with Free magazine.

7. General Assembly The National Youth Work Co-ordinator was able for the first time to plan a programme for part of the Youth Committee night of the General Assembly in May 2007. A DVD was shown as part of the evening and this was an innovative way of bringing the youth work that is happening in the wider church to the attention of the Assembly. Mrs Matheson tried as far as possible to involve the employed youth workers in this event.

8. The Future The Committee, after consultation with Mrs Matheson, has decided that her post should be discontinued. The Committee will continue to support and encourage Youth Work at local level.

9. Conclusion The post has been somewhat challenging, sometimes very isolated, sometimes very busy, other times not so busy. It has required a lot of energy, determination, commitment and a total dependence on God. It would have been very difficult to undertake this post had Mrs Matheson not had past training and experience. The training and experience gained prior to taking up this post enabled her to initiate, establish and develop work that would have been very difficult to do without it. It was undoubtedly in God’s great providence that the current National Youth Work Co-ordinator was able to take up this post in the Free Church and there has been much learning in it, both at a practical and spiritual level. It is the hope of the National Youth Work Co-ordinator that those who read this report will see some benefits and positive outcomes that having such a post has brought about.

(G) YOUTH AND SECRETARIAL ASSISTANT FOR STORNOWAY FREE CHURCH

The Youth Committee has indicated that it is supportive of the Petition from the Presbytery of the Western Isles for the appointment of a Youth and Secretarial Assistant for Stornoway Free Church.

(H) CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

1. Remit A Working Party of the Youth Committee was set up following an instruction from the General Assembly of 2006, namely: “They (the Assembly) instruct the Youth Committee to investigate the potential of developing Christian schools, to consult with relevant and interested parties such as the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated), and to report to the 2007 Assembly”.

2. Membership Members of the Education Sub-Committee – Mr Innes Macleod, Rev. Douglas MacKeddie, Rev. Alex Cowie, Mr John N. Macdonald. Advisers – Dr Alan Fraser, Miss Mary Gillies, Mr Colin Macdonald, Mr Evan Macdonald, Mr Angus Morrison, Mr Peter Morrison.
3. Meetings

Four Meetings of the Working Party were held – the first two in Edinburgh and the last two in Inverness. The first meeting was an “orienteering” meeting and papers were presented at the second meeting from:

- Mr Gordon Ackerman, Head Teacher, Mannafields Christian School, Edinburgh
- Dr Alan Fraser, Depute Head Teacher, the Nicolson Institute, Stornoway
- Mr James Hutcheson, Retired Head teacher, Braes High School, Falkirk
- Rev. David Robertson, St Peter’s Free Church, Dundee
- Rev. Kenneth Stewart, Dowanvale Free Church, Glasgow.

These papers were wide-ranging in scope and thought-provoking in content, and formed the basis for much of the ensuing discussions in the Working Party. The members of the Working Party are most grateful to the input of these contributors to their work.

Mr Ackerman, Head teacher of Mannafields Christian School, Edinburgh, provided much useful information on the present situation in Christian schools in Scotland. Apart from Hamilton College, the one large school run on a clearly-stated Christian philosophy (apart from Roman Catholic schools) and which is a private, fee-paying school of some 800 pupils, from many backgrounds, predominantly but not completely Christian, all the other schools were much smaller. These were as follows: (followed by pupil numbers):

- Lewis Independent Christian School, Stornoway (20)
- Springfield Christian School, Dundee (30)
- Mannafields Christian School, Edinburgh (20)
- Regius Christian School, Edinburgh (15)
- River of Life Christian School, Dumfries (20)
- Cedars School of Excellence, Greenock (30)
- Living Waters Christian School, Glasgow (15)

There are seven very small Christian schools – all private and fee-paying, as is Hamilton College – with a total combined pupil intake of just under 1000 pupils. To put this in some kind of perspective, the latest figures from 2005 show that there were 713,240 pupils in state schools in Scotland and 30,321 pupils in independent schools, making a total of 743,561. The 1000 pupils in independent Christian schools represent 0.13 % of young people being educated in Scotland. It is important that we keep this in mind in our deliberations on the subject of Christian schools.

4. Main Arguments

We set out below the main arguments arising from our research and deliberations regarding the advantages of Christian schools and then the problems with Christian schools. As most of the contributors mentioned these, we list them here to give a flavour of the issues, but these are merely an attempt to encapsulate some of the main issues raised – the list is by no means exhaustive, of course.

4.1 Advantages of Christian Schools

- a Christian school would educate its pupils in a Christian atmosphere which would permeate all aspects of life in the school;
- a Christian school would have a positive influence in enhancing and encouraging young folks’ understanding and appreciation of the Christian faith, whether they came from a Christian home or not;
- Christian schools could help young people who were committed Christians to cope better in a largely secular society Christian schools could provide a strong platform for proclaiming Christian truth in our society;
- even one Christian school could have a positive influence in our society;
- Christian schools provide opportunities to develop Christian approaches to educational issues;
- Christian schools could generate material of use to many others inside and outside the educational world.

4.2 Problems of Christian Schools

- these schools would be expensive to run at Primary level, and much more expensive at Secondary level. Currently parents pay for the education of their children through taxation. The payment of fees for an independent Christian school is over and above what is paid in taxes to the state;
- even if teachers could be enticed away from state or independent schools (and this is surely highly debatable) it would be impossible to staff more than a small number of Christian schools;
- it might prove difficult to persuade parents to accept the Christian school;
- lacking a Christian school in every parish would make this type of school available to only a select few;
• isolating children from their contemporaries in the wider society would make it even more difficult for committed young Christians to cope in their community situations;
• staffing Christian schools would mean fewer Christian teachers in other schools, although the number involved would be small;
• a Christian school seeking to attract pupils from a number of denominations could face difficulties with regard to areas like worship, evolution, literature, and so on, where disunity could undermine the work of the school;
• many fear that Christian schools would be divisive in the wider community;
• if Christians were to opt out of state schools this may accelerate the spiritual declension in our society.

5. **Meetings**

The third meeting of the Working Party discussed the views expressed in the submissions to the Working Party, a flavour of which is explained above. The following were some of the views expressed by members of the Working Party:

- the concept of Christian schools would seem to be a good idea, but the practicalities of setting up even one were extremely difficult;
- the private aspect of them could create elitism, separatism and expense;
- if, for example, Dowanvale Free Church in Glasgow or St Peter’s Free Church in Dundee (the ministers of these churches being the leading advocates of the setting up of Christian schools, it would appear, in the Church) wished to set up a private Christian school, they might well proceed to do so, but the onus for such action should be with the local congregation or congregations, not with the Church at large – in other words the model should be “bottom-up” rather than “top-down” from Edinburgh;
- rather than creating separate schools, we should rather seek to create closer ties with other Christian organisations, such as CARE, SU, ACTS etc;
- there is a need for the Free Church to give a lead to parents and teachers – but not to enter the financial minefield of Christian schools;
- the Free Church should continue to seek ways of giving more support to Christian teachers as well as parents in all schools;
- it must be remembered that although Scottish schools in general provide a good service to our children, it is most important that Christian teachers and parents utilise opportunities which do exist to put across their viewpoint in their own school.

6. **Observations and Recommendations**

6.1 The task given to the Youth Committee and the Education Sub-Committee proved extremely demanding – perhaps unfairly so, given the wide remits on which these are working at this time.

6.2 The potential for the development of Christian schools in Scotland is extremely limited as the manifold difficulties mentioned frequently in the Report underline.

6.3 It was very difficult for the Working Party to investigate the case for Christian schools except in the context of the educational landscape of present day Scotland and the realities of that situation.

6.4 The majority of the committee felt that our investigation was useful inasmuch as it revealed how very small the Christian school sector is in Scotland, with the exception of Hamilton College, which is somewhat different in its aims and its wider appeal to a more affluent clientele.

6.5 The Working Party recommends that further consideration of the matter of Christian Schools be remitted to the proposed Home Missions Board, when it is set up, with a view to encouraging discussion of this important issue in the political arena and take further action as appropriate.

(I) **EDUCATION**

The Education Sub-Committee monitors developments in Education. The Committee is grateful to all of the consultants who keep in touch. Particularly they would like to thank Dr Graham Keith, the Church’s representative on the Scottish Joint Committee for Religious and Moral Education, who faithfully updates the Youth Committee on developments in this area and in Education generally.

**Support For Parents of School Pupils**

The Working Party set up to take this forward met twice in the course of last year. The main outcome from their discussions was that the best way forward was to seek to direct interested parents to the excellent educational papers produced by CARE (Christian Research and Action in Education) for Scotland and to facilitate easier access to this kind of material.
The Group was particularly impressed by the recently produced CARE for Scotland Briefing Papers, which covered such currently topical issues as:

- Scottish Parent Council Association
- Parent Councils Compared to School Boards
- Religious Observance in Schools
- Sex and Relationship Education
- The Bible and Education.

Discussions have taken place with the Director of CARE for Scotland who is most supportive of our proposal that appropriate materials from CARE be made more readily available to interested parents in the Free Church.

The Working Party commend such materials to the Church and request that the Church ensures that such materials are made readily available to interested parents throughout the Church.

(J) CONFERENCES

The Committee gives financial support to the Youth Conference and also to the Spring Conference. These Conferences, and also the Islands Conference, continue to be of much blessing to those who attend.

1. **Youth Conferences**  
   **Report on the 2007 Conference**  
   This took place at Lendrick Muir, Kinross, from 20th to 23rd April. Rev. Derek Lamont was the main speaker and there were a number of seminars. The Conference went well with positive feedback from delegates and speakers. The new venue and extra activities were clearly enjoyed and appreciated by all. Despite the centre being more central and heavy advertising from an early period the numbers were disappointing and we were unable to fill the 100 beds booked.

   It would seem that there is a gap for the 26 - 40 age range, a gap which the Spring Conference used to fill.

2008 Conference  
This took place at Lendrick Muir from 21st to 24th March 2008. The theme of the conference was The Grace of God and the main speaker was Rev. Mark Johnston, Grove Chapel, London, and the Conference organisers are grateful to him. Again, like 2007, numbers were disappointing, despite considerable advertising and encouragement.

2. **Spring Conference 2007**  
   This was a successful conference with a full house. The main speaker was Rev. Kenneth Stewart. Unfortunately, bookings for 2008 – 4th to 6th April 2008 – were down on 2007.

3. **Free Church Holiday**  
   The venue for the 2007 holiday was Gartmore House, Aberfoyle. There was an increase in the number attending and it was a very enjoyable week.

The 2008 holiday is planned for 5th to 12th July at Macdonalds Hotels, Aviemore Inn.

INNES MACLEOD, Convener  
DOUGLAS MACKEDDIE, Vice-Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and the Supplementary Report and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and Vice-Convener.

2. The General Assembly congratulate all the young people who have gained awards and certificates and who have completed Workbooks. They thank teachers and parents for their work in our Sunday Schools and at home. They encourage Sunday Schools to participate in the Awards system.

3. The General Assembly thank those who marked the Explorations for the various grades.

4. The General Assembly thank the office staff, especially Mrs Sharon Fraser who is responsible for the processing and distribution of materials relating to the Syllabus.

5. The General Assembly thank all those who are working on the revision of the Sunday School Syllabus and congratulate them on their work so far. They commend this work to the prayers of the Church. They
especially thank Mrs Howat for coordinating and collating this work. They urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to encourage Sunday Schools to make use of the new materials.

6. The General Assembly thank all those who organised the Sunday School Teachers’ Conference in Stornoway. They urge the Youth Committee to continue the provision of such support for Sunday School teachers and urge Kirk Sessions to encourage Sunday School teachers to participate in these events.

7. The General Assembly adopt the following revised regulations for the organisation and supervision of Sunday Schools:

1. All Sunday Schools are under the supervision of the Kirk Session which shall take a particular interest in them and use every possible means to improve their efficiency.
2. The formal appointment of Sunday school teachers shall be made by the Kirk Session and be duly recorded in the minutes of the Session.
3. No person shall be considered for appointment as a Sunday School teacher unless the Kirk Session is satisfied as to his or her qualifications and suitability. Ordinarily, they should be a member of the congregation.
4. Every Sunday School teacher shall have Child Protection clearance and shall be advised of their responsibilities before they commence their teaching duties.
5. The minister shall make every effort, where possible, to visit the Sunday School and take an active interest in its life and work.
6. The Kirk Session shall consider appointing an elder with specific responsibility for oversight of the Sunday School.
7. The Kirk Session shall appoint an overall leader for the work of the Sunday School, and that person shall be responsible to the Kirk Session through the elder where such is appointed in terms of 6 above.
8. It is recommended that Sunday Schools make use of the Free Church syllabus, or at least its core material, in the year to year curriculum.
9. The Kirk Session shall ensure that the Deacons’ Court are aware of the practical needs of the Sunday school and that they do all in their power to meet these needs.

8. The General Assembly thank Mr Ross Finlay, for his excellent work as Camps Supervisor over the past five years. The General Assembly also thank the Camps Administrator, Miss Mhairi MacKintosh. They thank the office staff who help with the Camps administration. They also thank all leaders, cooks and other helpers, and those who arranged and took part in the Camps Training days. They urge Presbyteries to encourage congregations to be active in promoting the Youth Camps and they commend the 2008 Camps programme to the prayers of the Church. They thank Deacons’ Courts and individuals who contributed to sponsorship for campers and leaders and invite others who have not already done so to consider this.


10. The General Assembly thank the Editor of The Instructor, Mrs Irene Howat, and the Editor of Free, Mrs Christine Nicolson and her team, and commend them to the prayers of the Church. They urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to encourage the distribution of the magazines and to support the editors in their work.

11. The General Assembly thank Mrs Donna Matheson for three years of unstinting work as National Youth Work Co-ordinator and urge the Youth Committee to take forward and monitor initiatives which she has put in place. They thank Rev. Derek Lamont for all his work in his role as Line Manager to the National Youth Work Coordinator.

12. The General Assembly thank all members of the Working Party on Christian Schools and note that the group considers the potential for setting up further Christian schools in Scotland to be very limited. The Assembly remit the matter of Christian schools to the Youth Committee with a view to encouraging further discussion of this important issue in the political arena. The Assembly instruct the Youth Committee to continue to work with groups such as CARE (Christian Action and Research in Education), ACTS (Association of Christian Teachers), SU (Scripture Union) etc., to ensure that a Christian voice is heard in educational matters in Scotland.

13. The General Assembly thank all who act as consultants on Education. They thank Dr Graham Keith, in particular, for representing the Free Church on the Scottish Joint Committee for Religious and Moral Education.
and for keeping the Youth Committee up to date with developments. They commend him to the prayers of the Church. The General Assembly call on the Church to support in prayer all teachers of Religious and Moral Education, Chaplains, Christian teachers and Head Teachers, in schools throughout the country.

14. The General Assembly urge ministers and others to take advantage of the opportunity to be involved as school chaplains. They urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to encourage Christian parents to become involved with the new Parent Councils.

15. The General Assembly authorise the Youth Committee to make arrangements to ensure interested parents throughout the Church have clear information about and ready access to appropriate educational materials and guidelines, such as those produced by CARE for Scotland. The General Assembly commend to the prayers of the Church the working group set up to access materials of support to parents.

16. The General Assembly thank the Youth Conference Committee, especially the Convener, Mr Martin MacLean. They urge Presbyteries to encourage young people within their congregations to attend the Conference. They thank the organisers of the Spring Conference, the Islands Conference and the Free Church Holiday and commend all these events to the prayers of the Church.

17. The General Assembly thank Miss Sandra Bain for her outstanding service over the last eight years as Clerk to the Youth Committee and indeed for her sterling service to the youth of the church over these years.
V.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON SUSTENTATION AND MINISTRY

It is noteworthy that this will probably be the last Report of the Committee on Sustentation and Ministry. This places the present Committee at the end of a long line of Sustentation Committees, dating back to 1844 and Thomas Chalmers. We may not be as distinguished as the membership of that first Committee but I believe that the Committee has carried out its duties with the same sincerity and commitment.

The minister’s stipend is an important part of the Committee’s remit. We are pleased to report that the stipend was increased to £18,500 from April 2008. Work is being done in consultation with the Board of Trustees with a view to producing a recognised formula for ensuring that the level of stipend is increased from year to year commensurate with inflation and the changes in the national average wage.

The Committee shares the concerns of the wider Church with regard to the growing number of congregations that are unable to meet their Schedule commitments because of local depopulation or decline. The number of congregations in the financially-non-viable category has increased significantly in the light of the fact that the 2007 General Assembly stated the full cost of ministry to be approximately 130% of stipend. In recognising its remit ‘to secure a more economically realistic distribution of personnel’ and ‘to be ready to propose new measures for the optimum use of available resources’, the Committee discovered that much of the rationalisation necessary in order to make optimum use of available resources is prevented by the principles that underlie the existing legislation.

The Committee therefore decided that it is necessary to change the legislation with regard to ministerial appointments. The proposed amendments to the existing legislation are detailed in Paragraph 6 of the Report. The main change to the legislation is the addition of a review process to be carried out by presbyteries and the proposed Board of Ministry. This review process would be initiated should a congregation’s remittances fall below 130% of stipend. The outcome of this review process will depend on local circumstances and the scope of possible outcomes ranges from no action being taken to the possibility of a change in the term of the minister’s appointment. The main purpose of the proposed change is to introduce a mechanism whereby congregations can be aligned and, where necessary, re-aligned, in a manner that is consistent with the current strength of the congregation. The proposals do not introduce a radical departure from what the Church has legislated for in the past; the existing legislation provides for the termination of renewable appointments in appropriate circumstances.

I would like to thank the membership of the Committee for their contribution to the work undertaken during the year. I would like to pay particular tribute to Rev. Angus J. Howat, Clerk, on whose wise counsel and guidance the Committee has relied during the year.

(A) SUSTENTATION

1. **Stipend** After being frozen for two years the Stipend was increased to £17,500 with effect from 1st April 2007. The favourable financial position of the Church at the beginning of 2008 has made possible a further and greater increase to £18,500 from April 2007.

For many years the goal set by the General Assembly for the Stipend has been a sum equivalent to 72% of the National Average Wage. The Committee has taken the view that this should be revisited and a Sub-Committee was appointed to investigate alternative modes of calculating the stipend level. This Sub-Committee has duly reported and its recommendations have been passed to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees and is under continuing consideration.

2. **Budget** In October 2007 the Commission of Assembly approved the Budget for 2008. The Ministers’ Car Expenses Fund was reinstated.
3. **Schedules** During the course of the year the Committee has granted or renewed Schedules for a number of vacant congregations. At the time of writing there are 10 vacant congregations authorised to appoint a minister or assistant minister through this Committee, compared with 9 at the same date last year.

4. **Congregations not remitting the Stipend** The Committee has the responsibility for monitoring the remittances of congregations to central funds and of drawing the attention of the congregation and the presbytery where congregations have failed to meet their commitments in order that steps may be taken to rectify the situation. The congregation of Dumbarton which failed to meet the stipend during 2006, remitted the appropriate sum during 2007, but the congregations of Clyne and Wick and Keiss failed to do so. These congregations have received the statutory notice from the Committee. In the case of Clyne the General Assembly of 2007 instructed the Northern Presbytery to initiate preparations towards linkage between the congregation of Clyne and the congregation of Helmsdale and Kinbrace. The Presbytery has reported that discussions are continuing and it hopes to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2009. In the meantime the Committee recommends that the minister at Clyne continue to receive his stipend in 2008 in spite of the shortfall in congregational remittances.

5. **Congregations not meeting their Schedule commitments** The General Assembly of 2005 enacted that:

   When any congregation given permission to call a minister (whether with or without restriction) fails to remit 120% of the Equal Dividend or less as promised on admission to the Platform, then the Sustentation Committee shall draw the attention of the Congregation and Presbytery to this fact, and the Presbytery shall report to the Committee what steps are being taken to rectify the situation. The Committee shall report to the General Assembly annually which congregations, if any, failed to meet their commitment in the previous year.

Accordingly the Committee has to report that three congregations, Bracadale, Fearn, and Kilwinning & Saltcoats, fell into this category in 2007. It was noted that Fearn is likely to become vacant in 2008 while Kilwinning has already become vacant. In the case of Bracadale, the Committee was advised that this was due to the congregation’s commitment to repay the loan for the new Manse to the Board of Trustees as the previous manse is not in the possession of the congregation. The congregation received the required notification from the Committee.

6. **Legislation on Ministerial Appointments** The Committee considered that the time was ripe to replace Act XVIII, 1998, Act anent the Sustentation Fund, in order (1) to reflect the fact that to be self-supporting a congregation requires to remit to central funds a figure equivalent to 130% of the stipend rather than 120% as previously; and (2) to address more speedily than is at present possible, the problem of congregations which have been unable to maintain their schedule commitments because of local depopulation or decline. The Committee is aware that there are areas in the Church where the ministerial arrangements could be rationalised and congregations linked or united under one minister were they vacant but where that is prevented by existing legislation, and is concerned that this should be minimised.

The terms of the Draft Act appear as Paragraph 5 of the Committee’s Deliverance.

7. **Small congregations** In 2005 the General Assembly authorised the Committee to meet with Presbyteries and with congregations whose gross ordinary income falls below £30,000 to discuss the appropriate ministerial arrangements. During the year no progress has been made with visiting the congregations in this category. The Committee feels this remit should be discontinued as a regular part of its work though the authority to visit Presbyteries and Congregations to discuss matters relevant to the Committee’s remit should be retained where appropriate.

8. **Quinquennial Consultation with Presbyteries** In terms of Act XXIV, 1989, the Conveners and Vice-Conveners of the Sustentation and Ministry and Church Extension and Redevelopment Committees met with representatives of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to discuss ministerial strategy in their area.

It was noted that the Presbytery were interested in developing ‘alliances’ between larger congregations in the city and some of the smaller satellite congregations whereby the ministers of the smaller charges might be released to give assistance in the larger congregations, the arrangement falling short of formal consolidation. The Committee believed that this suggestion should be examined more widely and legislation prepared to permit such alliances if after more mature deliberation this was felt desirable. Until such legislation has been enacted
they have advised the Presbytery not to formalise any arrangements in the meantime in view of the exclusive nature of a minister’s call and induction to a specific congregation under the existing practice.

9. **Changes in Personnel**
   
   **Deaths**
   
   Rev. William J. Campbell formerly of Portree 12th September 2007
   
   Rev. Murdo Martin formerly of Paisley 25th October 2007
   
   Rev. Clement Graham formerly Principal and Professor of Apologetics and Practical Theology, Free Church College 27th November 2007
   
   **Retirements**
   
   Rev. W. K. Stewart Sleat and Strath 30th June 2007
   
   **Resignations**
   
   
   Rev. Robert Macleod Falkirk 2nd July 2007
   
   
   **Translations**
   
   Rev. D. Gordon Martin from Helmsdale and Kinbrace to Urray and Strathconon 21st April 2007
   
   **Ordinations and Inductions**
   
   Rev. Richard MacDonald Badenoch 5th May 2007
   
   Rev. Ruairidh Maclean Harris 7th August 2007
   
   
   **Inductions**
   
   Rev. Douglas N. Campbell Dunfermline 24th August 2007
   
   
10. **Register of Ministers without charge available for call**

   None

11. **Register of Probationers**

   Mr Donald W. Maclean 43 Feddon Hill, Fortrose, IV10 8SP Renewal on Register by 1999 Assembly

   Mr James Eglinton 37 (1F4) Stewart Terrace, Edinburgh Licensed by Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth 26th June 2007

12. **District Ministry Charge**

   The Committee considered the Annual Report for 2007 for the District Ministry in Assynt and Eddrachillis. Rev. A. Fraser being present updated the Committee on the state of the congregations. On one hand the state of the Scourie congregation was weak and the local Youth Worker’s efforts had so far shown no fruit in the churches. On the other hand there was a new member in Assynt and the minister was involved in a Men’s Bible study on Friday evenings. Mr Fraser was thanked for his Report and comments and for his hard work.

13. **Congregations on Special Arrangements**

   The following congregations have been placed on the Equal Dividend Platform under Special Arrangements:

13.1 **Arran** 2007 was the first full year of Rev. David Karoon’s ministry. The congregation contributed a sum equal to 52% of the stipend to central funds, which exceeded the Assembly’s figure of 48.5%.

13.2 **Dumfries** The congregation of Dumfries remains vacant. Dumfries was placed on special arrangements by the Commission of Assembly in October 2006 and is seeking renewal of this status. The Committee recommends the congregation be placed on the Equal Dividend Platform on Special arrangements on condition they submit a sum equivalent to 70% of the stipend. This is a reduction from the previous percentage of 75% and reflects the decline in membership of the congregation.
13.3 **East Kilbride** The congregation has been granted Special Arrangements on condition that they remit a sum equivalent to 85% of the stipend. During 2007 the congregation remitted 84.2% of the stipend.

14 **Buccleuch and Greyfriars, Edinburgh: Assistant Minister** Rev. Robert J. Akroyd’s appointment as assistant minister at Buccleuch and Greyfriars, Edinburgh, expires at this Assembly in terms of the finding of the General Assembly of 2005. The Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth are petitioning the Assembly for his reappointment and the Committee is supporting the Petition. The Petition appears as an Appendix to the Committee’s Report.

**(B) SUPPLY**

15. **Resident Lay Preacher** The Committee received his Annual Report from Mr James Morrison, Lybster, who is now the Church’s only remaining Resident Lay Preacher. Mr Morrison’s hard work takes him into churches of various denominations in the south of Caithness because of the shortage of ministers there in addition to his labours in his own congregation. The Committee is grateful to him for his conscientiousness and commitment.

16. **Auxiliary Workers** The Committee received intimation from the Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross of the resignation of their Presbytery Worker, Mr Donald Robertson. There are no plans to replace Mr Robertson at this juncture. No other applications for appointment of Presbytery Workers have been received.

17. **Preaching Fee** The Committee reviewed the rate for preaching fees and travelling expenses. It was agreed to recommend that the standard fee for weekend supply be retained at £40, to be reviewed again in 2009, and that the mileage rate be increased to 30p per mile as from 1st January 2009.

18. **Ministers’ Car Expenses Fund** Although an allocation was included in this year’s Budget, there were no applications.

**(C) BUILDINGS MAINTENANCE**

19. **Church and Manse Building Fund** During 2007 the Committee made awards to the congregations of Olrig, Watten and Bower and Tongue, Farr, Strathy and Halladale.

20. **Building Returns** Act XXXI, 1988, requires that Building Returns be completed every five years for congregational properties in conjunction with Quinquennial Visitations, and that the completed Return be passed through the Presbytery to the Clerk of the Committee. The Committee is not permitted to approve applications for Grants and Loans from the Church and Manse Building Fund unless a current Return has been submitted. Very few returns have been received in the last few years, thus causing delays in providing assistance to congregations. An approach to Presbytery Clerks in 2007 produced very little result. Presbyteries are reminded of their responsibility here.

**(D) PASTORAL CONCERNS**

21. **Sick leave** The Committee has monitored carefully cases where ministers have been absent from work for health reasons for extended periods.

MALCOLM MACLEOD, Convener
IAIN D. GILL, Vice-Convener

Appendix

**Petition – Assistant Minister for Buccleuch and Greyfriars, Edinburgh**

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, indicted to meet in Edinburgh on 19th May 2008, the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth humbly shows that:

1. WHEREAS the congregation of Buccleuch and Greyfriars established a Millennium Project in 1999 with the goal of reaching various unchurched people, including young offenders and the homeless;
2. WHEREAS Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd was appointed as Assistant Minister in 1999 with responsibility *inter alia* for leading this work;

3. WHEREAS Dr Akroyd over the past nine years has developed this work, taking on, amongst other things, Chaplaincy responsibilities in Prison and University and outreach work to international students;

4. WHEREAS Dr Akroyd has established a wide network of contacts in the city and his work has become an integral part of the congregation’s outreach in the city;

5. WHEREAS Dr Akroyd’s ministry has been widely appreciated throughout the denomination and beyond;

6. WHEREAS Dr Akroyd has been called by two congregations in the past year but, due to his commitment to the work in Edinburgh, felt unable to accept either of these calls;

7. WHEREAS the congregation was seriously weakened following the Church troubles in the 1990s and the congregation’s subsequent support for the other Edinburgh churches, to such an extent that, although Sunday morning attendances remain high (140), in a recent election of office-bearers there were only ten male members eligible for election as Deacons;

8. WHEREAS the congregation has constantly contributed to Central Funds an amount not less than three times the Stipend, and there are exceptional circumstances as indicated above (and in the very nature of the expenses of assistantships) why the congregation has not been able to remit 78% of its net ordinary income;

9. WHEREFORE the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth humbly petitions that the General Assembly renew the appointment of Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd as Assistant Minister to the congregation of Buccleuch & Greyfriars under the present terms governing the appointment of Assistant Ministers.

**PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Committee on Sustentation and Ministry and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and Vice-Convener.

2. The General Assembly declare a stipend of £18,500 from 1st April 2008, this figure being based on the variation permitted by Act XII, 1989. The General Assembly approve the continuance of the other categories of salary that are paid at a fixed proportion of the stipend.

3. The General Assembly thank the members and adherents of the Church who by their contributions have shown their concern for the maintenance and furtherance of a gospel ministry throughout our land.

4. The General Assembly note the progress of negotiations to link or unite the congregation of Clyne with the congregation of Helmsdale and Kinbrace and continue this remit to the Northern Presbytery with instructions to report to the General Assembly of 2009 through the Committee. They authorise the continued payment of the stipend to the Minister of Clyne during 2008.

5. The General Assembly, desiring that arrangements regarding the Sustentation Fund be clarified and updated, ordain as follows:

1. **Congregations**
   1.1 A Schedule drawn up by the Home Missions Board shall be filled up on behalf of each congregation seeking to be given permission to call a minister.
   1.2 It shall be the duty of the interim-moderator of a vacant congregation in consultation with the Kirk Session, the Deacons’ Court and Congregation to fill up the Schedule and submit it to the Home Missions Board through the Presbytery of the bounds.
   1.3 The Schedule shall require the congregation to promise that in the event of a settlement it shall, as a minimum, remit to Central Funds a fixed percentage of the stipend. The minimum percentage promised shall be 100 per cent of the stipend. The promise should be adequate in relation to the Congregation’s resources and prospects. Consideration shall also be taken of the percentage of its ordinary income the congregation has been remitting to Central Funds.
1.4 The Home Missions Board may also require questions to be answered in the Schedule which will enable them to assess the Congregation’s remittances to Central Funds, the provision the Congregation intends to make to meet the minister’s expenses, the suitability of the manse and of the property used for holding services, and any anticipated major Congregational expenses.

2. Presbyteries
2.1 Each Schedule shall be submitted to the Presbytery of the bounds for approval.
2.2 In the light of its knowledge of local circumstances the Presbytery shall be asked if it considers the financial commitment promised and the proposals made to be adequate in the light of the Congregation’s resources and prospects.
2.3 When a Congregation’s commitment lies between 100% and 130% of the stipend in effect when the Presbytery gives consideration to the Schedule, the Presbytery shall be required to report to the Home Missions Board on why the Congregation should be given permission to call a minister, and to state what steps have been taken, or are proposed, to increase the Congregation’s remittances to 130% of the stipend.
2.4 A Presbytery shall not moderate in a call until the Home Missions Board has intimated that the Congregation has been given permission to call a minister.

3. The Home Missions Board
3.1 The Board shall not consider a Schedule until it has been approved by the Presbytery of the bounds.
3.2 The Board shall scrutinise each Schedule to ensure that the requirements of 1.3 above are met, and that the responses given in terms of 1.4 and 2.3 are satisfactory. The Board may only approve Schedules which have been validly completed in all these respects.
3.3 If the Congregation has promised to remit at least 130% of the stipend, and if the Board is satisfied with the responses given to the other questions asked in the Sustentation Schedule, then the Congregation will be given permission to call a minister without further restriction, but subject to the requirements of Act XIII, 1984.
3.4 If the Congregation undertakes to remit between 100% and 130% of the stipend, and if the Board is satisfied with the responses given to the other questions asked in the Sustentation Schedule, then the Board may give restricted permission to call a minister. In these circumstances, a minister inducted to the charge shall be on a five year renewable appointment, and a review of the congregation’s situation shall take place four years after an appointment has been made.
3.5 When the congregation’s remittances to Central Funds as a percentage of the stipend are reviewed four years after an appointment is made, the Congregation shall submit a fresh Schedule through the Presbytery of the bounds.
3.6 If a fresh Schedule is submitted the Congregation promise to remit at least 130% of the current stipend and if the Board are satisfied with the Schedule in this and other respects, then the Congregation may be placed on the Equal Dividend platform without restriction (as in 3.3). The Board will report on the matter to the next ensuing General Assembly so that the minister’s induction to the charge may be declared to be free of time-restriction.
3.7 If a fresh Schedule is submitted the Congregation promise to remit between 100% and 130% of the stipend and if the Board are satisfied with the Schedule in this and other respects, then the Board may extend the minister’s appointment for a further five years from the date of termination of the original appointment. A review similar to that of 3.5 shall be carried out nine years after the appointment to the charge was made, and every five years thereafter.
3.8 If at the time of a review the Congregation is unable to promise to remit at least 100% of the stipend, or if the Board adjudge the congregation’s promised commitment to be unrealistic, the Board shall report this to the next General Assembly, and unless exceptional circumstances are shown to exist, the Board shall recommend that the minister’s appointment be not renewed at the end of his current appointment.
3.9 When the contract of a minister in a terminable appointment is not renewed by resolution of the General Assembly, the Presbytery of the bounds shall direct that his name be added to the Register of Ministers without Charge, eligible for call.
3.10 When any congregation given permission to call a minister (whether with or without restriction) fails to remit the percentage of the Equal Dividend as promised on admission to the Platform then the Board shall draw the attention of the Congregation and Presbytery to this fact, and the Presbytery shall report to the Board what steps are being taken to rectify the situation. The Board shall report to the General Assembly annually which congregations, if any, failed to meet their commitment in the previous year.
3.11 When any congregation, whose minister is appointed under the terms of this Act, fails to remit 100% of stipend in any one year, the Home Missions Board shall draw the attention of the Congregation and the Presbytery to this fact. On receipt of such notification the Presbytery shall initiate a Review and Audit of the Congregation as in Section 6.1 below. The Board shall also report to the General Assembly that such a review has been initiated.
3.12 The General Assembly enact that in future the entitlement of a vacant congregation to call a minister be limited to two years from the date on which its Schedule is passed by the Home Missions Board.

4. **Union of Neighbouring Congregations**

On a vacancy occurring in a pastoral charge the Presbytery, before considering a Schedule, shall give consideration to whether in the light of their overall Strategy Plan it is desirable for the vacant congregation to be linked or united with another congregation whether vacant or not; and only when this possibility has been fully explored and departed from shall they approve a Schedule. In submitting the Schedule they shall report to the Board the steps taken and the reasons for departing from any such linking or union.

5. **Special Arrangements**

5.1 Notwithstanding the above regulations, the Board may recommend to the General Assembly that in special circumstances congregations be given permission to call a minister on conditions to be submitted by the Board to the Assembly. These special circumstances shall have regard to: (a) the geographical position of the Congregation; and (b) the potential for growth perceived to exist.

5.2 Each such case passed by the Assembly shall be reviewed every five years.

5.3 The Schedule submitted by such a congregation must express its financial commitment as a percentage of the stipend in terms of 1.3 above, and its remittances shall be monitored by the Board in terms of 3.10 above.

5.4 Before a Presbytery gives its approval to a Schedule seeking permission to call a minister in terms of special consideration, the Presbytery shall carry out a visitation of the Congregation and submit to the Board, along with the Schedule, a report on the prospects of a continued ministry in the Congregation.

6. **Review and Audit**

The purpose of this review is to make a decision regarding the long-term viability of a congregation whose numerical and financial strength has become seriously weakened. The review period shall be twelve months during which the following steps must be taken:

6.1 **Presbyteries**

The Presbytery, on receipt of notification from the Home Missions Board that a congregation’s remittances have fallen below 100% of stipend as in Section 3.11 above, shall initiate a thorough review of the congregation. This review shall include a thorough audit of the congregation, giving due consideration to (1) the likely causes of the fact that its numerical and financial strength has become seriously weakened; and (2) the future prospects for ongoing fulltime ministry in the congregation, including any potential for growth perceived to exist. On completion of the review, the Presbytery shall give a Report of its findings to the Board.

6.1.1 The Presbytery shall be required to meet with the congregation in order to explain the procedures to be followed as a result of the fall in the numerical and financial strength of the congregation. The Presbytery shall consult fully with the congregation during the review period in order to agree an achievable way forward for ministry in the congregation.

6.1.2 If the Presbytery finds that there is potential for growth in the congregation and that there is reason to believe special evangelistic effort on the part of the denomination could lead to realising this potential, then the Presbytery shall consider making application for redevelopment status in terms of Act XXXIV, 1988.

6.1.3 If the Presbytery finds that a fulltime ministry is not viable in the congregation in the long term but that there is a need to support ministry in the congregation in the short term, then the Presbytery shall formulate a short term plan for ministry, not exceeding five years, and recommend accordingly to the Home Missions Board. The Presbytery shall also arrange a meeting with the congregation in order to explain its findings.

6.1.4 If the Presbytery finds that the provision of a fulltime ministry in the congregation is no longer viable then it shall report to the Home Missions Board in these terms. The Presbytery shall also arrange a meeting with the congregation in order to explain its findings and to discuss arrangements for future ministry.

6.1.5 The Presbytery shall submit its Report to the Home Missions Board by 14th February in the calendar year after which the review was initiated.

6.2 **Home Missions Board**

Presbyteries shall ensure that Audit and Review Reports are submitted to the Home Missions Board by 14th February in any given year.

6.2.1 On receipt of the Presbytery’s Report that a fulltime ministry is no longer viable in a congregation, the Home Missions Board shall include this in its Report to the next General Assembly recommending that (1) the minister’s pastoral link with the congregation be severed within six months and his name added to the Register of Ministers Without Charge, eligible for call; and that (2) the Presbytery be instructed to make all necessary arrangements for linkage, union, or district ministry as local circumstances permit.
6.2.2 On receipt of the Presbytery’s Report that a full-time ministry is not viable in the long term but that arrangements need to be made to support ministry in the short term, the Board shall satisfy itself that all the requirements of Section 6.1 have been met and that the Schedule is completed with achievable commitments in the light of the congregation’s financial weakness. If the Board is satisfied with all the documentation received from the Presbytery it shall report on the matter to the next ensuing General Assembly with the following recommendations: (1) that the congregation be removed from the Equal Dividend Platform and the minister placed on a renewable appointment; and (2) that a review of the congregation’s situation, in accordance with Paragraphs 3.4 to 3.9 above, shall take place one year before the term of renewable appointment is due to end.

6.2.3 If at the end of the review referred to in paragraph 6.2.2 above the congregation’s circumstances have sufficiently improved, then the Board may place the congregation on the Equal Dividend Platform in terms of the prevailing regulations, with the minister’s induction to the charge being declared to be free of time-restriction. The Board shall include details of this change to the next General Assembly.

6.2.4 If at the end of the review referred to in paragraph 6.2.2 above the congregation’s circumstances have not shown signs of improvement, the Board shall report to the General Assembly with the following recommendations: (1) that, due to continuing full-time ministry in the congregation not being viable, the minister’s pastoral link with the congregation be severed, with his name being added to the Register of Ministers without Charge, eligible for call; and (2) the Presbytery be instructed to take other steps for ongoing ministry in the congregation such as linkage, union, or district ministry.

6.3 Terms of Re-appointment

When a congregation with a settled ministry is removed from the Equal Dividend Platform and the minister placed on a renewable appointment the following conditions will apply:

6.3.1 The annual stipend shall be paid at the rate of Equal Dividend each year with the shortfall between congregational remittances to central funds and the rate of Equal Dividend being borne by the Home Missions Board.

6.3.2 The congregation shall pay a sum for the minister’s travelling and other expenses, which sum shall be fixed in agreement with the Home Missions Board and reviewed annually during the appointment.

6.3.3 The minister placed on a five-year appointment shall devote his whole time to the congregation and work under the supervision of the Presbytery of which he is a member, in conjunction with the Home Missions Board.

6.3.4 The minister shall report at least annually to meetings of his Presbytery and the Presbytery shall report by 14th February each year to the Home Missions Board, on progress in the spiritual, numerical and financial aspects of the congregation. The Presbytery shall also ensure that all support-structures agreed in the development plan are being implemented.

6.3.5 If the minister’s link with the congregation is severed at the end of the five-year period, then he shall be treated as a minister without charge, except that he shall be paid at the rate of the then current Equal Dividend for a period of six months from the date of expiry of the appointment, or until his induction to another charge, whichever is sooner, and the Presbytery shall inform the Assembly Clerk so that his name may be included on the Register of Ministers without Charge.

7. Scope of this Act

7.1 The terms of this Act shall hereafter apply to all congregations for which Sustentation Fund Schedules come before the Presbytery of the bounds for scrutiny and approval.

7.2 Where a Schedule has already been forwarded by the Presbytery of the bounds to the Board, the Schedule shall be approved in terms of this Act.

7.3 Settlements that have taken place under previous regulations shall now be monitored in terms of this Act.


6. The General Assembly instruct the Committee to examine the feasibility of congregational alliances in accordance with the suggestions contained in the Strategy Document prepared by the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and if so resolved to bring proposals to a future General Assembly.

7. The General Assembly discontinue the remit to the Committee to visit Presbyteries and congregations whose gross ordinary income falls below £30,000 to discuss the appropriate ministerial arrangements and repeal Act XV, 2005. They empower the Committee to visit presbyteries and congregations as and when appropriate to discuss questions relating to allocation of ministerial manpower and status of congregations.
8. The General Assembly note the work being done by the Rev. A. M. Fraser in the District Ministry charge of Assynt and Eddrachillis and by the Resident Lay Agent, Mr James Morrison in Lybster, both areas of particular difficulty because of remoteness, local circumstances and declining population; and commend these special ministries to the prayers of the Church.

9. The General Assembly renew permission for the congregation of Dumfries to call a Minister under Special Arrangements in terms of Act XVIII, 1998 § 5, on condition that they remit a sum corresponding to 70% of the Stipend to central funds annually.

10. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth and grant its crave. They renew the appointment of Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd as Assistant Minister of the congregation of Buccleuch and Greyfriars Free Church, Edinburgh in accordance with the terms of Act IX, 2007.

11. The General Assembly declare that as from 1st January 2009 the minimum rate at which ministers’ car expenses are met shall be 30p per mile and amend Act XXXIII, 2005, § 1 accordingly.

12. The General Assembly approve the awards made by grant and loan from the Church and Manse Building Fund.

13. The General Assembly remind Presbyteries of their obligations under Act XXXI, 1988, § 5, to transmit to the Clerk of the Committee a copy of the Buildings Return completed for each congregation by the Deacons’ Court prior to a Quinquennial Visitation with the comments of the Presbytery duly incorporated. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to discharge this remit timeously.

14. The General Assembly thank the Chief Administrative Officer and members of the Offices staff for their contribution to the work of the Committee on Sustentation and Ministry.
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VI.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

This has been a relatively calm year for the Communications Committee as we anticipate the storm that will be the new committee structure after this Assembly.

**Bookshop**

Mr Charles Douglas continues to do a great job selling good books to an adoring public, despite ongoing structural problems that means the back corridor of the shop often resembles Niagara Falls. (There is a severe water problem that simply refuses to go away.)

Sales are boosted by the various Church conferences, bulk sales of Bibles and psalm books, *Christianity Explored* material and the theology student market.

The number of customers ordering online is on the increase all the time, and that is affecting the Bookshop. The Committee will continue to monitor this situation and make efforts to take advantage of the internet for our own Bookshop.

The Bookshop continues to offer a very important service to the Christian community in Edinburgh and beyond, and we are grateful to Mr Douglas for his commitment to the work and witness of the Bookshop.

**Communications Officer**

Mrs Catherine Pearson has continued to develop her post and has had a very busy year, and we would like to thank her for her hard work on behalf of the Church.

