



2021 General Assembly Documents

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PERSONNEL

Rev. NEIL MACMILLAN	Moderator
Rev. DONALD G. MACDONALD	Retiring Moderator
Rev. MALCOLM MACLEOD	Principal Clerk
Rev. NIGEL ANDERSON	Assistant Clerk
Rev. STEPHEN ALLISON	Assistant Clerk
Mr ANDREW GIFFEN	Chief Executive Officer
Messrs BALFOUR + MANSON, LLP, EDINBURGH	Law Agents

REPORT
OF THE
ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Assembly Business Committee met using audio-visual technology on Thursday 15th April 2021.

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. General Assembly. The Committee noted the ongoing COVID-19 Scottish Government restrictions on in-person meetings, and it was agreed that the General Assembly should meet as appointed on Monday 17th May 2021 at 6.00pm, and that this Session and subsequent Sessions should take place virtually using Zoom video-technology hosted in the Assembly Hall, St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh, according to the terms of Act 33, Class 2, 2010, and Act 5, Class 2, 2020.

2. Questions and the Formula. The Committee considered the procedure for a successful applicant for the Free Church Ministry answering the Questions and signing the Formula. It was agreed to recommend that, due to the current exceptional circumstances, this process be completed during the General Assembly immediately after the application being accepted and following the procedure outlined in the Act Act 2, Class 2, 2020.

3. Voting Arrangements. The Committee considered the possible complications arising from using the polling function on Zoom when asking Commissioners to vote on motions, amendments and appendices, especially where the result is close. The following arrangements for votes taken at the General Assembly were agreed: (a) that the Zoom polling function be used from all voting procedures as the first option; (b) that Survey Monkey, an online survey software, be used in situations where the result shows a ten percent or less majority, requiring to establish that all votes recorded are valid; (c) that all Commissioners be issued with an identification number for use on Survey Monkey as required; and (d) that the guidelines for voting in the Guidelines for Commissioners document be amended to include information on Survey Monkey.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

1. Reports to the General Assembly. The Committee noted that reports to the General Assembly were submitted from the Board of Ministry, Board of Ministry Supplementary Report, the Board of Trustees, the ETS Board, the ETS Quinquennial Review Committee, the Mission Board, the Psalmody and Praise Committee, and the Assembly Clerks' Office Report.

2. Northern Presbytery. The Committee also noted that the Committee appointed by the March 2021 Commission of Assembly Committee to examine the Dissent and Complaint with Reasons, Presbytery Responses, and a Petition from Mr Iain R. Morrison regarding the Presbytery's decision on Tuesday 16th February 2021 not to take Mr Morrison on trials for licence had submitted its draft Report.

3. Confidential Business. The Committee agreed that the following items should be taken up by the General Assembly in private session due to the personal nature of the substance of the reports: (1) the Supplementary Report of the Board of Ministry; and (2) the Report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly Committee.

4. Distribution of Documents. The Committee considered how to distribute the documents for the confidential items of business to Commissioners and other parties. The following arrangements were agreed: (1) Supplementary Report of the Board of Ministry – the documents made available securely online to Commissioners when the Report is taken up by the Assembly; and (2) March 2021 Commission of Assembly Report – the documents to be made available to all Commissioners, and to all parties involved in the matters raised in the documents, by the Assembly Clerk, securely online on Friday 14th May 2021 at 9.00am.

5. Programme. The Committee approved the draft Programme showing the General Assembly meeting as appointed on Monday 17th May 2021 at 6.00pm and with a total of five Sessions and with the business expected to be completed by 5.00pm on Wednesday 19th May 2021. The Committee considered the personal health and practical difficulties of attending virtual meetings for prolonged periods and it was, therefore, agreed to avoid evening Sessions in the Programme.

(C) OVERTURES AND PETITIONS

1. Overtures. The Committee noted the submission of two Overtures, one from the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross regarding the establishment of a Public Engagement Group to represent the Church in speaking out on public questions and to respond to Government consultations, and the second from Rev. Ian Watson and others requesting that the General Assembly form a Committee to consider how the Church should interpret and apply the Establishment Principle in the 21st century and advise the Church accordingly. The Committee noted that the Overture was correct in form and content and agreed that it should be taken up by the Assembly at a suitable time in the Assembly programme. The Committee noted that the substance of the Overture of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross was with reference to the same issue as the Board of Trustees' Proposed Deliverance Section E.10-11. It was agreed to recommend that this Overture be taken up by the Assembly as an amendment against the Board of Trustees' Proposed Deliverance and that Mr Watson's Overture be taken up by the Assembly as a separate item.

2. Petitions. The Committee also noted the following Petitions submitted by Presbyteries regarding Probationers and their names being retained on the Roll of Probationers: (1) Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding Rev. Colin Ross; and (2) Northern Presbytery regarding Rev. William Paterson. It was agreed to classify both Petitions as routine and to include them in the Committee's report. The Petitions are found in Appendix One and Appendix Two.

(D) GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

1. General Assembly Roll. The Roll of the General Assembly was noted by the Committee in its complete form except for one vacancy for an Elder Commissioner each from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and the Northern Presbytery. The Committee agreed to extend the deadline for submission of Commissioned Elders to fill the vacancies until 30th April 2021.

2. Commissions and Elders' Certificates. The Assembly Clerk reported on the submission of Elders' Certificates and informed the Committee that the Assembly Clerks would propose to the General Assembly this year that the requirement for Elders' Certificates be discontinued and that, instead, appropriate certification would be added to the Form of Commission issued to Presbyteries.

3. Standing Orders. The Committee approved the revised and updated General Assembly Standing Orders with the following noted changes: Section E.1.1 – Assembly meetings; Section E.5.3 – length of speeches; Section E.10.3 – voting; Section E.15 – examination of records; Section E.19 – minutes of the General Assembly.

(E) EXAMINATION OF RECORDS

1. Examination of Records. The Committee noted that the examination of Presbytery records, and that of the records of Boards and Committees, had not been possible since the 2020 General Assembly due to the COVID-19 restrictions on in-person gatherings. It was agreed to recommend the following arrangements to the General Assembly:

1.1 Presbytery Records. The Committee agreed to recommend that Presbyteries be instructed to submit the record for the periods 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 to the Assembly Clerks' Office for examination as soon as possible after the Clerks are able to have in-person meetings and that the Clerks should report on the examination to the following Commission of Assembly or General Assembly, whichever is the soonest.

1.2 Records of Board and Committees. The Committee also agreed to recommend that Boards and Committee be instructed to submit the records for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in electronic format to the Assembly Clerks' Office by Friday 12th June 2021 for examination and that the Assembly Clerks should report on the examination to the October 2021 Commission of Assembly.

1.3 Attestation of Records. The Committee considered the difficulty in recording the attestation of records, which is normally carried out by physically stamping the records, when in-person meetings do not allow examination of records in the usual way. It was, therefore, agreed to recommend that, on agreeing to attest records as correct, the Assembly Clerk be authorised to issue an extract of minutes of the General Assembly of its Commissions as a statement of attestation with the instruction that Presbyteries, Boards and Committees insert such an extract into their permanent records as soon as possible after it is issued.

(F) MISCELLANEOUS

1. Loyal and Dutiful Address. The Committee took up consideration of the Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her Majesty, The Queen. The Committee agreed with the proposal that Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly, and Rev. Neil MacMillan, Moderator Designate of the 2021 General Assembly, prepare a draft Address to bring before the Assembly Business Committee prior to the meeting of the Assembly, and that the draft could then be presented to the General Assembly with the Committee's recommendation.

2. Lord High Commissioner. The Committee noted that Prince William, Duke of Cambridge had been appointed as the Lord High Commissioner for 2021. The Assembly Clerk informed the Committee that Mr Thomas K. Murray, Purse-bearer at the Palace of Holyrood House, had been in touch regarding the Lord High Commissioner's usual practice of visiting the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. The Committee was pleased to note that Prince William would record a video message to be brought into the programme of the Assembly at a suitable point during the week.

3. Report on Deceased Ministers and Elders. The Committee considered that it had not been possible to take up a report on Deceased Ministers and Elders at the 2020 General Assembly and that the same would be the case at the 2021 General Assembly unless alternative arrangements were in place. It was agreed that the Assembly Clerks should include a report on Deceased Ministers and Elders in their Report to the Assembly on receipt of the relevant details from Presbytery Clerks.

REV. MALCOLM MACLEOD, *Principal Clerk*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

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

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. The General Assembly, noting the ongoing Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions on travel and public gatherings, declare that the Assembly shall convene virtually using Zoom video-technology hosted in the Assembly Hall, St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh, according to the terms of Act 33, Class 2, 2010, and Act 5, Class 2, 2020.

2. The General Assembly, noting the current exceptional circumstances with the restrictions on large gatherings, declare that it shall be competent on this occasion to proceed according to the process outlined in Act 2, Class 2, 2020 for asking the Questions and signing the Formula on accepting an application to the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland.

3. The General Assembly declare that voting on amendments and addenda to Reports, Overtures and Petitions which come before the Assembly shall be undertaken, in the first place, using the Zoom polling function, and, when the voting results show a ten percent or less majority, that an online survey software be used to verify the validity of votes and the identity of all participants.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

1. The General Assembly approve the draft Assembly programme distributed with Assembly papers showing the General Assembly meeting as appointed on Monday 17th May 2021 at 6.00pm and with a total of five Sessions, and with the business expected to be completed by 5.00pm on Wednesday 19th May 2021.

2. The General Assembly declare that the Supplementary Report of the Board of Ministry, containing applications for the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland, shall be taken up by the Assembly in private session, with the Assembly moving into open session for asking the Questions and signing the Formula.

3. The General Assembly declare that when the Report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly appointed to report on matters relating to a decision of the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February that only the following documents are made available to Commissioners due to the personal nature of one of the appendices: The Petition in the name of Mr Iain R. Morrison with Appendix 1-8 and 10 only; the papers before the Northern Presbytery at its meeting held on Tuesday 16th February 2021; the Dissent and Complaint with Reasons; and the Presbytery Responses to Reasons.