Much of the summer was taken up with preparing materials and resources to stock the Free Church stand at the Christian Resources exhibition in the Scottish Exhibit and Conference Centre, Glasgow last August. It was a good exercise for the Church to be involved in – at least once! It is doubtful whether the effort and cost will be worth repeating in future years. The exhibition itself seemed a little tired and is becoming less relevant in these days of internet access and information availability.

To add to ongoing work of the CO, the Committee have given her the responsibility for the design and layout of *The Monthly Record*. This has added significant pressure to the job, as it is a monthly production with very tight schedules, and needs to be co-ordinated with the ongoing production of the *Free* magazine. *The Monthly Record* has recently increased in size to 32 pages per issue, which corresponds to the annual *From the Frontiers* magazine which Mrs Pearson also designs.

As well as producing leaflets, booklets, flyers and posters for committees and events throughout the church – ‘Guidelines for Local Church Evangelism’; Missionary Prayer Cards; Psalmody CD cover etc - the Year Book and Camps Brochure were again designed in-house. Mrs Pearson has been involved in the production of a new Free Church College information pack – don’t miss it. She continues to update the Church Website, and we continue to be grateful to Mr John MacDonald for his technical expertise in the upkeep of the website and forum.

**Media and Website**

Rev. Alex J. MacDonald is stepping down from his post as Media Officer as from this year’s Assembly. Although the task of replacing him is the responsibility of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, the Communications Committee has had the benefit of his membership and advice for many years in different roles. We would like to acknowledge our indebtedness to Mr MacDonald in all that he has done for and with this Committee.

Over this year, Mr MacDonald has dealt with the routine enquiries and has debated in a BBC show ‘The Big Questions’.

He has also been involved in the work of the Website and Message Board as one of its moderators. He would like to see the Bookshop selling online through the Website, a development which is being considered. The Forum, which replaces the old Message Board, has been a limited success. Everyone wants to contribute in an
ad hoc manner, but very few are willing to moderate their own threads, when they realise the work involved. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation.

The Monthly Record Over the year, the Committee has enjoyed helping Rev. David Robertson to settle into his role as the new editor of The Monthly Record. There is now an in-house team helping the Editor in different areas, and both he and the Communications Officer have had to get used to working together to meet printing deadlines. We are grateful to Mrs Dayspring MacLeod for all the work she has done in copy editing the magazine – no easy task with the current editor! The Committee would like to thank Mr Robertson for taking on this responsibility for which he is eminently suited, and look forward to seeing the magazine develop its readership within and out with the church in the coming years.

Booklets The Committee also provided up front financial and practical support for the production of a Bible study booklet that Rev. Duncan Peters has written to use in connection with his work with Muslims in Glasgow. We are also looking into producing the Handbook on Worship that the Committee on Worship has developed.

Developments It would be good to see a pool of expertise associated with the Communications Committee that would enable the Church to produce good quality, branded material for all its publications.

The Committee is currently looking to encourage more use of technology to progress the work of the Church in many different areas. There is much potential in this development, but there are budgetary and personnel implications for the Church.

Clerk At this Assembly, the current Clerk of this Committee is stepping down. We are extremely grateful to Miss Mary Gillies for all her hard work over the last five years, and the current Convener would certainly have sunk without her help, especially when he was first thrown in! Thank you, Mary, for all your hard work and shared expertise.

It seems a pertinent place to suggest that if the new Committee system is to have any hope of success in not only maintaining, but developing the work of the Church, it is the time to consider full time clerks for all of the major Committee areas, as exists for the International Missions Board. While there would be painful cost implications, ministers would be freed up to concentrate on their immediate calling, while handing over administrative and development responsibilities to gifted personnel with the time and motivation to do so. It would also offer a degree of continuity and economy of deliberation, hitherto unknown, to the committee work.

DEREK LAMONT, Convener
RODDIE RANKIN, Vice-Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report and thank the Committee.

2. The General Assembly thank Miss Mary Gillies for her professional and winsome Clerkship to this Committee over the last number of years.

3. The General Assembly thank Mrs Catherine Pearson for her work as Communications Officer, and encourage her to continue to develop the post.

4. The General Assembly thank Mr Charles Douglas for his running of the Bookshop. The General Assembly commend the work of the Bookshop to the prayers of the Church.

5. They also thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald for his dedicated and professional work as Media Officer over the last number of years

6. The General Assembly thank the ongoing moderators of ‘The Forum’ and Mr John Macdonald for creating and managing the Message Board over the last year.
VII.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON PSALMODY

1. Introduction If “it is good to praise the Lord”, and if all are commanded to “worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs”, then the work of the Psalmody Committee could not be more central to the task of the Church of Christ. Its importance cannot be judged by the smallness of its membership or of its budget, but by the nature of its God-glorifying task. It is the Committee’s hope that, however inadequately, it is enabling all members and adherents of the Free Church of Scotland to be a praising, rejoicing and thankful people.

2. Psalm Singing Resources The Committee continues to provide a constant flow of resources to enable precentors and congregations to fulfil as well as possible their duty and privilege of praising the Lord in song. When one adds to the Committee’s productions Gaelic psalm-singing material emanating from the Isle of Lewis, it leaves us as a Church without excuse if the level of our praise is slovenly, unattractive to outsiders and failing to glorify God. Sales of the Committee’s materials are usually steady, if in some cases slow. Proving most popular are CDs (formerly cassettes) of psalm-singing, while leading the way in the printed page is the combined words only edition of *Sing Psalms* and *The Scottish Psalter*. The original production has been followed by two re-printings, the second of which has about 400 copies left. The Committee is always open to suggestions as to what further psalm-singing aids might be helpful to congregations and individuals.

3. Presbyterian Church in America In recent years the Free Church has been represented at the PCA General Assembly by Rev. Malcolm Maclean, Scalpay. These visits have been sponsored by the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the College Board and the Psalmody Committee, with expenses being shared by the three bodies. These expenses have been kept to a minimum thanks to Mr Maclean’s generous use of Air Miles. In addition to conveying Free Church greetings to the PCA, Mr Maclean has manned a stall with promotional material from the College and psalm-singing resources from the Psalmody Committee. This has not represented much in the way of additional income for the Committee, given that the dollar has been very weak against the pound, making our materials appear expensive, and also since on such occasions delegates expect bodies selling their wares to offer highly discounted prices. But the Committee feels that making our materials better known in the United States is worthwhile, and from time to time letters and emails from there demonstrate that this is true. For example, a member of another Reformed denomination in California recently contacted the Committee, after watching the *Discovery* DVD, eager to know how he could purchase a music copy of *Sing Psalms*. Interestingly, he asked if the music copies provided one tune per psalm, which confirms our experience that most of our North American friends find our split-page format confusing. Mr Maclean is due to attend this year’s Assembly in Atlanta, and hopes there will be a good response, especially to the CDs and both words and music editions of *Sing Psalms*.

4. Training for Precentors The Committee greatly appreciated the initiative taken by Mr Colin Rogerson, Edinburgh, in organizing an excellent precentors’ conference in St Columba’s Free Church last year. Part-day training courses for precentors, budding precentors and others interested in promoting psalmody have been a feature of our Church scene for a considerable time. They are usually much appreciated, but it has to be said that those who attend are usually already highly committed to improving the praise of the sanctuary. The Committee is concerned that many precentors and prospective precentors are not benefiting from such courses, because they simply do not attend, for reasons perhaps of embarrassment, fear, lethargy, busy schedules or lack of encouragement.

In view of this, the Committee hopes to organise a denomination-wide training conference for precentors and prospective precentors. If the Church at national or presbytery level holds in-service training courses for ministers and training courses for elders, youth workers, Sunday-school teachers or treasurers, why not also for precentors, given their vital role in leading the praise of Almighty God by the people of God? Information will be sent to ministers as soon as it is available, since ministers, even those who consider themselves musically illiterate, have a prime responsibility in encouraging their precentors and congregations to praise the Lord heartily, skilfully and melodiously. Current thinking in the Committee is that the training conference would
take place over a Friday night and Saturday morning and afternoon, with the venue probably being Inverness, and the likely time being May/June 2009. Assembly commissioners are urged to be active ambassadors for this venture, since the Lord is worthy of our highest endeavours as we worship him.

5. **Psalms for all Seasons CD** Last autumn the Committee published a new CD of psalm-singing with the apt title, *Psalms for all Seasons*. This CD is a compilation of the items recorded at the Festival of Psalms held in St Peter’s Free Church, Dundee, in October, 2005, along with the psalms sung at the special session of praise during last year’s General Assembly. The psalms on the 21 tracks are from both the *Scottish Psalter* and *Sing Psalms*, sung to familiar and less familiar tunes.

6. **Tutor CD** Arrangements are in hand to publish a second double album Tutor CD to help individuals, precentors and congregations familiarise themselves with the tunes in *Sing Psalms*.

7. **Part-singing CDs** A second volume of Part-singing CDs containing 30 tunes is now available. Those learning to sing an alto, tenor or bass part have found them a useful means to that end. Each tune is recorded twice: firstly, with the individual part on its own; this is then repeated along with all four parts at a lower volume. This enables the singer to learn the part and then practise harmonising.

8. **Virtual Precentor CD** Realising the difficulty which some congregations have in finding someone willing or able to lead the praise, the Committee has produced an experimental CD containing 31 psalms recorded at various psalmody recitals, all from the *Scottish Psalter*, and sung to familiar tunes. If this proves to be a feasible substitute for a precentor, then the Committee will consider extending the repertoire to include versions from *Sing Psalms*.

9. **Young People and Psalm-singing** Following the debate on the Report of the Psalmody Committee at last year’s Assembly, when the very regrettable decline in interest in the Psalmody Award was noted, the Committee undertook “to explore new ways in which the interest of young people in Psalm-singing might be stimulated.” As part of this exercise, the Committee consulted Presbyteries to find out what was happening at grass roots level and to invite suggestions on how the church might promote interest in psalm singing among children and young people. The Committee is grateful for the replies which they received. They included the following observations and suggestions:

- There were encouraging reports throughout the church of initiatives at local church and presbytery level of psalmody classes, psalm-singing practice, psalmody recitals and psalm-singing evenings.
- Promising young singers should be encouraged to lead the praise at appropriate opportunities.
- Congregations should be encouraged to organise occasions such as after-church fellowships, at which young people are present and are able to participate, when, for example, new tunes can be learned.
- Where possible, a small group made up of keen singers of mixed ages, but including children, drawn from neighbouring congregations, could sing at special occasions such as missionary meetings, farewells, or in a hospital or care home.
- Regrettably, some congregations had no children or young people.
- Poor precenting discouraged congregational participation in psalm-singing, especially among children.
- One presbytery observed that children found it easier to appreciate scripture choruses than psalms, and that unaccompanied psalm-singing was less attractive to young people than modern praise songs with lively musical accompaniment.

In addition, the Committee is aware that the young people themselves encourage psalm-singing at the annual Youth Conference, the Big Free Rally and at Free Church Youth Camps. Crucial to voluntary participation in psalm-singing is good leadership which will inspire interest in, and respect for, the psalms as well as improving musical standards.

Regarding the Psalmody Award, only one congregation took part in it last year, and this is a situation where the local minister is able to go into the local primary school and lead an after-school Psalmody Club. Two presbyteries felt that the concept and structure of the Award scheme is too old-fashioned, lacking appeal to young people. They wondered if MP3 recordings of the tunes could be made available for download or as podcasts to help teach the tunes. One presbytery felt that more children might participate if the Group Award was highlighted, especially if it was linked to some sort of inter-congregational singing events, or even an annual music festival. In the light of these comments and of the experience of recent years, the Committee took the following decisions:
In view of the very poor uptake by congregations of the Psalmody Award over the past number of years, the Committee has regretfully decided to discontinue it for the present. Should, however, any congregation wish to operate an awards scheme on an informal basis, the Psalmody Committee will be only too willing to provide whatever support they can by way of tune suggestions, certificates and prizes.

To help stimulate the interest of children and young people in psalm-singing, the Committee intends to run a pilot scheme in one area of the Church, to encourage the formation of congregational children’s groups or choirs, which would then join together for a youth event to focus mainly on singing the psalms they have practised.

10. Psalmody Festivals  Although the Committee has not sponsored any psalm-singing festivals since 2005, it is aware of several local initiatives over the past year including Psalms for a Summer Evening, which has been an annual event in Greenock Free Church’s calendar. A service of psalm-singing organised by Highland Harmony as part of the Highland Year of Culture attracted a congregation of 900 in the Free North Church last September.

11. Psalm-singing at the Assembly  The Committee was gratified with the very positive response from commissioners following the session of psalm-singing at last year’s General Assembly. The Committee was especially grateful for the group of “Assembly Singers” who led the singing, under the capable direction of Mrs Martha Middlemiss. It is hoped that a similar extended time of praise will be arranged at this year’s Assembly.

12. Clerk  According to current General Assembly legislation, Rev. John MacPherson will not be eligible for reappointment as Clerk on completion of five years’ service in May 2008. The Committee owes a great debt of gratitude to Mr MacPherson, not least for his diligence, efficiency, wisdom and enthusiasm. He will be a difficult act to follow. Despite three major operations and a heart attack within the last 18 months, his commitment to serve the Committee has been an example to us all. We wish him well in his second retirement! The Committee warmly approves the proposal of the Nominations Committee that Mr Colin Rogerson, elder and precentor in St Columba’s congregation, Edinburgh, be appointed Clerk in Mr MacPherson’s place.

WESTERN ISLES PRESBYTERY

Psalmody Award Participants

Back
Grade 3: Uilleam Maciver, Eilidh Macdonald, Catriona Bain, Chirsty Graham, Eilidh Murray, Katie Carmichael
Grade 4: Catherine Macdonald, Leanne Macdonald, Mairi Maclellan
Grade 4 (Adv): Isabelle Bain, Louise Campbell, Jane Macinnes
Grade 5: Katy Graham
Grade 6: Mairi Graham, Alison Macinnes, Annabel Maclellan, Lauren Mackenzie

EVAN G. MACDONALD, Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Committee, especially the Convener.

2. The General Assembly thank the Psalmody Committee for its diligent promotion of high standards of congregational praise. They encourage the Committee to continue its production of materials which enable congregations and individuals to achieve such high standards of psalm singing to the glory of God.

3. The General Assembly thank Rev. Malcolm Maclean for his contribution in disseminating Free Church psalmody materials throughout the United States of America.

4. The General Assembly thank the Psalmody Committee for organising training courses for precentors and prospective precentors. They commend the Committee’s initiative in proposing a denomination-wide training conference, and urge Assembly commissioners to give full support to this venture, as more information becomes available.
5. The General Assembly thank the Committee for arranging an extended session of psalm-singing at last year’s General Assembly and especially Mrs Martha Middlemiss and the choir who led the singing.

6. The General Assembly thank the Committee for producing the *Psalms for all Seasons* CD and commend it to the Church.

7. The General Assembly direct the Psalmody Committee to continue its efforts to increase the interest of children and young people in psalm singing.

8. The General Assembly thank Rev. John MacPherson for his services as Clerk to the Psalmody Committee for the past five years and pray for God’s blessing on his successor.
VIII.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH EXTENSION AND REDEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Charged with the redevelopment of precarious but strategic congregations, the Committee recognises that consolidation is necessary before there can be significant growth. Most redevelopment congregations are very fragile, some having slowly declined over the years, whilst others have gone through more recent traumatic experiences that have weakened them both numerically and in other respects. They all need prayerful, caring and supportive ministry to develop their potential. It is, therefore, good to be able to report not only stability but also progress in most redevelopment congregations. A similarly positive picture can be painted of our church extension charges, which without exception are growing both numerically and spiritually, and, as they do, cultivating an outward looking, evangelistic spirit that bodes well for the future. The challenge is to maintain and increase this momentum. Often one of the greatest needs such congregations have in this regard is the assistance of a few extra people to enable them to carry through modest but significant local projects. In our small and often over-stretched denomination, the Committee and the Presbyteries of the Church face serious limitations in their ability to help. It is the congregations of the Church that are best placed to provide the additional help needed by neighbouring church extension and redevelopment congregations, who can feel neglected by their stronger neighbours and isolated from the support they need. Small injections of finance to help with local projects, plus a few extra hands to help run them, can make a wholly disproportionate contribution. A most encouraging example of such partnership is the new relationship cemented between Service to Overseas Students (SOS) and the St Vincent Street congregation. The Evangelism Support Sub-Committee also finds a strategic role as it provides small injections of money to enable congregations to run Christianity Explored courses, holiday Bible clubs and other low budget outreach projects. Reviewing its operations over the last year the Committee cannot report anything sensational, but it can tell a story of Christian commitment, patience, hard work, vision, enterprise and real spiritual progress in those congregations and projects which it is its privilege to oversee. Above all it can testify to the faithfulness, kindness and generosity of Almighty God. This is the last year the Committee will report to the General Assembly in its current form as, with the formation of the Home Missions Board, it will be amalgamated with a number of other Committees into that larger entity. It looks to the future with optimism.

(A) EVANGELISM SUPPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

Now operating under a new name and a new regime, the Sub-Committee has shown great commitment to small scale support for evangelism. During 2007, from a slender budget of £4,000, it has made a number of small grants totalling £3,623.41 to support congregational and presbytery evangelistic initiatives across Scotland. It was especially encouraging to have been approached for support from congregations who had not done so previously, namely, Callanish, Park, Golspie, Brora and Dornoch. As well as helping to fund congregational outreach through the launch of a community café, the establishment of a youth club, congregational holiday clubs, and Christianity Explored courses, the Sub-Committee also supported the Western Isles Presbytery youth camp, and the Highland Weekend for young Christians, an exciting new joint initiative by the Skye and Wester Ross, Inverness, Lochaber and Ross, and Northern presbyteries. For each project the Committee arranged for funding to be sent to relevant contacts; commissioned feedback; and ensured prayer cover for each project through The Monthly Record and the monthly Mission Prayer Notes. With its members drawn from a wide area, the Sub-Committee keeps its costs down by conducting its deliberations and executing its business largely by email. The Sub-Committee is especially thankful for the help given by Miss Lisa Wightman at the Free Church offices, who ensures that approved grants are quickly dispatched to the relevant congregations.

(B) CHURCH EXTENSION

The congregation of Dunfermline, the most recent church extension charge, serves God in the midst of the largest private housing estate in Europe. Rev. Douglas N. Campbell, who was inducted to the new charge in August, recognises that many who have recently moved into this important commuter community, are open to change, seeking to establish new friendships and therefore open to the Gospel. The congregation enjoys an
average attendance of around thirty at the morning service in Masterton Primary School, and in the evening worships together with the Kirkcaldy congregation, with whom it also meets for prayer twice a month. In addition it holds a fortnightly home group, with a mid-week morning women’s group being planned. **St Andrews** Free Church, essentially a student congregation, has grown in numbers and influence among young people in the University through Sunday preaching and mid-week Bible Studies, as well as through counselling, which happens usually in the coffee shops of the town. Rev. Alasdair I. MacLeod has become heavily involved in the work of the Christian Union, advising on the programme, mentoring the president, giving seminars and speaking at main meetings. He has been asked to give the four addresses at the C.U.’s annual conference in November 2008. Mrs Cathie MacLeod helps to prepare food at Solid Rock, a weekly evangelistic lunch, where every week students give their testimony. It has been a huge encouragement to the congregation to see Dr. Grant Macaskill appointed as a second part-time Asian information and advice service, whose work has been enhanced by the activities of Mrs Penny Peters Penny Helps to prepare food at Solid Rock, a weekly evangelistic lunch, where many live. About twenty people in the University through Sunday preaching and mid-week Bible Studies, as well as through counselling, which happens usually in the coffee shops of the town. Rev. Alasdair I. MacLeod has become heavily involved in the work of the Christian Union, advising on the programme, mentoring the president, giving seminars and speaking at main meetings. He has been asked to give the four addresses at the C.U.’s annual conference in November 2008. Mrs Cathie MacLeod helps to prepare food at Solid Rock, a weekly evangelistic lunch, where every week students give their testimony. It has been a huge encouragement to the congregation to see Dr. Grant Macaskill appointed as a permanent member of staff at St Mary’s College, lecturing in New Testament. However, they are disappointed to lose Mr Matt Ford after his valuable work in congregation and community, and pray he will know God’s guidance and blessing. This summer will see around half of the students leave the congregation for good, so it will be an emotional time. May these young people be an influence for Christ wherever they go. At **Cobham** (Surrey), Rev. David Miller reports that the congregation, as it comes to the end of its first five years as a church extension charge, has doubled its size, with an average Sunday morning attendance of twenty-eight adults and twenty-two children. Despite losing three families early in 2007, the congregation has gained three more. It is believed that the monthly service started in Maidenhead will provide further evangelistic opportunities. The **South Uist and Benbecula** congregation, under the leadership of Rev. Iain MacAskill, continues to thrive, with both numerical and spiritual growth reported. Christianity Explored and Road to Recovery have proved useful tools in meeting the needs of various groups in the community. With the Caladh Trust community café staffed by volunteers from the congregation and the An Caladh building used for the Benbecula service, the continued collaboration with the Trust is invaluable. The Committee hopes that there will be a speedy settlement of the neighbouring North Uist congregation, and that Mr MacAskill will soon be released from his responsibilities as interim-moderator of the congregation.

**C) SERVICE TO OVERSEAS STUDENTS**

The work of Service to Overseas Students, under Rev. Finlay Mackenzie has entered a new phase of its ministry after negotiating a closer partnership with the St Vincent Street congregation. As well as continuing his active involvement with overseas students at the Glasgow universities, Mr Mackenzie now has a more defined role in the teaching ministry of the congregation, whilst they provide closer support and extra resources. During 2007 two teenage girls were baptised on profession of faith and three more students are currently attending baptism classes. Future plans include training some St. Vincent Street members to act as host couples to students on Sunday evenings and undertaking visitation by members of the congregation of students in the Sighthill area, where many live. About twenty-five students regularly attend Church, with ten enjoying the International Bible Study Group.

**D) ASIAN OUTREACH**

Due to sensitive nature of its work in this area the Committee is unable to report in detail all that it would like, but rejoices in the most heartening opportunities that have been seized for building friendships and maintaining witness in a number of Scotland’s Asian communities. The Committee is extremely grateful for the cooperation of the International Missions Board in helping fund Rev. Colin MacLeod as a second part-time Asian Outreach worker. Despite their best efforts, the Committee is disappointed to have to report its failure to relocate the family of Rev. Duncan Peters in alternative suitable accommodation during the past year and continues to make this a matter of urgency. Mr Peters continues to serve on the management Committee of The Well, a Glasgow based Asian information and advice service, whose work has been enhanced by the activities of Mrs Penny MacLeod as a women’s outreach worker.

**E) REDEVELOPMENT CHARGES**

Inducted to the charge of **Badenoch** in May 2007, Rev. Ricky MacDonald reports progress despite the frustrations caused by lack of space in the Church and manse, slow progress with the Sunday School and people leaving over the distinctive worship of the Free Church. The congregation is fully committed to supporting the work and hope that their new Church will be filled with new worshippers. Around twenty-five to thirty regular worshippers attend the Sunday morning service, with fifteen to twenty at night, attendance at both services is often increased by visitors. Contact with the local schools has been particularly successful: Kingsussie Primary School used the Church for their end of term assembly with over 200 people attending. Mr. MacDonald regularly takes assemblies, and Mrs. MacDonald has helped start an SU group that regularly numbers twenty to
thirty P5 and P6 pupils. Community outreach includes a monthly lunch club, when up to thirty people enjoy lunch together. At Elgin despite the fact the numbers of those attending services remain unaltered over 2007, the congregation’s income was slightly up on 2006. Rev Colin Morrison reports that spiritual progress is difficult to assess but the Bible class and small youth fellowship are sources of encouragement. Consideration has been given to the establishment of a Road to Recovery project, but it is uncertain if there is sufficient commitment for it to be viable. At present, Gairloch, under the interim-moderatorship of Rev. Marcos Florit, remains vacant but the Committee is hopeful of a settlement in the not too distant future. Rev. John MacKay reports that attendance at the Sunday services in Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus are stable. The congregation has benefited from the active participation of two of its missionary members, Mr. Richard and Mrs. Barbara Davies (AIM), who with their two young children have been on home assignment since July. In Fort Augustus a new family, with seven children, has started to attend. In both parts of the congregation there is discernible spiritual growth and openness, with people ready to learn and keen for fellowship and involvement. Following an earlier Christianity Explored course a Discipleship Explored course has been held. Mr. MacKay is involved in the local primary schools, and a local branch of Urban Saints (formerly Crusaders) has been established. Some of the congregation are active in local education, the community council and other local activities. In Harris, during the 6 months since his induction, Rev. Ruaridh Maclean has been busy getting to know the congregation by visiting all in the community who are attached to the Free Church. It is encouraging to note the enthusiastic involvement of members in the Sabbath School, congregational visitation, charitable work, and joint projects with the local Church of Scotland, such as Urban Saints. The Kirk Session of Paisley are discussing with the Dowanvale Kirk Session the possible mutual benefits of the linkage of the congregations.

JOHN S. ROSS, Convener
NEIL MACMILLAN, Vice Convener

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APPENDICES

(1) Petition: Renewal of Church Extension status: St Andrews

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, indicted to meet at Edinburgh, on Monday the 19th day of May 2008, the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the General Assembly granted Church Extension status to the Congregation of St Andrews in 2003; and
2. Whereas this work has, under God, prospered and is expanding; and
3. Whereas the Congregation desires the Rev. A. I. Macleod to continue as their Minister and he has indicated to the Presbytery his desire to remain in this Charge; and
4. Whereas in terms of under current regulations, (Act XXVII, 1989, § 2.5(b)) it falls for the General Assembly to grant an extension to the Congregation to continue under the present arrangements for a further five years;

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration, and ordain that the Congregation of St Andrews be granted Church Extension Status for a further five year period under the arrangements as originally granted.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

(2) Petition: Renewal of Church Extension status: Cobham

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, indicted to meet at Edinburgh, on Monday the 19th day of May, 2008, the petition of the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth humbly shows:

1. Whereas the General Assembly granted Church Extension status to the Congregation at Cobham in terms of Act XXVII, 1989, § 2.5(b); and
2. Whereas the Congregation has continued to grow and develop; and
3. Whereas the Presbytery has had regular reports of this progress; and
4. Whereas the Congregation desires to retain the services of Rev David Miller and he has indicated his desire to continue to Minister to the Congregation; and
5. Whereas it falls to the General Assembly to grant an extension of Church Extension status;

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration, and ordain that the Congregation at Cobham be granted an extension of a further five years in terms of current legislation; or do otherwise as in their wisdom they deem best.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

(3) Petition: Renewal of Redevelopment status: Paisley

Unto the Venerable General Assembly indicted to meet in Edinburgh on the 19th day of May 2008 the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll humbly shows that:

1. Whereas Paisley is a town of 90,000 inhabitants with little evangelical witness, great spiritual darkness and many social problems and also the centre of an area greater and increasing population;
2. Whereas Paisley has both a University and a Further Education College in the town making possible, with a suitable Ministry and the blessing of God, a successful outreach to students as in the past;
3. Whereas it is desirable that Paisley and its surrounding communities, including Renfrew, Linwood, Inchinnan and Bishopton, have the services of a full-time minister;
4. Whereas the congregation have held together relatively well and are harmonious in spite of the impact of the Secession of 2000 and the departure of their two previous Ministers in very difficult circumstances which were in no way the fault of the congregation;
5. Whereas the Presbytery has put measures in place to support a Ministry were it to be granted.

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly grant a further period of Re-development Status to the congregation of Paisley in terms of Act XXXIV, 1988 as amended by Act XIV, 1992 and any other relevant legislation, or do otherwise as in their wisdom they deem best.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and Vice-Convener.
2. The General Assembly give thanks for the conscientious work of Church Extension going on at Cobham (Rev. David Miller), Dunfermline (Rev. Douglas Campbell), St Andrews (Rev. Alasdair I. MacLeod), and South Uist and Benbecula (Rev. Iain MacAskill), and call on the Church to continue in prayerful support of their work.

3. The General Assembly receive the petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth and, noting the recommendation of the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee, grant its crave. They grant to the congregation of Cobham renewal of Church Extension status under the ministry of Rev. D. Miller for a further five years from the date of the rising of this General Assembly in accordance with Act XXVII, Class II, 1989.

4. The General Assembly receive the petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth and, noting the recommendation of the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee, grant its crave. They grant to the congregation of St Andrews renewal of Church Extension status under the ministry of Rev. A. I. Macleod for a further five years from the date of the rising of this General Assembly in accordance with Act XXVII, Class II, 1989.

5. The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude the cooperation of The Caladh Trust, in particular its permitting its property, An Caladh, to be the venue for the Benbecula services, and sends greetings to the Trustees praying God will continue to prosper their valuable work.

6. The General Assembly welcomes the active support of the St. Vincent Street - Milton congregation in the work of Service to Overseas Students and give thanks for continued witness to the international student community in Glasgow, warmly commending the Rev. Finlay Mackenzie, and all involved with him in this strategic ministry.

7. The General Assembly, approving the recommendation of the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee that the Rev. F. H. MacKenzie be enabled to share more fully in the teaching ministry of the St Vincent Street – Milton congregation than is possible under existing legislation, declare that Mr MacKenzie, while acting as Colleague to the minister of St Vincent Street - Milton, Glasgow, with responsibility for outreach to overseas students and/or the resident international community, may in addition, at the minister’s request, from time to time exercise a ministry of preaching and teaching within the congregation. They amend Act VII, 1997, and Act XXIV, 1997, accordingly.

8. The General Assembly reaffirm their commitment to sensitive evangelistic witness to resident Asian communities in Scotland and give thanks for the dedicated ministry of Rev. Duncan Peters and Rev. Colin Macleod and all involved in Asian Outreach. Recognising the necessary limitations imposed on public reporting of this work, the General Assembly encourage ministers and interim-moderators to invite Mr Peters and Mr Macleod to inform their congregations directly of their activities.

9. The General Assembly authorise the appointment of an additional Worker for the Glasgow Asian Outreach Project with additional duties under the International Missions Board in accordance with the following terms:

1) The person appointed shall be a Minister or Probationer of the Free Church of Scotland.

2) He shall be ordained/inducted by the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll as Colleague to the minister of the congregation of Govanhill. He shall have responsibility (1) only for outreach to the resident international community in the city of Glasgow; (2) and such lecturing and involvement in church planting duties as the International Missions Board may assign to him. For the former purpose he will have membership of the Kirk Session of Govanhill. As far as is possible he shall give an equal amount of his time to both aspects of his work over a twelve-month period.

3) Induction shall include admission to a seat in Presbytery and the charge will rank as a charge for representation of the Presbytery in the General Assembly.

4) The minister appointed shall be paid at the rate of the current stipend in equal proportions from the Budgets of the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board (hereinafter referred to as ‘The Boards’).

5) The minister appointed shall receive appropriate expenses to be paid equally by the Boards.
6) The minister appointed shall be provided with suitable accommodation at the joint expense of the Boards.

7) The minister shall report in writing by 31st December annually and at other times in person, as appropriate, on the Asian Outreach aspect of his work to the Presbytery and through the Presbytery to the Home Missions Board by 14th February following. He shall report to the International Missions Board with respect to that aspect of his work as they may require.

8) The appointment shall be for a period of five years from the date of induction and may be renewed by authority of the General Assembly upon joint recommendation of the Boards. If the appointment is not renewed at the end of any five-year period, the Presbytery shall inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly so that his name may be included in the Register of Ministers without Charge and the Boards will pay him at the rate of the then current Stipend and provide him with accommodation for a period of six months from the date of expiry of the appointment or until his induction to another charge, whichever is sooner.

9) During the first five year term of an appointment a call may not be addressed to the minister appointed to the work without the approval of the Boards.

10) If for any reason an appointment terminates before the end of a five year period, the Boards must seek the approval of the General Assembly for a new appointment to be made.

10. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work being undertaken in redevelopment charges and commend the Rev. Ruaridh Maclean (Leverburgh), Rev. Ricky MacDonald (Badenoch), Rev. Colin Morison (Elgin) and Rev. John MacKay (Glen Urquhart and Fort Augustus) for their faithful labours and entrust them and their congregations to the prayers and support of the Church.

11. The General Assembly receive the petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and, noting the recommendation of the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee, grant its crave. They grant to the congregation of Paisley renewal of Redevelopment status in terms of Act XXXIV, 1988 as amended by Act XIV, 1992, and Act XIV 1993.

12. The General Assembly give thanks for the commitment shown by the interim-moderators, assessor elders and all responsible for the maintenance of services in the redevelopment charges of Gairloch and Paisley and commit these congregations to the prayerful support of the Church.

13. The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude the enthusiastic efficiency of the Evangelism Support Sub-Committee in supporting small scale evangelistic initiatives.

14. The General Assembly appeals to the Kirk Sessions of congregations situated near Redevelopment and Extension Charges to support and encourage their work, by doing all in their power to offer additional helpers to assist these congregations.

15. The General Assembly rejoice in all evangelistic initiatives, formal and informal, which are undertaken by Church members, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries and encourage them to renewed efforts in the coming year.

16. The General Assembly express their thanks to the Rev. Ian Allan as clerk to the Committee and commend him for his diligence in matters relating to the Committee’s work throughout the year.
IX.
REPORT
OF THE
PUBLIC QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

(A) INTRODUCTION

In this, the last Public Questions Report before the reorganisation of the Church’s Committee structure, we report on several important matters. The Committee is grateful to those who have researched and prepared the material for the various sections of the report. Over the years much material has been produced and some of it is now available on the Church’s website. We would encourage our people to make frequent use of this material.

Throughout the past year the Convener and Clerk have responded to several Government consultations and have encouraged our ministers to use the material provided by the Lawyers’ Christian Fellowship to make representation to Government regarding various important pieces of legislation going through Parliament.

One of the most important of these Bills is the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, which touches on the basic question of what it means to be human. We are happy to report that the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the original Human Tissue and Embryology Bill responded to a large number of objections to bringing together the subjects of human tissue use and embryology under one body. The very different matters of human tissue use and human embryology are now being dealt with through two separate Bills. However the Government is determined to pass into law various measures which we oppose. These include legalising the creation of animal-human hybrids for research into embryonic stem cells, the removal of ‘the need for a father’ in IVF treatment, and the selection of embryos to produce ‘saviour siblings’ along with the discarding of unwanted embryos. Despite vigorous lobbying in the House of Lords, their Lordships passed these provisions by a considerable majority. At the time of writing this report we await the reading of this Bill in the House of Commons.

This Bill is also being seen by many as an opportunity to alter the provisions of the Abortion Act. There will probably be further attempts by pro-life MPs to lower the limit for abortion from 24 weeks. However, there is also expected to be a determined effort to make abortion more easily available. This will include doing away with the need for the signature of two doctors to certify the need for an abortion in the first trimester, leading to abortion on demand, and permitting nurse-led abortions with the use of medical techniques.

Another matter that occupied our attention was the Scottish Government Consultation about the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act and its implementation. Together with the Child Protection Coordinator and the Lead Signatory, the Convener and Clerk responded in detail to this consultation regarding how this Act is to be implemented, including the time scale of its implementation, its scope and charges to be levied. This Act will have a significant effect on both paid and volunteer staff who work with vulnerable groups. It will replace the Protection of Children Scotland Act and the present Act governing work with adults at risk. The aim of the Act, which is to prevent abuse of the most vulnerable, is laudable and we must do all we can to further this aim. However, the amount of bureaucracy involved and the proposed reliance on computer-stored data give cause for concern about the efficiency and confidentiality of its implementation.

We also responded to the Government consultation on The Discrimination Law Review. While supporting legislation which outlaws discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, age, disability and so on, we are concerned that some of the proposals may endanger freedom of speech. While the Government have agreed to a clause protecting freedom of speech with regard to incitement to religious hatred, this is not so far the case with regard to sexual orientation. If no such clause is included, there is the danger that any declaration of Biblical sexual ethics might be deemed to be offensive or discriminatory. The Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill is still going through Parliament.

The Committee was represented at a conference, organised by the National Commission for Pastoral and Social Care, on domestic abuse. The aim was to look at ways of working together towards a better understanding of the damage caused by domestic abuse. The conference highlighted the emotional and psychological impact that domestic abuse has on children who witness it, with the claim that it actually affects brain development, functioning and size which results in them being disadvantaged in many ways as they grow up. Consequently,
children in abusive situations find difficulty in relating sensitively to others, can be oblivious to social cues, may be prone to dissociation and are unable to empathise or to experience social connectedness.

**(B) REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY LIAISON OFFICER**

It is probably stating the obvious that the major item of parliamentary interest for us all in 2007 was the election for a new term of the Scottish Parliament. What may not be so generally known is that this event had a major influence, some might say disruptive influence, on the Parliament itself. Thus, once the polling date had been set, parliamentary business was seriously altered, even reduced, by the run-up to the dissolution of the old body. Matters which could not be fully completed before the end of term, or as cynics might put it, which could adversely affect the ruling party’s election prospects, were postponed, delayed or cancelled.

Similarly, in the immediate post-election period, there was a “shaking-out” phase as the winners attempted to appoint their own ministers, committees and administration, while the losers were busy moving out and perhaps looking for new jobs. A further cause of disruption this time was that the winning party’s majority was so slender that they could only hope to govern by setting up alliances with one or more of the other parties. We therefore experienced a very lengthy period of inter-party negotiation, known in the media as “horse-trading”, before the ruling SNP could be confident of having sufficient MSP votes on various issues to carry the day and be able to legislate. Even then it was clear that most of the SNP’s controversial pre-election or manifesto promises would have to be delayed or perhaps abandoned altogether. At best they could only operate as a minority government by agreeing to take up some points or pledges from their other party allies.

Many, if not most, Scottish voters found the idea of what could be called consensus politics quite attractive and exciting, not least because of its apparent promise of less political party in-fighting and therefore perhaps purer democracy with less turmoil for the nation. The reality of course has been a dearth of fresh parliamentary action and the only significant legislation has been the passing, after major amendments, of the finance bill in early 2008.

The SNP’s avowed intention of consulting the nation on the question of full Scottish independence has had to be put off. However there has been a noticeable effort to persuade the electorate of the merits of the case by such actions as the abolition of bridge tolls, the stated intention to seek more devolved powers from Westminster (not very successful to date), and the launching of what the First Minister called “A National Conversation” on Scotland’s future.

Whatever the intention, this last proposal presents a golden opportunity for denominations, congregations and even individuals, to submit their views and priorities to Holyrood. The success or failure of such submissions will be a sure gauge of whether or not we now have a real “listening parliament.”

**(C) THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY GRANT-AID SCHEME**

Under the Grant-Aid Scheme, the Committee continues to help kick-start a variety of caring initiatives and youth projects in several communities. The following projects received financial support from the Committee during the current financial year.

**Road to Recovery Initiatives**

The Caladh Trust employs Stan Gowdy as a full time Alcohol Outreach Worker. The Trust operates a drop-in programme in An Caladh on four days and has piloted one in Lochboisdale in partnership with the Free Church. Stan works closely with the South Uist and Benbecula congregation in running Road to Recovery meetings there. He also does one-to-one work in clients’ homes. An integral part of his remit is to support the families of those affected by addictions. He also supports Road to Recovery meetings in Lewis on a monthly basis. Ian Polworth has been working as Alcohol and Drug Support Worker at Madras Street, Inverness, since 2006, under the supervision of the Free North Church.

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Family Support Scotland

Family Support Scotland (FSS) is a community-based ministry of marriage and family therapy counselling which began in Dundee in January of 2005 under the leadership of Robert Rahaim. It was developed as a part of the ministry partnership between the Free Church of Scotland and Mission to the World. The purpose of Family Support Scotland is to provide professional counselling and education in support of families in the church and in the communities around the church. Overall, the growth of the work has given much encouragement. Plans for the future include development of more specific helps to ministers and their families, establishment of a family resource centre within St Peter’s Free Church, Dundee, and the development of a community-based parent training support scheme. The feasibility of recruiting additional staff to address other areas of need such as drug and alcohol counselling is also being considered.

The Assynt Christian Community Youth Project

The Assynt Christian Community Youth Project (ACCYP) was formed in 1997 in Lochinver in north-west Sutherland, by a group of concerned Christians from several denominations who wanted to bring Christian influences to bear on the community’s young people by providing educational support, improved sports facilities and the establishment of a youth café facility with a Christian ethos. By helping to build up their self-confidence and sense of self-worth, it was believed that this in turn would help them avoid the temptations of drugs, alcohol and unhealthy lifestyles and encourage more responsible decision making.

As a result of funding from various bodies, and help from the Free Church’s Grant Aid Scheme, Erick Olsen was employed as a full time youth worker in 2006. Erick works closely with the local teens in many different ways. He has developed a good working relationship with Ullapool High School where he helps in the Support for Learning Department. Opting to travel with the pupils in the school bus from Lochinver to Ullapool gives him the opportunity during the hour long journey to address bullying, spirituality, academic queries and general questions about life.

Presbytery Youth Workers

The Grant-Aid Scheme has been able to support Presbytery Youth Workers within the Western Isles and Skye and Wester Ross Presbyteries. Mrs Alison Macdonald is based in Stornoway and is involved in building relationships with young people in Lewis and Harris through leisure and recreational activities. Throughout the year she has been working with youth fellowships and has led SU groups in schools and has organised events such as the Summer Bible Study for young people who have been at camps. She has also been involved with a youth visit to Korea, a Presbytery youth camp, the All for Jesus discipleship programme for young believers, and a youth day conference. Alison has arranged joint youth fellowship meetings and the Youth Leader Forum (an opportunity for youth leaders in the Presbytery meet to support and learn from each other).

Mrs Susan MacLean is youth work co-ordinator with the Skye and Wester Ross Presbytery. She diligently visits the scattered congregations within the Presbytery supporting and developing Sunday Schools, youth fellowships, a Campaigner group, after school clubs, trips, sports events and holiday clubs. She works in the churches, the schools and the local communities. She has organised Presbytery wide events such as two Presbytery youth camps and annual trips to Fairburn Activity Centre and has also been involved with advising congregations in annual training events on matters such as child protection and running Sunday schools and youth groups. In the course of her work, as well as contact with church children, she has involvement with many disaffected youngsters who have little or no church connection.

Kirkcaldy Community Worker

The newest project which the Grant-Aid Scheme has been able to support is the appointment of a Community Worker, Mr Andy Pearson, to help address and alleviate the problems of the Sinclairstown community in Kirkcaldy. Based in the local Free Church, Andy’s remit is to establish the church building as a gathering place for the community by means of a weekly café as well as a regular community drop-in. Another aspect of the role is to make the building available for use by other support agencies, such as those focused on helping disadvantaged children, those caught up in drug and alcohol addiction and those recently bereaved. The project involves home visitation, the recruitment and management of volunteer help from within the congregation and liaison with other caring agencies.
(D) MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

There is a crisis concerning marriage in our society. We do not need to quote statistics to prove that. Not that long ago we thought that the breakdown of marriage was restricted to America, or to cities, or to the non-Christian world. Our illusions have been completely shattered. There is not one community throughout our land, including the Highlands and Islands, where marriage breakdown is not a reality. There is hardly a congregation of the Free Church where marriage breakdown is not a reality. We all know that we only need to look at our own marriages and those in our own families to know the pressures that exist in this whole area.

The purpose of this report is to examine the pastoral implications of the widespread breakdown of marriage and to try to give some biblical guidance and practical counsel as to how ministers in particular ought to approach the subjects of marriage and divorce today. One of the harsh realities of all this is that normally a minister first becomes aware of a problem in this area when it is far too late – when the relationship has broken down, often, it would appear, irretrievably. Or it will come to the minister’s attention when a couple approach him for marriage and he discovers one of them has been married before, and a lot of discussion has to take place at that point.

This tells us that we really must be far more proactive and preventative in our pastoral care. “Prevention is better than cure” is the well known saying, and often it is so much more effective than attempting (to change the metaphor) “to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted”.

Lest all this sounds too negative, we ought also to remember the positive aspects, not least of which is the fact that marriage is one of the few areas where the minister not only has a statutory role, but also is willingly given a spiritual, pastoral and evangelistic opportunity and that at a most intimate stage of people’s lives, as they get married.

This report will look first at some of the pressures on marriage today, then at the principles from a Christian perspective (understanding for example what the Bible teaches about marriage and divorce) and finally at what all this suggests for pastoral practice.

Pressures

First of all, what are the pressures? There is a whole complex of pressures in connection with family, work and finance. There are pressures in connection with the use of money. There is the pressure of materialism today, for people to have the ‘latest’ and the ‘best’ and to overspend. There is the pressure on both spouses to work because of that, or perhaps for other very necessary reasons. There is the pressure of debt that may result because of this. There are also pressures that come from the use of time or the wrong use of time – perhaps too much time spent away from home in the company of members of the opposite sex. It is good to have hobbies, interests, sports and so on but, for instance, it is possible for one spouse to begin to have special friends of the opposite sex and that can be very dangerous in terms of the marriage relationship. But also it may be that there is simply not enough time spent together, or at least not enough ‘quality time’ spent together sharing experiences. It is from these shared experiences that couples then have shared memories. How often in our family life, and in particular when the children are growing up, we remember things that happened, and these are shared experiences that bind the family together. But if you are not sharing very much experience, then you are not going to have those shared memories – the binding together is going to be loosened.

This also raises the whole question of relationships with the children. Again this is an area of tremendous pressure. There are two particular stages in life when marriage breakdown is most prevalent: first, soon after the first child is born or when the children are young; and then, second, after the children have left home. Now in the early stage, the husband perhaps can’t cope with the pressures of family life, or he feels he is no longer the centre of attention, perhaps, as he once was. He maybe doesn’t like having his routine disturbed. Perhaps the wife’s loss of interest in sex might contribute. These are pressures which can come about in the early stage.

In the later stage, breakdown may be the culmination of years of problems that were suppressed for the children’s sake. This may not be as common as it was in the past, but it is still there. Perhaps the couple had stopped really communicating years before. They had developed totally different interests and it was only the children that were really holding them together. This can often coincide with the menopause in woman, and what is called the male menopause in men. It is a time of re-assessing and a new stage in life, and people sometimes don’t know how to handle it. It is, of course, entirely possible at other stages, for instance when the couple disagree over the raising of children, particularly when children reach the teenage years. There can often
be difficulties and tensions then about being too strict or too lax, and simply the pressures of badly disciplined children. All of these can contribute to the pressures on marriage.

A second whole area of pressure involves gender roles. There has been a new situation in our society in the last half century, due to women’s liberation, or feminism. And now a kind of reaction has set in to that, so we get a “lad and ladette” culture. The outcome of all this has been that equality now means that it’s acceptable for women to behave as badly as the worst men, instead of what surely would have been the ideal result: men being lifted up to the best of women’s behaviour – selflessness, care, conscientiousness and so on. But through all of this there really is a resultant confusion of gender roles, and it is often very difficult for couples to work this out in marriage. There is a pressure on the wife to be Superwoman and excel in high pressure employment, perhaps, plus being supermum at home and all the time look like Catherine Zeta Jones! Caroline Simon, who is an American Judge, said that “a woman had to look like a girl, act like a lady, think like a man and work like a dog!” That gives some idea of the kind of pressures that exist.

Also there are corresponding pressures on the husband to be Superman, at work, at home with the kids, to be a fitness fanatic, to look good. He’s expected to be masculine, but the whole idea of being the head of the home is actively discouraged. So again there are tremendous pressures there.

Another area of pressure is addiction: gambling, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, addictive sexual behaviour, including pornography (especially now internet pornography) and violence. People can have a violent streak or addiction to violent behaviour through things that have happened to them in the past, or it may be the result of frustration, the inability to talk (often on the part of the man), bitterness, pent up anger, resentment. All these things may lead to violent behaviour which can in itself become a kind of addiction, a way of resolving problems that doesn’t really resolve them at all. These are often among the causes of breakdown and divorce.

However, behind all of that there lies a paradigm shift in world view. We need not deal with this at a philosophical level. It is obvious at a popular level. The following sound-bites will illustrate this. “What’s right for you, is not necessarily right for me.” This is in the area of morality. No longer is there an accepted moral code in our society.

Often in the breakdown of marriage another motto recurs: “I need my space”, more often on the part of the man, but sometimes on the part of the woman too. This is in the area of psychology, this whole influence of selfishness. “I need my space or I need to give priority to my needs.”

A third area is the “Sex is god” mentality. Sexuality is viewed today as something intensely personal. No one has the right to tell someone that what they desire is wrong, except maybe the two things which most would outlaw: child abuse and rape. These are the only two areas which would be outlawed, but when you try to ask why exactly they (and only they) are outlawed, it’s difficult for people to come up with a rational answer. But the whole area of sexuality is another area of pressure on people because of the surrounding consensus.

The fourth area in the paradigm shift of world view is what may be called “feeling before honour”. If you’re in love, or you fall in love, or you fall out of love, that comes before everything else, and there is an attempt to separate this from the rest of life, so that in the area of relationships it is all right to put feeling before honour. You may have taken solemn vows to a woman or to a man, to be with him or her for the rest or your life, but feelings come before honour. But how can you really separate that from the rest of life? How can you really trust a man who fails to honour his solemn promises? If you need someone to stand by you in a time of trouble, either in business or in politics or in your personal life, can you really trust someone who hasn’t stood by his word in another area of life?

These are just some of the pressures on marriage today.

**Principles**

We look next at some of the principles of marriage from a Christian point of view – trying to understand marriage and divorce.

**Understanding marriage – from the Bible**

For a Christian trying to understand marriage, a knowledge of what the Bible has to teach – the Biblical background – is essential.
The origin of marriage is in the doctrine of the image of God in Genesis 1. Right from the beginning we are told that God created the human race in the image of God and that both male and female are in the image of God. There is this essential equality of both man and woman being in the image of God. Also the fact he created the male and female together in the image of God and told them to be fruitful and to multiply means that the community of marriage and family has this amazing nobility that is given to it, right at the start. It is this community of marriage that reflects the God-head. It is this community of marriage that reflects the community of the Trinity, because in marriage and family you have this community of persons bound together by love, and it’s a reflection (maybe a pale reflection) of the God-head. This places marriage in such an honourable and noble position. The result is that marriage is extraordinarily important, socially, spiritually and in terms of personal development. That’s why it is so crucial, not only for the Church but also for society, that marriage is re-invigorated in our society today.

More detail is given of what is involved in marriage in Genesis 2:24, where it said “therefore a man will leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife and the two will become one flesh”. This is expounded in detail in the book *I Married You* (Walter Trobisch), where he argues that Genesis 2:24 (cited by both Jesus and Paul) really sums up the three sides to marriage. First, there’s the *leaving* which speaks about the public, the social and the legal side of marriage. Even in those earliest times there was the emphasis that a new home was being set up. When a man loved a woman and they became married, they were leaving their parents’ home and setting up a new home. In every society, no matter how primitive or how advanced, there is some kind of public recognition or (in our modern societies) legal recognition of this fact and that is an important aspect of marriage.

Secondly, there is what is translated in the older version by the word “cleave”. *Cleaving* means to be united, to be joined together. This speaks about the commitment side of marriage, love, not just in the sexual side of marriage, but love in its fullest sense, in the total commitment to one another to be united as a new unit.

Thirdly, there is the area of *one flesh* which includes the whole area of being one emotionally and one sexually, and the Bible in general, and particularly in the Song of Solomon, is completely unashamed of that.

These are the three aspects of marriage we find in Genesis 2.

**A Definition of Marriage**

So can we come up with some sort of definition of marriage from this Biblical material? Lord Penzance, a 19th Century English Judge, summed it up very succinctly: “Marriage is the voluntary union for life, of one man and one woman”. It’s an excellent definition of what marriage is, and particularly what is a valid marriage. It’s a more succinct version of the more long winded version in the Westminster Confession of Faith, but saying exactly the same thing. There are certain aspects that we would have to emphasise and perhaps to add. There’s *permanency* – “for life”. “What God has joined together let no man separate”, Jesus said. There’s *consent* – it has to be a voluntary union. This is also a Biblical emphasis. In Genesis 24, Rebecca is asked, “Will you go with this man?” So it would appear that even in that very early society there was an emphasis on the consent of the woman. The family arranged the marriage, but there had to be the free consent of the woman. This also has a general theological basis. In the New Testament marriage is compared with the relationship of Christ and his church. Just as there is consent in becoming a Christian, in loving the Lord Jesus, so in the same way there ought to be consent in marriage.

But there is another area that isn’t dealt with, of course, in that very brief definition of marriage, and that is that it must not involve the committing of incest. There are the laws of consanguinity and affinity. Consanguinity refers to people who are related to oneself, like one’s mother, sister and so on. Affinity refers to people who have a similar type of relationship of consanguinity, but to one’s wife or ex-wife or one’s deceased wife. The Westminster Confession adopts generally the Scriptural position from Leviticus 18, also 1 Corinthians 5:1. The present civil legislation is rather different. There is now quite a difference between what is forbidden in the Old Testament and what is allowed in legal terms. For instance, modern legislation allows marriage to a wife’s sister, not just to a deceased wife’s sister, but to a divorced wife’s sister. Also marriage to a wife’s aunt or a wife’s niece is no longer forbidden. Thus there is a difference in the modern legislation concerning forbidden marriages in cases of consanguinity and affinity, whereas the Biblical position and the Westminster Confession position is that it’s identical for both. It is a valid question as to whether we are justified in the wholesale adoption of Old Testament law in this regard, while we do not do so in other areas of law.

There are various passages of the New Testament relevant to a consideration of marriage. One is the emphasis in Ephesians 5:22-33 on married love and Christ’s love and the comparison made between them – the marriage relationship and the relationship between Christ and his Church. It surely speaks supremely of the great nobility
of marriage that it is even spoken of in the same breath as the relationship between Christ and his Church. But also it emphasises that there are different roles in marriage. We have already stressed the emphasis the Bible has right from the beginning on the equality of man and women before God being equally made in the image of God. However, there is also an emphasis in the Bible on the headship of the man and the submission of the women. It is interesting to compare this again to the Doctrine of the Trinity, because essentially there is the co-equality of the persons of the Trinity, but in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus there was a willing submission to the will of the Father and this is actually used in the New Testament as illustrative of submission in marriage. Just as the man is the head of the woman, so Christ is the head of the Church and God is the head of Christ. So there is a headship of the husband, but it is a particular kind of headship. It is not some sort of domineering, tyrannical headship. It is the headship of Christ, so husbands should ask: How does Christ act as head of the church? Similarly, the kind of submission that is required of the wife is not some kind of slavish fear. It’s the submission of the Church to Christ. So the whole thing is bound up in love, Christ’s love for his Church and the Church’s love for Christ. Evangelical feminists, of course, point to Ephesians 5:21, “submit to one another”, and deny any special submission of wife to husband. Some conservatives say that verse 21 is not relevant and there is a break after 21. Verse 21 is relevant, and the following verses explain how that submission is to be put into effect in the realm of marriage. The husband “submits” himself to his wife as Christ gave himself up for the Church. This further defines headship in marriage.

Another emphasis in the Biblical teaching about marriage is the emphasis in the New Testament about marrying in the Lord. This is an area that can provide great difficulty. Often the text that is used to prove this is the wrong one: “be not unequally yoked with unbelievers”. The context of that in 2 Corinthians 6:14, is not marriage, but idolatry. However, there are other passages that do speak about this area. For instance in 1 Corinthians 7:12ff. Paul is speaking about a Christian who is already married to a non-Christian. This would have happened quite often in New Testament times. A wife or a husband would be converted, but the other partner was not converted or not yet converted. So what does Paul say about that situation? He says that if the unbelieving partner is willing to remain, to stay in the marriage, then the Christian should stay. In other words they should stay together. However, this same passage speaks about what is desirable. In 1 Corinthians 7:39, where Paul is talking about a Christian widow whose husband has died, he says she is free to marry again, but only in the Lord. This means that she should marry a Christian; she should enter into a relationship that is in relationship with the Lord. So there is clear guidance from Scripture, but the pastoral situation may be very unclear. What does the minister do where Scripture has not been followed, or where it is not being followed? He has to try to handle that situation sensitively.

Understanding Marriage – the historical perspective
We should also look briefly at the historical perspective on marriage. Here the booklet on Marriage and Divorce (Free Church of Scotland Study Panel, 1988) is very helpful. Marriage has a complicated history in Europe in general and in Scotland in particular. In first century Greek and Roman society the situation was very different from today. There wasn’t the emphasis on legal documentation for marriage. There were some documented marriages, but that was only when a lot of property was involved. Most marriages were undocumented, yet they were recognised socially and publicly. Of course, there was betrothal and there was some kind of ceremony and social, public celebration. The New Testament situation was very complex as we know from 1 Corinthians, and yet we have no practical guidance as to how the apostles viewed the various kinds of marriage situation that there were. They simply seemed to view the marriages people were in when they became Christians as valid.

Following that there was the whole medieval development of Canon Law which is extremely complex. But it is clear that in some ways the church was moving far beyond what the Bible says, for instance in their development of the concept of consanguinity. The Canon Law excluded cousins of the sixth degree. In other words, you couldn’t marry your sixth cousin. And of course divorce was absolutely prohibited.

Then with the Reformation, there was the rejection both of the sacramental status of marriage (marriage was viewed and is still viewed by the Roman Catholic Church as a sacrament) and there was the rejection of the absolute indissolubility of marriage. However, Scotland has been slightly different in many ways from the time of the Reformation. For instance, alone amongst all the nations of Christendom it retained some principles of Canon Law until quite recent times. The distinction between regular and irregular marriages was recognised by the State up to 1940. Irregular refers to a couple simply giving consent before two witnesses, and both the Church and State recognised the validity of that marriage. This was abolished in 1940, but nonetheless it remains part of the folk memory of people as they think about marriage, and so the situation in Scotland can often be quite different from other parts of the world. Also, all matters relating particularly to divorce were dealt with by a commissary court, and its proceedings were secret, so there is a great lack of academic knowledge about what actually took place in relation to marriage and divorce during that period.
In this context the Study Panel booklet warns:

...we as a people or a Church cannot slough off the past and forget it. That is why we must be very careful in reading books on marriage and divorce by authors of a different background – e.g. English or American – which may be excellent in other respects.

An example of this occurs in *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church* by David Instone-Brewer:

*People have interpreted what the Bible says about divorce and remarriage in two main ways (although there are many others):*

1. **There are two valid grounds for divorce, but remarriage is not allowed unless one of the couple has died.**
2. **There are no grounds for divorce or even separation.**

However, in Scotland since the Reformation a different position has been held: that there are two valid grounds for divorce (adultery and desertion) and that remarriage is allowed.

**Understanding divorce – the historical perspective**

As has been just noted, at the Reformation there was a rejection of the absolute indissolubility of marriage. It recognised divorce on two grounds, adultery and desertion, and that was the way things continued right up to 1938, until the Divorce (Scotland) Act added cruelty, sodomy and bestiality as grounds of divorce, and also the concept of a no fault divorce was introduced in that same act, with the addition of incurable insanity among the grounds for divorce. But the major piece of legislation which has had far-reaching effects is the Divorce (Scotland) Act, 1976. It provided that irretrievable breakdown was the sole ground of divorce, and it had to be evidenced by one of five sets of facts: adultery, desertion, unreasonable behaviour, two years separation plus the defender’s consent to divorce, or five years separation without consent.

There have been subsequent changes to the law. The two years mentioned above have been reduced to one year, and the five years to two years. There are now two grounds for divorce (or dissolution of a civil partnership) in Scotland: **irretrievable breakdown** and **gender recognition** (sex-change). Irretrievable breakdown can be established only on the basis of one of four “fact situations”. These are:

- Adultery: This ground does not include adultery condoned or connived at.
- Unreasonable behaviour: Unreasonable behaviour includes activities ranging from financial irresponsibility, violent actions and nagging, to ignoring a spouse’s emotional or sexual needs.
- One year’s non-cohabitation by the spouses where both consent to the divorce.
- Two years’ non-cohabitation by the spouses where there is no mutual consent to the divorce. Non-cohabitation means living separate lives and not living together as a normal married couple would.

The second ground for divorce is for a transsexual who has an interim gender recognition certificate.

**Understanding divorce – from the Bible**

There are no doubt many different positions on divorce and remarriage in the Christian church, ranging from a “high” position that would virtually outlaw all divorce, possibly allowing separation, but not remarriage, to the “low” position where divorce and remarriage would be merely regarded as civil rights. In Scotland, historically, and in our own particular denomination, we have another position: divorce is allowable for adultery or desertion, and remarriage is allowed.

Each of these positions would claim Biblical support. The “high” view would refer to Jesus’ apparent banning of all divorce in Mark 10:2-12. The “low” view would possibly argue that the Bible’s teaching on matters like marriage and divorce are cultural, and cultures change. The traditional Scottish Presbyterian view would refer to Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19:3-9 and Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 7:15.

**Traditional Scottish view**

The traditional view is that divorce was tolerated in Old Testament times – Jesus said that Moses allowed divorce for the hardness of their hearts. John Murray (in *Divorce*) held that God never in any way commanded divorce, but there is an allowance that if a wife is divorced, this is what happens. At any rate, divorce was tolerated in that society right up to the time of Jesus, and one school amongst the Jews says that divorce could be on very trivial grounds. However, right at the end of the Old Testament, God says that he hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). This is a passage both about the marriage relationship and God’s relationship with Israel, and in that context, God says, “I hate divorce”. The traditional understanding is that this is the position that the Lord
Jesus takes. In Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 he appears to take what is almost an absolutist position about divorce: “What God has joined together, let no man separate”, but then he adds the only ground for divorce is adultery or fornication.

Then in 1 Corinthians 7:10, Paul appears to introduce another ground. The context is that of a Christian married to a non-Christian spouse. If the non-Christian is prepared to stay with the Christian spouse, Paul says they should stay together. But if the non-Christian spouse is unwilling to stay, then the Christian partner is free. The question is what does that mean? Does he mean simply free from the obligations of that marriage, or free to re-marry? John Murray restricted this to separation (he uses the phrase from the canon law (separation “from bed and board” – a thoro et mensa) and held that it gave no right to remarry. He also held that this freedom to separate was strictly limited to the situation where a non-Christian deserted a Christian. However, in terms of equity, you can’t have a law that’s just for Christians. Marriage is available to everyone and the Westminster Confession is right to include desertion in the grounds for divorce.

Thus according to the traditional Scottish Presbyterian view, divorce is allowed, but only on two grounds – adultery and wilful desertion – and the divorced party is allowed to remarry.

**Different perspective on divorce**

However, a different perspective has emerged in recent years. One of the leading exponents of this view is David Instone-Brewer. He has written two books, one more academic (*Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible*) and one more popular (*Divorce and Remarriage in the Church*). Methodologically, his approach differs from the traditional ones, in that he looks at the relevant Biblical texts against the contemporary historical background. Much more has been discovered in recent years about Judaism, the teaching of the Rabbis and Pharisaism than was known in even the first half of the twentieth century. Such new discoveries, and the new emphases that emerge from them, have to be treated with some caution, as is shown by “the new perspective on Paul”, for instance.

However, it would be utterly wrong for a Bible-believing church such as our own to ignore anything that can throw light on the meaning of the Biblical text. We lay great emphasis on our ministers being able to understand Greek and Hebrew, the languages in which the Bible was originally written. But we also need to appreciate that those languages were used in a particular historical and cultural milieu. For instance, until Greek papyri were discovered in Egypt, classical scholars thought that the New Testament was written in very bad Greek. In fact it is written in the Koine (common) Greek of the first century.

Instone-Brewer argues that the Old Testament, as understood by the Jewish Rabbis and Jesus’ contemporaries, teaches that there were a limited number of grounds for divorce:

- Adultery (in Deuteronomy 24:1, affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19)
- Emotional and physical neglect (in Exodus 21:10-11, affirmed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7)
- Abandonment and abuse (included in neglect, as affirmed in 1 Corinthians 7)

Those who divorced on these grounds were entitled to remarry. He argues that the expressions “free” or “not bound” were clearly understood in this way.

Interestingly, he also argues that these grounds were based on marriage vows which made a commitment to clothe, feed and love (found in marriage certificates discovered near the Dead Sea). These have formed the basis of marriage vows ever since, even to the present day – reflected in such phrases as “love, honour and cherish” or “love, comfort, honour and keep”. The same idea occurs in Ephesians 5:29, where Paul is dealing with marriage and he says that husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies (v. 28). He continues: “After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the Church”. There is the same emphasis: love, feed and care for.

The implication is that where these commitments are broken, divorce is permitted. Notice, Instone-Brewer says “permitted”, not mandatory. This is important, as in first century Roman society, divorce was considered mandatory.

Does this mean that divorce could be had for almost any reason? Instone-Brewer answers in the negative, and he finds that the incident described in Matthew 19:3ff deals with this very question. The Pharisees ask him “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” Jesus’ answer has traditionally been understood to be: No, there is only one ground for divorce and that is sexual immorality (adultery). In fact, Instone-Brewer shows that the Pharisee’s question was something much more specific and referred to a contemporary controversy which would have been understood by everyone present. They were asking if Jesus believed an “any cause” divorce
was lawful. The background to this is a dispute between two schools of thought among the Pharisees. The school of Hillel understood Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1 to have given two grounds of divorce – adultery and “any cause”. This meant, in practice, a man could divorce his wife for virtually any reason at all. The school of Shammai, on the other hand, held that that passage only referred to adultery. Jesus in his answer agreed with the Shammaites. Because the parameters of the debate were limited to that particular matter, Jesus’ statements should not be understood as outlawing any other kind of divorce (as becomes plain when we consider Paul’s teaching on desertion (I Corinthians 7).

If Instone-Brewer is correct, we need to rethink our position on divorce and remarriage. However, even if he is right, this does not mean that we can simply accept the present civil legal position as being correct. While Instone-Brewer maintains the idea of fault or guilt in grounds for divorce, the present legal position does not. It is obvious that this area requires more study, and it would appear that the time is ripe for the General Assembly to set up a special committee, along the lines of the previous Study Panel, to look at the subject in the light of these recent studies.

Pastoral Practice

Pastoral Practice – Marriage

There is a very positive pastoral opportunity in the area of marriage. The first emphasis needs to be on preaching. Marriage should be regularly dealt with in our preaching, not necessarily having a whole series on marriage, or even treating marriage as a discrete subject, although sometimes that’s very appropriate, but also as a minister preaches through Scripture he should bring out these emphases. We need to constantly remember that there are people in our congregations who may need to hear that emphasis. It is not unspiritual to talk about these matters. In fact, it is linked in to the most spiritual thing of all – the relationship of Christ with his Church.

There is also, of course, a great pastoral opportunity when a couple approach a minister for marriage. There is an opportunity to explain what is involved in the Christian view of marriage. They may be Christians, they may not be, but it’s an opportunity to explain the Christian view of marriage. Marriage, and even Christian marriage, is not just for Christians. Marriage is for everyone, and if people understand the vows they are taking before God and understand the Christian emphasis and want to have that kind of ceremony, it is good to do it. The minister should explain it is a Christian ceremony. It is different from a civil marriage conducted by a Registrar. The vows are taken before God, so the people involved must believe that God exists and at least they must be sympathetic to the Christian world view. This gives an opportunity to explain what that is.

Of course, the minister has to ask the couple if either of them has been married before. If so, he must obtain details of the divorce and discuss it with them. If he is not sure what to do, he should not agree to anything until he has sought advice. He can seek advice from his Presbytery, for instance. It is, however, much better to have one’s position on divorce thought out beforehand. Matters may not be entirely clear, but that does not absolve the minister of having thought out his position clearly in Biblical terms, so in good conscience he can explain to people what he believes the Biblical position to be; and if he feels that he cannot in all conscience marry a couple, then at least he can give good reasons.

The minister may also have to explain to the couple the legal side of marriage. Some people are au fait with what they have to do, but others don’t have a clue. The minister is often the first port of call, so he has to ensure that they know that he cannot carry out the wedding without a schedule from the Registrar. Only the bride and groom can obtain that, but the minister may have to give any help or information that they might require in doing this.

It is not essential, but it is desirable to have a rehearsal. Here it should be noted that there is a growing tendency for the couple, or the parents, or some of the people involved, to try to arrange everything including the service. Could you imagine going to a surgeon and telling him how to do the operation? But some people seem to have no compunction at all in telling the minister how things should be done. This kind of situation has to be handled authoritatively but sensitively, without being overbearing. The minister can only be authoritative if he has thought things out well and has a good reason for what he does, but he should make clear that after discussion of whatever points are involved, the decision must rest with himself. He is the presiding minister and only he can conduct the ceremony. Particularly when he has had experience of officiating at weddings, he knows how things are best done and how things are not well done. At the same time, he must remember that it is the couple’s big day and he should not spoil it by being overly fussy about things that do not matter at all.
In the wedding ceremony itself, the minister should try to ensure that everything is done “decently and in order”. It can be very upsetting on an important occasion like this if the ceremony is chaotic or embarrassing. But at the same time there should be a relaxed and a welcoming informality about the ceremony. It is supposed to be a happy occasion, and not as one minister once said at a wedding, “This is indeed a sad and solemn occasion”! It really is a happy occasion, and the way the minister conducts the service and smiles should communicate this to people. We need to remember that, for many people, this will be one of the few times that they are ever inside a Church building and we should want to make it a positive experience for them. In connection with this, the address the minister gives is very important as well. This is not the time for a class on sex and marriage! Such things should have been discussed long before then, if necessary. Nor is it time for a paper on the theology and the history of marriage! It shouldn’t be pitched at too high a level. However, equally, it is not the time for pious platitudes. A theme that is pastoral, practical and passionate should be picked, and what better theme can there be than love – human love and God’s love! There is room for practical advice and evangelistic appeal. This has to be done sensitively, but it is a great opportunity.

Pastoral practice – Divorce

Prevention is better than cure. We should try to be aware of situations developing. We are to look out for warning signs: how a couple react to one another, even their body language, any cooling off spiritually on the part of one partner or another. We should try to involve such couples more in the life of the congregation, because often the trouble is this cooling spiritually and not being involved. Whether that is a symptom of the problem or the cause of the problem is often difficult to detect.

If one spouse comes to the minister with worries, what does he do? These may be very clear worries or they may be more general. He must try as soon as possible, obviously with the permission of the person who has come to him, to speak to the other spouse as there are always two sides to every story, and it is important from an early stage to try to resolve the issues. It is also important that he see them together as soon as possible and assure them he is not there to find fault or be judgemental but to help them. If things are obviously quite difficult, he should seek permission to involve someone else: an elder, his wife or another mature Christian woman to speak to the wife particularly.

He should try to get to the real problems. This may be impossible if people aren’t prepared to be honest. There may be things like debt, addiction, depression, unfaithfulness, and the minister may have to get specialist help in some of these situations. Above all, the husband and wife have to be encouraged to talk, because often at the root of the problem is that they have not been able to talk through the issues or to talk about the problems.

If necessary, the minister is called to support one or other or both of them through what may be a very messy separation or divorce process, and throughout the whole thing he must try and be as impartial as possible. This may be extremely difficult. There is often fault on both sides, but it is not always so. Sometimes it is so obvious that one person has really acted abominably, but the minister must try to maintain impartiality.

Conclusion

The Church today has to make a concentrated effort to do everything in its power to support marriage in our communities and in our Church. We must encourage our young people to think seriously about marriage. We are bombarded all the time with everything that goes wrong in marriage, and so we should be encouraging our young people to see the positive side of marriage. We need to encourage our parents to give a positive experience of marriage to their children, because that is often the most influential thing – what young people see as they grow up. We need to encourage strong Christian commitment and involvement of the parents in the congregation.

But above all we ought to pray for our married couples and families in the enormous pressures that they face today. The Church must make this a priority in the life of our congregations.

Resources

Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible, David Instone-Brewer, Eerdmans, 2002
Divorce and Remarriage in the Church, David Instone-Brewer, Paternoster, 2003
Divorce and Remarriage, Andrew Cornes, CFP, 2002
Divorce, John Murray, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1961
Marriage and Divorce, Study Panel of the Free Church of Scotland, 1988
Love Minus Zero, Alex MacDonald, CFP, 1989
I Married You, Walter Trobisch, IVP
Introduction

One in every two children alive today lives in poverty. One billion people live on less than $1 a day. Since 1990 around 270 million people have died from poverty-related causes. Nine out of ten Christians live in poverty. The statistics could be multiplied till they no longer made any impact as we become paralysed by the sheer enormity of the problem. Yet behind these statistics are real people, mothers and babies, brothers and sisters, grandparents and grandchildren. The same nervous system responds to pain in them as in us. They share the common human desire to live and to keep their loved ones alive.

But is the problem not so large that it becomes pointless even to attempt to do something about it? The answer is a resounding “NO!” for three reasons. Firstly, our God has revealed himself as the God of the poor, the one who cares for them and is concerned by their plight. We must share that concern if we are not to come under his judgement for our callousness. Secondly, various organisations are making a difference. One such is FAIRTRADE which is the subject of this report. Thirdly, we ought to cultivate the mind set of the little boy who was walking along a beach strewn with thousands of starfish thrown up by a storm. He was throwing what he could back into the sea, one by one. An adult passing by remarked that there were so many starfish he could not possibly make a difference by rescuing so few. The little boy stooped down and picked up yet another starfish and, as he threw it back into the sea, said, “I can make a difference to this one.”

The causes of poverty are mostly due to man’s greed or lack of concern. There are also problems caused by earthquakes and volcanoes, but even there the human factor comes into play when we respond to those affected or choose to do nothing to help. Most poverty however, is caused by war or unjust trade. We can add to that the consequences of climate change which also has a dimension of human greed attached to it. This report will focus on the issue of trade.

Before going on to look at trade issues and the FAIRTRADE movement in particular it is important that the Biblical teaching on the subject be outlined.

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**Sixty Minute Marriage**, Rob Parsons, Care

**No Longer Two**, Brian Edwards

David Instone-Brewer’s Websites:
http://www.instone-brewer.com/
http://www.tabs-online.com/Tyndale/Staff/Instone-Brewer/index.htm

Marriage in Scotland (General Register Office)
http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files/frm1text.pdf

Divorce (Scotland) Act 1976

Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 – http://slcc.strath.ac.uk/scotslawcourse/hw/rep/hwregstatutes_1.htm

Marriage (Scotland) Act 2002 – An Act of the Scottish Parliament to amend the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 to enable civil marriages to be solemnised in certain places approved by local authorities; and for connected purposes.

Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/asp_20060002_en_1#pb1-l1g1

DesktopLawyer.co.uk
http://www.desktoplawyer.co.uk/dt/browse/law/index.cfm?fuseaction=ViewContent&sid=75927&aid=35179

Weddings.co.uk
http://www.weddings.co.uk/info/scotland.htm

**E) FAIRTRADE**

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**Introduction**

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Biblical Teaching

Throughout the Bible we have teaching on the poor, God’s concern for the poor and our obligations to the poor. Some of these passages are heart warming and others are solemn warnings.

The Pentateuch contains much enlightening material in the laws given to Israel at Sinai that were to govern their social structure. We have the provisions made for the poor in the Year of Jubilee, Gleaning and even Slavery, (Leviticus 25; Deuteronomy 15 and 24:19-22). Gleaning is beautifully illustrated for us in the story of Ruth. There it was neither cold charity nor legalistic provision for accruing merit but an expression of true compassion for the poor as encouraged in the law: “... you shall open your hand to him (i.e. your poor brother).” (Deuteronomy 15:8) The Israelites were reminded how God had looked on them with compassion and were expected to reflect that divine care for them in their own relations with others.

The wisdom literature continues the injunction “to defend the rights of the poor and needy” with a stark judgement that any who “oppresses the poor shows contempt for their maker.” (Proverbs 14:31 & 29:7) One of the strongest expressions of this is given by Job where he protests his innocence before God. He gives a prominent place to his care for the poor, even accepting that had he turned the poor man away empty handed from his gate he would have deserved all he was suffering and much more. (Job 31:16-23) The psalms also have frequent references to the poor, Psalm 146 being a good example.

In the prophets we hear much about the poor and social justice. Amos clearly condemns those “who buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals.” (Amos 8:4-6) Perhaps Ezekiel is the prophet who expresses most strikingly the divine displeasure with any ill-treatment of the poor when he says, “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and the needy.” (Ezekiel 16:49) Isaiah spoke out against hypocritical religious practices, reminding the people that true fasting was demonstrated when God’s people chose to “loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free … to share your bread with the hungry … and not to hide yourself from your own flesh.” We must be particularly careful we do not ignore the import of the whole chapter when we read or expound the final verses on the Sabbath lest we encourage a legalistic sabbatarianism among our own people. (Isaiah 58:6-7)

Jesus picked up on Isaiah’s prophecy when he read from Isaiah 61, “… he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. … to set at liberty those who are oppressed, …” announcing to the congregation that this was now fulfilled in their hearing. In his teaching he emphasised the need to “Love your neighbour as yourself”; “love your enemies, and do good, and lend expecting nothing in return, … and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful,” (Luke 6:35-36); “Sell your possessions, and give to the needy …” (Luke 12:33) The well known parable of the Good Samaritan and the very solemn teaching on the judgement day in Matthew 25:37-39 leave us in no doubt that a heart for the poor is at the heart of the gospel because it reflects the heart of our heavenly Father. His healing miracles serve to underline this.

The apostle Paul continued this emphasis on the poor; referring to a decision by a church council he said, “Only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do,” (Galatians 2:10) John is more specific saying, “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (1 John 3:17). James adds, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:27)

So much more could be said. The Bible is so full of teaching on our obligations towards the poor and the oppressed that we have to ask ourselves if we are being faithful to the Word in our regular teaching ministry, or allowing our predilections to select what we think important and play down the massive volume of Scripture that talks of the poor. Throughout the history of the church there have been those who spoke up for the poor.

Tertullian describing the use of funds raised among believers says, “… they are not taken and spent on feasting and drinking-sessions, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of needy boys and girls without parents, and of housebound old people … People say, See how they love one another.” Basil the Great in the fourth century said, “Wherefore, as often as you were able to help others, and refused, so often did you do them wrong.” Clement of Alexandria rather whimsically said, “Goods are called goods because they do good, and they have been provided by God for the good of humanity.” Calvin argued that the eighth commandment involves an obligation to assist those “we see oppressed by the difficulty of affairs.” Later John Owen wrote, “Churches and their members ought to think of caring for the poor as an eminent grace and excellent duty. For
Christ is glorified and the gospel is honoured when we care for the poor. … it is one of the priorities of Christian communities because it is the main way we show the gospel grace of love.” (All quoted in Good News to the Poor by Tim Chester, IVP)

**Trade Injustice**

For most people it is clear that trade is the engine of economic development and that better management of international trade offers one of the best opportunities for people in developing countries to escape from poverty and build sustainable livelihoods. It is also widely accepted that the present international trade system unfairly limits the potential for poorer countries to achieve these objectives, especially in agricultural markets.

Take cotton, one of the world’s oldest crops, as an example. Around 100 million rural households around the world are involved in its production. In 2002, prices of cotton fell to the lowest level in 30 years, and despite small rises, have remained below US $2 per kilo. Whilst some of this can be attributed to reductions in production costs as a result of technological advances, or to competition from synthetic fibres, a major contributor has been the unfair subsidies granted to their own farmers by rich cotton producing countries, notably the USA, China and the EU. In crop year 2003/4, 76% of US cotton was dumped on to world markets, with US farmers receiving millions of dollars in subsidies enabling them to undercut prices elsewhere. This has had a devastating effect on more cost-effective producers in poorer parts of the world.

Similar stories could be told about coffee, cocoa, sugar, bananas etc. where the power of the rich countries and multinational companies ensures they can look after the interests of their citizens or shareholders, with little or no regard for the devastation caused to hard working farmers, who are innocent victims of political pressures in far away lands.

Many factors contribute to trade injustice, some of the most important being:

*The dependency of many countries on a narrow range of primary export commodities*

These are mostly processed and marketed by companies in the developed world which retain most of the value added through these activities. Even where developing countries can invest in these processes, they are prevented from accessing developed markets by tariff systems that penalise products processed in the country of origin.

*Protectionist policies by richer countries*

These not only prevent producers in developing countries from accessing markets in richer countries through tariff barriers, but also undermine their domestic markets through export subsidies. Overproduction created by subsidies to the sugar industry in the EU, led to surpluses being dumped on the world market below the cost of production, depressing world prices by at least 12%.

*The power of a few dominant commodity traders*

For example, several million small-scale coffee farmers sell into a market where just four companies buy 40% of global output, and similar structures apply in cocoa, bananas, soya and many other products. In most developed markets, retailing has also become extremely consolidated – in Britain the “Big Four” supermarket chains account for over 70% of all food sales. In a series of price wars among the big supermarkets between 2002 and 2007 the price for loose conventional bananas in the UK was cut by as much as 45%. Globalisation offers buying companies operating at this scale huge benefits as they can seek the best deals from anywhere in the world, whereas producers, especially smallholders, are extremely limited in their ability to find new customers.

**FAIRTRADE – One way we can make a difference**

Fairtrade changes the lives of producers who are suffering as a result of unjust international trade rules. When we choose Fairtrade, it not only immediately benefits producers but also sends a signal to the government that we want to see a change in the unfair trade rules that undermine livelihoods and reduce the opportunities of millions of producers in developing countries.

The basic idea of arranging the sale of goods in such a way as to give a fair return to the producer is not new. We have it in small ventures such as Tearcraft, Traidcraft and a host of other small scale direct links between producers of craft work in a UK market. However, there has also grown up in recent years a much bigger movement that is successfully using consumer power to change the market place.
**Origins of FAIRTRADE**

The Fairtrade Foundation was established in 1992 by CAFOD, Christian Aid, New Consumer, Oxfam, Traidcraft and the World Development Movement. These founding organisations were later joined by Britain’s largest women’s organisation, the Women’s Institute, and also Tearfund. The first Fairtrade certified product, Green & Black’s Fairtrade Maya Gold chocolate was launched in 1994 and was shortly followed by Cafedirect, Fairtrade Coffee and Clipper Fairtrade Tea. Since then there has been a continuous growth in the number of products, outlets in the UK and consumer confidence. The growth of sales up to 2007 can be seen in the table below.

**Sales of Fairtrade certified products in the UK**

**Estimated UK retail sales by value 1998-2007 (£ million)**

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<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>93.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate/cocoa</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<td>34.0</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>47.7</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>21.8</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>140.8</td>
<td>195.0</td>
<td>286.3</td>
<td>493.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Estimated percentage increases from 2006-2007**

- Total sales: 127% increase by volume and 72% by estimated retail value
- Total coffee: 33% increase by volume and 24% by estimated retail value
- Total tea: 21% increase by volume and 24% by estimated retail value
- Total Wine: 47% increase by volume and 51% by estimated retail value
- Total Flowers: 71% increase by volume and 72% by estimated retail value
- Total Cotton: 1,655% increase by volume and 658% by estimated retail value

The figures for 2007 also show that the actual volumes of Fairtrade products more than doubled between 2006 and 2007. Globally, consumers worldwide spent £1.1bn on Fairtrade certified products in 2006. This is a 42% increase on the previous year directly benefiting over 7 million people – farmers, workers and their families in developing countries.

Worldwide, Fairtrade is working with 422 producer organizations in 49 countries, with benefits reaching around 5 million people – farmers, workers and their families.

The first Fairtrade label was launched in 1988 in the Netherlands and applied only to coffee. It was a specific response to the collapse of the world coffee price, which fell for some years to far less than the cost of production, and led to much suffering for coffee farmers and their families. Today, Fairtrade standards are set for a range of commodities from the developing world including FairTea, coffee, chocolate, cocoa, sugar, bananas, fresh and dried fruit, juices, biscuits, cakes and snacks, honey, jam and preserves, chutneys and sauces, rice, quinoa, herbs and spices, nuts and nut oil, wines, spirits, ale, confectionery, muesli, cereal bars, yoghurt, ice-cream, baby food, flowers, sports balls, sugar body scrub, cotton products including clothing, home ware, cloth toys and cotton wool. The FAIRTRADE Mark can now be found on over 700 products in shops, cafes, work places and online.

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1 Table and figures from the Fairtrade web site [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)
How does FAIRTRADE operate?

FAIRTRADE Foundation is the UK member of Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO www.fairtrade.net), which unites 20 national initiatives across Europe, Japan, North America, Mexico and Australia/New Zealand, and licenses the FAIRTRADE Mark in the UK.

The FAIRTRADE Mark guarantees:
- farmers a fair and stable price for their products;
- extra income for farmers and estate workers to improve their lives;
- a greater respect for the environment;
- a closer link between consumers and producers;
- a stronger position for small farmers in world markets.

Under Fairtrade labelling, there are two sets of generic producer standards; one for small farmers and one for workers on plantations and in processing factories. The first set applies to smallholders organised in co-operatives or other organisations with a democratic, participative structure. The second set applies to organised workers, whose employers pay decent wages, guarantee the right to join trade unions and provide decent housing, where relevant. On plantations and in factories, minimum health and safety, as well as environmental, standards must be complied with, and no child or forced labour can occur.

As Fairtrade is also about development, the generic standards distinguish between minimum requirements which producers must meet to be certified Fairtrade. Progress requirements also encourage produce organisations continuously to improve working conditions and product quality, to increase the environmental sustainability of their activities and to invest in the development of their organisations and the welfare of their members or workers.

The Fairtrade system seeks to tackle some of the current trade injustices by:
- providing minimum prices to producers that cover the costs of sustainable production and living;
- including a premium that producers can invest in development;
- offering advance credit facilities when requested by producers and encouraging contracts that allow for long-term planning and sustainable production practices;
- encouraging more direct trading relationships in the supply chain;
- encouraging small farmers to work together in co-operatives and associations, sharing market knowledge, increasing bargaining power and allowing greater community improvements.

The Fairtrade Foundation, with its international partners, checks that approved products continue to meet these criteria.

Some Examples

Banana growers in the Dominican Republic

Aquilino Durán’s banana farm in the northwest of the Dominican Republic is a hive of activity on harvest day. Aquilino is a member of ASOBANU, a 191-strong farmer co-operative that has been certified to sell to the Fairtrade market since 2004. The Fairtrade premium has meant the co-operative has been able to support the farmers in upgrading their farms to meet the requirements to sell to European supermarkets. For each box sold to the Fairtrade market, Aquilino earns an agreed and stable price which can be around a dollar more than he would earn from the conventional market.

ASOBANU can see many more things they’d like to help change through the Fairtrade premium. As well as supporting their own farmer members with training, technical advice and assisting them in meeting European supermarket requirements it also helps by improving farm roads, supporting more local school improvements, investing in a local maternal health centre and more sports facilities for young people.

Flower workers in Kenya

At Ravine Roses, a Fairtrade certified flower farm, Alice Gatonye has worked as a bucket washer for a year and lives with her two children and husband in a nearby town. She gets to work on a bicycle which she bought at a subsidised rate thanks to the bike project paid for by the Fairtrade premium. This means workers have more independence and no longer have to rely on overcrowded local buses. A lack of money for school fees had meant that her eldest daughter had to leave secondary school. Alice however applied to the farm’s
Fairtrade premium funded bursary scheme and was delighted when her daughter was awarded a scholarship.

Another Fairtrade certified farm, Finlay Farms, has developed a controlled wetland area to purify waste water and chemical off-flows from cleaning containers. It is also trialling a biological pest management system to reduce use of insecticides. And the farm is increasingly using hydroponic techniques to grow the flowers, which reduces the amount of water required. In addition, approximately 90% of power consumption is now generated by hydroelectricity.

Ethiopia, Poverty and Fairtrade

Twenty years ago, in 1985, the world’s attention was rocked by appalling food shortages in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is not just one of the world’s poor and heavily indebted nations – it is also the birthplace of coffee and Africa’s largest producer with 1.2 million coffee growers. Income from coffee sales has been crucial to the country’s economy, including the payment of its external debts. However, just four years after Live Aid, the agreement that regulated international coffee prices collapsed, throwing millions of smallholder coffee growers worldwide to the mercy of the market. Since then, prices have regularly fallen well below the cost of production for coffee farmers, such as in 2001 when the price of Arabica coffee beans fell to just 45 US cents a pound. For Ethiopia, the collapse of prices has seen revenue from coffee exports fall by some 60%, with disastrous results for the country’s longer-term food security and wider development.