4. The General Assembly declare that when the said report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly is taken up by the Assembly the whole matter is processed during private session. They approve of the process of sharing the above-listed documents with Commissioners and interested parties digitally and securely before the matter is taken up by the Assembly.

(C) OVERTURES AND PETITIONS

1. The General Assembly note receipt of the Overture of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross regarding the establishment of a Public Engagement Group. They declare that the Overture be taken up by the Assembly as an amendment to Section E 10-11 of the Board of Trustees Proposed Deliverance.

2. The General Assembly note the submission of an Overture from Rev. Ian Watson and others requesting that the Assembly form a Committee to consider how the Church should interpret and apply the Establishment Principle in the 21st century and advise the Church accordingly. They declare that the Overture be taken up by the Assembly as a separate item in the Assembly Programme.

3. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding Rev. Colin Ross and grants its crave. They direct that Mr Ross's name be retained on the Roll of Probationers for another three-year period according to the provisions of Acts 8, Class 2, 2019.

4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Northern Presbytery regarding Rev. William Paterson and grant its crave. They direct that Mr Paterson's name be retained on the Roll of Probationers for another three-year period according to the provisions of Acts 8, Class 2, 2019.

(D) GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

1. The General Assembly record the Roll of the Assembly as distributed with Assembly papers. They approve of the Business Committee's decision to receive late additions to the list of Commissioners appointed by Presbyteries up until 30th April 2021. They declare that such late additions be included on the Roll of Assembly on receipt of the appropriate extract of the proceedings of the Presbytery outlined in Act 8, 1853, as amended by Act 9, 1863.

2. The General Assembly approve and adopt the Standing Orders, distributed with Assembly papers, with the changes to the following paragraphs: Section E.1.1 – Assembly meetings; Section E.5.3 – length of speeches; Section E.10.3 – voting; Section E.15 – examination of records; Section E.19 – minutes of the General Assembly.

3. The General Assembly approve the revised Guidelines for Commissioners distributed with Assembly papers.

(E) EXAMINATION OF RECORDS

1. The General Assembly note that the Assembly Clerks have not been able to carry out the examination of records are instructed by the Assembly in Act 2, Class 2, 2020, Paragraph 6, due to the ongoing Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions on in-person meetings. They also note that it is not possible for committees to meet for the examination of records because of the said restrictions.

2. The General Assembly instruct all Presbyteries to submit their records for ecclesiastical years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 to the Assembly Clerks' Office for examination as soon as in-person meetings are possible and on receipt of a request of the Assembly Clerk. They instruct the Assembly Clerks to report to the Commission of Assembly or the General Assembly as soon as possible after the examination has been completed.

3. The General Assembly instruct all Boards and Committees to submit their records for ecclesiastical years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 electronically, in MS Word format, to the Assembly Clerks' Office by Friday 12th June 2021. They instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine such records and to report on the examination to the October 2021 Commission of Assembly.

4. The General Assembly authorise the Assembly Clerk, on records being attested as correct, to issue a statement of attestation in the form of an extract of the proceedings of the General Assembly or its Commissions to Presbytery Clerks and the Clerks of Boards and Committees. They instruct all Clerks to insert the statement of attestation in their permanent records at the first available opportunity after receipt of the same from the Assembly Clerk.

(F) MISCELLANEOUS

1. The General Assembly note that the work of a committee to prepare a Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her Majesty the Queen is not possible due to the current restrictions on in-person meetings. They thank Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly, and Rev. Neil MacMillan, Moderator Designate of the 2021 General Assembly, for preparing a draft Loyal and Dutiful Address for the 2021 General Assembly. They receive and adopt the draft Loyal and Dutiful Address on the recommendation of the Business Committee, and they declare that it shall be read at a suitable time in the Assembly programme before being forwarded to Her Majesty the Queen.
2. The General Assembly note that Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, has been appointed as the Queen's Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for 2021. They note with regret that it will not be possible for the Lord High Commissioner to address the Assembly in-person. They welcome the opportunity to receive a recorded video message from the Lord High Commissioner and declare that it should be brought to the Assembly at a suitable time in the programme.
3. The General Assembly approve of the alternative arrangements for the preparation of a Report on Deceased Ministers and Elders. They thank the Assembly Clerks for preparing a report on this item. They also thank Presbytery Clerks for the submission of the relevant details for the Report and associated tributes in the case of deceased Ministers. They declare that Presbytery representatives shall read tributes to Ministers who have passed away within their bounds when the Report is taken up by the Assembly.

APPENDIX ONE

PETITION OF PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH AND PERTH

Rev. Colin Ross

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 17th May 2021, the Petition of Rev. Colin Ross humbly shows that:

1. Whereas your Petitioner, Rev. Colin Ross, was licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth on the 29th March 2011.
2. Whereas the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth granted that your Petitioner's name should remain on the list of probationers eligible for a call on the 28th March 2017 according to the provisions of Act 33, Class 2, 2012, Paragraph 1.6.
3. Whereas your Petitioner is currently working in support of ministry in the congregation of Cornerstone, Edinburgh.
4. Whereas the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth supported the Petitioner's application to have his name retained on the Register of Probationers on the 24th November 2020.
5. Whereas the Acts 8, Class 2, 2019 requires that Probationers petition the General Assembly to allow their name to remain on the Roll of Probationers for another three years.

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly take these premises into their consideration and grant that your Petitioner's name remain on the Roll of Probationers for a further three years.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may deem best.

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

APPENDIX TWO

PETITION OF THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY

Rev. William Paterson

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 17th May 2021, the Petition of Rev. William Paterson humbly shows that:

1. Whereas your Petitioner, Rev. William Paterson, was licensed by the Northern Presbytery on the 2nd July 2010.
2. Whereas the Northern Presbytery granted that your Petitioner's name should remain for a further four years on the list of probationers eligible for a call on the 16th August 2016.
3. Whereas the current Act 8, Class 2, 2019 requires the Probationer to petition the General Assembly so as to allow his name to remain on the register of Probationers' eligible for a call for another three years.

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly take these premises into their consideration and grant that your Petitioner's name remain on the Roll of Probationers.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may deem best.

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY CLERKS' OFFICE

(A) GENERAL

1. Examination of Records. The 2020 General Assembly at its May meeting instructed the Assembly Clerks' Office in the terms of Act 1, Class 2, 2020, to examine the records of Boards and Committee along with the examination of Presbytery records and to report to the 2021 General Assembly. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Scottish Government restrictions on meetings and travel, it has not been possible to carry out the examination of any of the said records. The Clerks recommend that the records of Boards and Committees be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office for examination and that all Presbyteries submit their records to the Assembly Clerks' Office when the COVID-19 Scottish Government restrictions permit in-person meetings and at the request of the Principal Clerk.

2. Presbytery Workers. The 2020 General Assembly at its October meeting instructed the Assembly Clerks' Office to draw up draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers in conjunction with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees and to report to the 2021 General Assembly. The revised proposals have been drafted but not yet completed and consultation with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees has not yet taken place. The Clerks' Office requests that this remit be continued with instructions to report to the 2022 General Assembly.

3. ETS Staff. The 2020 General Assembly at its October meeting also instructed the Assembly Clerks to examine all Acts of Assembly relating to ETS staff and to revise and update the relevant Acts to ensure consistency and accuracy in the light of recent changes, and to report to the 2021 General Assembly. This task has not been completed and the Clerks' Office requests that this remit also be continued with instructions to report to the 2022 General Assembly.

4. Deceased Ministers and Elders. The General Assembly Standing Orders Section E.17.1 states that a Committee of Assembly be appointed to prepare a report on deceased Ministers and Elders for the period commencing from the last Assembly with the report presented to the General Assembly at the last Session. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the absence of an in-person meeting of the General Assembly in 2020, the information gathered covers the period from May 2019 to March 2021. The Clerks' Office has collected and collated information on deceased Ministers and Elders from Presbytery Clerks. The information is found in Appendix Three.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Provincial Synods. The 2020 General Assembly at its October meeting instructed Provincial Synods to report to the Assembly Clerks' Office on the completion of financial re-arrangements for funds held under the name of each Synod in the Church. Confirmation has been received from the Synods that unrestricted funds had been shared equally to the Presbyteries under the Synod and that, where restricted funds existed, that arrangements have been made to administer such funds by the Finance Office in Edinburgh. The arrangements for the dissolution of Synods did not include arrangements for the storage of records. The Clerks' Office recommends that all Synod records be deposited in the Central Offices, Edinburgh, for storage with other historical Church records.

2. Elders' Certificates. The 2020 General Assembly waived the need for the submission of Elders' Certificates from Kirk Sessions on behalf of Elders appointed as Commissioners to the General Assembly due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on meetings of Church Courts. This requirement is set out in Act 8, 1853 as amended by Act 9, 1863. Representations have been made by some of our Presbytery Clerks, questioning the need for the submission of such certificates and asking for consideration of this requirement being discontinued. The Assembly Clerks are of the view that this practice is superfluous in that certification is given by the Presbytery when completing the Form of Commissioners. We recommend that this process be discontinued and that the Form of Commissioners for Presbyteries be updated to ensure a clear statement is made by the Presbytery that all Elders appointed as Commissioners are *bona fide* acting Elders in Congregations within their bounds and that they have signed the Formula. The proposed revised Act is found in the Proposed Deliverance, Section (B), General Assembly, Paragraph 2.

(C) NOMINATIONS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

1. Board of Ministry. Rev. Ivor Macdonald's second four-year term of service on the Board of Ministry comes to an end at this General Assembly. We are thankful to Mr Macdonald for his contribution to the work of the Board and for his services as the Board's Vice-Chairman. Mr Charles Anderson was appointed Clerk of the Board by the 2020 General Assembly. Mr Anderson has expressed his desire to be released from being a member of the Board to enable him to focus on the duty of the clerkship.

2. Board of Trustees. Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Paul Clarke and Mr James Fraser resigned from the membership of the Board of Trustees since the 2020 General Assembly. Mr Callum Macdonald informed the Board in January that he wished to retire from his membership of the Board at the 2021 General Assembly. We are greatly indebted and thankful to Mr Fraser for his long service to the Church as a member of the Board and as its Chairman. We are also thankful to Mr Callum Macdonald, who has served as Vice-Chairman of the Board for many years, and to Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Paul Clarke for their contribution to the work of the Board. Rev. Neil MacMillan, Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod and Mr Gordon Macleod were appointed to the Board on a temporary basis to replace Mr Macleod, Mr Clarke and Mr Fraser respectively. We recommend that they be appointed to the Board for the fixed term of four years.

3. ETS Board. Rev. Thomas Davis informed the Edinburgh Theological Seminary Board of his desire not to be re-appointed to the Board at the 2021 General Assembly. We are thankful to Mr Davis for his work on the Board and in particular for his services as Fundraising Coordinator.

4. Mission Board. Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd has served as Chairman of the Mission Board for the last four years. Dr Akroyd is stepping down as Chairman at the 2021 General Assembly and he informed the Assembly Clerks' Office that he did not wish to be appointed to the Board for a second four-year term. Dr John Morrison has also informed the Board and the Office that he wished to retire from the membership of the Board at this Assembly. We are thankful to Dr Akroyd for his contribution to the work of the Mission Board and for his leadership during his term on the Board. We are also thankful to Dr Morrison for his work and service on the Mission Board and on its predecessor, the Home Missions Board.

5. Board of Ministry. Rev. Ivor MacDonald completes his term on the Board of Ministry, both as a member and as its Vice-Chairman, at this Assembly. The Assembly Clerks recommend that Rev. Thomas Davis be appointed to the Board of Ministry to replace Mr MacDonald.

6. Psalmody and Praise Committee. Mr Angus T. Macleod has submitted his resignation from the Psalmody and Praise Committee, both as a member and as the Committee's Clerk, effective from this Assembly. Mr Cameron Maciver has also indicated that he is unable to continue on the Committee due to other commitments. Rev. Ruairidh Maclean, has intimated that he is unable to continue as Convener of the Committee. The Assembly Clerks recommend that Mr Charles Douglas and Mr Stewart Clark be appointed to the Committee to fill the vacancies and that Rev Neil L. Macdonald be appointed Convener.

7. Judicial Commission. There are no vacancies arising on the Judicial Commission at this Assembly.

8. Nominations. The Assembly Clerks' Office requested nominations from Presbyteries to fill vacancies arising on Boards and Committees at the 2021 General Assembly according to the requirements of Act 6, Class 2, 2014, Paragraph 1.1.2. A summary of the nominations received from Presbyteries is found in Appendix One.

REV. MALCOLM MACLEOD, *Principal Clerk*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly note the difficulties encountered in seeking to complete remits from the 2019 and 2020 General Assemblies due to COVID-19 restrictions. They grant a further extension of the 2019 General Assembly remit regarding draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers in conjunction with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees and to report to the 2021 General Assembly. They also grant an extension on the 2020 General Assembly remit to examine all Acts of Assembly relating to ETS

staff and to revise and update the relevant Acts to ensure consistency and accuracy in the light of recent staffing changes. They instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to report on both of the aforesaid remits to the 2022 General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly direct that all Boards and Committees submit their records to the Assembly Clerks' Office in electronic format not later than Friday 12th June 2021 for examinations. They further direct that all Presbytery records are submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office for examination as soon as the Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions allow in-person meetings and at the request of the Principal Clerk. They instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to report on the examination to the October 2021 Commission of Assembly.

3. The General Assembly suspend the requirements of Assembly Standing Orders Section E.17.1 regarding the appointment of a Committee to report on deceased Ministers and Elders. They thank the Assembly Clerks' Office for the alternative arrangements for the work of this Committee. They note with sadness the names of the Ministers and Elders who have passed away since the 2019 General Assembly, listed in Appendix Two. They instruct that the Report, including the tributes to deceased Ministers in Appendices Three, Four and Five, be engrossed in the records of the Assembly.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The General Assembly note that all Provincial Synods have completed the re-arrangements of funds held in their name according to the requirements of Act 1, Class 1, 2020. They declare that Provincial Synods are now dissolved and instruct that the terms of the said Act be fully implemented. They direct that all Provincial Synod records be deposited in the Central Offices in Edinburgh for safe storage with other historical records.

2. The General Assembly declare that the requirement of Act 8, 1853 as amended by Act 9, 1863 that Kirk Session that bona fide Certificates be issued by Kirk Session for Ruling Elders appointed as Commissioners to the General Assembly be discontinued. They instruct the Assembly Clerks to ensure that a bona fide Certificate be included in the Form of Commissions for Presbyteries. They amend Act 8, 1853, as amended by Act 9, 1863, to read as follows:

The General Assembly, on the Report of their Committee appointed to collect, revise, and classify, the existing Standing Orders, and to suggest such other Orders as might appear to be necessary, did, and hereby do, ORDER:

I. As to COMMISSIONS to General Assembly

1. That all Commissions transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly, shall be revised by them, in so far as regards the regularity of said Commissions in point of form; and that the Clerks shall prepare and submit a Report on the subject to the Committee appointed by the Assembly for the revising of Commissions.

2. That the Clerks of Assembly shall furnish all Presbytery Clerks with printed copies of the form of Commission to Representatives hitherto in use and hereto appended.

Commission to Representatives

At the day of one thousand eight hundred and years. The which day the Free Church Presbytery of being convened, in order to elect their Representatives to the ensuing Assembly, pursuant to a resolution entered their minutes on the day of did, and hereby do, nominate and appoint:

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Congregation</i>
Rev.	Minister at
Rev.	Minister at
Rev.	Minister at
Rev.	Minister at

With (*with their names given at length and including the Kirk Session of which they are members*)

<i>Ruling Elder</i>	<i>Congregation of</i>

their Commissioners to the next General Assembly of the Free Church Scotland, indicted to meet at Edinburgh the day of May next to come when and where it shall happen to sit, willing them to repair thereto, and to attend all the diets of the same, and there to consult, vote, and determine in all matters that come before them, to the glory of God and the good of His Church, according to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and agreeable to the constitution of this Church, as they will be answerable ; and that they report their diligence therein at their return therefrom.

And the said Presbytery do hereby testify and declare, that all the Ministers above named have signed the Formula, and further, that the said Ruling Elders are *bona fide* acting Elders of their Congregation and have signed the Formula, are of unblemished character, circumspect in their walk, regular in giving attendance on the ordinances of Divine Institution and behave in other respects agreeable to their office. All which the Presbytery have hereby attested on proper information.

Attested by

..... Moderator

..... Clerk

AFTER-ELECTION OF A MINISTER

At the day of one thousand eight hundred and years. The which day the Free Church Presbytery of being convened, and *here narrate the occasion of the new election*) did, and hereby do, nominate and appoint in place, their Commissioner to the next General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland; and do hereby testify and declare, that signed the Formula.; which the Presbytery hereby attest upon proper information.

Attested by

..... Moderator

..... Clerk

AFTER-ELECTION OF AN ELDER

At the day of one thousand eight hundred and years. The which day the Free Church Presbytery of being convened, and (*here narrate the occasion of the new election*) did, and hereby do, nominate and appoint in place, their Commissioner to the next General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland; and do hereby testify and declare, that he is in all respects qualified in the same manner as their Commissioner, in whose room he is chosen; which the Presbytery hereby attest upon proper information.

Attested by

..... Moderator

..... Clerk

(C) NOMINATIONS

1. The General Assembly note that Rev. Ivor Macdonald completes his second four-year term on the Board of Ministry at this Assembly. They thank Mr Macdonald for his contribution to the work of the Board and for his services as the Board's Vice-Chairman.
2. The General Assembly note the resignations of Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Paul Clarke and Mr James Fraser from the Board of Trustees. They thank Mr Macleod, Mr Clarke and especially Mr Fraser for his unstinting and faithful service to the Church as a member and as Chairman of the Board.
3. The General Assembly note Rev. Thomas Davis's desire not to be re-appointed to the ETS Board. They thank Mr Davis for his services on the Board and especially his contribution as Fundraising Coordinator.
4. The General Assembly note Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd and Dr John Morrison's desire not to be re-appointed to the Mission Board. They thank Dr Akroyd for his service and leadership of the Board as its Chairman. They also thank Dr Morrison for his services to the Church as a member of the Board and of its predecessor, the Home Mission Board.
5. The General Assembly note that the figure in the year column in the tables below refers to the new year of service in a four-year term, and that the figure in the term column refers to which four-year term the year refers to. They appoint the following membership of Boards, Committees and the Judicial Commission:

Board of Ministry			Year	Term
	Rev. Paul Clarke	EP	2	1
	Rev. Thomas Davis	EP	1	4
	Rev. Colin L. Macleod	SWR	2	1
	1 member appointed by Senate			
	Mr Murdo Murray	WI	4	2
	Mr Michael W. J. Townsend	WI	4	2
	Mr Clive Bailey	SWR	2	2
	Mr Robert Coke	EP	1	1
	ETS Principal <i>ex officio</i>			
Chairman:	Rev. Paul Clarke			
Clerk:	Mr Charles Anderson			

Board of Trustees			Year	Term
	Mr Donald Forsyth	ILR	4	1
	Mr Gordon Macleod	WI	1	1
	Mr Alan Crooks	GA	1	1
	Mr Neil Longwe	GA	3	1
	Mr Mark Robinson	N	3	1
	Rev. Neil MacMillan	EP	1	1
	Rev. David C. Meredith	EP	4	2
	Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod	ILR	1	1
	Rev. Iver Martin	EP	1	1
	Rev. Calum Iain Macleod	ILR	2	2
	Mr Alastair Oliver	EP	2	2
	Mr Donald Macleod (Stornoway)	WI	3	1
Chairman:	Mr Donald Forsyth			
Clerk:	Chief Executive Officer			
Adviser	Principal Clerk <i>ex officio</i>			

Ecumenical Relations Committee		Year	Term
	Mission Director <i>ex officio</i> Mission Board Chairman <i>ex officio</i> Principal Clerk of Assembly <i>ex officio</i> Assistant Clerk Representative <i>ex officio</i> Principal of ETS Moderator of the Assembly Mr Alastair Simison	3	1
Convener:	Rev. Iver Martin		
Clerk:	Principal Clerk of Assembly		