Throughout this crisis, the international Fairtrade price for coffee has remained at US $1.26 per pound – including a 5 cents premium for the farmers to invest in social, economic or environmental improvements. As well as the minimum price, Fairtrade has also encouraged longer-term contracts, up-front payments and other investments that have provided farmers with more stability in the face of the crisis. In Ethiopia, Oromia Coffee Farmers Co-operative Union brings together 35 co-operatives of small farmers. Eight of these, representing over 7,000 farmers, are now certified to international Fairtrade standards. They now have an alternative to the low-price coffee auctions, and are able to sell some of their coffee directly to the Fairtrade markets in Europe and North America. The premium received from Fairtrade means that they have been able to invest in improving the quality of their coffee by installing machines to wash the beans, and by committing to organic farming methods. By planting citrus fruits and bananas in between the coffee bushes, they are also reducing their dependence on income from coffee for their food security.

Under a quarter of Ethiopia’s children complete primary education, with families unable to afford school uniforms and books, or even food, at schools which can be up to 20 kilometres away from their homes. The Oromia co-operative is now building four primary schools to help farmers keep their children in school. They are also investing in two health clinics and two clean water pumps for local communities.

Criticisms of Fairtrade

1. **Misguided Interference with Market Forces**

For many there is a deep suspicion of any political meddling with market forces. How often has well meant interference made a problem situation worse rather than better? There are those who maintain that Fairtrade will lead to inefficiency and over-production. Among them are economists who believe that untrammelled market forces of supply and demand will always be the fairest in the end.

No system is perfect because all are driven by human beings who are sinners. As the prophet Jeremiah said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (ESV). This applies to all political, economic and even ecclesiastical systems. Market forces are not exempt. They are driven by human actions, much of which is driven by human greed. Market forces are not merely influenced by benign or amoral forces of supply and demand. The picture is skewed by varied producer and consumer power. If a powerful economic block decides it is in its own interests to subsidise its agricultural industry and dump its products at low prices on the world market then small farmers in politically weak areas will suffer. Fatalism in economics is no more valid than in any other area of life.

Human intervention is necessary to provide the checks and balances that will protect the weak from the power coupled with avarice. Free trade, if consistent, must also allow for innovative ideas including ethical trading.

Of course, human intervention may still be misguided with the best will in the world. Does Fairtrade lead to the problems associated with subsidised sectors of a global economy? Fairtrade would argue that they are
aware of these dangers. They point out that fair-trade producers cannot sell their products unless consumers are prepared to pay the Fairtrade price. They also look for market niches where they are not competing head-on with the big players. Fairtrade does not directly subsidise producers. It operates more in the area of providing access to the kind of financial packages not normally available to small producers but easily available to the more powerful competition. In some cases the improved local facilities have benefited even producers not officially linked to Fairtrade.

2. **Fairtrade does not go far enough. It ignores the bigger picture of trade injustice.**

This criticism is clearly unfair. If those concerned about injustice did nothing until they could solve everything then injustice would roll on unchecked and no good person would do anything about it. It is clear that international agreements have a bigger impact for good or ill than anything an organisation like Fairtrade could achieve. A big debate is currently unfolding on the EU approach to African, Pacific and Caribbean interests. Details of the debate surrounding EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements) can be accessed from the Tearfund website. The rights and wrongs of what is being done in this huge political arena takes more specialist skills and knowledge to appreciate. However, it requires only basic moral skills to understand that there is no level playing field in the international market and that there will always be serious poverty derived from trade injustice that no tinkering by relatively small players will resolve. If democracy matters then right thinking voters must hold the politicians to account for all they do in the international arena. The Tearfund website contains a very useful comment in the “global action” section under “Trade Campaign Briefing – July 07”.

Some consider Fairtrade not to be radical enough. They would like to see more effort at bringing down the capitalist system. This certainly cannot be ignored even if it is a scary option. However, if a group who are relatively weak in terms of global power structures wants to make a difference for good for as many as they can, they have no option but to work within the current structures.

3. **Fairtrade is biased towards certain commercial structures.**

Fairtrade often works through co-operatives rather than family farms and large plantations. The benefit of this policy is that it empowers more people to do something for their own families and the local community. However, some consider this unfair for those not part of that structure. It should be appreciated that the fair trade movement is developing. As it gains momentum it will be able to help more producers to get a fair price for their goods that will impact on the lives of all involved in the production.

**What can we do?**

Fairtrade has moved forward through the participation of individuals supporting this initiative. As shoppers buy Fairtrade products, shops will stock them. As the electorate promote Fairtrade, politicians declare their support. The following areas for action are open to us.

1. As individuals, by choosing to purchase Fairtrade products, we play our part in enabling farmers and workers to bring about change today in their own lives and communities, as well as sending out a signal for justice in wider international trade.

2. As individual voters we can use our democratic rights to encourage local authorities to become Fairtrade institutions, using Fairtrade products in their catering and in schools. Campaigning can also be extended to the local Health Board and other institutions.

3. As members of local congregations we can request our Churches to demonstrate long-term commitment to supporting trade justice. More than 3000 churches across the UK had already made this commitment by the end of 2006. To become a Fairtrade Church, communities must commit to:
   - using Fairtrade tea and coffee at church events;
   - moving forward on using other Fairtrade products where possible;
   - promoting Fairtrade.

**Fairtrade contact details**


Grateful acknowledgement is made of material taken from the FAIRTRADE website.
The last 20 years has witnessed a phenomenal technological revolution which has transformed our lives – and our homes. We now live in a television world of cable, satellite, digital, videos, DVDs and camcorders; a computer world of PCs, laptops, computer games, PlayStations, iPods, the worldwide web and email; and a world of mobile phones, text messaging and camphones. Faced with this electronic technological revolution, how do we react? This article will look at some of the Biblical principles which should help us govern our thinking with regard to Television and the Internet; the ways these media are impacting our lives – especially the effects they are having on our children; and suggest ways in which we as Christians, as Christian parents and as a denomination should be addressing the challenges which they present.

Some Biblical principles

1. Scientific research and invention should be seen in the context of obeying the Biblical mandate to subdue the earth. [Genesis 1:28; 1 Timothy 4:4]

   The product of scientific and technological advances, when developed in accordance with God’s revealed will and used for the benefit of humankind, will be God-glorifying. The potential exists for such blessings to be beneficial or to be abused and this is certainly true of Television and the Internet.

2. The Christian is called to die to sin and to live to righteousness. [Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:5, 10; Romans 12:9; Colossians 3:2; Titus 2:11-12]

   Christians are urged not to let the world ‘squeeze them unto its mould’ but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. They are urged to put to death what belongs to their earthly nature and to put on the new self which is being renewed in the knowledge of God. They are to hate what is evil and cling to what is good, to live holy lives. Their use of Television and the Internet should never hinder their sanctification.

3. The Christian is called to be salt and light. [Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 4:8]

   What use he or she will make of Television or the Internet, therefore, must aid in this witness, not detract from it. The programmes we watch (or make) should be ‘true’, ‘right’, ‘pure’, ‘lovely’, ‘admirable’ and ‘praiseworthy’.

4. The Christian is in the world, but not of it. [John 17:15-19; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Ephesians 6:10-18; Philippians 2:15]

   Christians must engage with the world. Indeed, they cannot escape from it. Television, the Internet and other media continuously propagate ideas and lifestyles which conflict with the Christian ethic. So Christians must pray for sanctified critical judgement to address these issues.

5. Moderation is a Christian grace. [Galatians 5:23]

   Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Nowhere should this virtue be exercised more than in the time we spend watching television or surfing the net.

6. The family, an institution created by God, must be honoured and preserved. [Genesis 2:22-24; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21]

   There are few things better able to encroach upon family time and family relationships than television. A high view of the importance of the family and the Biblical principles on which it is based and on which it should operate, will do much to regulate our attitudes to this medium.

7. The church must obey the Great Commission. [Matthew 28:18-20]

   Television and the Internet, especially the latter, present the church with a means of unprecedented potential to preach the gospel and to make disciples. We should never underestimate the value of the many good Christian websites which exist and not be slow to utilize this amazing medium to propagate Christian truth and Christian teaching.

Some Television Facts

Television and the Internet can provide magnificent educational resources, opening up new worlds and cultures with powerful, beautiful and moving images of a wonderful world. Television can entertain. It can provide positive role models for our young people. It can enable children to see how other people live and empathise with them. But of course there is the negative side: it has become, for many young families, an electronic babysitter and, as children get older and watch TV unmonitored in the privacy of their own bedrooms, it has
produced the “splintering family” and what has been described as the “toxic childhood syndrome.”² Our screens are hit with information and images which are unedifying, distasteful and indecent. “By the age of 75, most of us will have spent more than twelve-and-a-half years of 24-hour days watching television. It has become the industrialised world’s main activity, taking up more of our time than any other single activity except work and sleep.”³

According to the market research agency ChildWise, almost all 5 to 16 year olds in the UK have access to multi-channel TV; 84% of them have a TV in their bedroom and watch 2.4 hours television a day.⁴ The same survey, based on 1,147 children in 60 schools in England, Scotland and Wales found that two-thirds watched TV before going to school, 83% after getting home, and 58% watched TV during their evening meal. When other screen viewing is included, such as the Internet and computer games, the figure is higher. Children aged 11 to 15 now spend 53 hours a week watching TV and computers — an increase of 40 per cent in a decade. Television has become an integral-can’t-do-without apparatus which governs our daily routine. It is claimed that children now spend more time watching a television screen than they spend in school. By the time he reaches the age of six, the average child will have already watched television for nearly one full year.⁵

Some Television Effects
A trawl through the internet will reveal literally thousands of articles and studies into the effects which television viewing is purported to be having on children and adults in the UK and across the Atlantic. Such studies should be viewed with caution; it has been shown that their methodology is not universally robust; and that sometimes conclusions may be drawn unfairly from limited evidence.⁶ Nevertheless, there are a number of helpful publications and studies which are referred to in this article.

Dr Aric Sigman, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, claims a direct link between excessive television viewing and a host of health problems. He believes he has found that even viewing moderate amounts of television:

- May damage brain cell development and function.
- Is the only adult pastime from the ages of 20 to 60 positively linked to developing Alzheimer’s Disease.
- Is a direct cause of obesity — a bigger factor even than eating junk food or taking too little exercise.
- Significantly increases the risk of Type 2 diabetes because of its link with obesity.
- May biologically trigger premature puberty.
- Leads to a significantly elevated risk of sleep problems in adulthood, causing hormone changes which in turn increase body fat production and appetite, damage the immune system and may lead to a greater vulnerability to cancer.
- Is a major independent cause of clinical depression (of which Britain has the highest rate in Europe).
- Scientists report ‘deleterious effects’ on mathematical ability, reading recognition and comprehension in later childhood.⁷

Other studies have claimed a link between television viewing and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). For every hour of television a child watches a day, a nine per cent increase in attentional damage was noted.⁸

More controversially, many studies have sought to show a link between media violence and aggressive and violent behaviour in the viewer, especially the young viewer.⁹ In 2000, the American Medical Association, the

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³ Aric Sigman, Daily Mail, 1 October 2005.
⁵ Aric Sigman, Remotely Controlled: How Television is Damaging our Lives and What We Can Do About it, Vermilion, 2005.
⁷ Daily Mail, 1st October 2005.
American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics jointly stated “At this time well over 1000 studies ... point overwhelmingly to a casual connection between media violence and aggressive behaviour in children.” A review of some of this research evidence (all from US studies) which appeared in The Lancet, concluded that “From a public health perspective, there is evidence that violent imagery has short-term effects on arousal, thoughts, and emotions, increasing the likelihood of aggressive and fearful behaviour. However, the evidence is less consistent for older children and teenagers. Long-term outcomes for children viewing media violence are more controversial, partly because of the methodological difficulties in linking behaviour with past viewing. Nevertheless, a small but significant association persists in the research with an effect size that has a substantial public health effect. ... However, there is only weak evidence from correlation studies linking media violence directly to crime.”

Whatever the correlation there might or might not be between media violence and violent behaviour, the bottom line for Christians and Christian families surely must be that film violence – real or concocted – is rarely edifying and almost always degrading and often gratuitous, and can have a traumatizing effect, especially on younger viewers. Furthermore, it might well desensitize youngsters to pain and suffering which, in turn, might contribute to the apparent increase in bullying. The same can be said for programmes in which sexually explicit scenes are depicted as normal and acceptable. However controversial the link between these and premature sexual behaviour in young people – as many studies claim – any viewing which arouses sinful thoughts and desires should be avoided and dealt with in terms of such texts as Matthew 5:27-30.

Some Internet Facts

Computers are now a key part of our lives. The World Wide Web has revolutionised global communication and has made it possible for information of mega-encyclopaedic proportions to flood into our homes instantly at the click of a mouse. The Internet allows us to do our weekly shopping online, book our holidays, sort out our finances, get all sorts of advice from medical matters to DIY, play games, listen to music, watch missed TV programmes, and chat to our friends.

As with television, the benefits are enormous, but so are the dangers. 93% of children have a computer at home and a third have their own PC. Users are spending an average of 1.9 hours per day on line.

Some Internet Effects

Childnet International, a charity concerned with children’s Internet safety, categorises the dangers of the web for children into “Content”, “Commercialism” and “Contact”. The easy access to inappropriate content poses dangers for adults as well as children, but the recent surge in social networking sites present particular concerns for parents. Nearly three-quarters of youngsters have visited networking sites like Bebo and MySpace, with half of them setting up their own profile, some as young as eight years old. A Panorama programme, “One Panorama” (7th January 2008) highlighted the dangers of such sites which are used by adults with dubious intentions posing as teenagers.

The Internet has become an insidious medium for pornography. “Internet pornography is easily accessible, affordable and anonymous, and can appear secret and safe. No Internet application is immune from pornography which is why it is so important to be careful when surfing alone.” Although primarily affecting men, increasingly women are being drawn into Internet pornography and chat rooms. It has been estimated that one in five Internet UK users are logging on to sexually explicit sites, with 40% of all searches being conducted from the office. About 3.8 million British home users logged on to an adult site in June 2001. Evidence seems to point to internet pornography being addictive for some. It has produced a new word – “cybersex” – any form of sexual expression which is accessed through the Internet. Some researchers believe that 1% of the population “have a fully blown cybersex compulsion”.

The Internet has major repercussions on church administration at national and local level. The church is able to communicate with the world through its various web sites. Visitors to the websites of local congregations can

10 Quoted in Palmer, op cit, 261.
14 “Internet Misuse” on the Care website www.care.org.uk
find out the times of the services, listen to sermons and view other useful information with ease. Church
committes and congregational church courts can exchange information easily and quickly. But this comes with
a health warning! E-mail can very easily be abused and should never replace face-to-face contact, especially
when communicating sensitive information. There is also the whole question of confidentiality to consider,
bearing in mind that other members of one’s family may be able to view outgoing and incoming emails. The
immediacy and accessibility of emailing should never be an excuse for sending impolite or hurtful messages.

**How do we Respond?**

This article has highlighted the concerns which Television and the Internet have produced. How should we
respond to these concerns? Getting rid of one’s TV and PC is a drastic measure which may well be appropriate
in some circumstances, but seeking to find ways of moderating and controlling the amount of daily screen time,
though difficult, may in the long term, prove a better alternative. The American Association of Pediatrics has
recommended that children under the age of two should not watch any television at all, while Aric Sigman has
raised this threshold to three,15 but this ignores the evidence that limited, good educational TV can actually aid
toddlers’ language development.16 **Cbeebies** – the BBC channel for pre-school children – “avoids cartoons and
‘montage telly’ (cutting rapidly from shot to shot, as on many US children’s channels), instead aiming for gentle
 pacing, language appropriate to the age group and plenty of real-life presenters speaking directly to their young
viewers.”17 As for older children, Sigman’s “Recommended Daily Amount” is one hour a day for children under
13; an hour-and-a-half for teenagers; and two hours for adults.18

The key factor here, of course is parental involvement and control of children’s viewing. Parents should attempt
to watch programmes with their children and discuss what is seen. A good idea is for a family to discuss and
plan which programmes should be watched, and so forestall or reduce family squabbles! Meal times should be a
TV-free occasion to allow family discussion and the kids should not really be trying to do their homework with
the telly on. Family routine should not be dictated to by the programme listings! All writers with a concern for
the moral, spiritual and physical health of children are all adamant that children under 16 should not have a TV
or internet access in their bedrooms where they can view or surf in unmonitored isolation. A supply of
wholesome DVDs and videos can provide good alternatives to the “daily TV dose”. Having access to non
screen entertainment (books, puzzles, board games, sport etc) and being able to work on hobbies and crafts
helps parents to think “outside the ‘box’”. Above all, it is essential that parents set their children a good example
by what, and by how much, they watch themselves. It has been suggested that there is abundant evidence that
“there’s nothing to be lost by watching less television but much to be lost by continuing to watch as we do. And
the good news is that many of the ills and consequences attributed to television can be dramatically reduced or
eliminated immediately by simply controlling how much and what type of television programmes we watch.”19

As well as being willing to complain to the television companies when they broadcast offensive programmes,
we should not be slow to compliment them for showing wholesome and edifying material.

The Free Church should consider organizing conferences or workshops to deal with the issues raised in this
article. Its web site should include guidance and support for individuals and families who may be struggling to
control viewing habits. Its members should be aware of the many useful publications, resources and web sites in
existence.

Much the same advice can be offered with regard to the Internet. Having the PC in a family space permits
regular monitoring of what information is being seen or what games are being played. The installation of
filtering software to prevent young people entering inappropriate sites is advisable, but such technology is
rapidly outdated and outsmarted by determined hackers. The CARE website (www.care.org.uk) has an
excellent section on **Internet Misuse** containing good practical advice for helping those being affected directly or
indirectly by Internet pornography.

**Finally**

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15 Sigman, op cit, 262.
16 National Literacy Trust, as quoted on BBC News, 2005.
17 Palmer, op cit, 255-6.
18 Sigman, op cit, 262.
19 Sigman, op cit, 259-260.
Television and the Internet present some of the greatest challenges facing us as individuals, as families and as a society. These media provide a useful means of communicating news, accessing information, providing educational support and wholesome entertainment, yet at the same time they have the potential to damage our physical, psychological, social and spiritual health. What better touchstone is there, when considering what we and our families watch, than the words of the apostle, “whatever is true, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”

**Further reading**


**Useful websites**

- [www.care.org.uk](http://www.care.org.uk) (A Christian research and educational organisation, with helpful material on a wide range of issues)
- [www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com) (A magazine approach to issues, including phones, chatrooms and instant messaging)
- [www.childnet-int.org.uk](http://www.childnet-int.org.uk) (International campaign to make the Internet safer)
- [www.cyberangels.org](http://www.cyberangels.org) (An international parents’ organisation)
- [www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk) (Basic safety advice)
- [www.mediatwatchuk.org](http://www.mediatwatchuk.org) (Christian media pressure group)
- [www.nch.org.uk](http://www.nch.org.uk) (Good advice for parents on internet safety)
- [www.unicef.org/magic](http://www.unicef.org/magic) (Ideas for children)

**G) THE BIBLICAL BASE FOR THE CARE OF CREATION**

Neither the Old nor New Testaments provide an integrated doctrine of ‘nature’. Indeed, the very word ‘nature’ is absent from the Hebrew language. To deal therefore with 21st Century environmental issues such as climate change or over-population requires careful analysis and application of Scriptural principles. The created order is intimately tied up with God’s purposes for the salvation of mankind and therefore follows the Biblical pattern of creation, fall and redemption. The principles we find relating to 21st Century environmental problems are laid down in Creation, applied in the Fall and reinforced in Redemption.

**Creation**

The Creation narratives (Genesis 1, 2) and poems (e.g. Psalm 104) form the timeless, yet ever relevant principles surrounding a Christian attitude to the environment.

1. The Created Order is Good

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20 Philippians 4:8

21 For the purpose of this paper, Creation is used to describe Genesis 1-2; Fall to describe Genesis 3 to Malachi 4; Redemption to describe Matthew 1 to Revelation 22. Strictly speaking these are not accurate delineations, since Redemption begins in Genesis 3:16.
Repeatedly, God proclaims that His creation is good (Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Its goodness is reflected in its biodiversity, sensory appeal and plenty. God so orders His creation so as to make it a place of shalom.

**a. God is the Source** – the Bible begins by asserting that ‘God created the heavens and the earth’. The origin of the created order is to be found neither in matter nor in nothing, but in God. That is not to say God is not transcendent, nor is it to say that God is not immanent, simply that God created. Furthermore in God all things hold together (Col. 1:17), sustaining all things by his powerful word (Hebrews 1:3). Since the created order finds its source and sustenance in God, we must conclude that it is valuable to Him and has an intrinsic positive value in itself. The ‘natural’ world belongs to God by right of creation.

**b. God is the Centre** – humans possess one of three attitudes towards the created order. First, some are *biocentrists*. In general, Eastern religions and the spawning New Age consider all of the natural order to be One. As romantic as this may sound, biocentrism has not prevented the deforestation of large tracts of India and China; nor has it always treated humans with the dignity they deserve. As one writer comments, “*the quest for the humane treatment of beasts by lowering people to the level of animals leads only to the beastly treatment of humans.*” Secondly, some are *anthropocentrists*. The great monotheistic religions believe that the natural order exists for mankind. There is no Scriptural doubt man is the zenith and peak of God’s creation, but this does not allow us to be arrogant about our ownership or self-importance. Rather, the first two chapters of Genesis, taken together with Psalm 104, force us to adopt a theocentric position. Cas Labuschange explains, “*the creation is God’s and the ultimate purpose of creation is not just humanity, but rather the embodiment and expression of God’s greatness and majesty in the creation.*”

Professor Lynn White, an American historian, has argued that the exploitative attitude to nature adopted by much of Western technology is a direct result of the Judaeo-Christian belief that since people were created to have dominion over nature, they can treat the natural environment as they like. He wrote, “*Christianity ... insisted that it was God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends ... Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt.*” However, these views can be challenged on both historical and theological grounds. Historically, environmental abuse is not only found in Christendom – before the time of Jesus the Romans were notoriously liberal with their use of lead compounds. Today, one only has to visit the polluted Ganges or the smog-filled air of Tokyo to realise that the problem isn’t exclusively Christian. Likewise, from the Middle Ages onwards, Christians like Bacon and Descartes developed a positive concern for nature. Theologically, a proper understanding of biblical dominion is expressed in terms of a caring, responsible authority where human beings act as God’s stewards and obey divine moral limits.

**c. God is the Reason** – the Book of Job and Psalm 104 shed light on God’s pleasure in His created order, helping us understand that the natural world is not merely for human use. Job 38:26ff tells us that God waters lands and causes grass to grow where no-one lives. And why did God create the behemoth and leviathan (Job 40, 41)? According to Psalm 104:26, the leviathan is created to frolic in the sea – for pure enjoyment! Psalm 104 is the pleasure of God in His creation.

The created order belongs to God. As human beings we must not be so arrogant as to snatch ownership from its maker. Our relationship to the environment is therefore primarily a theological issue.

**2. Man is a Part of Nature and Apart from Nature**

The heading of this section was famously coined by the Christian geneticist Professor R. J.Berry. Mankind is part of the created order. He is created on the same day as the animals; he is created from the dust of the earth; he lives in the Garden. Mankind is literally the ‘earth creature’. We cannot therefore distance ourselves from the created order because we are part of that created order. Nor can we damage the created order without damaging ourselves. Psalm 104:23 presents the life of man within the scheme of the created order.

However, mankind is also unique. God deliberates over mankind’s creation and function (Gen. 1:26). God also makes man ‘in’, or more accurately ‘as’ His image (Gen. 1:28). Following on from a suzerain-vassal covenant, we are to regard ourselves as those whom God appoints to rule in His stead. We are His stewards, set apart from ‘nature’ on behalf of the God who declares its goodness and finds pleasure in it. By placing humans above non-humans, proper environmental stewardship will acknowledge that human needs are superior to non-human needs, when the two are in conflict.

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3. Stewardship does not mean status quo

Man is created and given three commands – fill, subdue and rule. We are to understand the fulfilment of these commands in relation to our being the image of God. As God’s stewards, we are to fill the earth, subdue the earth and rule the creatures of the earth. God created the cosmos and pronounced it ‘good’ – our responsibility as His stewards is to keep it good by obeying His commands. The good of the created order is thus expressed in mankind filling, subduing and ruling. Over-population and its subsequent over-exploitation of natural resources may seem like obedience to the commands God gave, but God does not command mankind to treat the finite cosmos as if it was infinite, nor to damage it. Over-exploitation is therefore prohibited. It is a non-trivial fact that in discussing the trees of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:9a, “the aesthetic is placed before the utilitarian. We are to enjoy creation just as God did when he proclaimed it to be ‘very good’. Enjoyment in this way and destruction do not belong together.”

Stewardship however, does not mean stagnant preservation. In the New Testament parable of the talents, the manager who merely preserves his talent is condemned (Matt. 25:14-30). God calls us to conserve and manage, not merely to preserve. This implies the careful management of habitats, but taken in connection with the other commands God gave to mankind (fill, subdue, rule), it does not imply the cessation of technological advance nor the non-exploitation of natural resources. The function of the steward is to manage environmental change.

The parable of the talents reminds us also that the steward is accountable for his actions. The earth belongs to the Lord (Psalm 24:1) and He has placed us here as His managers. We are therefore accountable to Him for how we have managed (or mismanaged) His creation always remembering that ‘nature’ does not exist simply to meet our material needs, but also to provide us (and our Maker) with pleasure and enjoyment.

4. Dominion does not mean Domination

The anthropocentric view of many Christians has often substituted domination for dominion. God does not command us to act as tyrants or despots. Dominion implies responsible kingship (in the mould of King David and his greater Son Jesus – Psalm 72:8; Psalm 110:2). “The Hebrew understanding was of a ruler totally responsible for his subject’s welfare – caring, feeding, protecting (e.g. Psalm 72:1-2).” Deuteronomy 17:14-20 shows what the Hebrews understood by rule. Likewise, in Genesis 1:29-30 mankind is commanded to share the earth’s vegetation with other creatures – not to use up all the earth’s resources for human needs alone. “People, the land, and all of its creatures are not to be relentlessly pursued.”

One area in which dominion was exercised was in the serving and keeping of the land (Genesis 2:15). Mankind’s dominion was exercised in active and responsible management of the land itself. The verb ‘shamar’, to keep, carries the connotation of a loving, caring, sustaining keeping, such as we experience through the Aaronic blessing (the Lord bless you and keep you) – “as God keeps his believing people, so should God’s people keep creation.”

In summary therefore, we live in God’s world. We are stewards of God’s World. We will be held accountable for our management of the earth.

Fall

The Fall of mankind through sin devastated the earth. Never again, in this age, shall we live in Eden.

1. The Impact of the Fall

God’s curse of the earth means that ‘nature’ does not work as it should. It is imperfect and according to Moss, “cannot therefore ever be managed with complete success, however well understood, or however faithfully valid ethical principles are applied in decision-making.” Similarly sinful human beings abuse the environment – mankind’s lack of care for the created order is a symptom of his sinfulness. Berry writes, “Abuse of the natural world is disobedience to God, not merely an error of judgement.”

27 C. B. De Witt, http://www.ausable.org/or.resources.online.1.cfm
29 R. Moss, The Earth in our Hands, Leicester, IVP, 1982.
30 R. J. Berry, op. cit.
2. Noahic Covenant
Six times throughout Genesis 9:8-17 does God reiterate that His covenant is not merely with Noah but with ‘every living creature’. The rainbow is a sign of God’s covenant with the earth. God is committed to the earth and all life on it.

3. Moses and the Environment
Behind the creation narratives, the rest of the Pentateuch gives us the clearest teaching about God’s concern for earth ethics.

a. The Sabbath Principle – Exodus 20:8-11 extends the Sabbath principle to livestock – farm animals are to be rested on the Sabbath. Leviticus 25:1-7, 18-22 describes a Sabbath year, where the land is allowed to rest and lie fallow for one year out of seven – the food growing in the land being eaten by the owners, their servants, aliens, livestock and wild animals. Following God’s cycle will ensure successful yields.

b. The Jubilee Principle – In Leviticus 25:8-17, 23-24 the fiftieth year is the year of Jubilee where debts are cancelled and the land is allowed a further opportunity to rest and recuperate. The Sabbath and Jubilee principles allow good land management. They promote biodiversity and the restoration of the soil. Prance writes, “This is different from much of modern agriculture that over-uses the soil drastically, kills biodiversity with chemicals and pollutes the river and water tables.” Modern examples of what happens when the Sabbath and Jubilee principle is ignored are the American Dustbowl and the degradation of Sicily’s grain production.

c. ‘Natural Justice’ – the Pentateuch is full of ‘odd’ commands concerning the treatment of wildlife (e.g. Leviticus 22:27-29; Deuteronomy 22:6-7; 25:4; Exodus 23:19). Wenham points out that the reason for such commands “could well be a combination of outrage at the apparent heartlessness of such a custom and the subversion of the natural order that it implies: milk should be used for sustaining the kid’s life not cooking it.” Killing a bird and its chicks could compromise the survival of the species. The Bible therefore advocates sustaining the life of man, animals and plants.

d. Fruitfulness – in Deuteronomy 20:19-20 the fruit trees of a besieged city may be plucked, but not destroyed. Their fruit is to be enjoyed, but their fruitfulness is not to be destroyed – “We are permitted to use the fruit of creation, but we are not allowed to destroy the ability of creation to be fruitful.” The destruction of ‘nature’s’ ability to be fruitful has caused and is causing rapid desertification and loss of habitat.

4. The Prophets and the Environment
The moral failures of God’s people are reflected in the fertility and fruitfulness of the land (Hosea 4:1-3). Loss of habitat and ecological disaster are functions of mankind’s sinfulness.

God is concerned for His creation – He is committed to it by covenant arrangement and has set down principles by which the fruit of the environment may be exploited whilst the fruitfulness of the environment may be maintained.

Redemption

Although the New Testament does not contain as many references to the natural order as the Old, it does reinforce and further creation teaching.

1. Jesus and ‘Nature’
The very fact we talk at all of the man ‘Jesus’ is testimony to God’s commitment to the created order. The Son of God took flesh; God chose to take a material body in order to save us. Thus, embedded within Christianity itself, is an inherent respect for matter. Matter is important to God. Added to that is Jesus’ own respect for, and interest in, the created order. He speaks of plants, seeds, birds and flowers. The Christian has no right to ruthlessly or thoughtlessly destroy that which God cares for (Matt. 10:29-30).

1 Prance, op. cit.
2. Salvation and ‘Nature’

Colossians 1:19-20 confirm that Christ’s death does not merely reconcile mankind to God, but the whole created order to God. He did not just die for us, but to reconcile to himself ‘all things’. God’s care for His cosmos extended to the reversal of the curse of the fall. One common objection to Christian environmentalism is that as Christians, since this world is doomed to destruction, we must focus on our spiritual lives and show no concern for the material. However, God showed enough concern for the material to become material Himself. Similarly, our salvation is holistic – we do not anticipate heaven being a place of disembodied spirits, but glorified people – perfected spirits re-united with glorified bodies. Since we care here for our bodies, even though they are doomed to destruction, should we not also care for the natural world? Christian pietism is no excuse for environmental sin.

3. Glory and ‘Nature’

Romans 8:18-22 reinforces the function of the created order. At the present time, the whole creation is groaning. It groans because it was created to glorify God and yet, because of the sinfulness of mankind, it cannot fully fulfil its purpose. Cranfield writes, "We may think of the whole magnificent theatre of the universe together with all its splendid properties and all the chorus of sub-human life, created to glorify God but unable to do so fully, so long as man the chief actor in the drama of God’s praise fails to contribute his rational part.” However, as Christians begin to glorify God for and through His creation, and as we anticipate the return of Christ and our attendant perfection, the created order will once again function as its was created.

(H) CLIMATE CHANGE

Reading the daily newspapers and watching television makes us very aware of the warming of the climate not only in the UK but in virtually all parts of the world. Global warming is not a new phenomenon: global temperatures over the millennia have experienced cyclical variations. In recent times, many scientists have become convinced that the increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide, CO₂, along with other gases is responsible for this effect. These gases are referred to as Greenhouse Gases because of the way they are believed to increase the temperature of the world. Kofi Annan, the past Secretary General of the United Nations, endorsed this view and stated that climate change is not just an environmental issue, as too many people still believe. It presents an all-encompassing threat. It could be a threat to health, since a warmer world is one in which infectious diseases such as malaria and yellow fever will spread further and faster. It could imperil the world’s food supply, as rising temperatures and prolonged drought render fertile areas unfit for grazing or crops. It could endanger the very ground on which nearly half the world’s population live - coastal cities, such as Lagos or Cape Town, face inundation from rising sea levels as a result of melting of the icecaps and glaciers. Climate change is also a threat to peace and security due to changing patterns of rainfall. This could heighten competition for resources, setting in motion potentially destabilizing tensions and migrations, especially in fragile states or volatile regions. There is evidence that some of this is already occurring; more could well be in the offing.

The Greenhouse Effect and Climate Change

The origin of Climate Change and thus warming of the planet is the consequence of what is known as the Greenhouse Effect. Radiation from the sun passes through the earth’s atmosphere which is largely composed of nitrogen and oxygen. This energy passes through the atmosphere and heats the surface of the Earth. Some of that energy returns to the atmosphere but not all of it makes it through a layer of gases that covers the earth like the glass of a greenhouse. This layer of gases causes the surface of the earth to be warmer than it would be in their absence. If it were not for these gases, known as greenhouse gases, the average temperature would be -18°C and not 15°C, and life would be barely sustainable. The best known of the greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide, CO₂ but methane and nitrous oxide are also important. On average, about one third of the solar radiation that hits the earth’s atmosphere is reflected back into space. Of the remainder, some is absorbed by the atmosphere but most is absorbed by the land and the oceans leading to the warming of both land and sea. The major greenhouse gases (GHG) are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Over the last 250 years or so, since the industrial revolution, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as a result of burning of fossil fuels (gas, oil and coal), has steadily increased from 280 to 370 ppm. The increase in the

concentration of carbon dioxide has been exacerbated by the burning of forests which results in the formation of more carbon dioxide. Records of the earth’s previous climates reconstructed from ice cores confirm that the carbon dioxide and methane concentrations are higher than at any time for at least 650,000 years. This warming trend will increase the likelihood of more frequent and intense heat waves, droughts and rainstorms as has been experienced recently in many parts of the world.

Other possible sources of global warming are the effect of volcanic eruptions and the variation in solar output of the sun. These are insufficient to explain the degree of warming. Some of the world’s leading climate scientists recently tried to sweep away the last doubts surrounding global warming, saying they were certain human activities were altering the climate and warning severe effects were inevitable unless greenhouse gas emissions were curbed. The evidence for climate change caused by fossil fuel combustion was “unequivocal”, said IPCC experts convened by the UN. Their report predicted severe heat waves, droughts, storms and flood would increase with increasing temperature.

**Key Impacts of Climate Change**

1. **Rising sea levels**

Some claim that sea levels are expected to rise by over 40 centimetres by 2080 because of thermal expansion of the oceans as the temperatures rises and because of melting of land ice. Melting of the Greenland ice cap could raise the sea level by as much as 7 m. Roughly 1 million people live on coral islands worldwide, and many more millions live on low-lying real estate vulnerable to the rising waves. 100 million people live less than 1 m above sea level making them very vulnerable to rising sea levels. This includes populations of major cities both in the developed world, e.g. London and New York and the developing world, e.g. Mumbai, Shanghai and Lagos. Perhaps the country most at risk is Bangladesh which is threatened frequently by enormous storm surges when typhoons sweep into the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh is also threatened with the melting of Himalayan glaciers leading to extensive flooding of the two huge rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, which flow into the Bay of Bengal.

2. **Melting Glaciers**

The Himalayan glaciers, which regulate the water supply to the Ganges, Indus, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Thanlwin, Yangtze and Yellow rivers are believed to be retreating at a rate of about 10-15 m each year. In a few decades this situation will change and the water level in rivers will decline, meaning massive eco and environmental problems for people in western China, Nepal and northern India. Glaciers are retreating in every part of the planet.

3. **Rising Arctic and Antarctic Temperatures**
The Arctic could lose virtually all its summer sea ice by the year 2013, many years earlier than was previously thought. The permafrost is thawing, trees are moving north and some species, such as polar bears, are in danger of becoming extinct as the ice is becoming so thin that they can no longer catch seals because the ice will not support them. The average Arctic temperatures have risen at twice the rate seen elsewhere on the planet. There is a similar problem in the Antarctic where it has been claimed the catastrophic collapse of the Larsen B shelf, an Antarctic ice shelf larger than Luxembourg, four and a half years ago, was man-made, and not an “act of God”.

![Map of Bangladesh](image)

*The impact of sea level rise in Bangladesh*

![Upsala Glacier](image)

*Argentina’s Upsala Glacier was once the biggest in South America, but it is now disappearing at a rate of 200 metres per year.*

4. Increasing food shortages
Africa is expected to experience significant reductions in cereal yields, as are the Middle East and India. An additional 290 million people could be exposed to malaria and yellow fever by the 2080s, with China and Central Asia likely to see the largest increase in risk. One of the big problems is that the weather in many parts of the world is very erratic.

In the next 15 years, displacement of people, disruption to agriculture and food supplies, and damage and destruction to the infrastructure would likely lead to economic and political instability, both within countries and across international borders, and even to wars as environmental refugees seek new homes and countries clash over scarce water and food supplies. The industrial countries also could find themselves under immense pressure from huge numbers of environmental refugees from the developing world. [Christian Aid]

One region of Mozambique used to be ‘normal’ with two seasons – hot and cool. Recently temperatures have risen from 30°C up to 49°C in the hot season and are less cold in the cool season, changing the timing of the rains. The majority of communities are afraid to plant, thinking that it is not the right time, thus affecting the food security of the region. [Tearfund]

5. Severe water shortages

In some areas, water resources for drinking and irrigation will be affected by reduced rainfall or as ground water in coastal zones suffers from salination as sea levels rise. An additional three billion people could suffer increased water stress by 2080. Northern Africa, the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent will be the worst affected. The Indian monsoon is likely to become more variable: this may lead to severe water shortages which will be exacerbated as a result of melting of the Himalayan glaciers. The steadily increasing population results in ever increasing demands of water. The population has increased more than three times in the last 70 years!

6. Loss of tropical forests

By the 2070s, large parts of northern Brazil and central southern Africa could lose their tropical forests because of reduced rainfall and increased temperatures, in addition to the wanton deforestation. This will make climate change even more severe. As trees grow, they take in CO\(_2\) from the air. When the wood dies the CO\(_2\) is returned to the air. Forest clearance and wood burning (such as happens in tropical rain forests) is increasing the latter half of the process, adding to the CO\(_2\) in the atmosphere. Deforestation is now out of control. For example in 1987 an area of the Amazon rain forest the size of Britain was burned, adding 500 million tonnes of CO\(_2\) to the atmosphere. The loss of the forests also means that there are fewer trees to absorb CO\(_2\).

7. Increase in environmental refugees

A report from Tearfund raises the spectre of hundreds of millions of environmental refugees and says the main reason will be the effects of climate - from droughts and water shortages, from flooding and storm surges and from sea-level rise. Already, there are an estimated 25 million environmental refugees - more than half the number of political refugees. Experts such as the ecologist Norman Myers suggest this figure could soar to 200 million in less than 50 years. Even in the UK, 5 million people are at risk from increased flood and storm damage. [Operation Noah] One in five born in Brazil are forced to move because of drought. In the next 15 years, displacement, disruption to agriculture and food supplies, as well as damage and destruction to infrastructure, would be likely to lead to economic and political instability, both within countries and across international borders, and even to wars as environmental refugees seek new homes and countries clash over scarce water and food supplies. Industrial countries also could find themselves under immense pressure from huge numbers of environmental refugees from the developing world. [Christian Aid]

8. Greater incidence of disease

During the next 50 years, Africa is expected to experience significant reductions in cereal yields, as are the Middle East and India. An additional 290 million people could be exposed to malaria and yellow fever by the 2080s, with China and Central Asia likely to see the largest increase in risk.

9. Effect on wildlife

The impact of climate change on some wildlife will be catastrophic even with little further change in the climate. Up to a third of land-based species could face extinction by the middle of the century. [RSPB] It is surely a sin not to care for the creation that God has given us to enjoy.

Global biodiversity is under particular risk. Already hemmed in by habitat loss, pollution and over-exploitation, species and natural systems are now faced with the need to adapt to new regimes of temperature, precipitation and other climatic extremes. Nature conservation in the new millennium has increasingly difficult challenges to
face. Polar bears could become extinct by the end of this century. They are very unlikely to survive as a species if there is an almost complete loss of summer sea ice cover, which is projected to occur within the next ten years. [WWF-UK]

10. The threat to coral reefs

Coral reefs are threatened by global warming. They can only live in waters between 18°C and 30°C. Therefore, with the increase in temperature of the surrounding water, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of coral bleaching events during the past two decades (which have had some of the warmest years in history). When ocean temperatures get too high, coral polyps lose the symbiotic algae inside them, causing them to turn white, or "bleach," and eventually die.

11. Rising ocean acidity

The UK's Royal Society has launched an investigation into the rising acidity of the world's oceans due to absorption of carbon dioxide. Oceans mop up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, lowering the water's pH value - an effect that may be increasing. Increasing use of fossil fuels means more carbon dioxide is going into the air. Most of it will eventually be absorbed by sea water, where it reacts to form carbonic acid. Experts currently predict that if this trend continues, ocean pH could fall by as much as 0.4 units by the year 2100.

Scientists fear increasing acidification could have a particularly detrimental effect on corals and sea creatures with hard shells leading to accelerated disappearance of coral reefs. Increasing acidity reduces the availability of calcium carbonate from the water - which the creatures rely on to produce their hard skeletons. Juvenile organisms could be most susceptible to these changes.

Acidification may also directly affect the growth and reproduction rates of fish, as well as affecting the plankton populations which they rely on for food, with potentially disastrous consequences for marine food webs.

In addition, nutrient concentrations in surface waters of high-latitude regions are likely to fall, subsurface waters become less oxygenated, and phytoplankton will experience increased exposure to sunlight. This could affect multiple marine species and change the composition of biological communities in ways that are not yet understood.

Disaster Risk Reduction

98% of those killed and affected by natural disasters come from developing countries, underlining the link between poverty and vulnerability to disaster. In 2002 alone, 618 million people, over ten times the population of the UK, were affected by disasters. Drought in India affected 300 million. Based upon current trends, by 2025 over half of all people living in developing countries will be highly vulnerable to floods and storms.

People in low-income countries are four times more likely to die in natural disasters than people in high income countries. Globally, disaster losses increased from $71 billion in the 1960s to $608 billion in 1990s. Poverty and lagging development exacerbates people’s vulnerability to extreme weather. [Oxfam] Four out of forty-nine least developed countries face a high risk of disaster. Protection from storms can reduce the loss of life. Thus cyclone shelters in Bangladesh have helped to reduce the loss of life from major cyclones. In La Masica, Honduras, early warning flood systems and training of the local community ensured that not a life was lost when a hurricane Mitch struck in 1998.

Disasters are increasing, partly because of climate change, partly because of increased population in vulnerable and dangerous areas. There was a time when we did not know where disasters would occur. But today we know which countries are most disaster-prone, and which communities are most vulnerable and so the effect of disasters can be more readily predicted.

In the next 15 years, displacement, disruption to agriculture and food supplies, and damage and destruction to infrastructure would be likely to lead to economic and political instability, both within countries and across international borders, and even to wars as environmental refugees seek new homes and countries clash over scarce water and food supplies. This has happened in Niger [Tearfund]. The industrial countries also could find themselves under immense pressure from huge numbers of environmental refugees from the developing world [Christian Aid].