ETS Board		Year	Term
	Principal <i>ex officio</i> 1 other member of Senate Chairman Board of Ministry President SRC Rev. Andrew Longwe Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean ILR Rev. Dr Fergus A. J. Macdonald EP Mr William Mackenzie N Mr Ross S. Finlay LIR	1 4 4 2 2	1 2 2 1 1
Chairman:	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean		
Clerk:	Seminary Secretary		

Mission Board		Year	Term
	Rev. Jeremy Ross EP Rev. Dr Alastair Wilson EP Rev. Iain MacAskill GA Rev. David Macleod WI Rev. Chris Davidson ILR Rev. Donald G. Macdonald SWR Dr Andrew Maciver EP Mr Duncan MacPherson WI	2 1 3 1 3 3 3 1	1 1 2 2 1 1 1 1
Chairman:	Rev. David Macleod		
Secretary	Mission Coordinator		

Psalmody & Praise Committee		Year	Term
	Rev. Iver Martin EP Rev. Neil L. Macdonald SWR Mr Charles Douglas EP Rev. Ruairidh Maclean GA Mr Kenneth Macdonald WI Mr Stewart Clark SWR	4 3 1 3 1 1	2 1 1 2 2 1
Convener:	Rev. Neil L. Macdonald		
Clerk:	Mr Charles Douglas		

6. The General Assembly reappoint the **Judicial Commission** as follows:

Presbytery		Year	Term
Edinburgh & Perth	Rev. David C. Meredith	2	3
	Rev. Neil MacMillan	4	1
	Mr John MacRae	2	3
	Mr Neil Campbell	4	1
Glasgow & Argyll	Rev. Iain MacAskill	2	3
	Rev. Ian M. Watson	4	1
	Mr Evan MacDonald	2	3
	Mr Rod Morrison	4	1
Inverness, Lochaber & Ross	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	4	1
	Rev. Angus MacRae	2	3
	Mr Andrew Murchison	2	3
	Mr John Macaulay	4	1
Northern	Rev. Howard Stone	4	1
	Rev. Gordon Mair	4	1
	Mr Bill Ferrier	2	1
	Mr John Skinner	4	1
Skye & Wester Ross	Rev. Marcos Florit	4	1
	Rev. Roddie Rankin	2	1
	Mr Ian Macdonald	4	1
	Mr Stewart Clarke	2	1
Western Isles	Rev. Andrew Coghill	2	1
	Rev. Ewen Matheson	3	1
	Mr Donald Macleod (Shawbost)	4	1
	Mr Murdo Murray (Stornoway)	2	3
Chairman:	Mr Neil Campbell		
Clerk:	Principal Clerk		

APPENDIX ONE

Vacancies on Boards and Committee

Nominations from Presbyteries

BOARD OF MINISTRY			
Presbytery	E&P	G&A	IL&R
Minister	Rev. Thomas Davis	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Rev. Peter Turnbull
Elder	Dr Alan Woodley (Broughty Ferry)	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Mr John Macdonald (Dingwall & Strathpeffer)
BOARD OF MINISTRY			
Presbytery	Northern	S&WR	WI
Minister	Rev. Calum M. Smith	Rev. Dan Paterson	Rev. Calum M. Smith
Elder		Mr Robert Coke (Gairloch, Kinlochewe Torridon)	

BOARD OF TRUSTEES			
Presbytery	E&P	G&A	IL&R
Minister	Rev. Iver Martin	<i>No Nomination</i>	Rev. Hugh Ferrier
Elder	<i>None requested</i>	<i>None requested</i>	<i>None requested</i>
BOARD OF TRUSTEES			
Presbytery	Northern	S&WR	WI
Minister	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Rev. Andrew Coghill
Elder	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>

ETS BOARD			
Presbytery	E&P	G&A	IL&R
Minister	Rev. Euan Dodds	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Rev. Robin Gray
Elder	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>
ETS BOARD			
Presbytery	Northern	S&WR	WI
Minister	Rev. Andrew Longwe	Rev. Marcos Florit	Rev. Paul Murray
Elder	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>

MISSION BOARD			
Presbytery	E&P	G&A	IL&R
Minister	Rev. Dr Alasdair Wilson	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Rev. Dr Alasdair Wilson
Minister	Rev. David Macleod	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	
Elder	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Mr Craig Murray (Kilmallie)
MISSION BOARD			
Presbytery	Northern	S&WR	WI
Minister	Rev. Murdo Campbell	Rev. Neil L. Macdonald	Rev. Mark Macleod
Minister	Rev. Andrew Macleod	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Rev. David Macleod
Elder	Mr Andrew Shearer (Castletown Community)	Mr Colin Macdonald (Glenelg & Inverinate)	Mr Duncan MacPherson (North Harris)

PSALMODY & PRAISE			
Presbytery	E&P	G&A	IL&R
Minister	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>None requested</i>
Elder	Mr Charles Douglas (Leith Elder Memorial)	<i>No nomination submitted</i>	Mr Kenneth Macdonald (Back)
PSALMODY & PRAISE			
Presbytery	Northern	S&WR	WI
Minister	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>	<i>No nomination requested</i>
Elder	Mr Kenneth Macdonald (Back)	Mr Stewart Clark (Trotternish)	Mr Kenneth Macdonald (Back)

APPENDIX TWO

Report on Deceased Ministers and Elders

1. **Deceased Ministers.** The Assembly Clerks received notice of the passing of the following Ministers since the 2019 General Assembly:

Presbytery	Names	Date
<i>Edinburgh & Perth</i>		
<i>Glasgow & Argyll</i>	Rev. Dr David E.C. Ford	16 th February 2020
<i>Inverness, Lochaber & Ross</i>		
<i>Northern</i>		
<i>Skye & Wester Ross</i>	Rev. John H. Maclean	12 th February 2020
<i>Western Isles</i>	Rev. Robert Sinclair	1 st July 2019
<i>North America</i>		

2. **Deceased Elders.** The Assembly Clerks received notice of the passing of the following Elders since the 2019 General Assembly:

Presbytery	Name	Congregation
<i>Edinburgh & Perth</i>	Mr Ian Macdonald Mr Kenneth Maciver Mr William Anderson Mr Donald Matheson	Bon-Accord, Aberdeen Bon-Accord, Aberdeen Buccleuch & Greyfriars, Edinburgh Falkirk
<i>Glasgow & Argyll</i>	Mr John Macleod	East Kilbride
<i>Inverness, Lochaber & Ross</i>	Mr Donnie Macrae Mr Malcolm Fraser Dr Gordon Fraser Dr Alastair Morrison Mr Ian MacIennan Mr Martin Cameron	Dingwall & Strathpeffer Dingwall & Strathpeffer Free North, Inverness Free North, Inverness Kiltearn Ferintosh and Resolis
<i>Northern</i>	Mr Ian MacIennan Mr Hector Grigor	Kiltearn Knockbain
<i>Skye & Wester Ross</i>	Mr Charles Baptie Mr Ronald Jackson Mr Ian R. Macleod	Portree & Bracadale Duirinish Duirinish
<i>Western Isles</i>	Mr William Macleod Mr Neil Murray Mr Alexander Stewart Mr Alan Duncan Mr John M. Mackay Mr Roderick Mackenzie Mr Norman MacMillan Mr Malcolm J. Mackay Mr William Morrison Mr Murdo Mackenzie Mr Alexander Crichton Mr Alexander D. Macdonald	Back Back Back Barvas Barvas Garrabost Garrabost High Free Church High Free Church Kinloch Stornoway Stornoway
<i>North America</i>		

APPENDIX THREE

TRIBUTE

Rev. Dr David E. C. Ford

We are saddened to report the death of our brother and friend, David Ford, who passed into glory on Sunday night, 16th February 2020, after suffering a stroke during the previous week.

David will be sorely missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him, but especially by his family. David was a loving husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather. We extend our deep sympathy and condolences to his wife Marianna, and his children David, Elizabeth, Rebecca, John and Matthew, and their families. We pray that each of them may know the comfort and presence of the Lord in their sadness.

David was a man who loved his Lord and Saviour and loved to tell others of the God of all grace, which he did in a lifetime of ministry and preaching in an impressively wide range of locations and contexts.

His first pastoral charge was in the remote town of Celendín, high in the Peruvian Andes, where he ministered with Olwen, his first wife who pre-deceased him, for several years, along with the growing family. In this challenging environment, they were a wonderful example of a loving Christian home, open to all, and caring for anyone needing help and counsel. In due time they returned to Scotland where David was called to minister in Coatbridge Free Church, where he was much loved by the congregation. But his love for Latin America was still evident, making frequent short teaching trips to Lima, Moyobamba and Medellín.

His gifts in lecturing were widely respected, leading to his taking up a full-time post in the seminary in Medellín, Colombia, and establishing an online theological resource in Spanish, Recursos Teológicos, making its material available to all.

David's servant heart and desire to serve his Lord continued when he returned to Scotland, assisting as Interim-Moderator where needed, Clerk to the Board of Ministry, part-time Lecturer in Edinburgh Theological Seminary and in many other ways, many of them known only to his Master.

Now his work on earth is done, and he is enjoying being with the One he loves most, the Lord Jesus Christ. We miss him but are comforted in our sorrow by our sure and certain hope in the gospel.

APPENDIX FOUR

TRIBUTE

Rev. John H. Maclean

It was with an enormous sense of sadness that we learned of the passing of Rev. John H. Maclean on 12th February 2020. There are not the words to express how much he was loved and how much he will be missed. He was a loving husband to Morag, his trusted helpmeet and partner in the work of the Gospel, a devoted father and best friend to his son Martin, and a father-in-law who welcomed with open arms into the family his daughter-in-law, Shivonne. We continue to pray that they will know the Lord, the God of all grace, comforting and carrying them through their grief.

John was a man who loved people and loved preaching for he was a man who, above all things, loved his Saviour. His enthusiasm for preaching the gospel was unmatched. Even when, due to ill health, he was no longer able to preach, he was still preparing sermons. From the age of seventeen he proclaimed the Gospel faithfully and powerfully, always believing it was the power of God to salvation for those who would believe. His ministry in Lairg and in Trotternish was owned and blessed by God and he was used by Him in the much wider Church to bring many to Christ. John's optimism was unbridled and his willingness to serve the Church in any way he could made him that rare individual who actually enjoyed Presbyteries and Committees! His gravitas and wise counsel in the Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross provided stability during difficult times, and his friendship and encouragement to colleagues over the years were invaluable. He truly was a good and faithful servant. But it was time for him to enter more fully into the joy of his Lord. He is now before the throne of God and will serve Him night and day in his temple, and the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be his Shepherd and lead him to springs of living water, and God will wipe every tear from his eyes. We are comforted by that Gospel hope, but we still feel the pain of the parting and miss him immensely.

APPENDIX FIVE

Tribute

Rev. Robert M. Sinclair

Robert (Bob) Malcolm Sinclair was born in Gaya, India on 25th April 1941. When Bob was 11, the family moved to England and he completed his secondary education in Exeter. In 1957, Bob joined the RAF as an apprentice radio technician and in 1961 he was posted to the RAF station at Aird, Uig, Isle of Lewis. In the providence of God, Lewis was to become home. Quite soon after his arrival, he met Annie Mary Macleod, and they were married in Stornoway Free Church in September 1964, a marriage which lasted for 55 happy years. The first three years of their married life were spent in Germany during which Allison and Robert were born. This was followed with a posting to RAF Kinloss in 1968 and in 1969 they were posted back to Aird, Uig. They set up home in Stornoway and in 1971 their third child, Monica, was born. Monica passed away in 2015.

Bob was deeply affected by Annie Mary's conversion and in due time he too came to embrace the Saviour and lived out the rest of his life consistently honouring and serving Him. Shortly after his conversion, he felt the Lord was calling him into the Christian ministry. After completing his studies at the Free Church College, Edinburgh, he was ordained and inducted to the pastoral charge of Dumbarton Free Church where he and Annie Mary served the Lord faithfully and fruitfully for over 17 years. During his time there he also served as Clerk of the Glasgow Presbytery. He was also a dutiful Interim Moderator for the vacant Free Church congregations of Arran, St Vincent Street, East Kilbride and Ayr.

As a preacher, Bob conveyed the great themes of the gospel with Christ-centred reverence and with a genuine zeal to see all those who were still strangers to God's grace embracing Him as their Saviour. Although he retired from the pastoral charge of Dumbarton Free Church, he never retired from being a pastor. On their return to Lewis in 2009, their home at Nicol Crescent was a particularly warm and welcoming one, as is fondly remembered by their many friends. From there Bob continued a quiet but effective ministry of supporting, comforting, counselling and encouraging all those he came into contact with.

After being granted a seat on the Western Isles Presbytery, Bob served with great acceptance as Interim Moderator of the Lochs congregation, and of the Stornoway Free Church congregation. In addition, he regularly provided a much-appreciated pulpit supply to the vacant congregations throughout the Western Isles. In 2012 he was elected to serve as an Elder on the Kirk Session of Stornoway Free Church where he applied himself with unfailing loyalty.

One of Bob's great concerns was for the continuance of a robust, challenging and Bible-focused pulpit ministry and he frequently provided support, wisdom and encouragement to his younger colleagues in the ministry. He loved preaching and did so up to the close of 2018, when his health issues became more apparent, forcing him to decline invitations to do so.

We extend our sincere condolences to his widow Annie Mary, his daughter Allison and her husband John, his son Robert and his wife Marina, and to his grandchildren Michelle, James, Josh and Jodie, as well as to his remaining brother Peter and his wife Margaret. We pray that God will comfort and strengthen them all.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1.21

REPORT OF THE MISSION BOARD

Chairman's Introduction

"For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen." (Romans 11:36)

Mission is not about us; it is not from us and thankfully it is not dependent upon us. The glory is not ours. Mission does not depend upon Boards and Church Courts, or Congregations and Ministers, or strategies and initiatives. Mission is all about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. The gospel reconciles us to God and brings us into His family. As God's people, all that we are and all that we do is from God, through God and to God.

We have no message apart from the Gospel; we have no saviour apart from Jesus; we have no resource apart from the Bible; we have no power apart from the Holy Spirit and we have no commission apart from the Great Commission. We heed the imperative of William Carey, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." However, we know that God is greater by far than what we can attempt, expect or even imagine.

At a recent meeting of the Board, Stephan Pues, a Church Planter in Frankfurt and the director of City-to-City Europe told us that Europe has 5 'alpha' cities and that there are 50 smaller cities which are hubs for church planting. These networks require the partnership of many churches. It is exciting to see the Free Church playing a small part in a large movement.

Our vision must neither be narrow nor denominational. John Knox prayed, "Give me Scotland or I die." John Wesley said, "I look upon the whole world as my parish." Our time is limited, our numbers are few and our resources are scant. So, if growth comes, if conversions occur, if new churches are planted and if declining churches are revived, we need God to do it, and all the credit belongs to God and all the Glory is His. As a veteran missionary, Hudson Taylor reflected, "I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking Him to do His work through me."

In all the strands of the Board's work, we are reminded of our dependence. We need God. We need Him to intervene. We need Him to work. In Global Mission, we desire to see unreached people reached for the gospel. A helpful example is **James O. Fraser** (1886–1938), Fraser of Lisuland. In 1908, Fraser arrived in Yunnan province to minister in a far-flung corner of SW China which was inadequately reached by the gospel. Fraser encountered the Lisu people – a minority people group who lived in the mountains. There were no Lisu Christians; not one. To reach the Lisu, Fraser not only had to learn a second language, but he also had to invent a script to capture the Lisu language in print. God was pleased to bring revival to the Lisu people. Fraser commenced a church planting network that was self-funding and self-propagating. There was no gimmick. Fraser preached about the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus and the call to repentance with the promise of remission of sins and everlasting life. Preaching was accompanied by much prayer. In 1922, Fraser wrote to his prayer partners, "I used to think that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second. I now feel that it would be truer to give prayer the first, second and third place, and teaching the fourth."

Over this last year, the Board of Trustees has adopted the following strapline: **Our vision: A healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland.** This is not just a line to include on an email, but this vision shapes all that we do. If we desire to see Scotland reached with the gospel, we can contribute to this effort. We can't do everything; we can do something, but we cannot afford to do nothing. I am reminded again of Carey who wrote to his supporters back in Great Britain, "Is not the commission of our Lord still binding upon us? Can we not do more than now we are doing?" Maybe this can be our prayer for 2021 that by God's grace we do more than we are currently doing.

Capturing the God-enthralled vision of all things embedded in the Bible, articulated powerfully by Jonathan Edwards, John Piper issues a clarion call to the church of Jesus from Minneapolis to Montrose to Mombasa and Medina:

God is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for Himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He has an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the supremacy of His name among the nations. Therefore, let us bring our affections into line with His, and, for the sake of His name, let us renounce the quest for worldly comforts and join His global purpose.

As you read, please pray and, as you pray, please consider how God might use you and your local church to answer your prayers. Pray for Scotland and its people, pray for godly preachers and pastors, for Spirit emboldened worshippers and witnesses so that blessing of the gospel would so overflow, that the people of Scotland and the peoples of the world would join heart and voice in the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and theirs.

On a personal note, I have had the privilege of serving on the Mission Board for these last 4 years. Everything that we have done, and everything contained in this report is a genuine team effort. I am grateful for ALL the people I have worked with from the office team to the CEO and the Board of Trustees, to the officers of the Mission Board, and to the members and advisors of the Mission Board itself. Thank you all very much.

(A) GENERAL

1. Mission Board Staff

1.1. **Mission Director.** Rev. David Meredith works full-time as the Mission Director. The remit of the post is to: (a) support the Mission Board in the development of strategic and operational planning for existing and proposed ministries at home and overseas; (b) establish regular contact with Presbyteries and their Strategy Committees, and to equip them to take more responsibility for strategic development within their bounds; (c) maintain and develop links with other Christian churches and agencies; (d) provide a link between the different Boards and Committees within the Church; and (e) to provide oversight and mentoring for Church Planters. The Mission Director's report appears in Appendix One of this report.

1.2. **Mission Director Post Review.** The Board carried out a review of the role of the Mission Director, as is currently required every three years. Following this review, the Board recommends to the General Assembly that the post be made permanent and that the post be subject to review every four years rather than every three years. The Board's review of the post and its recommendation appear in Appendix Two of this report.

1.3. **Mission Coordinator.** Mrs Sarah Johnson began a period of maternity leave, beginning in September 2019 and ending in September 2020. The Mission Board was thankful to hear of the safe arrival of Mr and Mrs Johnson's daughter and commits their family to the prayers of the Church. The post of Mission Coordinator was covered by Mrs Màiri MacPherson from September 2019 to September 2020. Mrs Johnson returned to work following her maternity leave in November 2020 in a part-time capacity. Mrs MacPherson was offered the role in a part-time capacity and accepted this role, thus creating a job share within the role of Mission Coordinator. The remits of the two Mission Coordinators are as follows:

Mission Coordinator	Remits	Working Days
Mrs Sarah Johnson	Church Development Church Planting	Thursday Friday
Mrs Màiri MacPherson	Church Equipping Global Mission Clerk to the Mission Board	Monday Wednesday Thursday

2. **Mission Board Consultants.** Rev. Malcolm Macleod, Principal Clerk, Mrs Janet Murchison, Chair of Women for Mission, and Mrs Sarah Lytle, Secretary for Women for Mission, serve on the Board as consultants. The Board wishes to thank them for their invaluable support to the work of the Board. Mrs Rona Matheson, Urquhart and Resolis, stepped down as consultant to the Board in December 2019. Miss Ali MacDonald, Smithton, stepped down as consultant to the Board in March 2021. The Board would like to sincerely thank Mrs Matheson and Miss MacDonald for their continuously wise and informed contributions during their time as consultants to the Board. The Board is grateful that Miss MacDonald will remain on the Church Equipping Sub-Committee of the Board.