The financial costs of flooding could rise in both the UK and the rest of Europe, increasing the annual flood bill by up to £82 billion across Europe [Association of British Insurers].
Facing the challenge of climate change

According to a report compiled by Sir Nicholas Stern for the UK government, the world has to act now on climate change or face devastating economic consequences. Sir Nicholas was formerly chief economist of the World Bank. The 700-page report was initiated by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

Sir Nicholas suggested that global warming could shrink the global economy by 20% if serious action is not taken soon. He argues that taking action now would cost just 1% of global gross domestic product. Stern made the following key points:

The dangers of climate change

- All countries will be affected by climate change, but the poorest countries will suffer earliest and most.
- Average temperatures could rise by 5°C from pre-industrial levels if climate change goes unchecked.
- Warming of 3° or 4°C will result in many millions more people being flooded. By the middle of the century 200 million may be permanently displaced due to rising sea levels, heavier floods and drought.
- Warming of 4°C or more is likely to affect global food production seriously.
- Warming of 2°C could leave 15-40% species facing extinction.
- Before the industrial revolution, the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere was 280 parts per million (ppm) CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e); the current level is 430 ppm CO₂e. The level should be limited to 450-550 ppm CO₂.
- Anything higher would substantially increase risks of very harmful impacts. Anything lower would impose very high adjustment costs in the near term and might not even be feasible.
- Deforestation is responsible for more emissions than the transport sector.

Recommended actions

- Three elements of policy are required for an effective response: carbon pricing, technology policy and energy efficiency.
- Carbon pricing, through taxation, emissions trading or regulation will show people the full social costs of their actions. The aim should be a global carbon price across countries and sectors.
- Emissions trading schemes, like that operating across the EU, should be expanded and linked.
- Technology policy should drive the large-scale development and use of a range of low-carbon and high-efficiency products.
- Globally, support for energy research and development should at least double; support for the deployment of low-carbon technologies should be increased my up to five times.
- International product standards could be introduced.
- Large-scale international pilot programmes to explore the best ways to curb deforestation should be started very quickly.
- Climate change should be fully integrated into development policy, and rich countries should honour pledges to increase support through overseas development assistance.
- International funding should support improved regional information on climate change impacts.
- International funding should go into researching new crop varieties that will be more resilient to drought and flood.

Economic impacts

- The benefits of strong, early action considerably outweigh the costs.
- Unabated climate change could cost the world at least 5% of GDP each year; if more dramatic predictions come to pass, the cost could be more than 20% of GDP.
- The cost of reducing emissions could be limited to around 1% of global GDP; people could be charged more for carbon-intensive goods.
- Each ton of CO₂ emitted causes damage worth of at least $85, but emissions can be cut at a cost of less than $25 a ton.
- Shifting the world on to a low-carbon path could eventually benefit the economy by $2.5 trillion a year.
- By 2050, markets for low-carbon technologies could be worth at least $500bn.

If the adverse effects of climate change are to be avoided, emissions of greenhouse gases will need to be reduced to keep the average global temperature increase to less than 2°C. Capping the rise in average global temperatures doesn’t mean that there will be no harmful impacts, but a 2°C limit will keep them to a minimum. To stay within this limit, global greenhouse gas emissions must peak and be falling irreversibly by 2015.
Therefore the choices made now and in the next five to ten years, by politicians and decision makers, will determine the extent of the devastation faced by future generations.

The Kyoto Treaty commits industrialised nations to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide, by around 5.2% below their 1990 levels over the next decade. The US government is still opposed to making a firm commitment to the demands of the Treaty. The industrialized countries have the lion’s share of the responsibility for creating the problem and for finding the solutions. They have developed their industrial base, and consequently, their higher standards of living, through the use of vast amounts of fossil fuels. This has resulted in high concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Furthermore, their per capita emissions of CO₂ continue to be tens of times larger than all of the developing countries.

So far, politicians have failed to take sufficient action to avoid exceeding the 2°C limit. Legally binding national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are the only way of meeting the global 2015 target, as well as holding world leaders to account over taking the necessary action. The alternative to legally binding targets is voluntary schemes. A growing number of large multinational corporations have recognized it is important to their success as businesses to combat climate change by the way they make, use and dispose of their products. For example, Johnson & Johnson, IBM, Polaroid, Royal Dutch/Shell and DuPont have all undertaken to reduce average annual CO₂ emissions. However, it is widely accepted that voluntary schemes cannot achieve the same level of environmental protection as mandatory ones; they are usually adopted when political resistance blocks the implementation of more powerful mandatory controls [Stop Climate Chaos].

High emitting countries, with their prime historic responsibility for the emissions that have contributed to this crisis, must lead in reducing their emissions to make certain that this goal is achieved. Developing countries must also ensure that their own emissions are ultimately reduced within a global framework, but by an amount and timing that accounts for their pressing developmental needs and lack of resources.

No one disputes that Earth's climate is changing or that atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased as a result of human activities. The concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are higher now than at any time during the last 420,000 years.

Overwhelming scientific evidence supports the conclusion that observed changes in the global climate are, in large part, due to human activities and primarily related to fossil fuel consumption patterns. Without urgent action to curb greenhouse gas emissions, the Earth will become warmer by 2050 than at anytime in the last 10,000 years.

**Generation of electricity from renewable sources**

A major problem facing the world is how to generate electricity cleanly. Historically it has been generated in coal-fired power stations. This is a ‘dirty’ process not just because of the enormous amount of CO₂ which is produced but also because sulphur dioxide is produced, which is responsible for acid rain, as well as the fact it is produces a lot of particulates. CO₂ has been injected into declining oil fields for more than 30 years to increase oil recovery. An alternative is to find ways of generating electricity which do not require the generation of carbon dioxide using sources which do not involve the formation of carbon dioxide. Such sources are referred to as renewables. Nuclear power can also be used but this is not popular with the public though it does not produce CO₂. Whether individuals like or dislike nuclear power is very much a personal political decision.

Renewable energy is defined as "energy derived from resources that are regenerative or for all practical purposes cannot be depleted.” Renewable energy sources contribute approximately 29.3% of human energy use worldwide but very much less in the UK. Once the generating devices have been manufactured, the generation of renewable energy involves minimal emission levels of carbon dioxide. Hence use of renewable energy sources will mitigate against the relentless increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide.

There are a number of different types of renewable energy: wind power, wave and tidal power, hydroelectricity, geothermal energy, solar energy, biomass and use of biofuels.

**Wind and tidal power**

Scotland is well placed to be a leader in the generation of electricity involving renewable technology. Scotland has the most favourable wind regime in Europe for the generation of wind power. This extends to the offshore construction of wind farms, which could possibly generate twice as much as their onshore counterparts. It remains a conundrum then why this resource should be so spectacularly underexploited in Scotland. To this we
should compare, though comparison proves odious, the 1700 MW installed in Denmark and the 100 MW capacity installed per month last year in Germany. Tidal power has great potential in Scotland. It is more dependable than wind due to its predictable nature, thus making it a better source of electrical energy for feeding the baseload of the national grid. The tides run almost six hours in one direction and then reverse and run for six hours in the opposite direction, thus giving a power source that is available 24 hours a day unlike wind and solar. At the turn of the tide power levels would fall but since the tide does not turn at the same instant up and down the coast there would always be power production if a number of tidal generators at differing locations were hooked into the grid. The siting of wind farms frequently arouses hostile local opposition. Another problem with the generation of electricity using wind and wave power in Scotland is that generation takes place in remote areas which means that the electricity has to be transported to the areas of high demand, i.e. the central belt. This has raised controversy about having large pylons in the Highlands.

**Biofuels**

A few years ago biofuels were favoured, but a serious negative aspect of biofuels is that they are based on agricultural crops, e.g. maize and sugar cane. This may be a problem in an increasingly hungry world. Biofuels are any kind of fuel made from living things, or from the waste they produce. This is a very long and diverse list, including: wood, wood chippings and straw; pellets or liquids made from wood; biogas (methane) from animals' excrement; ethanol, diesel or other liquid fuels made from processing plant material or waste oil. In recent years, the term "biofuel" has come to mean the last category - ethanol and diesel, made from crops including corn, sugarcane and rapeseed.

The grain required to fill the petrol tank of a Range Rover with ethanol is sufficient to feed one person per year. Assuming the petrol tank is refilled every two weeks, the amount of grain required would feed a hungry African village for a year! Food prices are already increasing. With just 10% of the world's sugar harvest being converted to ethanol, the price of sugar has doubled; the price of palm oil has increased 15% over the past year, with a further 25% gain expected next year. Little wonder that many are calling biofuels "deforestation diesel", the opposite of the environmentally friendly fuel that all are seeking. Since the beginning of last year, the price of maize has doubled. The price of wheat has also reached 10-year high, while global stockpiles of both grains have reached 25-year lows. Already there have been food riots in Mexico and reports that the poor are feeling the strain all over the world. In Scotland, there are plans based on biomass as a fuel based on softwood sawmills using a mixture of sawdust, bark and wood chips. Systems like this can be located in rural areas thus eliminating transmission costs.

**Solar Energy**

Almost two billion people in developing countries – one third of the world's population – have no access to electricity. Fuel wood, agricultural residues, human power and draught animals continue to be the primary energy resources for millions of rural families. Solar energy systems have been installed in rural areas in the developing world – 70,000 in Mexico, and 50,000 in Kenya.

**Reducing the Carbon Footprint**

There is much that the individual can do to reduce their ‘Carbon Footprint’ – a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.

The following gives an indication of how we can reduce the size of our carbon footprint:

- Sign up to a [green energy](#) supplier, who will supply electricity from renewable sources (e.g. wind and hydroelectric power) - this will reduce your carbon footprint contribution from electricity to zero
- Turn off power when not in use (lights, television, DVD player, Hi Fi, computer etc.)
- Turn down the central heating slightly (try just 1 to 2°C)
- Turn down the water heating setting (just 2°C will make a significant saving)
- Have a shower rather than a bath
- Check the central heating timer setting - remember there is no point heating the house after you have left for work
- Fill your dish washer and washing machine with a full load - this will save you water, electricity, and washing powder
- Fill the kettle with only as much water as you need
- Unplug your mobile phone as soon as it has finished charging
- Defrost your fridge/freezer regularly
The following is a list of items that may take an initial investment, but should pay for themselves over the course of 1-4 years through savings on one’s energy bills:

- Fit energy saving light bulbs
- Install thermostatic valves on your radiators
- Insulate your hot water tank, your loft and your walls
- Recycle your grey water
- Replace your old fridge/freezer (if it is over 15 years old), with a new one with energy efficiency rating of “A”
- Replace your old boiler with a new energy efficient condensing boiler
- Install solar heating
- Install double glazing

Travel less and travel more carbon footprint friendly:

- Car share to work, or for the childrens’ school run
- Walk or cycle
- Use the bus or a train rather than your car
- Don’t use domestic flights (e.g. from London to Edinburgh), use a train or a coach.
- Take the ferry or Channel Tunnel instead of flying to France
- See if your employer will allow you to work from home one day a week
- Next time you replace your car - check out diesel engines. When on holiday - hire a bicycle to explore locally rather than a car
- When staying in a hotel turn the lights and air-conditioning off when you leave your hotel room
- Note the CO₂ emissions when you change your car. Low emissions also mean you pay less car tax!

Estimated annual CO₂ emissions from devices left on standby in the UK:

- Stereos - 1,600,000 tonnes
- Videos - 960,000 tonnes
- TVs - 480,000 tonnes
- Consoles - 390,000 tonnes
- DVD players - 100,000 tonnes
- Set-top boxes - 60,000 tonnes

The average household has up to 12 gadgets left on standby or charging at any one time. More than £740m of electricity was wasted by things being left ticking over. Britons waste the equivalent of around two power stations’ worth of electricity each year by leaving TV sets and other gadgets on standby. The entire population of Glasgow could fly to New York and back again and the resulting emissions would still be less than that from devices left in sleep mode. 

A “green lifestyle” will help reduce the carbon footprint:

- Buy local
- Buy fresh food rather than frozen
- Buy less meat
- Recycle to reduce waste
- Compost waste food
- Avoid products with a lot of packaging
- Plant a tree (one tree absorbs one ton of CO₂ over its lifetime)
- Use a clothes line instead of a tumble-dryer

**Conclusion**

The topic of Climate Change has provoked much discussion in the media and continues to be hotly debated. This paper has taken the view that it must be taken seriously by the Christian church. We have been given the mandate to subdue the earth. We must exercise our stewardship of the environment wisely. This issue provides Christians with an unprecedented opportunity to take a lead and demonstrate love for the world’s Creator and
Redeemer, and love for our neighbours wherever they may be – remembering the words of our Lord, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:48).

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DONALD M. MACDONALD, Convener

SANDY SMITH, Vice-Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Committee, especially the Convener, for its work over the past year.

2. The General Assembly commend the work of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and of Mr Donald Matheson, the Church’s Parliamentary Officer.

3. The General Assembly commend the UK and Scottish Governments to the prayers of the church. Where possible, they encourage our people to participate in the *National Conversation* initiated by the Scottish Government.

4. The General Assembly commend the work of the various caring initiatives and youth projects within the Church and also those involved in these ministries.

5. The General Assembly commend the section of the Report on Fairtrade to congregations and direct that it be circulated to Deacons’ Courts for their consideration.

6. The General Assembly, while conscious of the benefits which Television and the Internet have brought to our lives, note with concern the potential adverse effects which uncontrolled access to these media can have, especially on children and young people. They urge the church at national and local level to be pro-active in alerting our people to these concerns and to provide them with suitable guidance and support. The General Assembly direct that the section of the Report on Television and the Internet be circulated to all ministers for their consideration.

7. The General Assembly direct that the section of the Report on Marriage and Divorce be circulated to all ministers for their consideration.

8. The General Assembly ordain that a Study Panel of six members, including the Professors of Systematic Theology and Practical Theology in the Free Church College, be appointed to examine, in the first instance, the implications of the Public Questions Committee’s report on Marriage and Divorce, to formulate guidelines for ministers in view of Biblical teaching and the present legal situation and to report to a future Assembly. The
General Assembly further ordain that the members and the Convener be re-appointed by the Assembly each year as long as is necessary and that the Panel study any other subjects that may be referred to it by this or a future Assembly.

9. The General Assembly direct that the sections of the report on the Biblical Basis for the Care of Creation of Creation and on Climate Change be circulated to Deacons’ Courts for their consideration.
REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF PASTORAL ADVICE

1. There were no formal meetings of the Board since last General Assembly. This is perhaps surprising in the light of general comments regarding the urgent need for pastoral advice. It would appear that the Board is only contacted when a substantial pastoral crisis arises. The Board exists to give advice to ministers and church courts on perplexing problems which are not open to formal process and which do not obviously fall within the remit of any existing body.

2. As a result of informal discussion and correspondence, several suggestions have been put forward to develop a more workable and accessible system. Some of these will be highlighted when the Report is presented.

3. Act XXIV, 2007, § 1.2 gave the functions of the Board to the proposed Personnel Committee. It is felt that the Board would function more appropriately as an independent body and proposals to this end are included in Paragraph 4 of the Deliverance.

REV. A MACDONALD, Chairman

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive the Report.

2. The General Assembly remind all ministers and presbyteries that the Board of Pastoral Advice is always willing to be consulted on any perplexing pastoral problems.

3. The General Assembly encourage Presbytery Pastoral Committees to continue their support of ministers and their families.

4. The General Assembly, in view of the special nature of the remit of the Board of Pastoral Advice, direct that the Board shall be replaced by a Panel of Pastoral Advice consisting of men of proven pastoral experience, to be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the said Panel to report directly to the General Assembly. They amend Act XXIV, 2007, § 1.2 accordingly.
REPORT

OF THE

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

The opening verses of Isaiah chapter 6 are meant to take our breath away. Isaiah’s encounter with the Living God transformed his life and his ministry. Nothing for him was ever going to be the same again. He looked up and glimpsed something of the immensity of the eternal majesty of God. He then looked inwards at himself and the comparison left him reeling. Outwardly respectable he may have been, but in the presence of the pure holiness of God, Isaiah realised that he was far short of the mark.

Why mention this? Should the thought of a man broken before God depress us? Far from it! As we contemplate preparing men for the office of the Ministry what is more fitting than the realisation of the qualities that really matter? No amount of academic qualifications, laudable though they may be, will replace a heart truly prepared by the Holy Spirit for a life of self-giving and service.

Those of us involved with the TOM Committee are aware of the heavy responsibility placed upon us both to identify and prepare men adequately for God’s service in the office of the Ministry. We do what we can to put all the practical considerations into place yet we confess freely that it is God who moulds and shapes the raw material, as men are challenged spiritually, emotionally and physically by the ongoing burden of their calling.

It is heartening to report that although not adequate to fill all currently existing vacancies a number of men have responded to the call that God has placed on their lives, and this has been recognised by the Courts of the Church. Of course we continue to pray, and urge you to join with us, that the Lord will continue to call and equip men for the ministry of the Church, bringing both blessing to our congregations and the needy peoples of our lands.

(A) IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The second course in the latest three year cycle of In-Service Training for those in the Free Church ministry was held in the Free Church College from Monday 14th to Thursday 17th January 2008.

The course was organised by Rev. Alasdair I. Macleod, who was responsible for the content of the programme, and Dr Ian MacIver, who was responsible for the logistical elements. Twenty five ministers and one Resident Lay Preacher were in attendance for the whole course. Participants were again given an evaluation sheet to fill in and were offered the alternative of e-mailing their verdict on the course. Although only one third of the attendees took up either of these opportunities to make their views known, the responses received have mainly been positive. In addition, The Monthly Record has carried a generous article on the course written by Dr. Colin Dow. Recordings of the lectures from this year’s course are now available online and the organisers would like to thank Professor John A. Macleod for his willing and expert assistance in making this possible. The College was the appropriate venue and its facilities were much appreciated. The hotel facilities were superb and the organisers are grateful to Mr Donald Macdonald for his generous provision of subsidised accommodation and to his staff for their professional expertise and unfailing courtesy. The organisers would also like to thank Mr John Scoales, Mr Matt Ford and Mrs Cathie Macleod for their invaluable help in ensuring that everything ran so smoothly. The organisers are busy arranging next year’s course and the Committee would like to thank Rev. Alasdair I. Macleod and Dr Ian MacIver for all they are doing to make In-Service Training so helpful for those who attend.

(B) GUIDANCE FOR MINISTERS SUPERVISING STUDENT PLACEMENTS

The General Assembly of 2007 instructed the Committee to prepare a Handbook on the Student Placement Scheme for the guidance of Ministers and Interim-Moderators. Accordingly, a set of Guidelines for Ministers Supervising Student Placements has been drawn up and the Committee would like to thank Professor Donald M. MacDonald for undertaking this task.

(C) TRAINING OF ELDERS AND DEACONS
The Committee now has the final copy of a Training Manual for Elders and Deacons and thank Mr Norman Cumming in particular for all the work he has done on this project. The Committee is at present looking into the most cost-effective and user-friendly way to publish this extensive and most helpful manual. Every effort will be made to make it available as soon as possible.

(D) THE ROLE OF THE EVANGELIST

The Committee has been discussing a paper on this subject prepared by Principal Donald Macleod. A sub-committee comprising of Rev. Iain Thomson, Rev. Kenneth Macleod, Mr Norman Cumming and Mr David Lipp has been appointed to determine the best way to progress this matter with the initial remit of defining what the office of Evangelist is and its Biblical grounding.

(E) APPOINTMENTS AS ASSISTANT MINISTERS

The General Assembly of 2006 instructed the Committee to “formulate proposals whereby all Probationers who are under 30 years of age at the completion of their studies are required to serve 6 – 12 months as an assistant minister in a pastoral charge before they can be inducted to the pastoral charge of a congregation, unless they are called to an assistantship under existing legislation, or in cases where there are children of school age when the Committee may exercise its discretion”.

The Committee is of the view that to retain the title “Assistant Ministers” as a description of this position would lead to much confusion bearing in mind that the category of “Assistant Minister” already exists as an Office in the Free Church. Consequently, the Committee is recommending to the General Assembly that this position be referred to as “Probationary Placements”.

Furthermore, the Committee, aware of legislation concerning discrimination, is recommending that the conditions set out for “Probationary Placements” shall be applied to all students commencing their studies for the Free Church Ministry as from September 2008. The Committee is also of the opinion that the experience gained from the Placements would be beneficial to all students.

(F) MISCELLANEOUS

1. **Application Forms** for candidates for the Free Church Ministry are now available in electronic format. Work is in progress on an updated draft of the Application Form.

2. **Student Finance Scheme** The Committee is aware that the burden of financing the Scheme falls on individual congregations. With this in mind, the Committee is in a position to adjust the 2008 assessment so that individual congregations will be contributing less to the Scheme than in 2007.

(G) FREE CHURCH STUDENTS

- **Final Year:** John Forbes, Murdo Macleod, Ewen Matheson
- **Second Year:** Calum MacMillan, John Johnstone
- **First Year:** William Paterson, Alexander Stewart
- **Pre-College:** Calum M. Smith is in the Final Year of his Degree course.

MARCOS FLORIT, Convener
IAN THOMSON, Vice Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive the Report and thank the Committee especially the Convener, Vice-Convener, and Clerk.

2. The General Assembly note with gratitude the work of Rev. Alasdair I. Macleod and Dr Ian MacIver in their capacity as organisers of the In-Service Training programme. They thank the Free Church College, Mr Donald Macdonald and everyone who contributed to the smooth running of the course in January 2008. They
also thank Professor John A. Macleod for his work in making the recordings of lectures from the course available online.

3. The General Assembly encourage congregations to pray that the Lord will continue to call and equip men for the ministry of the Church, bringing both blessing to our congregations and the needy peoples of our lands.

4. The General Assembly note that a set of Guidelines for Ministers Supervising Student Placements has been drawn up. They thank Professor Donald M. MacDonald for undertaking this task.

5. The General Assembly note that a Training Manual for Elders and Deacons has been prepared and thank Mr Norman Cumming in particular for the work he has done on this project. They instruct the Committee to make progress towards the publication of the Manual.

6. The General Assembly approve the work by the Committee on the role of the Evangelist and instruct them to report further to the next General Assembly.

7. The General Assembly, having considered it desirable that all Probationers complete a one year Probationary Placement, enact as follows:

7.1 The conditions set out for Probationary Placements shall be applied to all students commencing their studies for the ministry of the Free Church as from September 2008.

7.2 When a student is licensed by Presbytery he shall be required to complete a one year Probationary Placement before he can take up a congregational charge. The Board of Ministry will meet with students in January of the year in which they are due to complete their studies. In consultation with the student(s) a date will be agreed for the Placement to begin, which will be after the anticipated date of Trials for Licence. The Board of Ministry may, at its discretion, delay setting a date of Placement if it is of the opinion there are justifiable reasons for doing so.

7.3 The Board of Ministry shall inform the Principal Clerk of the men who will be undergoing Probationary Placements, and of the dates when the Placement will begin and end. The Principal Clerk shall distinguish in the Register of Probationers between those men who are undergoing Probationary Placements and those who have satisfied the requirements of the General Assembly and are eligible for call. No vacant congregation may initiate the procedure for electing a Probationer until nine months of his period of Placement has been completed. The period of nine months will be calculated from the date the Placement begins. The Principal Clerk shall notify Presbyteries when Probationers have completed nine months of their Placement. A Probationer on Placement cannot be inducted to a charge, or take up an appointment by a Committee or Board of the Church, until he has served his one year Placement.

7.4 Upon appointment to a Probationary Placement a Probationer shall be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery within whose bounds he serves his period of Placement. He shall not have a seat in the Presbytery. After the date and location of the Placement has been agreed, the student must then inform the Clerk of the Presbytery and the Clerk of the Kirk Session to which he belongs of the decision, and request that after he has been licensed his oversight and membership be transferred to the Presbytery and congregation in which he will serve his Placement. In all cases a Probationer on Placement shall be under the direct supervision of the Minister of the charge. In all cases Probationers in a Probationary Placement shall be expected to attend all meetings of the Kirk Session, Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly during their period of service, without prejudice to the rights of these Courts to exclude such as are not members thereof from private sessions.

7.5 The Minister of the congregation shall make arrangements for a Probationer on Placement to carry out the normal duties of the ministry of the Word, pastoral visitation and conduct funeral services under the direction of the Minister of the congregation, in accordance with the laws of the Church. Probationers may not solemnise marriage until such time as the Church may authorise the same.

7.6 The Probationer shall agree not to conduct public worship outwith the congregation without the consent of the Minister. After six calendar months a Probationer on Placement shall be allowed to take up invitations to preach with a view to a call in vacant congregations, up to a maximum of two Sabbaths per calendar month, always in consultation with the Minister. In addition, the Probationer shall not engage in any other employment (whether paid or unpaid) without the prior written consent of the Board of Ministry.
7.7 The Board of Ministry shall inform all congregations through intimation to Presbyteries of potential Probationers at the commencement of their final year of studies. Furthermore, the Board shall inform all Ministers of congregations which have indicated in advance the willingness of their congregation to accept a Probationer on Placement, subject to the requirements set out below. Application shall then be made by all interested parties to the Board of Ministry before the end of the December prior to the student completing his studies. The Board shall then decide, in consultation with the Probationer(s) involved, where the period of Placement shall be served. Interested congregations will then be informed and asked if they concur with the decision. In the event of a congregation not being satisfied with the decision they must inform the Board immediately, who will take steps to arrange an alternative Placement.

7.8 In the event of there being more students than there are applications, the Board of Ministry shall exercise the right to stipulate which students may be exempted from the requirements of a Probationary Placement.

7.9 Probationary Placements may not be carried out in vacant congregations. Congregations remitting less than 130% of stipend may not apply to have a Probationer on Placement. It will be the responsibility of the congregation to provide accommodation for the Probationer on Placement. It shall be acceptable, as the Board of Ministry may determine, for a Probationer to carry out his duties of Placement from accommodation already occupied by him, whether rented or owned by him, if it is within reasonable working distance of the congregation.

7.10 Probationers on Placement shall be paid the stipend which all Ministers of the Free Church of Scotland receive as fixed from time to time by the General Assembly. Such remuneration shall be paid in the usual manner through the Central Payroll. Income Tax and National Insurance contributions shall be deducted as appropriate from the said remuneration. The Probationer on Placement shall become entitled to the same pension arrangement as is current at the time for Ministers.

7.11 The cost of travel and related motoring costs involved in the carrying out of a Probationer’s duties within the congregation while on Placement shall be met by the Deacons’ Court at such rates as they may determine or be required by Church legislation at any time. The Deacons’ Court shall make a written agreement with a Probationer prior to him taking up his Placement regarding payments, whether partial or in full, to be made by the said Court towards the costs of fuel, phone or other costs relating to ministry. Deacons’ Courts shall be responsible for the full payment of Council Tax in all cases. The cost of rental, and removal costs where incurred shall be met by the Board of Ministry. All such costs shall be approved in advance by the Board of Ministry.

7.12 Probationers on Placement shall be entitled to 42 days paid holiday. Holiday leave shall be arranged in consultation with the Minister of the congregation whose consent shall always be required.

7.13 In the event of illness the Probationer shall comply with the procedures set out in Act IV, 2001 (Sick Leave Arrangements) mutatis mutandis, a copy of which shall be provided to him.

7.14 In the event of a Probationer being in breach of his terms and conditions of appointment, the Minister and Kirk Session shall in the first instance endeavour to resolve matters and shall, in particular, give to the Probationer on Placement a reasonable period in which to remedy any cause of dissatisfaction. If such resolution does not prove possible, the Kirk Session shall refer the matter to the Presbytery who shall be entitled to terminate the appointment upon just cause being shown, the rights of all parties to appeal to the higher Courts of the Church always being preserved. Upon the Presbytery’s termination of appointment the Probationer shall be entitled to the sum of two months remuneration, subject to a maximum stipend paid of twelve months.

7.15 In the event that a Probationer on Placement has a grievance he shall in the first instance endeavour to resolve the matter with the Minister. If thereafter the Probationer remains dissatisfied he shall refer the matter to the Board of Ministry who will endeavour to help him resolve any difficulties. If he still remains dissatisfied he shall have the right to petition the Presbytery thereanent, the rights of all parties to appeal to the higher Courts of the Church always being preserved. If the arrangements become unworkable the Board of Ministry reserves the right to end the Placement and make alternative arrangements as they deem necessary.

7.16 In the event that the congregation becomes vacant after the Probationer begins his Placement the Board of Ministry will endeavour to make alternative arrangements for the Probationer to complete his Placement with
another congregation. If such arrangements are not forthcoming the Board will exercise its right to terminate the appointment at no disadvantage to the Probationer on Placement.

8. The General Assembly thank the Office staff and the Committee’s medical and external examiners for their helpful and efficient services.
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XII.
THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

REPORT

OF THE

COLLEGE BOARD

The College Board has met twice since the last General Assembly, in September 2007 and in March 2008. Various sub-committees also met to deal with specific issues.

The general remit of the Board can be broadly summarised by quoting its first area of responsibility: “promoting the interests of the College within and outwith the Free Church (and) implementing a strategy designed to heighten awareness of the Free Church College as a centre of Biblical and Reformed teaching.”

The following issues were dealt with at the stated meetings:

1. Memorandum of procedures
2. Professors and presbyteries
3. Appointment of new Vice-Chairman
4. Centenary Fund Appeal
5. Bursaries
6. Payment of Tuition Fees by SAAS
7. Management accounts as presented at each meeting
8. The College budget for 2007 and 3 year rolling budgets for 2007-09
9. Marketing and publicity
10. Findings of the College Review Group
11. Student Welfare
12. Semester dates for 2008/09
13. Revalidation of BTh
14. New arrangements for the maintenance of the Mound buildings
15. Part-time Courses
16. Professors’ Reports for 2006/07
17. Consideration of production of a web-based College Theological Journal
18. Copyright Licensing Agency
19. Recommendation to Nominations Committee for new College Board Chairman
20. Student Satisfaction Questionnaire
21. Student Concerns
22. Accreditation of College required for Register of Approved Sponsors of the Border and Immigration Agency
23. Principal’s Report to General Assembly
24. Correspondence

As approved by the 2002 General Assembly the President of the Students’ Representative Council was a full participating member of the Board.

Some of the above are now commented on in more detail.

1. **Tuition Fees from Student Awards Agency**  The tuition fee awarded to students at the College by SAAS (Student Awards Agency for Scotland) has remained static at £1,561 since 1994 on the grounds that the College is classed as a Private Institution. However following an exchange of letters between the Principal and the Agency at the end of last year the Agency has agreed to increase the level of future awards to eligible BTh students to the standard rate (£1,735 in 2007/08) paid in respect of all undergraduate programmes at Scottish universities. This was done retrospectively for this session. The agency said they based their decision to award the standard fee to our students on the fact that the BTh is run in partnership with the University of Glasgow. This decision will also be of benefit to the Training of the Ministry budget as they will require to pay a reduced sum for each Free Church student.

2. **Centenary Fund Appeal**  At the beginning of 2007 the Board Chairman issued a challenge to all congregations in an attempt to raise £100,000 for the College’s Endowment Fund during its centenary year. It
was suggested this could be achieved by each Deacons’ Court donating £100 and each member and supportive adherent giving £10. Responses were received from 57 congregations as well as some very generous gifts from individuals and all were greatly appreciated. Three of the 57 congregations wrote to say that they were not contributing on the principle that they were already doing so in their monthly submissions to Edinburgh as part of that is dedicated to the upkeep of the College or for that reason plus a requirement to meet unexpected costs locally. While in these cases it was disappointing not to receive a donation, the fact that they took the time to write and explain their decision was appreciated. Only three congregations gave in such a way as would have met the target set; two of these (Ayr and Dowanvale) were in the Glasgow and Argyll Presbytery, the other from the Western Isles (Cross). Their generosity was much appreciated as was that of a considerable number of our smaller congregations which on average were more likely to contribute than the larger ones. The total achieved was £15,000 which while a long way short of target was nevertheless welcome.

3. **BTh Revalidation**  
The Board are glad to report that re-validation of the BTh programme for a further five years was successfully achieved in June 2007 and will now run until 2012. Thanks are due to the Principal and the College staff for the time and effort put into achieving this objective. Please pray that we get a good throughput of both Free Church and Private students over this period.

4. **MTh Degree**  
Two students have now successfully completed their theses and should graduate this summer. Pray that there will be a consistent number of students coming forward for this degree and that they will include some of our own men, either newly qualified students or those with some years of ministerial experience under their belts. The part-time option over two years should best suit such candidates.

5. **Part-time Course**  
This has continued to run over the past year and continues to draw a good number of students. A new development this year has been the linking–up with a group in Smithton, where there are some ten students. Twenty-four students have registered in Stornoway and 51 in Edinburgh making a total of 85. The link with Smithton is as yet one-way, but it is hoped to remedy this by upgrading our present equipment in future.

6. **Findings of the College Review Group**  
The General Assembly, on the motion of the Stewardship and Policy Committee, directed the College Board to examine the 2006 College Review report with a view to adopting such of its recommendations as they consider advantageous to the College. The Board found that a number of the proposed changes had been overtaken by events such as the restructuring of committees and boards, the demise of the Stewardship and Policy Committee and the proposed changes to the denominational financial contribution scheme. Nevertheless there were areas where their recommendations were apposite. One such was that the role of the Principal as the College’s chief executive should be recognised. At present, major changes which could affect the College can be introduced without any input from, or consultation with, the Principal and the Board regard this as undesirable. The Quinquennial Visitation Committee had addressed this problem by having the Principal made an *ex officio* member of the Stewardship and Policy Committee. With the demise of this committee the Board agreed that the logical solution to this problem would be to appoint the Principal as an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees. Other areas where the Board are already covering the Review Group’s recommendations are in annually reviewing the work of the College staff and getting feedback from the students providing their assessment of the training offered. One recommendation that the Board did not see fit to accept was that the Principal should be appointed on a four year rolling basis. The Board took the view that it was better for the College’s profile and for marketing and recruitment purposes to have a recognised head.

7. **Student Satisfaction Survey**  
A questionnaire was distributed to all students, Free Church and private, eliciting their opinions on the quality and benefit of their training and of the support and facilities provided. There was a full return of the questionnaires and the Board expresses its appreciation of the help of the SRC President, Mr Ewen Matheson, in ensuring this. The overall tenor of the responses was very positive with almost all students saying that if given the choice over again they would still choose to study at the College and would recommend it to a friend. Appreciation was expressed for some improved facilities such as the availability of laptop points in the classrooms and the provision of an interactive Smart Board for the study of Greek. Free Church students were very much in favour of the placement scheme and spoke highly of the benefit they derived from it. Obviously not everything in the garden is rosy but critical or negative comments were very much in the minority. Some were looking for improved Common Room facilities and more comfortable seating. One comment suggested that the provision of more electives would be beneficial. Suggested improvements were remitted to the Senate to action if desirable and possible. A couple of comments will give a flavour of the
responses received: ‘The building lends to the College experience. I would be sorry if it is modernised greatly and charged higher fees to do so.’ ‘It is a tough course but I love it here.’

8. **Accreditation of College required by Immigration and Border Agency** If the College is to continue receiving non-EU students after February 2009 it will require to be registered on the Border and Immigration Agency’s Register of Approved Sponsors. This is the result of recent Government legislation enacted to try and prevent unwanted individuals from entering the country under the guise of students. The fact that the target is ‘hole-in-the-wall,’ recently established bogus colleges teaching English doesn’t alter the catch-all nature of the legislation which means that unimpeachable private institutions with more than a century’s history behind them have to undergo the required accreditation process. This involves applying to one of three accreditation bodies, completing a detailed 26-page application form, supplying a monumental amount of accompanying documentation, undergoing one or two inspections and being charged somewhere between £4000 and £6000 for the privilege. The Principal has written to the relevant minister to try and gain exemption for the College on the grounds that we are already an accredited institution but the tenor of the reply tends to be discouraging in the extreme as he just repeats the mantra that all private sector providers will need accreditation. They do not enter into any discussion of the merit of individual cases. Among other things this episode highlights the burden that falls on the Principal and the other staff members from having to deal with an ever increasing number of peripheral issues that take up considerable time and effort often for little or no discernible gain or purpose. It behoves us as a Church to seek to do all in our power not to add unnecessarily to this load.

9. **Principal’s Report to the General Assembly** The Board came to the conclusion that since the passing of Act XXXI, at the 2004 General Assembly which no longer requires the Principal to provide a separate report there was no direct accountability from the Senate to the General Assembly thus leaving a gap in the information being passed to the church at large regarding College activities. It was also noted that as two reports are made to Glasgow University annually it was in fact better informed about the College’s activities than the Church and it was felt that this was not a desirable state of affairs. The Board, therefore, propose to repeal Act XXXI, 2004, ‘The General Assembly amend Act XVI, 1995, para 4, by deleting the words, “this report will include, as an item, the Principal’s Report”’; to include a Principal’s report in future College Board Reports; and to consult with the Assembly Arrangements Committee as to the possibility of the Principal presenting his report in person.

10. **College Secretary** The College Secretary, Miss Anne MacLeod, has had to undergo major surgery earlier this year followed by a course of radiotherapy and is now recovering at home. It is a testimony to her courage and the grace of God that she has maintained her usual good spirits. Her cheerful and reassuring presence has been missed by staff colleagues, students and Board members alike and we commend her to the prayers of the Church for a full recovery and an early return to her post.

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**STUDENT ROLL**

**Bachelor of Theology**

**First Year**

- Angus E. Page
- Ester Y. Tokunaga Page
- William A. Paterson, BA (UHI Millennium Institute)
- Jihe G. Song BA (Shandong University), M.Sc. (Renmin University), Ph.D.(Heriot-Watt University)
- Alexander J. Stewart
- Winston Tay BA (National University of Singapore), B.Soc.Sci. (National University of Singapore)
- Jonathan M. Kirk BA (University of Wales)

**Second Year**

- John Johnstone MA (Aberdeen)
- Hye Young Kim
- Calum MacMillan BA (UHI)
- Fumiko Nakamura BDes, MDes (Dundee)
- Dong Shin Ryu BA (Chonnam National University, Korea)
- Morgan Tivatyi
Third Year

Adam de Jong (Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees, University of Amsterdam)
John Forbes BA (Cantab.)
Murdo MacLeod
Ewen Matheson BSc (Robert Gordon University)
Robin Tso

Fourth Year

Shannon Beattie
Brian Munyuni

Master of Theology: Full-time

Michael Braütigam BA (Global University, Springfield, USA)
Myoung Jin Kim BA (Kosin University, Korea), MDiv (Chungsin University)
Apolos B. Landa MD (National University, Peru), MSc (London)
Koji Harada BA (Tohoku Gakín University), MDiv (Tokyo Union Theological Seminary)
Jeong-Sik Moon BEng (Kook Min University, Korea), MDiv (Hap Dong Theological Seminary)

Master of Theology: Part-time

Matthew Ford MTheol (St Andrews)
Malcolm Maclean BA (UHI Millennium Institute), DMin (Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, USA)
In Seong Son BA MDiv (Chongshin University, Korea)

Postgraduate Diploma

Marcy Vasvary

ALLAN MACPHERSON, Chairman
IAN D. CAMPBELL, Vice-Chairman

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Board for its work, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

2. The General Assembly note with thankfulness that the student award fee paid to eligible College students has been increased to the standard rate applicable to university undergraduates and commend the Principal for his role in achieving this outcome.

3. The General Assembly thank all those individuals and congregations who contributed to the College’s Centenary Appeal Fund especially those that gave with a view to meeting the target and to the considerable number of smaller congregations which contributed.

4. The General Assembly commend the Principal and staff for their efforts in successfully securing the re-validation of the BTh degree programme.

5. The General Assembly congratulate the first two students who successfully completed their theses for the MTh degree and would again commend this degree to any of our ministers who may be seriously considering pursuing further academic study particularly as it can be undertaken on a part-time basis.

6. The General Assembly note that the Part-time Course is now available at Smithton-Culloden as well as Edinburgh and Stornoway and would encourage our members and adherents in the area to avail themselves of this opportunity to increase their understanding of the Scriptures.

7. The General Assembly thank the Board for fulfilling its remit to consider the recommendations of the College Review Group and note their support for the recognition of the Principal’s role as the College’s chief executive and their suggestion that this might be best achieved by appointing him as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. They instruct the Nominations Committee to consider this suggestion prior to presenting their Report to the Assembly. They also note that the Board see no merit in the suggestion of having a four-year rotational Principalship.
8. The General Assembly note with pleasure the high level of satisfaction with the College and its teaching recorded by the students in the recent survey and commend the staff for their part in achieving this. They also encourage the Senate to take note of and action any suggestions that will enhance even further the College experience for our students.

9. The General Assembly note with regret and dismay the requirement for the College to be accredited in order to be registered on the Border and Immigration Agency’s Register of Approved Sponsors. They encourage the Senate and the Board to continue to explore the possibility that this requirement may yet be averted and encourage the Church to pray for such an outcome.

10. The General Assembly repeal Act XXXI, 2004. They instruct the Board to include in their Report to future General Assemblies, a Report from the Principal of the College and look forward with anticipation to the resumption of this Report.

11. The General Assembly congratulate the Board on the production of the attractive new publicity folder and leaflets about the College and its courses and record their particular thanks to Professor John A. Macleod and Mrs Catherine Pearson, Communications Officer, for their major contributions to this exercise.

12. The General Assembly note the recent ill-health of Miss Anne MacLeod, College Secretary, and commend her to the prayers of the Church for a full recovery and a resumption of her post.

13. The General Assembly, recognising the importance of the work and witness of the College, commend the Principal and Senatus, the student body and the Board members to the prayers of the Church.

14. The General Assembly thank Miss Sheena MacInnes for her work as Library Assistant; Mr Jonathan Innes, Board Treasurer; Miss Anne MacLeod, College and College Board Secretary; Mr John Scoales, College Officer; and the Chief Administrative Officer, Mr Rod Morrison and Office staff for all their invaluable background assistance. They also acknowledge with thanks the willingness of Miss Christine MacIver to provide part-time clerical assistance in the College Secretary’s absence.
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XIII.

REPORT

OF THE

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS BOARD

(A) INTRODUCTION

The last year has been one of change, opportunity and challenge. We have been blessed to witness first hand how God has been at work through the international ministry of the Free Church. He has certainly not withdrawn his blessings. We have seen his gracious provision of people and resources and have clearly experienced His forward leading. We are convinced there is a vital role for denominationally based missionary service.

Change

The rapid pace of change around the globe is dizzying. The changes faced by international missions are similarly breathtaking. Let’s be in no doubt, the task of mission expands with an ever-mushrooming global population. It is true also that the nature of the work changes to one of supporting and partnering national believers and churches rather than pioneering and planting them ourselves. It is in this context that we seek to adapt to change.

Since last May there has been the continued development of new fields and new relationships. Over a period of 15 months we will have seen the return of four missionary families and the commissioning of four others. There has been a change of leadership at Colegio San Andres. The IMB itself has undergone a change of leadership and faces another change of size and structure, as well as major funding and fundraising changes.

Opportunity

Undoubtedly one of the major battlefields of the present time is the world of Islam. We believe God has called us and is equipping us in this arena. There are also growing opportunities to network and partner within Europe. We have Free Church people who are eager to serve. In our traditional fields the opportunity exists to assist national churches to grow and become truly indigenous. As the majority of the world’s believers are now found in the southern hemisphere and the developing world, there is tremendous opportunity for mutual service and a two-way flow of people and blessing.

Challenge

There is the challenge to hand over mature ministries to national believers. There is the challenge to work more closely with other churches and national workers. There is the challenge to maintain our commitments to existing works as well as respond to new callings, doing so cost effectively. We are challenged to continue to obey, to send and to give, even when resources appear scarce and the needs at home are great. There is the huge challenge of communication in order to enthuse, envision and lead the people of the Free Church in obedience to our calling. May we as a church be caught up in God’s great plan of redemption in a fallen world.

The following is a report of activities over the last 12 months. It demonstrates God’s faithfulness and blessing and represents a platform for future service.

(B) SOUTH AFRICA

As we report on the work in South Africa let us give thanks for the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues there. The country is experiencing difficult times and there appears to be an ever widening gap between those who are economically prosperous and the many who remain in poverty. Thankfully there is still an open door of opportunity to preach the Gospel. There is also the challenge for the church there to demonstrate the love and caring spirit of Christian compassion to those within their communities who are suffering from the ravages of HIV/AIDS and many other sad problems.