3. **Board Members.** The Board would like to thank all its members for their time, commitment and effort in supporting the mission of the Church. The Board wishes to extend its thanks to the congregations of its Board members especially when Mission Board commitments take them away from their local congregation. The Mission Board welcomed Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Portree and Bracadale, and Rev. Chris Davidson, Merkinch, as new members of the Board following the 2019

General Assembly. Rev. Calum MacMillan stepped down from the Mission Board in March 2020. The Board wishes to thank him for his contributions to the Board. The Board welcomed Rev. Jeremy Ross, Dunfermline, as a new member of the Board following the 2020 General Assembly. Dr John Morrison, Dunfermline, stepped down from the Mission Board in March 2021. The Board wishes to thank him for his years of dedicated service and contributions to the Board.

4. Board Chairman. Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd has completed a four-year term as Chairman to the Mission Board and will step down as Chairman to the Board at the 2021 General Assembly. The Board wishes to thank Dr Akroyd for his years of dedicated service to the Mission Board, and his enthusiastic and wise leadership. The Board welcomes Rev. David Macleod, Vice-Chairman of the Board, as its new Chairman subject to the approval of the General Assembly, and Rev. Jeremy Ross as its new Vice-Chairman. The Board commits Dr Akroyd, Mr Macleod, and Mr Ross to the prayers of the Church.

5. Mission Board Sub-Committees. The Mission Board comprises four smaller committees on which are seated Mission Board members and experienced practitioners. Each Sub-Committee aims to fulfil its remit as given by the Mission Board, aims to meet quarterly, and reports to the Board regularly, with any structural, financial or governance recommendations being decided by the Board. The Mission Director is welcome to also join and advise each Sub-Committee.

The current Sub-Committee membership is indicated below:

Church Planting	Rev. Neil MacMillan, Convener Rev. Chris Davidson Rev. Athole Rennie Rev. Tom Muir Rev. Phil Stogner Mrs Sarah Johnson (Clerk)
Church Development	Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod, Convener Rev. Jeremy Ross Rev. Donald G. MacDonald Mr Rod Morrison Mrs Sarah Johnson (Clerk)
Church Equipping	Rev. David Macleod, Convener Rev. Thomas Davis Rev. Hamish Sneddon Miss Ali MacDonald Mrs Màiri MacPherson (Clerk)
Global Mission	Dr Andrew MacIver, Convener Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd Rev. Martin Paterson Mrs Janet Murchison (WfM Chair) Mrs Màiri MacPherson (Clerk)

6. Joint Board Meeting. Representatives of the Board joined the Forum Joint Board Meeting on Tuesday 23rd April 2019. Representatives of the Board joined the Forum Joint Board Meeting on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 via Zoom.

7. Prayer During the Pandemic. The Board encouraged a National Day of Prayer specific to the Covid-19 pandemic on 22nd March 2020. The Board also encouraged a National Day of Prayer specific to the Covid-19 pandemic on 25th October 2020 entitled “Covid 19: A Call to Prayer” as per the request of the 2020 October meeting of the General Assembly. The Board wishes to thank all those who participated in these days of prayer.

8. Sabbatical Requests. The Board received and approved sabbatical requests from: Rev. Paul Gibson, Rev. David Court, Rev. David MacPherson and Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod prior to the 2020 General Assembly. The Board received and approved a sabbatical request for Rev. Donald G. MacDonald prior to the 2021 General Assembly.

9. Webinars. The Board was involved in organising several online webinars held via Zoom video conferencing for Ministers across the denomination. A total of seven webinars were organised covering various topics related to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Some gave an opportunity to ask questions to the Chief Executive Officer and others had a more pastoral focus, for example, encouraging one another to find hope in hard times. The Board wishes to thank the Mission Director for his role in

organising the webinars, Rev. Donald G. Macdonald for hosting the webinars, and Rev. Thomas Davis for facilitating the webinars on Zoom.

10. Women for Mission. The Board are once again astonished by the fundraising achievements of the Women for Mission (WfM). The 2018-19 Project run by WfM was entitled *Community Connections* and £40,648 was raised for this Project. This Project raised funds for DARP in Central Asia, Bear Necessities in Bulgaria, OMF Basketball for Jesus in the Philippines, and the Heart 4 Home Fund. In 2018-19, WfM gave out three Support A Volunteer grants and two Heart 4 Home grants. The 2019-20 Project run by WfM was *Mobilising for Mission* raising funds for Operación San Andrés in Peru, World on our Doorstep in Govanhill, Donald and Rosangela Fraser at the WEC International College in Holland and the Free Church Youth Camps. Despite the difficulties of 2020 arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, WfM raised £30,457 for this project and we, as well as the recipients, were greatly encouraged and indebted to those who donated so generously. A further impact of the pandemic was that it was not possible to hold either our Annual Meeting in May or our biennial Ladies Conference in September. The 2020-21 project *Embracing the World with the Touch of the Gospel* will be seeking to raise funds for The Leprosy Mission Hospital in Purulia (India), Scripture Union Scotland, The Moldova Support Group and the WfM Disaster and Relief Fund. The WfM Disaster and Relief Fund has for many years been funded by our Favourite Recipes 1 and 2 book sales. Unfortunately, in September 2019 a serious fire at the printers where the books were being stored resulted in all of them being destroyed. Thankfully, the electronic versions were saved, and the Committee is now working towards reprinting the books. An effect of the global pandemic was that there were no applications for the *Support a Volunteer* or *Heart for Home* grants in 2020. The WfM Committee members for 2020-21 are as follows: Janet Murchison (Chair), Marion Macaulay (Vice-Chair), Cairine Davidson (Treasurer), Sarah Lytle (Secretary), Anne Fraser, Fiona Macaskill, Catherine Joan MacDonald, Mairi Macdonald, Donna MacIver, Sharon Macleod, Fiona Ross and Wilma Nicolson.

11. Mission Support Groups. The Board would like to thank the Mission Support Groups for their continued encouraging fundraising efforts for various mission partners.

12. Enspire. The 2020 Enspire Day Conference took place on Saturday 7th March at Greyfriars Free Church, Inverness. The theme for the day was “Sisterhood: Teachings from Titus”. The main speakers were Mrs Ann Allen and Mrs Katherine Davidson. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the 2021 Enspire Day Conference took place online via Zoom video conferencing on Saturday 6th March and was entitled “Virtually Enspired 2021”. Fifty-three delegates attended for a morning of worship, teaching, small group discussion, prayer and fellowship. Delegates were mainly from the Free Church. Other wives from different denominations also attended and greatly appreciated the event. There were delegates from every Presbytery area in Scotland and it was a great encouragement to also have the wives of some ministers in training attend. The event was organised by a team including Sheila Fraser, Mairi MacLeod, Sandra Munro, Alice Munro, Ruth Holden, Joan Sutherland, Mairi Eglinton, Alison MacKay and Ali MacDonald. The Committee was supported by Dave Eglinton who hosted the on-line event. The main speaker was Debbie Urquhart who spoke on “Steadfast in a Changing World” based on Philippians 4. They were delighted to welcome Mark Fleming who spoke on “Keeping the manse a mentally healthy place” and was then involved in a Question-and-Answer session. Worship was pre-recorded and two of the delegates shared their personal experiences of their involvement in ‘ministry on the move’. The Board would like to thank the Committee and all those involved in the event for their hard work in organising this event for ministers’ wives.

13. Mission to the World. The Board is thankful for its encouraging ongoing partnership links with Mission to the World (MtW). Between January and March 2020, it was agreed that Mr Keith Knowlton would serve in Buccleuch and Greyfriars Free Church from 20th July 2020 to 19th July 2023, and Rev. Dan Rose would serve in Dumfries Free Church in July 2020 as Sabbatical cover. A number of other placements were in the process of being discussed but all plans have been curtailed due to the pandemic.

14. Generation Podcast. The Board wishes to thank Rev. David Meredith and Mr Simon Kennedy for their diligent work in recording and producing the Generation podcast, which is continuing to grow in popularity. The podcast has also begun to be produced in video format. The Board thanks all the guests who have taken part in the podcast.

15. Communications. The Board wishes to thank Mr Simon Kennedy, Communications Officer, for his work in publicising the work of the Mission Board alongside Mrs Sarah Johnson and Mrs Mairi MacPherson, Mission Coordinators.

16. Sickness. The Board is aware of the increasing number of Ministers who were signed off work over the past year for health reasons. The Board is thankful for the recovery of some of these men and their ability to return to work. The Board is deeply conscious of the demands placed on Ministers and wish to commend our Ministers to the prayers of the Church.

(B) MINISTRY GENERAL

1. Sustentation Fund Schedules. The Board passed Sustentation Fund Schedules for the following congregations prior to the 2020 General Assembly: Kiltarn, Arran, Glenelg and Arnisdale, Lochalsh and Glenshiel, Dundee - St Peter's, Lennoxton, Back, Fortrose, Gardenstown, Dunblane, Golspie, Govan, Cornerstone, Abbeygreen and Bon Accord, Aberdeen. The Board passed Sustentation Fund Schedules for the following congregations prior to the 2021 General Assembly: Ayr and Kilwinning, Campbeltown (x2), St Columba's, Castletown and Community, Helmsdale and Kinbrace, Dingwall and Strathpeffer, and Burghead.

1.1. Campbeltown. An application was received seeking permission for the Campbeltown congregation to be granted to call a minister on a five-year reviewable appointment according to the provisions of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, anent The Sustentation Fund, paragraph 3.4. The Board approved the application from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll. The Board noted that the application requests a change from a Locally Subsidised Ministry to a five-year reviewable appointment. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted. The Petition appears in Appendix Three of the Report. The Board wishes to thank Rev. Rodger Crooks for his ministry in this congregation.

2. Admission of Congregation. The Board received one application for admission to the Free Church of Scotland.

2.1. Abbeygreen Lesmahagow. An application for admission of the congregation of Abbeygreen Lesmahagow was received from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll with all the requisite supporting documents. The Board recommended to the Commission of Assembly that the Petition's crave be granted. The Commission of Assembly granted this crave and Abbeygreen Lesmahagow was admitted into the Free Church of Scotland, effective from 31st March 2020.

3. Locally Subsidised Charges. There is one ongoing Locally Subsidised Charge under the Oversight of the Board prior to the 2021 General Assembly: South Uist and Benbecula.