1. The Free Church in South Africa

It is with sadness that we record the death of Rev. Wilfred Thozamile Vumindaba who passed away on 18th December 2007 at the age of 85 years. Mr Vumindaba served the cause of Christ over many years, both as an
Evangelist and then as an ordained Minister since 1975. He was a faithful and humble servant of Christ and a helper to the missionaries over a long period of years. Rev. Buntu Mtishe also suffered the death of both his parents in the course of the year and we extend our warm sympathy to him.

Rev. Webster Tshoni was ordained and inducted as the minister of the King William’s Town District and we wish him well in this position. Mr Tshoni, although he has come into the ministry later in life, has already proved to be a wise and competent addition to the church’s leadership. He also helps out at Dumisani.

Rev. Kenneth Ferguson, Mr Ernest Brown and the Board Secretary, Mr Calum Ferguson, visited South Africa as Board Delegates in March 2007. Their Report included several recommendations regarding the on-going work of the Church and all these have been conveyed to the Free Church in South Africa. Among these was a decision to reduce the amount given to the Central Fund of the African Church by 10% per annum. Special projects in the African Church will be supported financially as funds allow.

The Board is taking steps to transfer to the African church all church properties which are still registered as belonging to the General Trustees of the Free Church of Scotland (excluding those houses occupied by missionary staff).

The Board is very grateful to Women for Mission for setting up a Fund to help finance annual Youth Camps in the African church. We are grateful to them also for a generous grant towards the cost of the printing of the revision of the Xhosa Psalter. The generosity of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland has again been of great help to the Free Church in South Africa with money to help finish the new church building in King William’s Town.

While we in the Free Church of Scotland are able to help our African sister church in several practical ways, we acknowledge that the Free Church in South Africa has to take responsibility, under God, for its own progress and formulate its own vision for the days ahead. In the words of one of the Delegates’ recommendations to the Free Church in South Africa, “(it should) commit itself to earnest prayer for spiritual revival, urging and leading its people to sacrificial efforts in the service of the Lord.”

The Church is also asked “to commit itself to the priority of praying for a regular supply of godly and gifted students for the ministry and for elders.” We in the Free Church of Scotland must join our African brothers and sisters in these prayers.

2. Dumisani Theological Institute

The Board is encouraged by the continuing ministry exercised by DTI and commend the work to the prayers and financial support of the Church. The sphere of influence of the DTI continues to widen and it is obviously not just a useful facility for several churches, but also a centre of theological and spiritual maturity so clearly needed in the South Africa of today.

The Board was pleased to help Principal Dr Alistair Wilson attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America in June 2007 which enabled him to make useful contacts which we hope will bring more help for DTI in the future.

Rev. Thys Lourens retired from Dumisani at the end of 2007. He had given a number of years of excellent service and will be greatly missed. It has been an encouragement however to learn of the appointment of Rev. Deon Lombard as a lecturer. Deon is a fluent Xhosa speaker, and has been the minister of the Bethany-Emmanuel Baptist church in King William’s Town for some years. He has been helping at Dumisani for some time and from the middle of this year he will be on the full-time staff. Theologically he is in full sympathy with the doctrinal position of the Institute. Dumisani also welcomes Deon’s wife, Shelley, as its new Administrator.

When the Delegates visited the DTI they met with staff, students and the Board of Governors. They all agreed that, if finance became available, consideration should be given to acquiring a complex of buildings more suitable to the requirements of a modern theological college.

The DTI was encouraged to try and maintain the present range of activities associated with Dumisani and the emphasis on training Xhosa men for the ministry of the FCSA. The Principal has given the assurances that this is in line with present practice in Dumisani, even within the strict limits of staff and finance available.
3. Free Church Missionaries
During the year we were able to welcome on leave, Rev. and Mrs Reid, Rev. and Mrs Christie and Rev. Dr and Mrs Wilson.

Our sympathy was expressed to Mrs Angela Reid whose mother passed away just a day after she and Norman arrived home from South Africa in June. The Reids returned from their furlough in January. Norman has been extremely helpful in the church work as well and has been the channel through which much practical help has come from our sister church in Ireland. He has also been able to re-start the work in the King William’s Town prison which is a great encouragement. We wish Norman and Angela well in this new spell of service and we congratulate their son Stephen on the completion of his architect’s studies and on his new post in Johannesburg.

Ronald and Morag Christie will be retiring from South Africa in August. Since leaving Dumisani, Ronald has been busy with literature work associated with the church, the preparation of a ‘Blue Book’ and guide books for office-bearers and the revision of the Xhosa Psalter for printing, among other much else. In addition he has been the interim-Moderator of the Embo District and this has resulted in a great deal of travelling for both himself and Morag as she has helped with the women’s work there. Ronnie has also preached virtually every Lord’s Day in churches in the Southern Presbytery and Morag has led the Women’s Christian Association work in the King William’s Town District as well as with the Bible Women’s meetings. They will be missed in the Free Church in South Africa and we salute them for all they have contributed to the FCSA and to Dumisani during Ronnie’s years as Principal there. We pray with them for their daughter Fiona as she begins her new work in Medellin, Colombia.

Rev. Alastair and Mrs Jenny Wilson and family had a short leave at the end of 2007 and the beginning of this year. We are grateful to the Lord for the way they have all fitted into life in South Africa and for safety for Steven who has to travel many miles each day to and from school in East London. Jenny has been active in the Bible Women’s days at Dumisani and we are sure that her considerable talents will be further employed in the work there as time goes on. Alastair is developing the DTI in a way that continues to enhance its reputation in the Eastern Cape and much further afield.

From August to October Rev. Dr John Ross, along with Mrs Ross, ‘covered’ for Rev. Norman Reid in Dumisani during his furlough. As a result of this experience, Dr and Mrs Ross have felt the call of God to offer themselves for further service in South Africa and hope, God willing, to take up a post in Dumisani in time for the second semester of 2008. While we sympathise with the congregation of Greyfriars/Stratherick, Inverness, we are also grateful to them for their willingness to allow their minister to take up this new field of service. Rev. Dr John and Mrs Elizabeth Ross will be very welcome additions to the missionary family in South Africa. We do pray that all necessary arrangements for their going to South Africa will fall into place without problems. They are assured of the prayers and goodwill of all in the church as they take up this new work. We know that John will be a great asset to both Dumisani and to the FCSA. We are very conscious that Elizabeth will feel the break from the contacts she has fostered in Inverness but we are sure she will find a new niche in King William’s Town.

(C) INDIA

Regular contact is maintained with our colleagues in Central India. Frequent reports are received from the Presbytery, the Mission Council, the Schools and the Hospital. They have now been running independently for twenty years, but still require annual grants to help support the work. During the year the Board commissioned a systems review by an experienced Indian Christian accountant to help the Church, the Mission Council and the Schools to maximise their use of resources and to ensure that proper and efficient procedures are in place. His report is now being implemented. Board delegates will visit later this year to encourage further the move towards financial self-sufficiency.

The Board is delighted to report that last year’s Moderator, Rev. Dr John Ross, and his wife Elizabeth recently visited India on behalf of the Free Church and we look forward to hearing his impressions of the situation there. Such visits are a great encouragement to all those serving in the various branches of the work.

1. Presbyterian Free Church
During the process of registration as a charity it was found that the name Free Church of Central India was not acceptable to the Registrar, so the Church was registered by the Presbytery as the Presbyterian Free Church. This is now their official name. The four congregations continue to worship and witness in sometimes hostile conditions.
During the year Sumeet Mishra completed his BTh in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Dehra Dun, in North India. After an initial probationary period in Jabalpur he was ordained as co-pastor in Lakhnadon. Plans are being made for one of the other pastors to go for further study.

2. **Mission Council**
   Outstanding property matters, handled by the Mission Council and the Evangelical Trust Association of South India, which holds all the Mission property in trust, are still ongoing, but slow progress is being made.

3. **Shiksha Samitee (Education Society)**
   This is the body, made up of local Christians, which is responsible for running Chhapara Mission Higher Secondary School and Lakhnadon Mission School. The Schools continue to achieve excellent results in State examinations and Chhapara School is regarded as the best in the District. The Principal, Mr Michael John, son of the late Rev. Prakash Kumar, is keen to improve the accommodation and facilities. The head teacher in Lakhnadon is Mrs Anju Glory Singh. Daily Bible teaching is carried on in the designated moral education period in both schools.

4. **Emmanuel Hospital Association**
   The medical work in Lakhnadon and Chhapara has been run under the auspices of EHA since 1974. The Medical Superintendent in Lakhnadon Christian Hospital is Dr Adarsh Benn, a Physician, and his wife Dr Lata is Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. Mr Yohan Malche, the Administrator, is a tireless worker not only in the hospital but in other branches of the work as well. The Hospital still needs a surgeon.

   The two Community Health and Development projects, one called SPANDANA, based in Lakhnadon, and the other in Chhapara Christian Health Centre, continue to reach out in the name of Christ into villages some distance from the main centres bringing health services and development in challenging circumstances.

**D) LATIN AMERICA**

2007 has been a year of Continuity, Change, Opposition and Opportunity. Many of our key personnel have changed with the prospect of more change in 2008 but the core focus of mission, education, training and evangelism remain.

1. **Perú**

1.1 **Presbyterian Churches in Perú**
   The Free Church of Scotland maintains fraternal links with the Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana y Reformada en el Perú (IEPRP) and the Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana del Perú (IEPP). Currently the Board is open to investigate ways of making these links more meaningful by considering projects where joint cooperation is both possible and mutually beneficial.

   In March 2008, Don Luis Torrejon died. He had served the church in Perù faithfully for many decades. He was a pastor in Rioja, an Elder in Lima and a teacher at Colegio San Andrés. A tribute is being prepared by Rev. William M. Mackay and will appear in the Monthly Record.

1.2 **Lima Evangelical Seminary** ([www.sel.edu](http://www.sel.edu))
   In Lima, the Seminario Evangélico de Lima (SEL) provides excellent training for the emerging generation of church leaders, ministers and missionaries. The Rector, Rev. Donnie Smith, continues to raise the profile of the seminary both within Perú and throughout Latin America. The Free Church of Scotland is a significant partner facilitating the work of SEL. The staff and students of the Seminary are grateful to the Free Church of Scotland for their prayerful support and to the WFM groups that are in constant communication.

1.3 **Colegio San Andrés** ([www.sanandres.edu.pe](http://www.sanandres.edu.pe))
   Following the 2006 road traffic accident in Inverness, there are unresolved legal actions being taken in Perú against the Church, the school and a named individual. The Church has appointed lawyers to answer these actions in Perú and we await their report.

   On 13th June 2007, Colegio San Andrés celebrated its 90th anniversary. Dr Ian MacIver and Rev. Iain MacAskill representing the Board of Trustees and the International Missions Board respectively were present to bring greetings from Scotland along with taped messages from former members of staff. Among the other greetings was one from the Mayor of Lima City Council expressing ‘congratulations to St Andrew’s College on
the 90th anniversary of its founding celebrated on the 13th June of this year, with the prayer that it may continue its fruitful service as an institution of benefit to our young and our citizens in general.'

Colegio San Andrés is passing through a significant and critical stage in its illustrious 90-year history. In April 2007, Rev. Bob Akroyd, Rev. Iain MacAskill, Miss Mary Gillies and Mrs Annie Margaret MacDonald visited Colegio San Andrés and the summary of their report stated:

'We firmly believe that the Free Church of Scotland should be proud of the Colegio San Andrés and be prepared to invest in its future. The school is definitely contributing to the Christian good of Perú. This is clearly a time of transition. Questions of governance, location, personnel and identity are critical to the future of the school. Change is essential and this is recognised by missionaries, local members of staff and parents, but we need to devise a positive way forward to maintain the high standards of the school and to improve its link with the Free Church of Scotland. This is a mission field where the Gospel is reaching 485 students and their families and we are persuaded along with the staff of San Andrés that this field is ripe for harvest. We need God’s wisdom and vision to ensure that Colegio San Andrés remains a powerful testimony to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Later in 2007, the school was saddened to lose their headmaster Donnie MacAulay, Head of Secondary, Tim Donachie and Administrator, Julio Ardiles. All three have served the school diligently and faithfully over many years. The departure of the MacAulays and the Donachies necessitated an urgent search for a new headmaster. In the months that preceded the appointment of a new headmaster, Colegio San Andrés benefited greatly from the services of former Headmaster, Marcos Florit who served at the Colegio from September to December. Also at this time, Donnie Smith took time from his seminary responsibilities to provide leadership and supervision to the school in a time of transition.

With great anticipation, the Board was delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Clive Bailey as headmaster to commence in January 2008. Clive and his wife Ruth returned to Perú 30 years after their first tour of duty.

Within the Colegio, the English department remains strong due to the consistent input of Mrs Elma Armstrong and Mr Marc Scarlet. The International Missions Board is actively seeking one more person, or couple, to work in Colegio San Andrés.

The next chapter in the history of the Colegio San Andrés is the transfer of governance of the school from the International Missions Board to a Local Board. The Board, in consultation with Mr Clive Bailey and other experts in Perú, plan to bring forward a draft constitution for the new governing board to the Assembly.

1.4 Moyobamba Presbyterian Church (www.presbimoyo.org)
In Moyobamba, the work of the gospel is three-pronged: based in the church, the school and the clinic. In 2007, IMB representatives visited Moyobamba and had the privilege of preaching to over 300 people at both the morning and evening worship services. The Church pursues extensive outreach work in the San Martin region and church planting in other parts of Perú.

Alongside this large congregation there is the Annie Soper Christian School which continues to grow while maintaining a strong Evangelical Christian ethos. To further extend Christian education, there is an ongoing plan to found a Christian university in the Moyobamba area.

With over 20 years of ministry experience in Moyobamba, Asociación San Lucas (http://www.lukesociety.org/) is a multifaceted healthcare centre. The objective of the Society, set up in 1986, is to “change people’s lives by giving them the tools for self-change”. Their focus is on health both in the clinic and in the field, and in preventative rather than curative health. The three areas of work are clinic, integrated health programme and pastoral health.

Key to each prong of this work in Moyobamba is the MacPherson family. David and Martha have served the church and community in Moyobamba well in many ways. In 2008, they return to Scotland to so that their children can pursue full-time education. They will be sorely missed in Moyobamba but David has planned his transition well to insure that the work of the gospel in the church, the school and the medical mission will progress even in their absence.
2. Colombia

2.1 Intercession for Colombia
At the time of writing this report Colombia is in the midst of a major political crisis. While a measure of calm has been restored, tensions persist. The fight against internal terrorism (FARC) has embroiled the Colombian government in controversy with her neighbouring countries. There has been a threat of war with both Ecuador and Venezuela. Urgent prayer is needed for this difficult situation. Pray for political peace and Gospel blessing.

2.2 Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblica de Colombia ([www.unisbc.edu.co](http://www.unisbc.edu.co))
The Free Church of Scotland gives significant input into the training and preparation of leaders for the emerging church through providing two full-time missionaries to the Biblical Seminary of Colombia (Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblica de Colombia). Since obtaining university degree awarding status, the Biblical Seminary looks to grow in order to better support and train leaders for the growing Evangelical churches in Colombia. Currently, there are 150 fulltime students on the 5-year course. Dr Manuel Reaño, the Principal of the College, and Dr David Ford, Lecturer, have provided valuable input into the life and teaching of the seminary. Mrs Paty Reaño and Mrs Olwen Ford have important roles in the pastoral care of students and the development of projects ranging from after-school clubs to sewing classes. Within the next year, the Board plans to visit the seminary in Medellín to discuss the long-term strategy for involvement in the seminary and in the work of the gospel in Colombia at large.

The Lord is using the seminary to build His church and for the Christian good of Colombia. According to Manuel Reaño, the work of the seminary is growing:

‘We are applying for a licence for a master’s course next year. We’ll explore the possibility of a second career (Family Development). We start a full Communications Department, we convert our Saturday Bible Institute into a fully blown Centre of non-formal Church-related Education, we enrol more Bible Institutes into the network of such establishments we advise and help develop (there are almost 30 already in the network, and all over the country... that’s over 1000 students, but stay tuned as more are applying... absolutely overwhelming!), we have established a University publishing house [with three books published to date]. ... Bits and pieces like Diploma courses, and workshops and a Missions Centre, and of course, the Community Children’s Library [BINCO, the children’s library set up by the WFM funds] now strengthened with the presence of two lovely Swiss girls working as volunteers.’

While David Ford notes:

‘It is difficult to appreciate why, but the Colombian Evangelical Church is one of the weakest in Latin America. It stands at about 4% of the population, compared with Perú’s 12%. This weakness is reflected in the dominance of the Catholic Church in society. The conquistadors’ genocide was pretty complete in the northern part of South America resulting in a purer version of Catholicism than elsewhere in the subcontinent. Preaching is pretty weak, Colombians are great singers, and love dramas and participation. But exposition is a rarity. Students, even in 1st year tend to be confident that they pretty much know all there is to know. The Theological Resources web site continues to get 1000 plus visitors a day, and I get emails from all over Latin American and other Spanish speaking parts wanting info and advice.’

In 2008, Miss Fiona Christie, daughter of Rev. Ronald and Mrs Morag Christie, arrived in Medellín under the auspices of Latin Link. For a period of two years initially she will serve at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia to establish an English department there.

(E) NEW FIELDS

In looking at new areas of work the Board has in mind particularly: Theological education, leadership training and mentoring; the Muslim world; and ministry opportunities in Europe.

With this background in mind, we are delighted to report on the following developments. This report is limited in most cases because of the sensitive nature of the work involved.

1. Central Asia
We continue to provide funding for Adam to help him in his ministry among his people in many different countries. His reports to us in the past year have told of the Lord’s blessing on the ministry and wonderful accounts of God’s Spirit at work in Central Asia. He has also told us of much suffering and hardship that the believers face there. Adam’s own health has also suffered during the past year but we are thankful that he has been able to continue his vital ministry.
Our workers S and S are now settled into their language studies after the expected initial difficulties of adapting to a new country and culture with a young family. The greatest difficulty has been the lack of Christian fellowship. Visits from some family members have helped enormously and it is hoped that someone from the Board will visit later this year.

2. Turkey
In 2006 we began a partnership with a Turkish pastor who is seeking to church plant in an urban area of Turkey. Gurhan has a passion to reach his own people with the Gospel of Jesus and, in his own words, ‘to find the Lord’s lost sheep in Istanbul’. The killing of three Christian workers in Malatya in April 2007 has had a dramatic effect on the morale of ethnic Turkish believers. Taunts and threats have made many fearful and church attendances have declined. Gurhan’s fellowship has also been affected. It is small and they are hampered by the lack of a suitable building for worship.

The contact with Gurhan has been enhanced with the regular visits of Rev. Colin MacLeod to Turkey and it is felt that this link is vital to the development of the Turkish work. The Board fully support the proposals being brought by the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee to extend Colin’s contract and that he be appointed to this work for 5 years.

3. India
The partnership we have developed in India with Rahmat has continued to flourish. He is seeing a good response to the Gospel, with small groups of believers forming in various places, but there is always danger of persecution. He has plans for starting schools for children of this community, which suffers discrimination in educational opportunities. A delegation from the Board is expected to visit India in October this year and during that visit will be able to see at first hand the range of work that is being done.

4. Europe
4.1 Greece
We are looking into the possible development of a link with Rev. Argyris Petrou. He is a former pastor of a Greek Evangelical Church in Piraeus who is now a Lecturer in the Greek Bible Institute. The Institute has 40 students from various backgrounds and nationalities and it therefore has the opportunity to have a wide influence in the training of future ministries in that region and beyond. We are excited with this recent development and are providing some financial support to Argyris.

4.2 Italy
Rev. Kenny Boyd maintains close contact with the Church in Italy and keeps the Board informed of areas where we can support the development of the reformed church there. We have recently been able to provide some support to Rev. Dr John Paul Aranzulla who has been appointed professor of Biblical studies at IFED (Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione) in Padova. This chair will have a significant impact for the future of the reformed witness in the whole of the country.

4.3 Other opportunities
We are grateful to Rev. David Robertson for bringing to the attention of the Board potential partnership and ministry opportunities within Europe. There are already significant links between local Free Churches and European ministries and it is envisioned that these links and opportunities will only expand in the coming years. The Board feels that links through congregations here supporting churches there may be the best way to develop the contacts already established.

(F) CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL

The Council of Management of Christian Witness to Israel sends warm greetings to the International Missions Board and asks that the Board communicate to the 2008 General Assembly its grateful thanks for the Free Church’s prayerful and practical support during the past year.

1. Israel
The development of the work in Israel over the last two years since Mr David Zadok became the Society’s Field Leader has been encouraging. Under his leadership, HaGefen Publishing has increased its production of literature and sales have increased dramatically.
Chief among David Zadok’s long-term goals is to publish a commentary on every book of the Bible and, through the generous support of the Isaac Da Costa Foundation in Holland, work has commenced on Matthew Henry’s Commentary. The translation of the Banner of Truth Trust’s Let’s Study series is also taking place. HaGefen is also producing children’s books such as Shepherding a Child’s Heart to help parents inculcate godly values in their children. The children’s illustrated book Lior’s Prayer is the first Christian book of its kind to be produced entirely by Israeli believers.

The HaGefen website (http://www.ha-gefen.org.il/en/) has been online since the beginning of the year. Via the site HaGefen books can be purchased, and a database of Jewish Christians throughout history is being compiled which, it is hoped, will become a resource for researchers and a witness to those who believe Christianity and Jewishness are incompatible.

2. Summer School of Jewish Evangelism

Last year’s Summer School was probably the best ever. Seventeen students enrolled. The first week consisted of lectures and seminars. During the second week of outreach almost 6,000 copies of the tract So You Think You Know About Multi-Culturalism? Were distributed at underground stations in various locations around London. Hardly any were discarded. The team also assisted the Covent Garden “In-reach” team in their open-air evangelism.

The students conducted a door-to-door survey on multi-culturalism in the predominantly Jewish areas of North West London and gave away copies of the evangelistic broadsheet Shalom. The survey proved effective in generating discussions on the doors. Ninety-three people completed the survey, a good number of whom also requested further literature.

3. Yahad

The Society was able to assist the second annual conference of Yahad, the national network of young British Messianic Jews, which took place from 24th to 26th August at High Leigh Conference Centre. The main speaker was Meno Kalisher who is a member of the CWI Amuta in Israel and the pastor of the Beit Geula Congregation in Jerusalem. Young Jewish Christians from the north and south gathered to hear Meno teach on the theme “Being Myself in Messiah”.

4. Debates

At the time of writing, preparations are being made for two public debates that are set to take place in London and Oxford between the outspoken anti-missionary activist Rabbi Shmuel Boteach, and the Jewish Christian scholar Dr Michael L. Brown. This outreach is being undertaken in cooperation with the American-based Chosen People Ministries and it is hoped that a webcast of the debate will be broadcast in early June at http://www.jewishdebate.com.

5. Glasgow Seminar

The Society recognises the need to encourage churches situated in areas of significant Jewish population to include the Jewish people in their evangelistic programmes, and also to train Christians to share the gospel with Jewish people. On Saturday 23rd February, Mark Surey and Richard Gibson conducted A Beginner’s Guide to Sharing Jesus with Jewish People, a day seminar for students and Christians who wanted to share the faith with Jewish friends.

CWI remains grateful for the continued support of the Free Church, recognising that our origins lie in an 1842 Act of Assembly in which the Church authorised the formation of The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews. Though the Society has applicants who wish to become missionaries with us, it remains a matter of concern to the Council that CWI still has no missionary from the Free Church and we would ask not only for the continued prayers of the denomination but also for the Church to encourage its youth to share the message of Messiah with the people of promise.

(G) GENERAL

1. Publications Charles and Daphne Douglas took over the Editorship of From the Frontiers last year. We appreciate the excellent work they are doing and also the work which Daphne does in preparing the Prayer Notes every month. The Board also thanks the editors of The Monthly Record, The Instructor and Free for the work they do in promoting missionary interest.
2. **Support and Fund-raise**ng  The Board greatly values the work done by Women for Mission and by the three Support Groups in raising awareness and funding for mission projects. The young people of the Church are also to be commended for their excellent efforts in raising funds for Mission through the Youth Project.

3. **Furlough Flat**  Mrs Mary MacMillan and Miss Anna MacDonald have the responsibility of looking after the furlough flat in Edinburgh. The Board are most grateful to them for all they do to make the flat a warm, comfortable and welcoming home for the missionaries home on furlough.

4. **North America**  Rev. Bob Akroyd will be representing the Board at the meeting of the North American Synod in April 2008.

5. **Eastern Europe for Christ**  The Board continued its annual support of the excellent work of EEFC providing them with a grant of £3,000.

6. **Missionaries with other Societies**  We recognise the outstanding contribution being made by several Free Church members who are serving with other missionary agencies. In most cases they receive no financial assistance from the Board but are supported through inclusion in the Prayer Notes.

7. **Partnership with other Churches**  The Board greatly appreciates the continued support of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. We also value highly our continued relationship in mission with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland. The EPC is represented on the Board by Mr Ernest Brown and the Board recognises the tireless efforts which he makes in promoting the work of mission and in fundraising both in Northern Ireland and in Scotland.

8. **Disaster Fund**  The following amounts were received and paid out during 2007:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 1st January 2007</td>
<td>£28,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts received during 2007</td>
<td>£8,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£36,678</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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   Payments made during 2007:

   - Darfur – Payment to Tearfund  £ 12,000
   - Asian Floods – Payment to Tearfund  £ 5,000
   - Peru Earthquake – Payment to CONEP  £ 5,000
   - Peru Earthquake – Payment to Vine Trust  £ 2,500
   - Bangladesh Cyclone – Payment to Tearfund  £ 4,000

   **£28,500**

   **Balance at 31st December 2007**  £ 8,178

9. **Short Term Service**  In 2007, several young people from Scotland made significant contributions to the work of mission in Perú and Colombia. Mary Louise Stone served in Lima at Colegio San Andrés while Charissa Campbell, Mairi-Catherine Martin and Karen MacDonald served in Moyobamba. Mairianna Campbell spent a time in Colombia helping with the sewing project in Medellín.

   The IMB encourages young people to consider their calling to the mission field and to take the opportunity of short-term mission work to test such a calling. All applications for mission work (short-term or long-term) are warmly welcomed by Calum Ferguson, Secretary to the IMB.

   COLIN J. MACPHERSON, Chairman
   IAIN MACASKILL, Vice-Chairman

**PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the International Missions Board and thank the Board, especially the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.

2. The General Assembly greet all our missionary personnel and assure them of their continued support.
3. The General Assembly send greetings to the Free Church in South Africa and the assurance of our continuing prayers for God’s blessing upon all her activities. They extend their sympathy at the passing of Rev. T.W. Vumindaba and give thanks for his many years of faithful service.

4. The General Assembly greet the Missionaries and the missionary children in South Africa and give thanks that they have been kept safe and well over this past year.

5. The General Assembly record with gratitude the years of service given in South Africa by Rev. Ronald and Mrs Morag Christie and pray that they will be granted a long and happy retirement from the very fruitful and varied ministry they exercised over the years.

6. The General Assembly give thanks for the offer of Rev. Dr John and Mrs Elizabeth Ross to serve in South Africa. We pray that Dr Ross’s wide experience and scholarly gifts will be of great benefit to the Dumisani Theological Institute and that both he and Mrs Ross will know the presence and strength of the Lord as they prepare for this new avenue of service opened up to them.

7. The General Assembly greet Rev. Deon and Mrs Shelley Lombard as they join the staff at Dumisani Theological Institute and pray the Lord’s blessing will be upon them and their children as they settle into this new sphere of Christian work.

8. The General Assembly greet the staff, students and Board of Governors of the Dumisani Theological Institute. They rejoice with them in having new colleagues and pray for the blessing of Almighty God upon all the work that is undertaken in connection with the Institute.

9. The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude the considerable financial help given for the work in South Africa by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and by the WFM.

10. The General Assembly send greetings to the Presbytery of the Presbyterian Free Church in India and encourage them in their efforts in evangelistic outreach and in attaining financial self-support of the congregations.

11. The General Assembly send greetings to the Mission Council in India and encourage them to expedite the various property matters outstanding.


13. The General Assembly send greetings to Dr and Mrs Benn, Mr and Mrs Malche and the staff of Lakhnadon Christian Hospital and Chhapara Christian Health Centre.

14. The General Assembly give thanks to Almighty God for the Gospel blessings bestowed on the countries of Perú and Colombia in recent generations.

15. The General Assembly express their commitment to maintaining links with the Presbyterian Churches of Perú, the IEPP and IEPRP, indicating readiness to assist, where feasible, in projects of outreach and revitalisation.

16. The General Assembly express their sympathy to the family of Don Luis Torrejon and gives thanks to Almighty God for his decades of faithful service to Christ in Perú.

17. The General Assembly commend the input of Lima Evangelical Seminary in providing excellence in theological education to a rising generation of church leaders and missionaries throughout Latin America. The Assembly recognise the life-long commitment and service of Rev. Donnie and Mrs Julia Smith in their service to the Free Church and to the wider Church of Christ in Perú.

18. The General Assembly commend the work of the gospel in Moyobamba and specifically the work and commitment of Rev. David and Mrs Martha MacPherson in serving the Church, the Annie Soper School and San Lucas association. The General Assembly also commend Mr MacPherson’s vision for establishing a university in Moyobamba. The Assembly extend their cordial best wishes to the MacPherson family as they relocate in 2008.
19. The General Assembly congratulate the Colegio San Andrés having celebrated its 90th anniversary in providing Christian education to thousands of boys and girls.

20. The General Assembly give thanks for the appointment of Mr Clive Bailey as the new headmaster of Colegio San Andrés in Lima. We pray that Clive and Ruth Bailey will know the Lord’s blessing as they embark on this second tour of service in the Colegio.

21. The General Assembly express delight at the 467 pupils who have matriculated at Colegio San Andrés for the coming academic year and earnestly pray for them, their families and their teachers for the Lord’s blessing and protection throughout this year.

22. The General Assembly express gratitude to Mr Donnie and Mrs Marcella Macaulay and Rev. Tim and Mrs Marjorie Donachie as they return home to Scotland and to Mr Julio Ardiles upon his retirement. They pray blessing on all their labours at the Colegio San Andrés in their new spheres of service.

23. The General Assembly express gratitude to Rev. Marcos and Mrs Paty Florit and Rev. Donnie Smith for their service to Colegio San Andrés prior to the appointment of a new headmaster.

24. The General Assembly prayerfully remember the families of Gianmarco Peschiera and Carlos Gonzales and seeks a just resolution of all outstanding legal actions.

25. The General Assembly confirm their commitment to the local governance of Colegio San Andrés and await detailed proposals regarding its implementation.

26. The General Assembly earnestly pray for the country of Colombia for peaceful relations with its neighbours Ecuador and Venezuela and for domestic security and harmony. The Assembly also pray for continued gospel blessing throughout Colombia.

27. The General Assembly commend the work of theological education undertaken by the Biblical Seminary of Colombia and express their prayerful support to the work of Rev. Manuel and Mrs Paty Reaño and Rev. David and Mrs Olwen Ford.

28. The General Assembly extend their prayers and good wishes to Miss Fiona Christie as she begins her service at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia to establish an English department.

29. The General Assembly send greetings to Adam and assure him of our continued prayers for his safety and for continued blessing on the work.

30. The General Assembly send greetings to Rahmat and commend his ministry in India and assure him of our continued prayerful and practical interest in this difficult ministry.

31. The General Assembly send greetings to Gurhan and pray for the Lord’s blessing on his ministry in Turkey and for a suitable place of worship to be found.

32. The General Assembly assure Rev. Colin MacLeod of their prayers for his developing ministry among Turkish people.

33. The General Assembly commend its workers in Central Asia to the prayers of the Church.

34. The General Assembly encourage the Church to remember prayerfully the future endeavours of the New Fields subgroup to explore ministry opportunities in Europe and to identify a theological educator who could partner with an existing theological training faculty in a mainly Muslim nation.

35. The General Assembly greet Mr Mike Moore and all the CWI workers, expressing appreciation for their work in Jewish evangelism, and prayerfully commend the work of the society to the Lord.

36. The General Assembly greet all our Free Church members working outwith areas of direct Free Church missionary operation and assure them of our prayerful and practical support.
The General Assembly express gratitude to Mairianna Campbell for her assistance in Medellín, Mary Louise Stone for her service in Lima at Colegio San Andrés and Charissa Campbell, Mary Catherine Martin and Karen Macdonald for their service in Moyobamba.

The General Assembly thank Mr Charles and Mrs Daphne Douglas for their work in editing *From the Frontiers*. They also thank Mrs Douglas for her faithful service in producing the monthly Prayer Notes.

The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude the part played by the Mission Support Groups in raising funds and fostering an awareness of the special needs found in all areas of our missionary activity.

The General Assembly gratefully acknowledge the value of the work done by Women for Mission and commend them for their outstanding fund-raising efforts. They express their appreciation for the help and advice given by their representatives, Mrs Anne Mackay and Mrs Margaret Smith, who attend Board meetings.

The General Assembly acknowledge the excellent fund-raising efforts of our young people through the annual Youth Project and thank them for this wonderful achievement. They commend the 2008 Youth Project for Colombia to the attention of the wider church.

The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude the work done by Mrs Mary MacMillan and Miss Anna MacDonald in taking care of the furlough flat.

The General Assembly express their prayerful good wishes to the Synod of North America and look forward to continued partnership in the work of the Gospel.

The General Assembly commend the excellent work of EEFC and pray for continued blessing on this ministry.

The General Assembly send greetings to our brothers and sisters in Australia and Northern Ireland who co-operate with us in missionary effort, and pray for God’s blessings on our partnership.

The General Assembly commend the work of Women for Mission and express their gratitude for raising funds for mission and raising the profile of mission in the wider church.

The General Assembly commend organisations such as Tearfund in bringing compassionate aid in the name of Christ to victims of natural disasters.
XIV.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. Overture to Presbyteries  The 2007 General Assembly resolved to transmit an Overture to Presbyteries under Barrier Act procedure containing proposed legislation applicable to the interviewing of women, children and vulnerable persons in the following terms (page numbers refer to new paragraph numbers in Chapter V, Part II, paragraph 21 following, of The Practice should these measures be enacted):

The General Assembly transmit the following amended Overture to Presbyteries under the provisions of the Barrier Act:

1. Whereas the General Assembly reaffirm the need to have clearly defined procedures available for all Church Courts to follow;

2. Whereas it is imperative that the Church meets the standards set out in civil regulations for best practice in modern society, particularly with regard to the interviewing of women, children and vulnerable persons, and insofar as these standards do not involve principles or practices in conflict with Scripture;

3. Whereas sensitivity applies in all situations where women appear before an all-male court, especially in relation to breaches of the seventh commandment or in any matter where questions of an intimate nature are raised;

Wherefore it is hereby enacted and ordained that:

Paragraph 21. Guidance to Parties with regard to Appeal

Where judgment is announced with information that a complaint has been lodged, parties should be informed of the possibility that the complaint may be abandoned. This may affect decision on their part to appeal.

Paragraph 22. Guidance with regard to Accompaniment and Support

It is open to anyone who appears before a church court to be accompanied by a friend or support person. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the support person may be legally qualified. On such occasions, the church court itself should arrange to have a legal assessor present. The court should receive no less than seven days notice of such attendance in order to make its own arrangements, if required.

Paragraph 23. Cases involving the interviewing of Women.

Sensitivities apply in all situations where females appear before an all-male court, especially in relation to breaches of the seventh commandment or in any matter where questions of an intimate nature arise. If a female is a potential witness in a matter which could lead to the disciplining of a church member, another female should, where practicable, conduct the initial interview of the female, for the purposes of obtaining a precognition, which could inform the decision whether to institute disciplinary process. In any such situation, the following regulations shall apply:

(a) The female who provides such assistance should be a mature believer, preferably a communicant member of the Free Church of Scotland, or, where this is not possible, a professing Christian in another denomination. Such a female should possess appropriate professional qualifications and experience of the procedures and issues involved in interviewing females, whether from a legal, social work or similar background.

(b) The female must be appointed by the church court involved. No interviews should be conducted by individuals who are not so appointed.
(c) The principal questions should be prepared in advance by the relevant church court in liaison with the female who is to undertake the interview. At the discretion of the interviewer, supplementary questions may be asked in the light of answers received.

(d) The Principal Clerk of Assembly shall keep an updated list of suitably qualified females to undertake such interviews, entries to be by recommendation of Presbyteries and reviewed annually, to be known as the List of Female Interviewers. Church courts shall not be confined to using personnel from this list but Presbyteries should ensure, so far as possible, that they inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly of all suitably qualified females known to them for inclusion on the central list.

(e) Interviewers’ reasonable expenses shall be paid by the appropriate court.

In the event that, having considered the precognition obtained, the Church court considers that a disciplinary process should be instituted the general procedures applicable in all Church courts, as set out in the earlier paragraphs of this Chapter, shall be followed. In the event that it is deemed necessary to have a female give evidence to a Church court the court should consider in advance whether or not any of the standard or further special measures set out in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004, are practicable and appropriate. Before reaching a decision on whether such measures are appropriate, parties to the disciplinary process should have an opportunity to be heard.

In circumstances in which a minister or elder requires to interview a female in confidence, for example in connection with a pastoral matter, he should carefully consider the most appropriate venue for such an interview so as to ensure, so far as possible, that others are in close proximity.

**Paragraph 24. The interviewing of Children and other Vulnerable Witnesses.**

For the avoidance of doubt, where circumstances arise which merit implementation of the Church's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines the foregoing guidance shall only be followed, if necessary, subsequent to such implementation and any proceedings following thereon.

Church courts should ensure that in all instances where a child (being a person under the age of sixteen) or other vulnerable witness (as defined in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004**) is interviewed the interview is conducted in a skilled manner and in a low-key environment, with questions being simple and non-leading, and with the child or other vulnerable witness being given a break or rest period at any time requested.

Careful reflection is necessary, having regard to the whole circumstances of the case including the welfare of the child or other vulnerable witness, before any Church Court seeks to have such a witness give evidence on a matter involving church discipline.

If it is deemed necessary to have a child or other vulnerable witness give evidence to a Church court the court should consider in advance whether or not any of the standard or further special measures set out in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004*, would be practicable and appropriate. If there is a significant risk that the quality of the witness's evidence would be diminished through mental disorder, fear or distress, or if it is felt that the giving of evidence without such special measures would be detrimental to the welfare of the witness, an appropriate measure from such measures should be introduced where practicable, provided its introduction, in the particular circumstances of the case, would not prejudice the legitimate rights of the party who is the subject of the disciplinary process. Before reaching a decision on whether any such standard or special measures are appropriate, parties to the disciplinary process should have an opportunity to be heard.

It is proposed that the under-noted sentence be added to the penultimate paragraph of (3) Questions of Evidence, etc., that may be raised in consideration of a Libel (page 205, 8th edition, revised).

An individual who is the subject of a disciplinary process in connection with an allegation of sexual misconduct shall be prohibited from conducting his own defence. In such circumstances, a representative shall be appointed to conduct his defence.

* In terms of Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 standard and special measures include giving evidence from behind a screen, having a supporter present, giving evidence by live television link, giving evidence in chief in the form of a prior statement, the giving of evidence on commission or any other measures the Scottish Ministers may prescribe by Statutory Instrument.
** In terms of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 a vulnerable witness is (a) a child or (b) a person who is not a child but in respect of whom there is a significant risk that the quality of his evidence would be diminished by reason of mental disorder within the meaning of S.328(1) of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 or by reason of fear or distress in connection with giving evidence.

A response has been received from each Presbytery resulting in a unanimous acceptance by Presbyteries of the measures contained in the Overture. Consequently the Committee are recommending that this Assembly pass these proposals into legislation, in the terms set out in the Proposed Deliverance.

2. Corroboration of Evidence  The Committee in looking at some of the difficulties involved in corroboration of evidence gave consideration in particular to the question of whether the principle known as the “Moorov Doctrine” ought to be included in the procedures of church courts when assessing evidence from witnesses against an accused. The doctrine can be defined as follows:

“Where an accused is charged with two or more crimes and only one witness implicates him in each, they afford mutual corroboration if the crimes are so interrelated by character, circumstances and time as to justify an inference that they are parts of a course of criminal conduct systematically pursued by the accused. The similarity is not dictated by the nomen iuris (name in law) of the crime, but by an underlying similarity of character or substance, sometimes termed a nexus, suggesting that they are part of the same systematic course of conduct.” (Walker and Walker: The Law of Evidence in Scotland, (2nd edition by Margaret L Ross, 2000), para 5.10.1).

or,

“Where an accused is tried on two or more charges alleging similar acts so connected in time, character and circumstances as to justify an inference that they are instances of a course of similar conduct systematically pursued by him, the evidence of a single witness in relation to one charge may be corroborated by the evidence of another single witness in relation to another” (Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia Vol. 10 para. 769).

It is difficult to conclude that there are clear indications one way or another in Scripture as to whether the Moorov principle ought to apply in church court proceedings. The possibility is thus opened up that the evidence to be obtained could be from a single witness on repeated occasions. In addition, in Scots law “a piece of evidence” is required rather than necessarily a witness and a witness need not actually have been an eye witness.

The Committee is of the view that the specifications of the Moorov Doctrine, when taken together, are not clearly found in Scripture and cannot be clearly deduced from it by good and necessary consequence. Consequently, the Committee reached the conclusion that whenever church courts are involved in examining the corroboration of evidence against an accused the standard set by Scripture in Deuteronomy 19:15 and 1 Timothy 5:19 ought to apply, so that there ought to be, at a minimum, two witnesses to each accusation against a person, or two corroborating items of evidence, or one witness and one item of corroborative evidence.

3. Guidelines to Ministers  The Committee asked Rev. Professor Donald M. MacDonald to prepare a paper to assist the Committee in producing guidelines to ministers for dealing with the areas of marriage and divorce. Before Professor MacDonald had submitted his paper the Committee learned that the Public Questions Committee intended to ask the Assembly to set up a Study Panel to look at these issues in depth and to provide recommendations. Consequently the Committee decided to await the outcome of this before looking any further at these matters.

4. Judicial Commission /Disciplinary Commission  After precognitive investigation of an accusation against a Minister, Probationer or Office-bearer, should a church court conclude that there is prima facie evidence requiring formal process, the present procedure results in the said church court acting as investigator, prosecutor, jury and judge. Even allowing for the availability of appeal to the higher courts of the church for any party which feels aggrieved at the outcome of this process, nevertheless it appears unjust to have the same people involved in the initial investigation, the prosecution of the charges, the considering of the evidence and the final decision.

There is further scope for concern when the small size of the Free Church is taken into consideration. Many of our Kirk Sessions in particular have very few members, and even the largest Presbytery might have considerable difficulty in acting all at once as investigator, prosecutor, jury and judge, even if that were tolerable. The existence of what appears to be an unjust method of procedure, compounded by smallness in size, leaves a concern that the need for objective, detached, just proceedings might not be seen to be carried out, or indeed that in these circumstances justice might not always be achievable.
In addition to the above the Committee considered the position of Professors in the Free Church, who presently are not subject to investigation, prosecution and judgment by the same body, unlike the case of ministers. There are, nevertheless, serious difficulties with the present system which do not arise from the division of prosecution and judicial roles. As was found in the 1990s the current legislation is non-specific. In particular it does not specify what should happen should the Training of the Ministry Committee (TOM) decide after precognitions that there is no case to answer. The Committee is of the view that the transfer of responsibility from the TOM to the College Board is fraught with difficulty. Some professors are members of the Board and so could be involved in prosecuting one of their colleagues. There could also be a conflict of interests, in that the Board’s responsibility is to guard the reputation of the College, and therefore the independency of the Board might be questioned. There is also a question-mark as to whether the powers of citation given to a precognitions committee by Act XXIV, 1993, is desirable. While a church court may cite it is questionable if a precognition committee ought to be given the same powers inherently. The Committee is intending to subject this point to competent legal opinion.

In the light of these apparent deficiencies the Committee has given consideration to the possible appointment by the General Assembly of a Judicial Commission or Disciplinary Commission. However, these considerations are not yet sufficiently ripe for the Committee to bring proposals to this Assembly but they are confident of being in that position by the 2009 Assembly.

JAMES MACIVER, *Convener*

**PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report of the Committee and thank the Committee.

2. The General Assembly continue the remit of the Committee and instruct the Committee to bring a further report to the next General Assembly, in particular with regard to paragraph 4. of the report.