3.1. South Uist and Benbecula. Act 19, Class 2, May 2018, details the Mission Board's financial commitment of £4000 per year to help cover ministry costs and expenses for the first three years of a settled ministry. As Rev. Thomas Penman was inducted into the South Uist and Benbecula congregation in October 2019 on a three-year terminable/renewable appointment, the Mission Board's financial commitment to this ministry began in October 2019 and was due to end in October 2022. The Board was in receipt of a request from the Western Isles Presbytery to extend the current appointment of Mr Penman by one year due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the work of revitalisation throughout 2020 and into 2021. The Board noted that the congregation's finances were in order. The Board approved a two-year extension of Mr Thomas Penman's current appointment, along with a further annual grant of £4,000 p.a. to be paid in October 2022 and October 2023. This was subject to an approved two-year extension of financial support by the Western Isles Presbytery. The Western Isles Presbytery approved a two-year extension of financial support to the congregation of South Uist and Benbecula, and the Board recommends that Mr Penman's appointment will now be reviewed in October 2024 rather than October 2022.

4. Part-time Ministerial Arrangements. There are two ongoing part-time ministry arrangements under the terms of Act 13, Class 2, 2014 anent Alternative Ministerial Arrangements under the oversight of the Board prior to the 2021 General Assembly: Helmsdale and Kinbrace, and Castletown and Community.

4.1. East Kilbride. An application was received seeking to extend the appointment of Rev. Iain Thomson at East Kilbride for two months on the same part-time arrangements with the congregation meeting 75% of the Ministry Levy. This application was approved on Monday 19th October 2020 and Mr Thomson's appointment lapsed on 31st December 2020. The Board extends its thanks to Mr Iain Thomson for his ministry in East Kilbride.

4.2. Part-time Ministerial Arrangements – Applications. The Board received the following applications for part-time ministerial arrangements:

4.2.1 Arran. An application was received from the congregation of Arran seeking permission to call a Minister on a part-time basis under the terms of Act 13, Class 4, 2014 anent Alternative Ministerial Arrangements with the congregation committed to paying 50% of the Ministry Levy. The Board approved the application from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll on 4th December 2019.

4.2.2 Helmsdale and Kinbrace. An application was received from the Northern Presbytery requesting that Rev. Roddy MacRae's appointment to the congregation of Helmsdale and Kinbrace be changed from the provisions of the Sustentation

Fund Act to a part-time ministry under the provisions and terms of Act 13, Class 4, 2014 with the congregation remitting 80% of the Ministry Levy. The Board approved the application from the Northern Presbytery on 8th September 2020.

4.2.3 Castletown and Community. An application was received from the Northern Presbytery seeking to renew the appointment of Rev. Howard Stone, Castletown and Community, and pay 80% of the ministry according to the terms of Act 13, Class 4, 2014 with the congregation committed to paying 80% of the Ministry Levy. The Board approved the application from the Northern Presbytery on 3rd December 2020.

5. Assistant Minister – Applications. The Board received two applications to renew Assistant Minister appointments and two applications seeking permission to call Assistant Ministers.

5.1. Tain and Fearn. An application was received seeking to renew the appointment of Rev. Andrew Macleod, Assistant Minister in the congregation of Tain and Fearn, for a second three-year term. The Board approved the application from the Northern Presbytery and noted that Mr Macleod's appointment is now due for review in November 2023.

5.2. Smithton. An application was received seeking to renew the appointment of Rev. Innes MacSween, Assistant Minister in the congregation of Smithton, for a second three-year term. The Board approved the application from the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross, and noted that Mr MacSween's appointment is now due for review in October 2023.

5.3. St Columba's. An application for the appointment of an Assistant Minister in the congregation of St Columba's was received from the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth with all the requisite supporting documents. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted according to Act 18, Class 2, 2013, anent Assistantships. The Petition appears in Appendix Four of this Report.

5.4. Stornoway. An application for the appointment of an Assistant Minister in the congregation of Stornoway was received from the Western Isles Presbytery with all the requisite supporting documents. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted according to Act 18, Class 2, 2013, anent Assistantships. The Petition appears in Appendix Five of this Report.

6. Youth and Secretarial Assistant – Application. An application was received seeking the renewal of the role of the Youth and Secretarial Assistant from the congregation of Stornoway according to the terms of Act 12, Class 2, 2008. The Board approved the application from the Western Isles Presbytery.

7. Extended Permissions due to Covid-19. The Board, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer and Finance Manager, took into account the heightened workload of local congregations and Presbyteries due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently sought to extend the following existing permissions to call a Minister by a range of periods dependant on the congregation's financial situation or status of the existing permission:

Presbytery	Congregation	Extension
Glasgow and Argyll	Partick	6 months
	Lochgilphead	6 months
	Tarbert	6 months
Inverness, Lochaber and Ross	Kilmallie	1 year
Northern	Bonar Bridge and Lairg	6 months
Skye and Wester Ross	Trotternish	19 months
Western Isles	Carloway	6 months
	Garrabost	18 months

(C) CHURCH PLANTING

1. Church Planting Director. The Board appointed Rev. Neil MacMillan to the role of Church Planting Director in a part-time capacity. The responsibilities of the Church Planting Director are set out as follows: recruit, assess and oversee training for Church Planters, review Church Planting plans for each location, formulate and implement a strategic Church Plan with a clear vision. This is in order to fulfil the Church's vision of planting 30 churches by the year 2030. The Board of Trustees set aside £10,000 to be paid to the congregation of Cornerstone in order to release Mr MacMillan from his role as minister for two days per week to dedicate his time to the role of Church Planting Director. Mr MacMillan began his role in November 2020 and the role is due for review in 2023. The Board is extremely grateful to Rev. Neil MacMillan for his hard work and the progress already made in the Church's vision of planting 30 churches by 2030. The Board commits the work of the Church

Planting Director to the prayers of the Church. The Church Planting Director's report can be found in Appendix Six of this report.

2. Church Plants. The following Church Plants are in progress:

Edinburgh and Perth	Cornerstone
	Esk Valley
	Haddington Community Church
	Charleston
Glasgow and Argyll	Govan, G51
	Christ Church Glasgow
Inverness, Lochaber and Ross	Merkinch

3. Church Plant Grants. Over 2020 and 2021, the Board has provided the following grant amounts to Church Plants:

Church Plant	Amount
Esk Valley	£2,500
Charleston	£10,000
Haddington Community Church	£10,000
Christ Church Glasgow	£15,000 (backdated to cover 2019)

4. Church Planting Sub-Committee. Since the appointment of the Church Planting Director the Church Planting Sub-Committee has begun to meet more frequently. Mr Phil Stogner (Glasgow City Free Church), Rev. Chris Davidson (Merkinch Free Church,) Rev. Athole Rennie, (Grace Church Leith), and Rev. Tom Muir (Esk Valley Church) serve on the Committee alongside Rev. Neil MacMillan and Mrs Sarah Johnson. The Committee helps to guide the church planting planning process. Mr Phil Stogner (Glasgow) and Rev. Chris Davidson (Inverness) also serve the committee by acting as church planting catalysts for the west of Scotland and the Highlands respectively.

5. Thirty by Thirty. The vision to plant 30 new churches by 2030 as agreed by the General Assembly in 2017 is progressing. Rev. Neil MacMillan and Mrs Sarah Johnson are working on a detailed plan for this project in order that there is a pipeline of Church Planters in place as needed together with the assessments, training, coaching and funding necessary for their successful deployment. Recruitment and fundraising will be a priority as 37 trained Church Planters and £6,000,000 will be needed. Since 2017, four Church Plants have been started: Haddington Community Church, Christ Church Glasgow, Charleston and Merkinch. It is hoped that there will be at least an additional three Church Plants approved by the Mission Board in 2021: Helensburgh from Glasgow City Free Church led by Rev. Duncan Murchison, Winchburgh from St Columba's Free Church, led by Mr Robin Silson, and Galashiels led by Mr Craig Anderson. In addition, work has begun on the recruitment of church planters for Wick, Montrose and Chapelhall.

6. Cornerstone. An application for Cornerstone, a Church Plant from St Columba's Free Church, to become a fully sanctioned charge was received from the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth with all the requisite supporting documents. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted. The Petition appears in Appendix Seven of the Report. The Board is delighted with the growth and development of Cornerstone and rejoice with the congregation and the Presbytery over this good news.

7. Govan G51. The Board noted the remit from the 2019 General Assembly that, according to Act 24, Class 2, May 2019, the term of Rev. Norman Mackay's appointment at Govan G51 had been extended for a final year by the 2019 General Assembly. The Board was in receipt of reports from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll reviewing the work of Govan G51. The 2020 General Assembly extended all ministerial appointments due to be reviewed 2020 for one more year because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and to put the review back to the 2021 General Assembly. The Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll carried out a review of the ministry in Govan G51 and is in the process of securing a successor for Rev. Norman Mackay. Given that Mr Mackay is nearing retirement age, the need for a successor to the present Minister remains an urgent priority. It is the intention of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll, subject to the approval of the Board and the General Assembly, to request that Govan G51 become a fully sanctioned congregation. The Board requests that the General Assembly empower the Commission of Assembly to deal with such an application in October 2021.

8. Christ Church, Glasgow. The Board is delighted to report that Christ Church Glasgow had its official launch service on Sunday 22nd September 2019 and are thankful for the growth of the congregation from 40 at launch to about 70.

9. Church Plants in Areas of Social Deprivation. The Board noted the added financial burden of Church Plants situated in areas of social deprivation and thus has offered one grant payment of £5000 for the year 2021, in addition to the £5000 grant already available to the following Church Plants: Charleston, Merkinch and Govan G51.

10. Generation Vision Weekend. The Generation Vision Weekend took place from 24th-26th October 2019 at St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh. The main speaker for the weekend was Dr Scotty Smith, the founding pastor of Christ Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee, and the conference offered attendees the opportunity to attend seminars addressing the four streams of Generation Church Development, Church Equipping, Church Planting and Global Mission. The Board wishes to thank Dr Scotty Smith, Rev. Peter Turnbull, Rev. Martin Paterson, Rev. Andrew Robertson, Rev. Alastair Sewell, Rev. Adam McNinch and Mr Mark Campbell for leading the talks and seminars. The Board would also like to thank Rev. Derek and Mrs Catriona Lamont and those from the congregations of St Columba's and Buccleuch who helped with AV, refreshments, and stewarding. The Board's plans to hold a Vision Weekend in Autumn 2020 were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board is planning to hold a Vision Weekend, with a particular emphasis on Church Planting, in November 2021.