3. The General Assembly in reaffirming the need to have clearly defined procedures available for all Church Courts to follow; and in noting the need for the church to meet the standards set out in civil regulations for best practice in modern society, particularly with regard to the interviewing of women, children and vulnerable witnesses, insofar as these standards do not involve principles or practices in conflict with Scripture; and further in noting that sensitivity applies in all situations where women appear before an all-male court, especially in relation to breaches of the seventh commandment or in any matter where questions of an intimate nature are raised; with the consent of all Presbyteries hereby enact and ordain as follows:

1. Where judgment is announced with information that a complaint has been lodged, parties should be informed of the possibility that the complaint may be abandoned. This may affect decision on their part to appeal.

2. It is open to anyone who appears before a church court to be accompanied by a friend or support person. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the support person may be legally qualified. On such occasions, the church court itself should arrange to have a legal assessor present. The court should receive no less than seven days notice of such attendance in order to make its own arrangements, if required.

3. Sensitivities apply in all situations where females appear before an all-male court, especially in relation to breaches of the seventh commandment or in any matter where questions of an intimate nature arise. If a female is a potential witness in a matter which could lead to the disciplining of a church member, another female should, where practicable, conduct the initial interview of the female, for the purposes of obtaining a precognition, which could inform the decision whether to institute disciplinary process. In any such situation, the following regulations shall apply:-

(a) The female who provides such assistance should be a mature believer, preferably a communicant member of the Free Church of Scotland, or, where this is not possible, a professing Christian in another denomination. Such a female should possess appropriate professional qualifications and experience of the procedures and issues involved in interviewing females, whether from a legal, social work or similar background.
(b) The female must be appointed by the church court involved. No interviews should be conducted by individuals who are not so appointed.

(c) The principal questions should be prepared in advance by the relevant church court in liaison with the female who is to undertake the interview. At the discretion of the interviewer, supplementary questions may be asked in the light of answers received.

(d) The Principal Clerk of Assembly shall keep an updated list of suitably qualified females to undertake such interviews, entries to be by recommendation of Presbyteries and reviewed annually, to be known as the List of Female Interviewers. Church courts shall not be confined to using personnel from this list but Presbyteries should ensure, so far as possible, that they inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly of all suitably qualified females known to them for inclusion on the central list.

(e) Interviewers’ reasonable expenses shall be paid by the appropriate court.

4. In the event that, having considered the precognition obtained, the Church court considers that a disciplinary process should be instituted the general procedures applicable in all Church courts, as set out in Chapter V, Parts I and II of The Practice, (8th edition, revised) shall be followed. In the event that it is deemed necessary to have a female give evidence to a Church court the court should consider in advance whether or not any of the standard or further special measures set out in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 *, are practicable and appropriate. Before reaching a decision on whether such measures are appropriate, parties to the disciplinary process should have an opportunity to be heard.

5. In circumstances in which a minister or elder requires to interview a female in confidence, for example in connection with a pastoral matter, he should carefully consider the most appropriate venue for such an interview so as to ensure, so far as possible, that others are in close proximity.

6. For the avoidance of doubt, where circumstances arise which merit implementation of the Church's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines the foregoing guidance shall only be followed, if necessary, subsequent to such implementation and any proceedings following thereon.

7. Church courts should ensure that in all instances where a child (being a person under the age of sixteen) or other vulnerable witness (as defined in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 **) is interviewed the interview is conducted in a skilled manner and in a low-key environment, with questions being simple and non-leading, and with the child or other vulnerable witness being given a break or rest period at any time requested. Careful reflection is necessary, having regard to the whole circumstances of the case including the welfare of the child or other vulnerable witness, before any Church Court seeks to have such a witness give evidence on a matter involving church discipline.

8. If it is deemed necessary to have a child or other vulnerable witness give evidence to a Church court the court should consider in advance whether or not any of the standard or further special measures set out in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004*, would be practicable and appropriate. If there is a significant risk that the quality of the witness’s evidence would be diminished through mental disorder, fear or distress, or if it is felt that the giving of evidence without such special measures would be detrimental to welfare of the witness, an appropriate measure from such measures should be introduced, where practicable, provided its introduction, in the particular circumstances of the case, would not prejudice the legitimate rights of the party who is the subject of the disciplinary process. Before reaching a decision on whether any such standard or special measures are appropriate, parties to the disciplinary process should have an opportunity to be heard.

9. An individual who is the subject of a disciplinary process in connection with an allegation of sexual misconduct shall be prohibited from conducting his own defence. In such circumstances, a representative shall be appointed to conduct his defence. (this sentence to be added to the penultimate paragraph of (3) Questions of Evidence, etc., The Practice, page 205, 8th edition, revised).

* In terms of Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 standard and special measures include giving evidence from behind a screen, having a supporter present, giving evidence by live television link, giving evidence in chief in the form of a prior statement, the giving of evidence on commission or any other measures the Scottish Ministers may prescribe by Statutory Instrument.
** In terms of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 a vulnerable witness is (a) a child or (b) a person who is not a child but in respect of whom there is a significant risk that the quality of his evidence would be diminished by reason of mental disorder within the meaning of S.328(1) of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 or by reason of fear or distress in connection with giving evidence.

4. The General Assembly instruct each Presbytery to compile a list of suitably qualified females within their bounds, to be known as the List of Female Interviewers, as required by section 3.3(d) of this Act, not later than 30th September 2008. The General Assembly direct that each Presbytery forward a copy of their list to the Principal Clerk of Assembly as soon as the list becomes available. The General Assembly direct each Presbytery to review their list in December of each year and to send a copy of their revised list to the Principal Clerk not later than 31st January of the ensuing year. The General Assembly instruct the Principal Clerk to compile and maintain a complete List of Female Interviewers from the said Presbytery lists. The General Assembly specify that Church courts shall not be confined to using personnel from this list but that Presbyteries should endeavour to inform the Principal Clerk of Assembly of all suitably qualified females known to them for inclusion on the central list.

5. The General Assembly instruct all Session Clerks and Presbytery Clerks to retain a copy of these specifications anent the interviewing of women, children and vulnerable witnesses along with their copy of The Practice for ready access.

6. The General Assembly ordain that Church Courts, in all instances requiring them to consider corroboration of evidence against an accused, shall insist, as a minimum, that there be two witnesses to each accusation against a person, or two corroborating items of evidence, or one witness and one item of corroborative evidence, in accordance with the standard set by Deuteronomy 19:15 and 1 Timothy 5:19.
XV.

REPORT

OF THE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP

The 2004 General Assembly appointed a Committee on Worship “(1) to examine in the light of Scripture the Church’s testimony on worship, particularly on the purity of public worship and uniformity of the same, setting out the Scriptural parameters which should guide and inform the Church’s practice; and (2) to examine the role of women in the public worship of the Church in the light of Scripture and current practice.” The 2006 Assembly charged the Committee also “to ascertain whether the use of instrumental music is in accordance with the Scriptures. They instruct the Committee to consult with Presbyteries and to bring proposals to the 2008 General Assembly.”

As the Committee began its consideration of what constitutes public worship that is Biblically acceptable, it soon became evident that agreement must first be reached on whether such a thing as public or corporate worship is mandated in Scripture, and if so, what constitutes such worship. This led to the preparation of the Handbook on Worship, the opening section of which deals with the theological principles underlying public worship.

The Committee recognises that it is not possible to extract from the New Testament a detailed blueprint of how the church should conduct public worship, and that this makes strict uniformity in every detail unwarrantable and undesirable. The Committee is also aware that there is a real sense in which all of the Christian’s life is worship, and further, that there are many church-related activities which contain features of public worship, while also involving aspects not present or appropriate in public worship. However, it believes, in the words of the Handbook, that: “Public worship occurs when God, by his Word and Spirit, through the duly appointed leadership of the church, calls his people to assemble to worship him together as a congregation.” It also believes that God has made clear in Scripture that such public worship should take place regularly on the Lord’s Day or Christian Sabbath, commonly known as Sunday. It is significant that the chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith (XXI) which deals with public worship is headed: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath-day. It may happen, of course, that in exceptional circumstances (persecution, Sunday unrecognised by the authorities, wide distances from other believers) Christians are unable to meet for public worship on the Lord’s Day, yet may occasionally succeed in doing so at other times. The Scriptures allow for flexibility in these and other cases, but God’s normal pattern for the corporate worship of his people is as outlined above. In believing this, the Committee is aligning itself with the great majority of the Christian church during two thousand years, however much variety there may have been in how public worship has been and is conducted.

The Free Church of Scotland adheres to the Reformed principle that the public worship of God should consist only of elements specifically authorised by Scripture. The implications of this principle were widely discussed in the nineteenth century when, imitating changes already made by other Presbyterian denominations in Scotland, the Free Church permitted first the singing of hymns and subsequently the use of musical instruments in public worship. Both these changes were carried through in the face of protests against such departures from the worship previously authorised and practised in the Free Church. Consequently, when those who remained in the Free Church after 1900 came to formulate their position on worship, they repudiated the changes which had occurred and reaffirmed the Disruption position of 1843 in respect of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government. The General Assembly enjoined all congregations to adhere to purity of worship, as that was understood and practised at that period, with a view to securing that the practice of the Church be in accord with the terms of the Formula of 1846 in maintaining “purity of worship presently authorised and practised in the Free Church of Scotland” (Act V, 1905). That has remained the Free Church position, and it was restated in the preamble required by Act V, 1932, to be read at ordinations and inductions: “It is my duty to explain to you, and also to the Congregation here present, with reference to that part of the question which will be put to you as to “Purity of Worship as presently practised in this Church”, that, in 1910, the General Assembly reaffirmed the legislation of the Church as to uniformity in public worship going back to the year 1707; and that, in accordance with that legislation, it is the present practice of the Free Church to avoid the use in public worship of uninspired materials of praise as also of instrumental music. Such present practice determines the purity of worship to the maintenance of which the Ordinand pledges himself.”
With regard to the actual content and conduct of public worship, there are certain core elements that should in normal circumstances always be present. These are: prayer, singing of praise, reading of the Scriptures, preaching of the Word, the sacraments (when appropriate) and the giving of offerings (allowing for local variations in how that is done). It is the church’s duty to carry these out in as biblical a manner as possible. To fulfil such a limited remit may seem very simple, yet one only has to think of the matters remitted to the Committee to realise that Christians and churches equally committed to the authority of Scripture may reach different conclusions as to what is allowable in the corporate worship offered by the church to God. This requires mutual respect, a recognition of the importance of liberty of conscience and a conviction that the worship of the heart supersedes the forms in which that worship is expressed.

Women and Public Worship

In charging the Committee “to examine the role of women in public worship”, the 2004 Assembly went on to say: “The General Assembly hereby empower the Committee to consult, as they think fit, with individuals and presbyteries, both as to difficulties which may already exist and as to recommendations which it is proposed to bring to the General Assembly.”

The Committee proceeded to fulfil the remit regarding the role of women in public worship by commissioning an exegetical paper on this subject from Professor Donald MacDonald. This exegetical paper and its conclusions were discussed by the Committee and sent out for consultation in 2006. Responses were received from 7 Presbyteries, 12 individuals, including 5 women, and the WFM Committee. Many of these papers were extremely detailed. On the whole, the women who responded agreed with the conclusions, though one of them felt they were not radical enough and that the paper did not adequately consider the arguments of Evangelical Feminism. Despite disagreement about various points of exegesis, there was a fair measure of agreement with the substance of the conclusions, except for the original no.4, which stated that “in the light of Scripture, women may participate audibly in the corporate worship of the church by, for instance, praying and reading the Scriptures, under the leadership of the minister; but they may not teach or preach in contexts involving having authority over men.” This was not accepted in full by 5 out of 7 Presbyteries (although some members of these 5 Presbyteries did agree with it), particularly in respect of women praying and reading the Scriptures in public worship.

Professor MacDonald then revised his paper, responding to some of the criticism received and rearranging and rewording the conclusions. This paper has been engrossed in the Committee minutes. There was not complete agreement among the Committee regarding some of the points of exegesis. Some felt that the prohibitions of women speaking in church meetings in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 should take precedence over 1 Corinthians 11, which refers to women praying and prophesying in church. This led to discussion on practical issues with respect to possible roles for women in public worship, where divergent views were held. One example was the practice in some Free Church congregations of inviting gifted women to speak to the children during the worship service. Some Committee members felt that this transgressed the prohibitions of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, whereas the others believed that it was an acceptable and valuable use of women’s gifts in teaching children, albeit in the presence of the whole congregation. The Committee’s proposals are based on the view of the majority.

Instrumental Music in Public Worship

In fulfilling the remit given it by the 2006 General Assembly the Committee prepared two position papers, which have been engrossed in the Committee minutes, setting out differently held views on the subject, and following on its own initial discussion, sent these to presbyteries, along with a questionnaire on the basic question, namely, the scripturalness of using or not using instrumental music in public worship, along with several related questions.

All eight presbyteries sent responses to the Committee. Since not all presbyteries used the questionnaire and since some responses were less detailed than others, the Committee was not able to ascertain with finality the views of presbytery members or of church members within their bounds. However, it was possible to draw several fairly clear conclusions, among them the following:

1. No clear answer was given to the fundamental question as to whether Scripture permits the use of instrumental music in public worship.
2. There are ministers and elders who believe firmly that our current practice is biblically warranted, while others believe equally firmly that Scripture does not make that clear and that liberty to use instrumental music should be granted.
3. A considerable number expressed themselves as unsure on the issue, on the grounds that the Bible does not provide sufficient information to pronounce definitively one way or the other.
4. A very large number believe that the introduction of instrumental music, even as a permissive measure at Kirk Session level, would prove divisive.

5. They therefore believe that biblical imperatives on maintaining the peace and unity of the Church need to be heeded.

In the light of these presbytery responses, the Committee embarked on a lengthy discussion of the issue. Some in the Church have expressed the view that office-bearers are precluded from discussing this matter in the light of their ordination vows, but this is not a view shared by the Committee. While office-bearers at their ordination pledge themselves to the maintenance of the worship practices of the church, it is good to subject all areas of our church practice and beliefs to the scrutiny of Scripture, and if discrepancies appear, to endeavour to correct them.

It became evident that the divergent views throughout the Church at large were reflected within the Committee, and that it would not be possible to prepare for the Assembly a unanimous view on what the Bible actually teaches on instrumental music in public worship. Two possible proposals to the Assembly were debated. The first was that the present practice of unaccompanied praise should continue. While this view obviously satisfies those who believe there is sufficient biblical teaching to exclude instrumental music from New Covenant, non-temple-based worship, Presbytery returns show that both they and a large number of others who may be less fully convinced on this issue, believe there are important biblical commands to promote the unity and harmony of the church and that introducing instrumental music at this juncture would not serve that valuable end.

The second proposal was that the Assembly be asked to pass permissive legislation, allowing local Kirk Sessions to introduce instrumental music where they judged it to be profitable and acceptable. Such a proposal would require further work to be carried out on the content of the vows taken by ministers and elders.

*Public and Private Worship* Particularly in the light of the first proposal, the Committee discussed the concept of public worship as outlined in the opening paragraphs of this Report. The Committee holds that public, or corporate worship, normally held on the Lord’s Day, is divinely ordained and that the core elements of such worship are set out in Scripture. It is to such worship that the non-use of instrumental music refers, and not to other church-related activities, which will vary from place to place, and may include some or all of the core elements as well as other elements not specified for public worship. Examples of such activities, where local liberty of practice should not be restricted, are: fellowship meetings, children’s work, outreach evangelism, weddings and funerals. Some Committee members had an understandable fear that in making such a distinction, confusion may arise in people’s minds or that an unwarrantable dichotomy may be set up, but the proposal is being put forward on the basis that public worship every Lord’s Day has both biblical and confessional support, while other church-related activities may be carried out more flexibly and according to local time-tables and circumstances.

*Excellence in Praise* The Committee was in agreement that while the quality of singing in some congregations might be improved through the use of instrumental music, it would be quite wrong to suggest that the spiritual life of the Church would necessarily be quickened through its introduction. The power of the Spirit is not dependent on the mechanics of congregational singing. However, the Committee also agreed that if unaccompanied singing is to continue throughout the Free Church, there needs to be a much greater recognition of the fact that God is not glorified through mediocre singing. What is sought is not professionalism, but singing from the heart that strives for excellence (as commanded, for example, in Psalms 33 and 92). Therefore those who most robustly advocate unaccompanied psalm singing should be in the forefront of supporting the valiant efforts of the Psalmody Committee and other active individuals throughout the Church to ensure that in all our worship services, the Lord is praised skillfully, joyfully and melodiously.

*Content of Sung Praise* This is an issue that the Committee began discussing two years ago, but had to set aside when asked by the Assembly to deal with the matter of instrumental music. Discussion was resumed in February, but there was insufficient time to prepare considered proposals for this Report. The Deliverance reflects this situation by requesting more time to study the issue.

*Handbook on Worship* This has received a favourable reception from ministers and presbytery elders, who are so far almost the only people to have seen it. The intention is to have printed copies available for sale in the Bookshop: the Communications Committee is getting estimates and supervising the process.

*Membership of the Committee* In the course of the past year Rev. Ronald Mackay, former minister of the Free North congregation, Inverness, has resigned for health reasons. Rev. Dr John Ross, minister of Greyfriars
Free Church, Inverness, has accepted a missionary appointment in South Africa and will no longer be available as a Committee member. The Committee is grateful for the valuable contribution of these two brethren and wishes them God’s blessing in their future ministries, in retirement and overseas. The Committee feels that it would be helpful, if it is to continue its remit, that the General Assembly appoint two replacement members.

JOHN M. MACPHERSON, Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Committee, especially the Convener.

2. The General Assembly affirm that:
   
   1 The Bible teaches the equality of men and women in creation and redemption, male headship in marriage and in the church, and the complementary roles of the sexes.
   
   2 Ordination to the office of pastor/teacher and ruling elder is for suitably called and gifted men only. Since the Scriptures forbid women to teach or to have authority over men in the church, this precludes them from preaching the sermon in public worship.
   
   3 The presiding over public worship on the Lord’s Day is to be by the pastor of the congregation or, if required, by other men delegated by him. The pastor may call on members of the church, both men and women, to take part vocally in the service by, for instance, leading of the praise and reading the Scriptures.
   
   4 The Kirk Session may appoint other meetings for prayer, such as mid-week meetings, in which women may freely participate in audible prayer.
   
   5 In addition to the above, women may exercise a teaching function under the leadership of the church, for example, teaching children and young people, teaching other women and teaching some specific skill.

3. The General Assembly affirm the present practice of praise unaccompanied by instrumental music and direct that it be maintained in public worship services on the Lord’s Day. Such public worship takes place “when God, by his Word and Spirit, through the duly appointed leadership of the church, calls his people to assemble to worship him together as a congregation” (Handbook on Worship). The General Assembly recognise that on other occasions some of the elements normally associated with public worship may take place and may employ instrumental music and other materials of praise. Such occasions are a matter for the discretion of the local Kirk Session, under the general oversight of the Presbytery, and should be arranged according to the general rules of the Word and with Christian prudence.

4. The General Assembly resolve that the Special Committee on Worship shall exist for one more year only with the sole remit of continuing its study on the content of sung praise in public worship and bringing forward proposals to the 2009 General Assembly.

5. The General Assembly resolve to appoint two additional members to the Special Committee on Worship until the 2009 General Assembly.
XVI.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF DEACONS

The last General Assembly appointed this Committee “to examine, in the light of Biblical teaching, the question of the potential role of deacons with respect to service on committees.” The Committee was instructed to report to a subsequent General Assembly.

The Committee is currently in the process of producing papers on the question within their remit and intends to have recommendations laid before the next General Assembly.

JAMES MACIVER, Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive the report of the Committee and thank the Committee.

2. The General Assembly continue the Committee for one further year and instruct the Committee to bring a report with recommendations to the next General Assembly.
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XVI.

REPORT

OF THE

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Committee met in March of this year, having been in correspondence by email for four months previously. The Committee took the view that its proceedings in preparing a Report for the filling of vacancies in Committees and Boards had been largely determined by the decision of the 2007 General Assembly to accept in principle a new structure for the Committees and Boards of the Church, although Act XXIV, 2007, paragraph 2, does not provide a framework of practical steps for the Committee to follow in the carrying out of its remit.

In examining impending vacancies and related actions required, it became apparent to the Committee that there were a number of other details in Act XXIV, 2007, in need of adjustment and that some additional information ought also to be inserted in these Acts. The Committee thought it incumbent upon it to draw this to the attention of the Assembly and to make recommendations accordingly. Consequently, the Committee decided to present its Report in two sections. The first section sets out proposed amendments and additions to Act XXIV, 2007, while the second section presents the names recommended by the Committee for all Committees and Boards of the Church, the Committee having previously notified Presbyteries where they were required to submit names of suitably qualified individuals from within their own bounds.

In addition the Committee took account of resignations and other changes affecting Committee and Board personnel since last Assembly.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSED CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO LEGISLATION

1. Act XXIV, 2007 – Act anent Modification of Committee and Board Structure

1.1 In line with current legislation the Committee thought it best to insert a reference to clarify that ex officio appointments to Committees and Boards shall involve membership of the said Committees and Boards only in the cases of ministers holding a seat in a Presbytery of the Church and bona fide acting elders of the Church, all other cases of ex officio involvement in the work of Committees and Boards to be regarded as consultants to the relevant Committee or Board.

1.2 The Committee noted that Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.1, paragraph “membership”, did not include any representatives from the College Senate although provision had been made previously for two members of the Senate to serve on the Training of the Ministry Committee. The Committee is recommending that this arrangement be also included in the specification of membership for the Board of Ministry.

1.3 The Committee is recommending the addition ex officio of the Editor of From the Frontiers to the International Missions Board personnel.

1.4 The Committee noted that there was no reference in the new scheme to oversight of The Monthly Record and is accordingly recommending that the Communications Committee be given oversight. In addition the Committee recommends that the Editor of The Monthly Record, the Editor of Free, and the Media Officer be added ex officio to the personnel of the Communications Committee and the Editor of The Instructor be added ex officio to the personnel of the Home Missions Board, their being eligible in terms in the event of 2.1 above.

1.5 With regard to the Assembly Arrangements Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Psalmody Committee, it was felt that these also ought to be exempt from the requirement that their membership should contain at least one representative from each Presbytery, given the particular requirements for membership of these Committees. In addition the Committee took the view that the Assembly Arrangements Committee did not require “one additional minister or elder from each of the home Synods” as specified and that this be replaced with a reference to one additional minister and elder. The Committee is recommending accordingly.
1.6 The Committee thought it important to include a reference to the current legislation prohibiting the nomination in normal circumstances of any minister to membership of an Assembly Committee or Board during the first three years of his ministry. The Committee is accordingly recommending an additional paragraph specifying this.

1.7 Also in line with current legislation, the Committee thought it best that some details be added in reference to the need for one year to elapse before anyone finishing a full term of appointment could again be nominated to serve on a Committee or Board, and is recommending accordingly.

1.8 The Committee noted that there was currently no statutory timetable for meetings of Committees and Boards and decided to recommend that each Committee and Board referred to in Act XXIV, 2007, with the exception of the Nominations Committee, the Board of Pastoral Advice, the Assembly Arrangements Committee and the Psalmody Committee, be required to hold a minimum of three statutory meetings per annum with the liberty to arrange additional meetings as required. Details are as recommended in the Proposed Deliverance.

1.9 Finally, the Committee is recommending a scheme for the carrying out of its own remit in the interval between meetings of the General Assembly.

JAMES MACIVER, Convener

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

SECTION 1 – PROPOSED CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO LEGISLATION

1. Act XXIV, 2007 – Act anent Modification of Committee and Board Structure

1.1 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1, by the addition of the following after the opening sentence: “Membership of Committees and Boards in all cases of ex officio appointments shall be confined to ministers holding a seat in a Presbytery of the Church or to bona fide acting elders of the Church. In all other cases of ex officio involvement in the work of Committees and Boards those appointed shall be regarded as consultants to the relevant Committee or Board”.

1.2 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.1, paragraph “Membership”, so that the opening sentence reads, “Eight members (five ministers and three elders) appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee for a four year term, with the addition of two members ex officio from the College Senate appointed annually by them.”

1.3 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.1, by the deletion of the final clause “to discharge the present functions performed by the Board of Pastoral Advice.”

1.4 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.4, so that the opening sentence of second paragraph reads “Eight members (four ministers and four elders) appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee for a four year term, with the addition ex officio of the Editor of From the Frontiers.”

1.5 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.5, so that the words “to oversee Free” be amended to read “to oversee The Monthly Record, and Free if eligible under terms of 1.1 above.”

1.6 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.5, paragraph “Membership”, so that the first sentence shall read, “Eight members (four ministers and four elders) appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee for a four year term, which membership shall include a representative from each of the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board nominated by the said Boards, with the addition of the following ex officio; the Editor of The Monthly Record, the Editor of Free, and the Media Officer if eligible in terms of 1.1 above”.

1.7 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 2, so that the second sentence shall read, “With the exceptions of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, the College Board, the International Missions Board, the
Personnel Committee, and the Psalmody Committee, or unless otherwise provided for in this Act, the Nominations Committee shall ensure that each Presbytery is represented on a Committee or Board.”

1.8 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 1.9, so that the words “with the addition of one minister or elder from each of the home Synods, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee for a four year term” in the first sentence be replaced with, “with the addition of one minister and one elder appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee for a four year term.”

1.9 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 2, by inserting the following as the third paragraph, “In accordance with Act XXIV, 2003, paragraph 5, the Nominations Committee shall not normally nominate any minister to membership of an Assembly Committee or Board during the first three years of his ministry. Where under exceptional circumstances a minister is nominated for such an appointment during the first three years of his ministry, the Nominations Committee shall record the reasons in their minutes, and the circumstances shall be reported to the General Assembly.”

1.10 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, section 2, by inserting the following as the fourth paragraph, “In all cases, a person serving a full term on any Committee or Board specified in this Act, shall not be eligible for nomination to any Committee or Board until at least one year has elapsed from the date at which the full term of appointment ended.”

1.11 The General Assembly ordain that, with the exception of the Nominations, Board of Trustees, Assembly Arrangements, and Psalmody Committee, each Committee and Board referred to in Act XXIV, 2007, shall hold three statutory meetings per annum. Except for the International Missions Board and the College Board these meetings shall be held on the first Wednesday of March and October or Tuesday immediately preceding and on a date in June as each Committee and Board shall find suitable for themselves, with the liberty to arrange additional meetings as required. The International Missions Board and the College Board shall hold their statutory and other meetings as they shall find suitable but seeking to avoid dates on which other Committees and Boards are due to meet.

1.12 The General Assembly amend Act XXIV, 2007, by the deletion of section 6 and its replacement by the following, “6. The Nominations Committee shall meet in October annually to consider impending vacancies to Committees and Boards due at the ensuing General Assembly. After this meeting, and not later than 31st October, the Committee shall notify Presbyteries, indicating the vacancies which require nomination from within their bounds, as well as the skills required for these positions and inviting them to submit names of suitably qualified personnel by 31st December. In January the Clerk to the Nominations Committee shall collate the returns from Presbyteries and any other parties consulted and shall prepare these for the Committee in summary form. Not later than 15th March the Committee shall meet to formulate its Report to the ensuing General Assembly giving due consideration to these submissions and any other matters affecting Committee and Board appointments.”
### SECTION 2 – PROPOSED NAMES FOR COMMITTEES AND BOARDS 2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board of Trustees</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr James M. Fraser</td>
<td>ILR [3/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain K. Macleod</td>
<td>GA [3/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Murdo Murchison</td>
<td>GA [3/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Neil Campbell</td>
<td>EP [2/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain Gillies</td>
<td>WI [2/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Donald A. Macdonald</td>
<td>WI [2/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Allan MacPherson</td>
<td>GA [1/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr John Morrison</td>
<td>N [1/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John H. Maclean</td>
<td>SWR [4/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Ronald F. Morrison</td>
<td>N [3/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Kenneth Stewart</td>
<td>GA [4/1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Clerk <em>ex officio</em></td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chairman:** Mr James M. Fraser  
**Clerk:** Chief Administrative Officer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board of Trustees Sub-committees</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compliance</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Norman Campbell</td>
<td>ILR [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain MacLeod</td>
<td>EP [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Angus Macrae</td>
<td>ILR [3]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Audit &amp; Risk Management:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain D. Gill</td>
<td>EP [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr John Murray</td>
<td>GA [4]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finance:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. David C. Meredith</td>
<td>ILR [3]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** additional personnel are required by Act XXIII, 2007, par.2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, and members the Sub-committees are appointed annually by the General Assembly and additional members who are not members of the Board can serve for maximum of four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board of Ministry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Marcos Florit</td>
<td>SWR [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Iain Thomson</td>
<td>GA [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Chris Smart</td>
<td>ILR [4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 members appointed by Senate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Angus Graham</td>
<td>WI [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain Alasdair Macdonald</td>
<td>ILR [2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. David Lipp</td>
<td>N [3]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chairman:** Rev. Marcos Florit  
**Clerk:** Rev. Kenneth A. Macleod

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel Committee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod</td>
<td>SWR [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Murdo A. Murray</td>
<td>WI [3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Norman Cumming</td>
<td>GA [2]</td>
</tr>
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**Convener:** Mr Norman Cumming  
**Clerk:** Mr Neil D. M. Macleod
### Home Missions Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Alex MacDonald</td>
<td>EP</td>
<td>[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. David Meredith</td>
<td>ILR</td>
<td>[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Ian M. Allan</td>
<td>SWR</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Campbell Brown</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Kenneth Macleod</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain Gill</td>
<td>EP</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Donald Mackenzie</td>
<td>SWR</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr James Skinner</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr James Macarthur</td>
<td>ILR</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor “The Instructor”</td>
<td></td>
<td>ex officio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chairman:** Rev. Alex MacDonald  
**Clerk:** Rev. Angus J. Howat

### International Missions Board

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Kenneth M. Ferguson</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Iain Macaskill</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Colin J. MacPherson</td>
<td></td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Hamish Mackenzie</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Murdo H. Macleod</td>
<td></td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Finlay Mackenzie</td>
<td></td>
<td>[3]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editor “From the Frontiers”</td>
<td></td>
<td>ex officio</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Chairman:** Rev. Iain Macaskill  
**Clerk:** Mr Calum Ferguson

### Communications Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean</td>
<td>[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Roderick M. Rankin</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Prof. Donald M. MacDonald</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister from HMB</td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder from IMB</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr James Morrison</td>
<td>[3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Sandy Smith</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr John N. Macdonald</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor “Monthly Record”</td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor “Free”</td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Officer</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Convener:** Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean  
**Clerk:** Mrs Catherine Pearson

### College Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Donald Macleod</td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 other members of Senatus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairman Board of Ministry</td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President SRC</td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Dr Iain D. Campbell</td>
<td>WI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Dr Colin Dow</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Iain A. Mackinnon</td>
<td>WI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Neil Macarthur</td>
<td>WI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Peter Morrison</td>
<td>GA</td>
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**Chairman:** Rev. Dr Iain D. Campbell  
**Clerk:** College Secretary
### Ecumenical Relations Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John S. Ross</td>
<td>ILR</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair or Vice Chair HMB</td>
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<td>[n/a]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair or Vice Chair IMB</td>
<td></td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Clerk <em>ex officio</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. M. Iver Martin</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>[2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr James Macarthur</td>
<td>ILR</td>
<td>[3]</td>
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</table>

**Chairman:** Rev. M. Iver Martin  
**Clerk:** Principal Clerk

### Psalmody Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Prof. Donald M. MacDonald</td>
<td></td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Finlay H. Mackenzie</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Colin Mackay</td>
<td>EP</td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Evan G. Macdonald</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>[1]</td>
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**Convener:** Mr Evan G. Macdonald  
**Clerk:** Mr Colin Rogerson

### Assembly Arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Clerk <em>ex officio</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Clerk <em>ex officio</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>[n/a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator Designate</td>
<td></td>
<td>[2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John S. Ross</td>
<td></td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Derek Lamont</td>
<td></td>
<td>[2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr John Scoales</td>
<td></td>
<td>[4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Norman Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td>[1]</td>
</tr>
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**Chairman:** Rev. Kenneth M. Ferguson  
**Clerk:** Principal Clerk

### Nominations Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Clerk <em>ex officio</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Clerk of each home Presbytery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chairman of the Board of Trustees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moderator of the General Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chairman:** Principal Clerk  
**Clerk:** Rev. Malcolm Macleod  

(Numbers in square brackets indicate period of service remaining – e.g. [3/2] = 3 years left to serve of 2nd period of service)
MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Being the Minutes of the Ordinary Meetings of Commission
on 3rd October 2007 and 5th March 2008

(1) Wednesday 3rd October 2007

At Edinburgh and within the Free Presbytery Hall there on
Wednesday 3rd October 2007

1. Commission constituted Which day a quorum of the Commission appointed by last General
Assembly being met, Rev. A. J. MacDonald was called to the Chair, and the meeting was constituted with
devotional exercises.

2. Note of Business The Clerk submitted a note of the business to come before the Commission.

was laid on the table.

4. Application for leave to meet The Commission approved a request from the Kirk Session of
Oban for authority to meet with the congregation there during the sitting of the Commission.

5. Board of Trustees: Pension Scheme The Commission took up consideration of the Report of
the Board of Trustees: Pension Scheme in the following terms:

Introduction
At the last Actuarial Valuation of the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme (the “Scheme”) in December
2004 it was estimated that the Scheme was in deficit to the tune of around £4.5m or around 50% of its liabilities.
This came despite significant contributions from the Church into the Scheme with no discernable improvement
in the funding levels. Under the new regulatory regime that came into force in April 2005, the Church was
required to address the level of under-funding in the short to medium term. As a result, a Schedule of
Contributions was agreed with the Trustees which required that a contribution of 40% of all pensionable salaries
be paid by the Church into the Scheme in addition to all fees and expenses.

Against this background, and recognising that such a level of contributions was restricting the Church’s ability
to meet its objectives and other spending commitments, the General Assembly, meeting in May 2006, decided,
with regret, that it had little option but to move towards closure of the Scheme.

Since then, the Church, through the Board of Trustees (and its predecessor, the Stewardship and Policy
Committee) has been working closely with the Pension Trustees, and both parties have been assisted by their
respective legal and actuarial advisers. The Church and the Pension Trustees have been working towards
reaching an agreement over the arrangements for closure of the Scheme and over the arrangements to ensure
that the funding level of the Scheme is such that all accrued pension benefits are paid to members.

Request for Standard Security
Under the Scheme Rules, the Church cannot unilaterally decide to close the Scheme but needs the agreement of
the Pension Trustees. As part of such a closure agreement, the Pension Trustees have been advised by their
legal and actuarial advisers that if they are to protect themselves from potential Regulatory intervention and
criticism, they should not agree to the Church’s request to close the Scheme unless the accrued benefits are at
least partially protected by a standard security over some of the Church’s assets in favour of the Scheme. The
Board of Trustees, recognising the exposure that the Pension Trustees face in this area, and in order to reach an
agreement over the closure arrangements, have agreed that they would be willing to grant such a security as part of Recovery Plan package for the Scheme funding. The other elements of this package (which have yet to be formally agreed) are that

- The Church will make an annual contribution of £300k (increasing with inflation up to a maximum of 5% per annum) inclusive of all fee, levies and expenses. This represents a significant reduction from the current level of spend; and
- The Church will make no further contributions to the Scheme in 2007. This represents a reduction of around £200k in anticipated spend.

**Trustees’ Powers**

Civil legislation grants powers to trustees to “borrow money on the security of the trust estate.” However, there is some ambiguity with respect to whether existing Assembly legislation affords these same powers to the Board of Trustees. Accordingly, to avoid any debate, the Board of Trustees is requesting that the Commission of Assembly grant explicit authority to the Board of Trustees to grant security over some of the Church’s assets to the Pension Trustees. It is expected that the level of security sought will not exceed £2.5m.

In discussion with the Pension Trustees, the Board has made clear its desire that any security will be tied to the adequacy of the funding of the Scheme and that this should be reviewed as part of the Scheme’s triennial actuarial valuation process. Therefore, once funding reaches an agreed level, the security will no longer be necessary. In addition, the Board has also expressed the view that any security will only be callable in the extreme situation of recurring failure of the Church to meet its agreed annual contributions to the Scheme. On the basis of these conditions, the Board considers that the granting of such a security will have no appreciable practical impact on the activities of the Church or the use of its assets.

**Conclusion**

The Church cannot unilaterally decide to close the Scheme and, in order to secure agreement from the Pension Trustees to proceed, it is likely that a standard security over some of the Church’s assets will need to be granted. The Board of Trustees seeks the approval of the Commission of Assembly to grant such a security.

**Finding:**

It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the report of the Board of Trustees and thank the Board.

2. The Commission of Assembly authorise the Board of Trustees, as part of a package of measures designed to allow closure of the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme, to grant a standard security over some of the assets of the Church in favour of the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme.

6. **Board of Trustees: Budget for 2008**

The Commission took up consideration of the Report of the Board of Trustees: Budget for 2008 in the following terms:

**Introduction**

At the 2007 General Assembly, budgets were unavailable for 2008. The Board of Trustees was asked to draw up final budgets with recommendations which were to include the impact of any decisions taken by the General Assembly, and present these to the Commission of Assembly for approval.

A similar exercise was undertaken in 2006 when the Commission of Assembly meeting in October 2006 approved a package of measures designed to lead to a balanced budget in 2007. This package included a proposal that congregations receiving a subsidy from central funds should strive to meet the full costs involved in providing a minister with the stipend. This was reiterated by the General Assembly meeting in May 2007. However, to date, any increases in income from congregations have been limited and have been largely offset by reductions from others. The net effect is that income is broadly the same as over the same period in 2006. Therefore, the Board does not consider it prudent to assume any substantial income growth when assessing the prospects for 2008. However, expenditure budgets from Committees have increased significantly.

The draft budgets include expenditure which would exceed anticipated income by around £420,000. Conscious that such a level of overspend is unsustainable, the Board of Trustees tasked its Finance Sub-Committee with identifying a variety of options that would result in a balanced budget for 2008. Such an exercise involves...
making difficult and sometimes unpalatable choices. However, the Board of Trustees believes that in acting as good stewards of the resources at our disposal, we have a responsibility to break the cycle of over-spending. If additional income becomes available, then there may be an opportunity to reinstate some of the items identified as savings.

Proposals

Two categories of measures have been identified that are aimed at eliminating the projected deficit in the General Fund. The first category outlined in Table 1 involves a range of cost saving measures. Table 2 identifies a number of items where the Board of Trustees recommends that expenditure is met from reserve funds. Whilst this category contributes to presenting a position close to a balance in the General Fund, it does not prevent a deficit being recorded in the consolidated finances of the Church. The Board of Trustees is comfortable that this is a reasonable position to take and has agreed to present the measures outlined in these tables to the Commission of Assembly for final approval. Explanatory notes are provided for each item.

**TABLE 1 – PROPOSED SAVINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Holder</th>
<th>Budgetary Item</th>
<th>Potential Budget Saving</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Reduce payments following closure of scheme</td>
<td>£300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Missions Board</td>
<td>1MB to identify cost savings eg, costs in India could be met from the disposal of a property</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2(^{nd}) Asian Outreach worker from Aug 08</td>
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<td>Church Extension</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£335,666</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanatory Notes**

1 **Pensions**

The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme currently operated by the Church is in the process of being closed to new members and to new accrual of benefits for existing members. Negotiations are underway to ascertain the level of payment that the Church will have to make on an on-going basis to cover the funding deficit that exists in the scheme. The table above estimates that annual savings of around £300,000 may be realised compared to the current rate of contribution. The Board of Trustees is of the view that this is a reasonable assumption.

2 **International Missions Board/Church Extension & Redevelopment**

2.1 **India**

In recognition of the increase in proposed expenditure on international missions in 2008 compared to the budget for 2007, the Board of Trustees proposes that the International Missions Board be tasked with identifying savings of £25k from its budget. Included in that budget are costs associated with the work in India. The Board understands that there is a Church owned property in India which is currently being sold and it may be possible to use the proceeds from this to cover all the costs that the Board expects to incur in India during 2008.

2.2 **Asian Outreach worker - Glasgow**

A temporary appointment of a second Asian Outreach worker in Glasgow has been made jointly by the International Missions Board and the Church Extension Committee. It is anticipated that a proposal to make the appointment permanent will be submitted to the 2008 General Assembly. It seems inappropriate, at this stage, to pre-judge the Assembly decision on the matter by including the post in the budget beyond the expiration of the current one year contract. If the Assembly approves the appointment then the IMB and the Church Extension & Redevelopment Committee should be required to bring forward a funding plan setting out how the costs are going to be financed.
TABLE 2 – EXPENDITURE TO BE MET FROM RESERVE FUNDS

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<td>Jewish Mission to be met from reserves</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Questions</td>
<td>Social Responsibility Fund</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£76,367</strong></td>
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Explanatory Notes

1  Training of the Ministry
At present, the Training of the Ministry budget contains an overspend when compared to anticipated income. In 2006, the Committee recorded a surplus in its income through the student levy and this was added to reserves. Therefore, the Board of Trustees proposes that the anticipated overspend is met from these reserves rather than from the General Fund of the Church.

2  International Missions Board
2.1 Reserves Policy
In 2008, the Board of Trustees recommends that rather than drawing from central income beyond the ceiling of 12% envisaged by Assembly legislation, the International Missions Board should utilise some of its significant accumulated reserves. This will allow the International Missions Board to continue with its programme of work but will reduce the expected shortfall in the General Fund by around £25,000.

2.2 Asian Ministry
When planning a new work in Asian Ministry (as distinct from Asian Outreach in Glasgow), the International Missions Board requested that permission be granted for this work to be funded from a substantial legacy that it had received. This request was approved at the time and it is envisaged that the work will continue to be funded in this way.

2.3 Christian Witness to Israel
The International Missions Board’s budget includes the payment of a grant for £20,000 to Christian Witness to Israel. In view of the projected shortfall in the General Fund, it is proposed that around £10,000 of this grant is met from the interest on substantial legacy funds held for this purpose (current balance in excess of £200,000). The remaining £10,000 will be met from the Jewish Mission reserve funds.

3  Public Questions
The Social Responsibility Fund currently sits with a balance of around £200,000. This fund arose largely as a result of an allocation from the proceeds of the sale of Maxwell House and Act XXIII, 2004, provides that up to £20,000 per annum may be spent on social responsibility projects. In addition, a further allocation of £35,000 was made to the fund in 2006, with any remaining funds from this allocation also available for distribution. In view of the projected deficit in the Church’s finances in 2008, the Board of Trustees proposes that all social responsibility grants are paid from this fund rather than meeting some from the General Fund of the Church. This will result in a budget saving of £10,000 for the General Fund.

Stipend Increase
Since preparing the consolidated budgets, the Board of Trustees received a paper from the Sustentation and Ministry Committee arguing that there should be a further increase in the level of stipend over and above that envisaged in the base budget. It was argued that rather than basing the level of stipend on the available funds, the stipend should be set at a level that is considered appropriate with cost savings made elsewhere if necessary. Therefore, the Board of Trustees recommends that stipend be set at a level of £18,500 from April 2008. This represents an increase of £500 on the level included in the base budget and will result in an increase of around
£65k in budgeted expenditure. The Board considers that the Sustentation & Ministry Committee should be tasked with absorbing this increase within the existing budget provision. However, accepting that this may not be possible in 2008, and on the basis that it is anticipated that Church will record a surplus in 2007 the Board suggests that some of this anticipated surplus is carried forward to meet the resultant excess costs. Thereafter, cost savings or specific income generating measures must be identified to meet the increase.

Other Savings
If a balanced budget for the overall finances of the Church is required, as opposed to using reserve funds to remove the deficit in the General Fund, then further savings will need to be identified. Clearly, the main cost area of the Church is in its payroll and, although unpalatable, it may be necessary to look into employee numbers and salary levels. This would also imply that the proposed additional increase in stipend referred to above could not be applied.

Conclusion
The current level of budgeted expenditure for 2008 is likely to result in the Church recording a significant shortfall. The Board of Trustees believes that there are a number of cost saving measures that can be implemented to address this situation and recommend that the Commission of Assembly approve these measures. However, the Board of Trustees also recognises that there may be compelling reasons why some of these savings cannot be achieved. If this is the case, committees should be allowed to identify alternative measures. However, in order to protect the overall level of savings, no items of spend should be reinstated without identification of alternative measures to at least the same value.

Under a separate remit from the General Assembly, the Board of Trustees is continuing to look at alternative ways of organising the Church’s finances. As part of this exercise, opportunities for greater use of project-led financing will be considered. If successful, this could help to address the difficulties that have been experienced in producing balanced budgets.

JAMES M. FRASER, Convener

Rev. James Maciver addressed the Commission thereanent.

Finding: It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1 The Commission of Assembly receive the report of the Board of Trustees and thank the Board.

2 The Commission of Assembly note the anticipated shortfall in income compared to expenditure budgets for 2008, and support the conclusion that this situation is unsustainable.

3 The Commission of Assembly instruct budget holders to make the savings specified in the table below. The Commission of Assembly instruct that where circumstances prevent these specific savings from being made, budget holders must identify alternative cost saving measures of at least the same financial value. No items of spend may be reinstated to budgets without removal of other items amounting to at least the same value.

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JAMES M. FRASER, Convener
4 The Commission of Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to utilise the reserve funds of committees to meet the expenditure items detailed in the table below.

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<td></td>
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</tr>
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5 The Commission of Assembly approves the inclusion of a stipend level of £18,500 in the Budget for 2008. With a view to the Budget for 2009, it instructs the Sustentation & Ministry Committee to identify means of increasing income or reducing overall costs in order that this increased stipend level can be adequately financed.

6 The Commission of Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees, to monitor the budgets of committees and where budgets are being exceeded seek to have the committee find alternative funding sources or to seek approval from the Board of Trustees for permission to overspend their budget.

7 The Commission of Assembly support the Board of Trustees in its attempts to identify opportunities for project-led funding and instruct the Board to consult with the other Standing Committees of Assembly to agree on suitable projects.

7. Custody of Titles A Report was submitted from the Custodier of Titles in the following terms:

Two Petitions for sale of property have been received, both of which have supporting documents from congregations and presbyteries which are in order.

The Custodier of Titles addressed the Commission thereanent.

Finding It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the petition of the Deacons’ Court of Dornoch Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the manse building at 2 Rowan Crescent, Dornoch, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that proceeds of sale be held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation and that these funds be made available to the congregation for the acquirement of an alternative house, or the modification of the existing hall building, to provide a more appropriate manse. They further direct that any surplus funds be applied to the funds of the congregation for the purpose of maintenance and enhancement of the existing church buildings.

2. The Commission of Assembly receive the petition of the Deacons’ Court of Govanhill Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the manse at 587 Clarkston Road, Glasgow, the transaction to be carried out under the supervision of the Church’s Law Agent, and direct that proceeds of sale be held by the Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation and that these funds be made available to the congregation for the acquirement of a replacement manse nearer the church building. They further direct that any surplus funds be applied to the funds of the congregation for the purpose of maintenance and improvement of the existing church buildings.

8. Minutes The Minutes of this sederunt were read and approved.

9. Close There being no further business, the meeting was closed with prayer.
Wednesday 5th March 2008

At Edinburgh and within the Free Presbytery Hall there on
Wednesday 5th March 2008

1. **Commission constituted** Which day a quorum of the Commission appointed by last General Assembly being met, Rev. Dr John S. Ross was called to the Chair, and the meeting was constituted with devotional exercises.

2. **Note of Business** The Clerk submitted a note of the business to come before the Commission.

3. **Petition from Portree Deacons' Court** The Commission took up consideration of a Petition from the Deacons’ Court of Portree Free Church in the following terms:

   Unto the Venerable the Commission of Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Wednesday 5th March 2008, the Petition of the Deacons' Court of Portree Free Church humbly shows that:

   1. Whereas the Manse and Church buildings are currently occupied by the Free Church Continuing (FCC);
   2. Whereas the prospect of a negotiated settlement with respect to these buildings has been further progressed since the General Assembly of 2007;
   3. Whereas a negotiated settlement continues to be preferred by the congregation to legal action in order to retrieve some of the assets;
   4. Whereas the General Assembly in 2007 affirmed its support of a negotiated settlement and also agreed to the sale of the Church and Manse;
   5. Whereas the negotiated settlement agreed with the FCC would involve the transfer of Title of the Church Building and New Hall at Fancy Hill, Portree;
   6. Whereas the negotiated settlement would involve the Manse at Staffin Road being returned to Portree Free Church of Scotland;
   7. Whereas the sale of the Manse Building could contribute significantly to reducing the loan for the new manse and also to developing a fund to eyed or procure a new church building;
   8. Whereas the proposed settlement is supported by the Kirk Session, Deacons' Court and the Congregation;

   Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration and authorise the sale of the Manse at Staffin Road and the transfer of Title of the Church and Hall to Portree Free Church Continuing, the Presbytery of the bounds being fully informed of the final details of the proposed sale and transfer of Title, and having formally agreed that the transaction should proceed, the transaction to be carried out through the Free Church's Law Agent, and further that any proceeds be lodged with the General Trustees on behoof of the congregation, the interest in the meantime to be added to the capital.

   Or do otherwise as in their wisdom may seem best.

   And your petitioners will ever pray.

   The Custodier of Titles addressed the Commission thereanent.

**Finding** It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

The Commission of Assembly receive the Petition of the Deacons’ Court of Portree Free Church and grant its crave. They authorise the sale of the Manse at Staffin Road and the transfer of Title of the Church and Hall to Portree Free Church Continuing, the Presbytery of the bounds to be fully informed of the final details of the proposed sale and transfer of Title, the transaction to be carried out through the Free Church’s Law Agent, and any proceeds lodged with Board of Trustees on behalf of the congregation, the interest in the meantime to be added to the capital.
4. **Petition: Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross**  
   The Commission of Assembly took up consideration of a Petition from the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross with supporting documents in the following terms:

   Unto the Venerable the Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Wednesday 5th March 2008, the Petition of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross humbly shows that:

   1. Whereas the congregation of Nairn, Croy and Ardersier is located 16 miles from Smithton and is unable in its present financial condition to support its own minister;

   2. Whereas there is a close working relationship between the two congregations in that they share the same office bearers as the Smithton-Culloden Office bearers are assessors to Nairn, Croy and Ardersier;

   3. Whereas the two congregations are located at either end of the A.96 corridor which is zoned for substantial development in the near future;

   4. Whereas the joint congregation would have the financial capability to support an assistant minister who could be responsible for the Nairn, Croy and Ardersier section of the congregation;

   5. Whereas both congregations have expressed a willingness for this consolidation, under the present ministry of Rev. D. C. Meredith;

   Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration and declare:

   That from 31st March 2008 the congregations of Smithton-Culloden and Nairn, Croy and Ardersier be consolidated to form one pastoral charge, presently under the ministry of Rev. David C. Meredith, to be known officially as Smithton-Culloden and Nairn, under one Kirk Session and one Deacons' Court; that each section of the congregation be referred to locally as Smithton-Culloden and Nairn respectively.

   And your petitioners will ever pray.

   **Finding:**

   It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

   The Commission of Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross and grant its crave. They unite the congregation of Smithton-Culloden with the congregation of Nairn, Croy and Ardersier, under one Kirk Session and one Deacons' Court, under the present ministry of Rev. David C. Meredith, with effect from 31st March 2008. They appoint that each section of the congregation be referred to locally as Smithton-Culloden and Nairn respectively.

5. **Petition: Kirk Session of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort**  
   The Commission of Assembly took up consideration of a Petition from the Kirk Session of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort with supporting extracts in the following terms:

   1) **Petition**

   Unto the Venerable the Commission of General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Wednesday 5th March 2008 the Petition of the Kirk Session of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort Free Church humbly shows that:

   1. Whereas on the 3rd October 2001 by Act of Commission of Assembly the Congregation of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort was united as one pastoral charge with one Kirk Session and two Deacons’ Courts/Finance Committees;

   2. Whereas the union has worked to the mutual benefit of both sections of the congregation so that they feel as one;

   3. Whereas there is considerable duplication of effort in operating two sets of finances in the present set up, especially when there is one treasurer for both accounts.

   4. Whereas one Deacons’ Court would have representation from both sections of the Congregation.
Whereas it is agreed that the financial interests of the united Congregation would be more easily maintained by having one Deacons’ Court/Finance Committee.

Whereas both sections of the Congregation have been consulted and given their unanimous approval to the proposals.

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration and declare that:

The Commission of Assembly receive the Petition and grant its crave. They amend Act II of the Commission of Assembly, Oct 2001, and declare that there is one Deacons’ Court/Finance Committee in the congregation of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort.

2) Kirk Session

At Kilmuir and within the Free Church Manse Wednesday the 4th. December 2007 the Kirk Session of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort Free Church met and was constituted.

Inter alia

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The Kirk Session authorised the calling of a Congregational meeting in Uig on Wednesday 23rd January 2008 at 7.30 pm and in Staffin on Thursday 24th January 2008 at 7.30 pm, in order to have Congregational approval for a Petition to the Commission of Assembly for the union of the Deacons’ Court/Finance Committee and therefore having one bank account.

... [Petition ut supra]

3) Congregational Meeting: Snizort

At Staffin and within the Free Church on Thursday 24th January 2008 the Kirk Session of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort met with the Kilmuir and Stenscholl section of the Congregation and was constituted.

Inter alia

The Moderator read the notice calling the meeting, explained the reasoning behind the Petition and then presented it to the Congregation for their approval.

After discussion it was moved, seconded and agreed that the terms of the Petition be approved.

Extracted from the records of the Kirk Session of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Staffin by A. R. Gillies.

Finding

It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

The Commission of Assembly receive the Petition and grant its crave. They amend Act II of the Commission of Assembly, Oct 2001, and declare that there is one Deacons’ Court/Finance Committee in the congregation of Kilmuir, Stenscholl and Snizort.

6. Board of Trustees: Congregational Accounts Deadlines

The Commission took up consideration of a Report from the Board of Trustees regarding Deadlines for Congregational Accounts. Rev. James Maciver addressed the Commission thereon.

Finding

It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

The Commission of Assembly waive the requirement of Act XIII, 2007, (Congregational Constitutions, § 19) and authorise Annual Congregational Meetings to be held preferably not later than 30th April 2008 in order to give congregations additional time to finalise their Annual Accounts in accordance with the Regulations issued by the Charities Regulator.

7. Assembly Clerks: Communications Committee record

The Commission of Assembly took up
consideration of a Report from the Assembly Clerks regarding the Communications Committee records. The Principal Clerk addressed the commission thereanent.

**Finding:**
It was moved, seconded and agreed that:
The Commission of Assembly receive the Clerks’ Report. They instruct the Communications Committee to make good the defects stated, this to be examined as to its completion at next General Assembly.

8. **Minutes**  
The Minute of this sederunt was read and approved.

9. **Close**
I. AS TO REPRESENTATION OF PRESBYTERIES

1. That all Commissions, transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly, shall be revised by him, in so far as regards their regularity in point of form, and that the Clerk shall prepare a Report on the subject and submit the same to the Committee appointed by the Assembly for the revising of Commissions.

2. That the Clerk of the Assembly shall furnish all Presbytery Clerks with printed copies of the form of Commission to Representatives hitherto in use, and also printed copies of the bona fide Certificates to be used by Kirk Sessions, according to Act VIII, Assembly 1853, and Act IX, Assembly 1863, for certifying elders who are chosen to be Commissioners to the General Assembly.

3. That there shall be attached to Commissions a statement, certified by the Presbytery Clerk, of the number of charges in each Presbytery at the date of the Commission, and of any changes that have taken place during the previous year.

4. That Clerks of Presbyteries shall send intimation to the Clerk of Assembly on the death of a colleague, or of the induction of a colleague immediately after that event has taken place.

5. That the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall meet in the month of January annually, for the purpose of considering and ascertaining the effects as regards representation of any changes in Presbyteries which may have occurred in the course of the previous year, by the death or removal, or by the induction of Colleague-ministers, or by the sanctioning or the reduction of charges by the preceding General Assembly or its Commission, or by any other cause, and shall immediately thereafter intimate to the Presbyteries concerned what will be their representation in the ensuing General Assembly.

6. That the decision of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, so intimated to Presbyteries, shall be subject to review by the General Assembly, if appealed against or dissented from.

7. That should any question arise between the month of January and the meeting of Assembly, not provided for by these Orders, the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall meet for the consideration and disposal of such questions.

II. AS TO THE TRANSMISSION TO THE CLERK OF ASSEMBLY for the Committee on Bills, Commissions, Overtures, Returns to Overtures and Petitions

1. That the names and full postal addresses of the Representatives of Presbyteries shall be transmitted by Presbytery Clerks to the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of May in each year, so far as they have been elected by that time.
2. That all Commissions shall be sent up by Clerks of their respective Presbyteries, so as to be in the hands of the Clerk of the General Assembly at least one week before the Assembly meets.

3. That all Overtures from Presbyteries and Synods, passed by the first day of May, be sent to the Clerk of Assembly not later than that date each year, in order that they may be duly arranged and printed, at the expense of the Assembly, for the use of the members, and that said Overtures be in the form of certified extracts from the Minutes of the Court by which the Overtures are transmitted.

4. That Presbyteries shall transmit to the Clerk of Assembly their Returns to Overtures not later than the first day of May in each year; that said Presbyterial Returns shall consist of certified extracts from the Minutes of Presbytery; and that a separate leaf of paper shall be used for the Return on each Overture sent down by the General Assembly.

5. That papers and cases intended to be transmitted to the Assembly through the Committee on Bills, shall be laid before that Committee by the Clerk of Assembly, and parties concerned shall be in attendance at that meeting.

6. That all such papers shall be printed by the Clerk, except such papers as he may consider undesirable to print; that papers not printed shall be submitted in manuscript; and that if the Committee does not endorse the view of the Clerk, the papers shall forthwith be printed for the use of the Assembly.

7. That these regulations shall not apply to Petitions for authority to sell congregational property, which Petitions shall not be transmitted through the Bills and Overtures Committee, but in the case of those addressed to the General Assembly shall be forwarded through the regular channels so as to be in the hands of the Principal Clerk not later than 28th February in each year. In the case of such Petitions addressed to the Commission of Assembly, they shall be forwarded so as to be in the hands of the Principal Clerk not later than one month before the date of the meeting of Commission to which it is proposed to submit them. The Principal Clerk shall lay each Petition before the Committee on Custody of Titles with a view to a report thereon being timely prepared.

8. That in regard to returns from Presbyteries to any Overture transmitted to them under the Barrier Act the total number of Presbyteries in the Church shall constitute the appropriate base for calculating a majority and a non-return shall be taken as signifying disapproval of the matter contained in the Overture.

III. AS TO COMMITTEE FOR BILLS AND OVERTURES

1. That the Committee on Bills and Overtures appointed by the Assembly at their first diet, shall meet at the close of the first sederunt that day, and again if necessary on the following day before the meeting of Assembly.

2. That there shall be no other meeting of the Committee except by leave of the Assembly on special cause shown.

3. That the Committee shall see that all papers presented to them in Cases from Inferior Courts, whether forming part of the Record, or produced in evidence before said Courts, have been duly dated and numbered by the Clerk of said Courts, and marked with his initial; and that the Committee shall not receive any paper which is not authenticated, unless upon special cause shown, to be reported by them to the General Assembly.

IV. AS TO PRINTING OF PAPERS IN CASES COMING UP TO THE ASSEMBLY

1. That all papers coming before the Assembly - viz. Memorials, Petitions (excepting those for power to sell property), Applications, References, Complaints and Appeals, with Extracts of Minutes of Inferior Courts, relative thereto, as also Reasons of Complaint or Appeal; and in cases of Libel with the Defences and Evidence adduced - which are passed by the Inferior Court before the first of May, shall be transmitted in manuscript to the Clerk of Assembly not later than that date in each year, in order to be printed in sufficient numbers for the use of the members of Assembly; and that papers passed by the Inferior Courts at a later date shall be transmitted to the Clerk without delay.
2. That all such papers shall be printed by the Clerk, except any papers which he considers may lead to discussions in the Committee on Bills and Overtures; that he shall retain these in manuscript, and submit them in that form to the Committee, and that a list of them shall be appended to the volume containing the papers passing the Clerk.

3. That in cases of discipline brought before the Assembly by reference from a Presbytery or Synod, or by complaint by a minority of the Court, the expense of printing shall be borne by the Assembly Arrangements Committee; in other circumstances by the Complainer or Appellant; and that in all other cases, such as Petitions, References not in Causes, Memorials, etc. the expense shall be borne by the party having interest in same, or desiring a deliverance from the Assembly.

4. That all such papers be printed in a form corresponding to pages of the volume of Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.

5. That all such papers shall be stitched together, and provided with an alphabetical index; and that a copy thereof shall be placed in the hands of each member of the Assembly.

6. That a copy of every printed paper shall be kept by the Clerk of Assembly to be bound up and kept among the Records of Assembly.

V. AS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Devotional Exercises

1. That a bell shall be rung for one minute; and members shall take their places in the House before the Moderator takes the Chair; that the Assembly Hall doors shall be closed each day during the opening exercises to prevent interruption by persons entering the House during that time; and that the Assembly shall spend the first hour or more of the first diet of the second full day of their meeting in devotional exercises.

2. That any proposal for a pause in the Assembly’s proceedings with a view to engage in special devotional exercise, shall be made to the Assembly only through the Moderator.

2. Business Committee and Committee for Printing the Acts

1. That the Assembly shall, at their first diet, appoint a Committee to arrange the Business of the House (other than the Report A of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, which hereafter shall be considered at the first sederunt of the Assembly, the proposed Deliverance on said Report to be free from the application of Standing Order V.3.4); that the Business Committee shall be prepared to make their first Report to the Assembly at the first diet of the first full day, immediately after the report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures has been read; and further, that the Business Committee shall report from time to time to the Assembly till the whole business has been disposed of.

2. That the Business Committee shall in their Report indicate such petitions as are of routine nature; that motions and amendments regarding such petitions shall be handed in and read by the Clerk before the first adjournment on the day before they are intended to be moved; and that if at the time of consideration of such a Petition there is no objection to it being classified as of a routine nature, the motion regarding it will be formally moved and seconded.

3. That the Assembly shall, at their first diet, appoint a Committee for printing the Acts of Assembly and that the Committee shall arrange that the Acts be divided into two classes - Class I: those which have passed the Barrier Act; Class II: Acts which are of General Interest to the Church.

3. Reports of Committees

1. That the Reports of the International Missions Board and of all Committees reporting to the General Assembly (excepting only (1) that part of the Report of the Youth Committee which sets forth the results of the Youth Examinations, and (2) any report from the Nominations Committees which complies with Standing Order VI.5.10) shall, together with Deliverances to be proposed, be transmitted for printing to the Clerk of Assembly
not later than the first day of April. All Reports, inclusive of the Report in terms of Standing Orders VI.5.10, shall be stitched together, and sent to Commissioners to the General Assembly not later than ten days before the meeting of the Assembly.

2. That Reports shall not be engrossed in the Record, but, after being printed, a copy of each, certified by the Clerk as being that given in to the Assembly, shall be kept in retentis, and the Reports shall be appended to the printed volume of the Acts and Proceedings of Assembly.

3. That verbal Reports shall not be received, and no Sub-committee shall give in any Report to the Assembly.

4. That amendments to the proposed deliverances on the Report of the Committee on Assembly Arrangements may be moved without previous notice and amendments relating to Ecumenical Relations shall be handed to the Clerk and read by him before the adjournment of the first sederunt; that amendments to Reports to be taken during the second and third sederunts shall be handed in and read by the Clerk before the suspension of the second sederunt: amendments to deliverances on all other Reports shall be handed in and read by the Clerk before the first adjournment on the day before they are intended to be moved.

5. That paragraphs of a proposed Deliverance on the Report of a Standing Committee shall be numbered, and the mover shall not be required to read it when it is already in the hands of members of Assembly.

6. That when any Committee is appointed during the Assembly’s sittings it shall be competent to move amendments to the proposed Deliverance on its report without previous notice.

7. That it shall be competent for commissioners to give notice in writing of questions to be put to the person presenting a Report to the General Assembly—this without prejudice to the right to add supplementary questions or the right of members generally to propose questions from the floor.

4. The Reading of Speeches and Length of Speeches

1. That in the discussion of any subject brought before the Assembly, by Overture or by the Report of a Committee, it shall not be allowable, without leave granted by the House, for any member to read his speech from a Manuscript prepared previously to the discussion, except in the case of a member introducing an important subject to the attention of the House.

2. That, previously to the discussion of any question which does not arise upon or contemplate the approval or disapproval of the Report of a Committee, the House shall determine, in such manner as may seem expedient, the order of priority belonging to the motions given notice of, and that, when a motion approving of a Report has been made and seconded, the House shall determine in the same manner the order of priority belonging to any other motions given notice of.

3. That in the discussion of any question the proposer of each motion may address the House for not longer than 25 minutes, and the seconder for 15 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 10 minutes; and that these limits shall only be exceeded when the Moderator shall have ascertained that the House desires any speaker to continue, and shall intimate the ascertained desire to that effect.

4. That when a Convener, not being a member of Assembly, is permitted to present the Report of his Committee or Board, the Convener and the mover of the Deliverance shall be required to come to an arrangement by which their combined speeches shall not exceed the time normally granted to the mover of a motion in terms of Standing Order V.4.3, or as that Order may be amended by this or any subsequent Assembly. It shall be competent for the person who presents a Committee’s Report to answer questions relating to the Report and to reply to the discussion, even if he be not a member of Assembly.

5. That a member of the Assembly in moving or seconding an amendment shall confine himself to the matter of the amendment, and shall have the right to speak at a later stage to other matters in the Report and other amendments, provided that the total time taken in speaking shall conform to Standing Order V.4.3.

6. That with the exception of those permitted to present a Committee’s Report, or an Overture, Petition or Reference, it shall not be competent for anyone other than a member of the Assembly to ask questions or take
part in the discussion, although the Assembly may call on persons who are not members of Assembly to answer questions on specific items of business for reasons of information and clarification. Persons called upon in such instances shall confine themselves strictly to answering the questions put.

5. The Conducting of Causes

1. That Counsel shall not be heard at the Bar in any Causes which may come before the House.

2. That when a Presbytery acquiesces in the sentence of a Synod, it shall not be entitled to appear as a separate party at the Bar of the Assembly, but the members of Presbytery may nevertheless be heard as members of Synod.

3. That in no case shall there be more than two speakers for each party at the Bar, including the reply to which the appellant or complainer shall be entitled; and when there are more than two parties, there shall only be one speaker, and one speech for each, besides the reply - it being understood that where there is more than one complainer, each shall be considered as a different party only in case of its appearing to the Assembly that the complaints rest upon distinctly separate grounds.

4. That, previously to hearing the parties in any Cause, the Clerk shall read the following announcement, - viz., “The members are reminded that justice requires the pleadings as at the Bar to be heard by all those who vote in the Cause, and that, in particular, no member ought to vote against either side of the Bar who has not heard the pleadings on that side”.

5. That the Clerk of Assembly shall not issue the papers to the members of Assembly, with reference to cases which he thinks require to be conducted with closed doors until specially instructed by the Assembly to do so; but he shall report such cases to the Convener of the Business Committee, for its information immediately after its appointment;

5.1 That the Business Committee shall, in their first Report, specify any case which, in their judgment, requires to be conducted with closed doors; and any case which does not appear to them of that character, although the Clerk may have reported it as such;

5.2 That, in all cases thus reported on by the Business Committee the Assembly shall itself determine, by a special deliverance, at what stage of the proceedings the papers shall be issued to the members; and

5.3 That in every case which the Assembly appoints to be conducted with closed doors, the instruction to issue the papers shall be accompanied by a special exhortation to the members to keep them private.

6. Motions and Votes

1. That every motion, whether original or amended, if not already in the hands of the Clerk, shall be given into the Clerk in writing, as soon as it shall have been made to the House.

2. That the person who makes the first motion shall be entitled to the privilege of giving a reply, in which new matter must not be introduced; and that thereafter the debate shall be held to be definitely closed, and no other person shall be entitled to speak excepting with regard to the manner of putting a vote.

3. That all motions after the first that are truly amendments on the first motion shall be disposed of in accordance with Standing Order No. V.6.6, and that when an amendment raises an issue different from that in other amendments, it shall be dealt with as a direct counter-motion.

4. That there where are only two motions before the House, the question put to the vote shall be second or first motion.

5. That when there are three motions, the first question shall be, whether the second or third motion shall be put as amendment against the first; and the second question shall be, whether the first motion or the amendment so fixed shall be the decision of the House.
6. That when there are more than three motions, the first question shall be whether the last proposed shall be put as the amendment, and so till only three remain, when the procedure shall be as prescribed in the immediately preceding sub-section.

7. That in Causes, it shall not be competent to move an amendment to the motion, unless it be of such a nature as to decide the case, or to forward it in its progress.

8. That when any proposal has been submitted in the Report of a Committee any motion for approval of such proposal shall take precedence of any counter-motion or amendment.

7. Mode of taking the Vote

1. That on a division being called for, all parties who are not members, but have the privilege of entering the House, shall withdraw.

2. That on a division being called for the Clerk shall announce that no member ought to vote against a motion or amendment who has not been in attendance during the discussion thereof; that thereafter no one shall be permitted to enter the House till the vote has been taken and the result declared; that two or four Tellers shall be appointed by the Moderator, drawn equally from supporters of each motion before the House; and that these Tellers shall take their place at the Clerk’s table. But when the issue of a vote by show of hands is not immediately obvious the Tellers shall count the votes seat by seat taking up their positions at the ends of each seat in turn in order to do so.

3. That the vote shall, in the discretion of the House, be taken either by calling of the Roll or by a show of hands, or by card.

4. That as soon as the vote shall have been taken, the Tellers shall report the state of vote to the Clerk of Assembly, who shall write it down, and announce it to the House.

5. That the Report of the Tellers, when announced to the House, shall be held as final and conclusive, and not subject to any revision by scrutiny or otherwise.

8. Dissents

1. That no dissents against any deliverance of the Assembly shall be given in until the matter in which it is pronounced is, for that sederunt, disposed of, the Minutes are completed and adjusted, and the House is ready to proceed to other business.

2. That prepared reasons for dissent or complaint be not engrossed in the Minutes of the Assembly or its Commission but held in retentis. Where a brief statement is written at the time of lodging a dissent, it may at the discretion of the Court be engrossed in the Minute. At meetings of the Commission, members of the Commission shall have the right to request permission for leave to Complain by submitting to the Assembly Clerk reasons for a Complaint within ten days, such reasons to be held in retentis. Both the Commission and Assembly may refuse to receive Reasons if they are not couched in respectful language. Where Reasons for Dissent are held in retentis, the General Assembly or their Commission shall appoint a Committee to answer Reasons, except where the Reasons are deemed frivolous or unspecific. When the Assembly appoints such a Committee, it shall report to the Commission of Assembly at its October meeting. If such a Committee is appointed by the Commission, it shall report to the next stated meeting of the Commission, or to the following General Assembly, whichever falls first. The Committee’s Report shall contain both the Reasons and the Answers, and, if the Report is adopted, it shall be engrossed in the Minutes.

9. Drafts of Declaratory or Interim Acts and Overtures

That the Draft of any proposed Declaratory or Interim Act, as also the Draft of any Overture which it is proposed to transmit to Presbyteries for their opinion in terms of the Barrier Act, shall be laid on the Table of the Assembly, and printed and circulated among the members, at least one diet before a motion be made for the passing of such Declaratory or Interim Act, or for the transmission of such Overture to the Presbyteries of the Church.
10. **Letters addressed to the Moderator**

That all letters addressed to the Moderator for the purpose of being communicated to the Assembly, shall, in the first instance, be laid by him before the Business Committee, who shall advise the Moderator as to the way of disposing of them.

11. **Deputations from other Churches, etc.**

1. That the list of corresponding Churches and Societies shall be as determined by the General Assembly from time to time on the recommendation of the Ecumenical Arrangements Committee.

2. That deputies from corresponding Churches or Societies shall forward their commission or letters of introduction so as to reach the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of May in each year; and he shall submit the same to the Business Committee so that arrangements may be made for the deputies to address the General Assembly.

3. That deputies from Churches and Societies other than those aforesaid shall likewise forward Commissions or letters of introduction to reach the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of March, and he shall report the same to the Commission of Assembly meeting in that month, who shall be empowered to decide which of the deputies shall be received by, and invited to address the Assembly. In the event of failure of the Commission to meet, the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall meet at the earliest opportunity, and shall decide which deputies shall be received by, and invited to address the Assembly.

4. That in the case of strangers who may be desirous of being introduced to the Assembly and addressing the House, notice thereof shall be conveyed to the Moderator, who shall report the same to the Business Committee, that they may advise in the matter.

12. **Visitation of Synod Records, and Examinations of Minutes of Committees**

1. That the Synod Books shall be called for at the first diet of the Assembly, and that a Committee or Committees shall be appointed for visiting the same, who shall fill up a schedule with the information required by the Assembly regarding each book - said schedule to be returned when the Report of the Visitors shall be called for.

2. That a copy of the Report, as sustained by the Assembly, shall be transmitted to the Synod, and engrossed in their Record.

3. That the Minutes of Committees and Boards, with the exception of the Board of Pastoral Advice, shall be laid annually on the Table of the Assembly, and visited in the same manner as the Synod Books.

13. **Printing of Assembly’s Proceedings, etc.**

1. That the Minutes of Commission, together with roll of matters to be taken up on the following days, and lists of members of Committees, be printed and placed in the hands of the Members of Assembly on the opening day.

2. That when a motion is duly seconded, and in possession of the Assembly it shall not be competent to make any alterations upon it without the permission of the House, excepting in the shape of an amendment, or second or third motion, as the case may be, regularly proposed to the Assembly.

14. **Minutes**

That the minutes adopted at any of the diets be read over and approved of only at a morning diet, with the exception of the Minutes of the last day of the Assembly’s sittings, which Minutes shall be read over and approved of before the rising of the Assembly.

15. **Standing Orders**

That the Standing Orders be read, or, by vote, be held as read immediately before the appointment of the Business Committee, and that they be printed in the first day’s proceedings.
16. **Conduct of Commissioners**

That courtesy demands that all diets of the Assembly be attended by Commissioners, and that private meetings should not be held during the sederunts of the Assembly.

17. **Recording of Assembly Proceedings**

1. Recording of Assembly proceedings by video recorder etc. by television companies, or by sections of the media shall not be permitted unless prior permission has been received from the Assembly Media Officer acting in accordance with guidelines provided by the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

2. Use of flash photography by private individuals during the proceedings of the General Assembly shall not ordinarily be permitted, though exception will be made in cases such as the installation of the Moderator, reception of delegates, and presentation of individuals to the Moderator.

3. Notwithstanding the above, the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall have the power to make arrangements at any time for the recording in any way of any part of the Assembly proceedings by any means they consider appropriate.

18. **Media Officer**

The General Assembly shall have the Church's Media Officer act as their Media Officer. The Assembly Media Officer shall be responsible *inter alia* for liaison with representatives of the media and giving such guidance as may be necessary for them to carry out their duties.

VI. AS TO COMMITTEES

1. **Types of Committee**

That the business of the Church between one Assembly and the next ensuing shall be carried on by Standing Committees and Boards together with a Service Committee.

2. **Standing Committees**

1. That Standing Committees shall comprise four Groups, namely, Group 1 (Home Mission Group); Group 2 (Communications Group); Group 3 (International Missions Group); Group 4 (Miscellaneous Boards and Committees); together with a Board of Trustees, which shall provide an overview of the work of the aforementioned Groups and a Nominations Committee which shall act as the Service Committee.

2. That the Groups shall be arranged as follows:

   Group 1: A Committee on Church Extension and Redevelopment, a Committee on Sustentation and Ministry, a Committee on Training of the Ministry and Admissions

   Group 2: A Committee on Public Questions, a Committee on Youth, a Communications Committee, a Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

   Group 3: International Missions Board.

   Group 4: A College Board, a Committee on Psalmody, a Committee on Assembly Arrangements, a Board of Pastoral Advice, the Board of Trustees, and the Nominations Committee.

3. That Committees in Groups 1 and 2 shall meet on the first Wednesday of March and October and previous day and on Tuesday and Wednesday in June each year according to the following timetable:

   Tuesday
   - Training of Ministry - 2-5pm
   - Ecumenical Relations - 2-4pm
   - Communications - 4-7pm (with break)
   - Public Questions - 7-9pm
   - Church Extension and Redevelopment - 6-9pm
Wednesday  Sustentation and Ministry - 9am-1pm
          Youth - 9am-1pm
          Stewardship and Policy - 2-7pm (with break)

These Committees may meet at dates other than those specified above, if necessary.

4. That the membership of Groups 1 and 2 shall each consist of 12 persons (excluding *ex officio* members) of whom six shall be ministers and six elders. All Presbyteries in Scotland shall be represented on each Group and the period of service shall normally be for four years without immediate reappointment.

5. That every person nominated to Groups I and II of Standing Committees must serve on all the Committees of the Group.

6. That the International Missions Board shall comprise 12 members, six ministers and six elders. Each Synod in Scotland shall have at least three representatives on the Board and the period of appointment shall be for four years with eligibility for a second term without interval after which there shall be no immediate return. The Board shall meet as business requires but not on the dates of the statutory meetings of the Groups.

7. That the Senatus shall have the right to appoint two of their number *ex officio* supernumerary members of the Training of the Ministry Committee except where one or more members of the Senate are already members of the Committee in which case the *ex officio* membership will be reduced *pari passu*; the Media Officer, the Editors of *Free* and *The Instructor* and the Camps Supervisor if not otherwise on the Youth Committee, shall be *ex officio* members supernumerary of that Committee; the Editor of *The Monthly Record*, if not otherwise a member of the Communications Committee shall *ex officio* be a member supernumerary of that Committee; the Editor of *The Monthly Record*, the Media Officer and the Moderator of the most recent General Assembly, if not otherwise members of the Public Questions Committee shall *ex officio* be members supernumerary of that Committee; the Moderator of the most recent General Assembly, the Moderator of the previous General Assembly, the Editor of *The Monthly Record* and the Media Officer, if not already members of the Ecumenical Relations Committee shall *ex officio* be members supernumerary of that Committee; the Editor of *From the Frontiers*, if not otherwise a member, shall be a member supernumerary of the International Missions Board: such supernumerary membership not to interfere with the qualifications of those who hold it to serve on other Committees.

8. That the College Board shall consist of thirteen members which number shall include (1) three ministers in pastoral charges appointed by the General Assembly on a Synodical basis; (2) three elders, having relevant qualifications or experience in education, preferably tertiary education, or in the administration and promotion of education, to be appointed by the General Assembly on the basis of presbytery returns; (3) the Principal of the College *ex officio*; (4) two other members of the Senate appointed annually by the Senate; (5) the Convener of the Stewardship and Policy Committee or his Deputy; and (6) the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Training of the Ministry Committee. In addition to the foregoing twelve the President of the Students’ Representative Council of the College shall be a member *ex officio*. The Chairman of the Board will be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee. Members of the Senatus are excluded.

9. That the Psalmody Committee shall consist of six members, of whom at least two shall be elders, to be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee.

10. That the Assembly Arrangements Committee shall comprise four ministers or elders to be appointed from the Southern Synod and one from each of the Northern and Western Synods; the Principal Clerk of Assembly; the Moderator of the most recent General Assembly; the Moderator of the previous General Assembly; and the Moderator-designate of the General Assembly following upon his nomination. The Committee shall meet in January each year and on other occasions as required.

11. That the Board of Pastoral Advice shall have a membership of one minister or elder from each presbytery as appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee; one of whom shall be a member of Group I Committees. The Chairman shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee.

12. That the Board of Trustees shall consist of twelve members comprising at least four ministerial members and at least six elders, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee.
Committee for a four year term, renewable by the Assembly for one further term of four years. Each Presbytery shall have at least one representative on the Board. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the Board, who shall always be an elder, as Chairman, for a four year term, renewable by the General Assembly for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three trustees.

13. That the Board of Trustees shall be served by the following Sub-Committees:

_Compliance, Audit and Risk Management_, consisting of at least three members of the Board of Trustees, one of whom shall be appointed as Chairman by the Board; the Chief Administrative Officer _ex officio_, if an elder of the Church; up to four additional members, who need not be restricted to members of the Board, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee after consultation with the Board of Trustees;

_Finance_, consisting of at least three members of the Board of Trustees, one of whom shall be appointed as Chairman by the Board; a representative from each of the Personnel Committee, the Home Missions Board, the College Board and the International Missions Board, as appointed by the said Committee and Boards; the Chief Administrative Officer and Finance Manager _ex officio_, if elders of the Church; up to two additional members, who need not be restricted to members of the Board, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee after consultation with the Board of Trustees;

_Strategy_, consisting of at least three members of the Board of Trustees, one of whom shall be appointed by the Board as Chairman; the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of each of the Personnel Committee, the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board, as appointed by the said Committee and Boards; the Chief Administrative Officer _ex officio_, if an elder of the Church; up to two additional members, who need not be restricted to members of the Board, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee after consultation with the Board of Trustees;

_Legal Group_, to be appointed by the Board of Trustees, bearing in mind that for this issue, continuity of membership is important. The Board of Trustees shall appoint one of their number as the Chairman.

14. That the place of a representative from each of the proposed Personnel Committee and the Home Missions Board shall be taken respectively by a representative from each of the Sustentation and Ministry Committee and Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee, until such time as the Personnel Committee and the Home Missions Board be appointed in May 2008.

15. That the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for reporting on Custody of Titles and processing petitions relating to properties whether addressed to the General Assembly or its Commission. The Clerk of Assembly shall act as Custodian of Titles and report regularly to the Committee.

16. That the Assembly shall in each year appoint the Convener and Vice-convener of each Standing Committee, a Chairman and Vice-chairman of the International Missions Board and the College Board, and a Chairman of the Board of Pastoral Advice, due regard being had to effective working and continuity of policy. In the event of the death or resignation of the Convener of any of the Standing Committees, the Vice-convener shall forthwith be promoted to be Convener; and in the event of the death, resignation or promotion as aforesaid of the Vice-convener, the Committee shall forthwith appoint one of their members to be Vice-convener in room and place of the Vice-convener so deceasing or resigning or being promoted; but the Convener by such promotion of Vice-convener so appointed by the Committee shall hold office only until the second last day of the meeting of the next ensuing General Assembly.

17. Consultants or advisers may be appointed to Committees either by the General Assembly or by the Committees themselves. Such consultants or advisers need not be ministers or elders but shall have special expertise relating to particular aspects of the remit of a Committee. They shall only be present at meetings of Committees for those items of business to which their expertise relates and shall not be members of the Committee nor shall they have any voting rights. Only ministers or _bona fide_ acting elders of the Church, or on an _ex officio_ basis members of the Church, may act as members or co-opted members of Committees.
3. The Nominations Committee

1. That the Nominations Committee shall consist of the Principal Clerk of Assembly as Convener; the Clerk of each home Presbytery, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the Moderator of the General Assembly.

2. That the Nominations Committee shall receive nominations from Presbyteries for vacancies on committees and boards when they occur, and shall make recommendations from these submissions to the General Assembly. Unless exceptions are listed in current legislation, the Nominations Committee should ensure that each Presbytery is represented on a committee or board. The Committee when seeking nominations from Presbyteries shall outline for their information the skills and expertise expected of nominees for each vacancy. Presbyteries shall nominate candidates from within their own bounds. However, if a Presbytery is unable to identify a suitable candidate from within its own bounds, the Nominations Committee shall arrange to fill such a vacancy from elsewhere. Appointments made in these cases shall exist for the duration of the term of service specified, unless terminated by death, resignation, translation to another Presbytery or discipline. The Nominations Committee shall instruct Presbyteries to ensure that nominees are available, willing and able to serve before submitting their names. In addition, the Nominations Committee shall seek evidence from Presbyteries of the suitability of nominees to fill vacancies. The Nominations Committee shall make arrangements to ensure that initial appointments of committee and board members provide for a phased programme of retirement from service.

3. That the Nominations Committee shall, in consultation with committees and boards, appoint clerks and secretaries in accordance with Act III, 2001.

4. Nominations to Committees

1. That of the Committees in Groups 1 and 2, a certain number of members - in normal conditions, those who have served longest on the Committee - shall retire annually, so that within four years the membership of each Committee shall be changed throughout, and these retiring members shall not be eligible for appointment to another Standing Committee for at least one year from the date of their retirement; and that in the event of the death or resignation of a member of a Committee before his four years have expired, the Nominations Committee are empowered to nominate to the Assembly, or its Commission, a substitute who will finish the unexpired portion of the period of his appointment.

2. That appointments to the Committees and Boards in Groups 3 and 4 shall normally be for a period not exceeding four years with eligibility for a second term after which there shall be no immediate return.

3. That the termination of appointment of any member of a committee or board by death, resignation, translation to another Presbytery, or discipline, shall be reported as soon as possible after the event to the Nominations Committee by the committee or board affected. Upon notification the Nominations Committee shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the Committee shall report on the same. That termination of appointment to one Committee in a group of Standing Committees shall include the other Committees in that group.

4. That uninterrupted absence from meetings by any member of a Committee or Board during the period from the General Assembly to 31st December in any calendar year, without good reason given by him and sustained by the relevant Committee or Board, shall be considered a resignation of his membership of that Committee or Board, who shall inform the Nominations Committee accordingly before 31st January of the ensuing year. Upon notification the Nominations Committee shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the Committee shall report on the same.

5. That not later than the first day of January in each year the Principal Clerk of Assembly shall furnish to the Clerk of each Presbytery a list of the members of the Standing Committees and Boards indicating thereon which members of these Committees and Boards will retire from office at the next ensuing Assembly and which members may have died, or become disqualified.

6. That each Presbytery of the Church shall forward to the Principal Clerk of Assembly by 1st November of each year a list of names of such Elders, within their bounds (along with their designations and addresses, and a note of their previous periods of service, if any, on Committees and Boards, or their suitability for service on the same), as they desire to submit for the information of other Presbyteries, and being known by them to be
eligible, suitable and available for nominations to vacancies on Committees and Boards. The Principal Clerk shall consolidate these returns and forward a list of the names of the Elders so recommended to the Clerk of each Presbytery at the same time (namely before 1st January of each year) as he forwards the name of existing members of the Standing Committees and Boards showing which members are to be replaced.

7. That each Presbytery shall, not later than the 20th day of February next ensuing, furnish to the Principal Clerk of Assembly the names of Ministers and Elders recommended by the Presbytery as suitable for appointment to Standing Committees and Boards, these lists not to contain more names than the known number of vacancies. The Principal Clerk of Assembly shall forthwith cause these lists to be laid before the Nominations Committee.

8. That not later than 1st May the Nominations Committee shall select, out of the names so submitted by Presbyteries, as many Ministers and Elders as shall fill the vacancies on the various Standing Committees and Boards, and shall recommend these to the General Assembly, and that the names so recommended shall, not later than 1st May, be communicated by the Nominations Committee to the Clerk of Assembly, and shall be included in the papers to be printed.

9. That it shall be competent for any Member of Assembly to move an amendment or amendments to the recommendations of the Nominations Committee, provided that notice of such amendment shall have been given to the Clerk of Assembly in writing, not later than the second last day of Assembly, and provided that such amendments are in conformity with Standing Orders VI.2, VI.3 and VI.4, regarding the composition of Committees.

10. That in making their selection the Nominations Committee shall have regard (1) to fitness for the work of the particular Committee or Board for which the persons are to be nominated; (2) to as even a distribution of influence as possible over the Church; and (3) to economy as regards the expense connected with attendance at meetings of Committees and Boards.

11. That in the selection of names of Ministers and Elders to form any Special Committee, which is to report to a subsequent Assembly, the Assembly shall not be restricted to its own members.

12. That when the appointment of a Special Committee has been resolved on, the Committee shall not be nominated till the following day, except in cases the urgency of which does not admit of a day’s delay.

13. That no Committee shall sit while the Moderator is in the Chair at any diet of the Assembly’s meeting.