11. UK Partnership. The US contingent of the UK Partnership charity toured the UK from 21st to 25th October 2019. They visited Edinburgh from 24th to 25th October, where they heard from various Church Planters seeking to network and encourage financial and prayerful support. This visit resulted in funding for the Free Church of Scotland and also inspired some of our US partners to apply to work in ministry in Scotland. The Free Church of Scotland was invited by UK Partnership to attend the UK Partnership event in the US in 2020. This event was moved onto Zoom video conferencing due to lockdown restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This event resulted in funding for a Free Church of Scotland Church Plant. A UK Partnership event in Edinburgh is being planned for November 2021 involving a visit from the US contingent once again. This will take place in conjunction with the Generation Vision Weekend. Since 2013 the UK Partnership has raised \$537,400 for Free Church, Church Plants and over \$2,000,000 for church planting in the UK overall. This is an outstanding level of support and the Mission Board expresses its deep gratitude to God for the outstanding leadership that Rev. Ed Norton of Independent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN, has given to the UK Partnership.

12. Assessment. Annual Assessment takes place for those who want to be recognised as Church Planters. Assessments are a two-step process with an initial pre-assessment and a further full assessment if the pre-assessment outcome was positive and the candidate wishes to proceed with Church Planting. The assessment provides an in-depth assessment process that helps candidates uncover their strengths and weaknesses, which will better prepare them as they move forward. Within the last two years, six candidates have completed the pre-assessment, two have completed the full assessment and it is anticipated that at least three candidates will complete the full assessment on 3rd – 4th September 2021. The Board wishes to thank those on the assessment panel for their time and commitment to this area of the work.

13. Training. Monthly training days for Church Planters took place in ETS's Centre for Mission prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the learning occurred in a peer-to-peer context – with the opportunity to learn from other planters, pray with each other and be part of a supportive church planting community. The Church Planters followed a curriculum that covers all the building blocks necessary to plant a successful church whilst maintaining a focus on the gospel, the community, and contextualisation. From September 2021, the format train is expected to change. Rev. Tom Muir will lead an 'Incubator' for those in their first two years of church planting. Alongside this, there will be monthly Church Planter cohorts for Church Planters further along the planting process which will provide opportunity for peer-to-peer learning, support, and prayer. The Board wish to thank Rev. Tom Muir for his willingness to lead the Incubator training. The Board encourages all Church Planters connected to the Free Church of Scotland to engage in this training.

14. Coaching. A Coach was appointed to each of the Church Planters who attended the Church Planting training prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Coaches continue to work with Planters to set and meet personal, relational, and missional goals that enable Church Planters to plant and grow a healthy congregation. The Board wishes to thank those who are involved in the coaching of Church Planters and appreciate the time given to this, particularly during the difficult times of the pandemic.

15. Coaching Training. Rev. Derek Lamont, Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod, Rev. Jeremy Ross, Rev. Andrew Longwe and Rev. David Meredith have now completed a Gospel Coach Training course which was provided by Mr Scott Thomas and Mr Tom Wood and involved attending training days in Manchester (in 2019) and completing a certain amount of coaching hours. This training was accredited and each of these men have now become Gospel Coach Practitioners. The Board wishes to congratulate the Gospel Coaches on this achievement. It is hoped that this training will be of benefit to those in varying ministry

situations, including Church Planters and those on the Church Development Track. The Board wishes to record its thanks to the UK Partnership who have met 50% of the cost of this course for delegates to attend.

16. European Hub Cities Leader Learning Cohort. Rev. Neil MacMillan, Rev. Matthew Round of Hope City Church Edinburgh (FIEC), Rev. Alan McWilliam (Church of Scotland), and Mrs Sarah Johnson have joined a City-to-City Europe (CTCE) two-year training programme with leaders from 9 European cities seeking to increase the impact of the gospel in their cities, working through CTCE's Hub City Strategy for church planting movements. Over the last 10 years, CTCE has served leaders in 60 cities, formed 20 networks at city and regional levels, trained leaders and helped start 300 churches. Rev. Stephan Pues, Director of City-to-City Europe gave a presentation to the Mission Board in February and it is anticipated that the Board may be able to partner with City-to-City Europe to support Church Planting in the region.

17. Church Buildings and Manses. The Board of Trustees is currently looking at ways in which the purchase of church buildings and manses for new congregations can be funded. This is a significant matter to find a solution. The Board thank the Board of Trustees for their work on this matter. The Board wish to congratulate Grace Church Leith on its recent purchase of an exceptional building.

(D) CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

1. Consultation with Presbyteries. The Board remitted the remit of Consultation with Presbyteries to its Church Development Sub-Committee. The Board carried out a consultation with the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross as required by Act 7, Class 2, May 2019. The Church Development Sub-Committee is drawing up a timetable for these consultations with Presbyteries and the timetable will be circulated to Presbyteries by June 2021 at the latest.

2. Development Track. The Board ran the Church Development Track for a second term, welcoming a new cohort onto their first year of the Track. Nine churches were successful in their application to be on Year One of the track in 2019. They are listed below:

Glasgow and Argyll	Dunblane
	Ayr & Kilwinning
Inverness, Lochaber and Ross	Kiltarlity
	Nairn
	Maryburgh
Northern	Thurso & North Coast
	Helmsdale
Skye and Wester Ross	Lochbroom & Coigach
Western Isles	North Harris

Nine churches continued on to Year Two of the Track. They are listed below:

Edinburgh and Perth	Kirkcaldy
Glasgow and Argyll	Bishopbriggs
	Dumbarton
	Campbeltown
Inverness, Lochaber and Ross	Muir of Ord
Northern	Rosskeen
Skye and Wester Ross	Plockton and Kyle
	Gairloch
Western Isles	North Uist, Grimsay and Berneray

The Board is delighted by the number of congregations involved in the track and hope that it is proving to be helpful to Ministers, leaders and congregations. Applications are open for the new term of the Church Development Track. The Board encourages congregations and Presbyteries to think about who would benefit from being involved in this track for 2020/2021.

2.1 Training. Monthly training days take place alternatively between Edinburgh and Inverness. The first training took the form of an overnight stay in SU's Gowanbank and combined the two-year groups on the track. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the

final two training days planned 2020 for March and April were cancelled. While restrictions remain in place the group have utilised online platforms to meet. The Board would like to thank all those who came to speak and lead sessions during the Development Track training days.

2.2 Coaching. A gospel coach will be offered to each of the Ministers involved in this track to give personal support, direction, and encouragement as they seek to implement some of the lessons learnt on the track.

3. Evangelism. The Board desires to see local congregations and Church members actively involved in evangelism. In 2019, the Board developed two initiatives with an evangelistic focus, *Generation19* and *Gossiping the Gospel*. In 2020, the Board developed a follow-up initiative entitled *Generation-Go*.

3.1 Generation 19. Generation 19 took place from 1st to 10th September 2019 and was an extremely encouraging initiative. The Board would like to thank all the local congregations who organised events for Generation 19 which suited their local contexts, from international meals to DVD evenings. The Board is delighted to report of people coming to faith through these events and commits these people to the prayers of the Church.

3.2 Generation-Go. The Board developed an initiative to follow up Generation 19 entitled *Generation-Go*, scheduled for 29th August – 7th September 2020. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic the initiative was cancelled. Since then, the Board have become aware of a new UK and Ireland initiative called ‘A Passion for Life’. The Board commends the national initiative, A Passion for Life (www.apassionforlife.org.uk). This aims to facilitate a range of evangelistic events during Easter 2022 but also provides training for ongoing personal evangelism. The slogan is: *A month of mission, a lifetime of evangelism*.

3.3 Gossiping the Gospel. The four-video series designed to equip churches in sharing the Gospel with their neighbours was due to be completed by May 2020. However, this has been delayed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. A revised deadline has not been arranged but the Board hope to provide this resource to congregations at some point within the coming year. The Board will also write a workbook to accompany this resource. The Board wishes to thank all those involved in filming these videos and looks forward to their release.

4. Annual Health Check / Congregational Survey. The Board carried out the first Annual Health Check in 2019 and thank congregations for submitting their responses. The responses were reviewed by the Church Development Sub-Committee and action points drawn up accordingly. Due to feedback regarding the format of the Annual Health Check and the number of forms from the Central Office requiring responses from congregations, the Annual Health Check was combined with the Statistical Survey to make the Congregational Survey.

The online platform *JotForm* has been used to host the Congregational Survey – an online platform has been used to allow for a format where responses can be stored and accessed easily. Initial feedback would suggest that some would be more comfortable to have a PDF version of the Congregational Survey to look through while they are preparing to discuss the questions, the Board thank people for their feedback and will provide a PDF version in the future.

The Congregational Survey was issued to Session Clerks on 3rd February 2021 with a return date of Friday 2nd April 2021. In subsequent years, the timeline will be as follows:

1. Mid-October: Congregational Survey sent to Session Clerks.
2. November: Attendance data collected over four Sundays and averaged.
3. October, November, December, and January Ministers’ Monthly Memos will include information and reminders about the survey.
4. 31st January: Congregational Survey to be submitted.

The Board hope to share the findings of the Congregational Survey with Congregations by June 2021. The Board appreciate the time that local congregations have given to discussing and completing the survey for this year.

5. Rural Ministry.

5.1 2019 General Assembly. The 2019 General Assembly thanked the Mission Board for introducing the Development Track to support rural congregations and ministers serving in rural and urban settings. They instructed the Board to bring forward strategy proposals to the 2020 General Assembly demonstrating how the Church will secure the reliable provision of ministry personnel for the Church's rural congregations. They also instructed the Board to consult with Presbyteries and with the Board of Ministry before finalising its proposals.

5.2 Rural Ministry Remit Response. Rural Ministry is a key component of the life of the Free Church. It was recognised as such in the 2019 General Assembly when this remit was given to the Board. The Board is delighted to support and promote the work of Rural Ministry, particularly through the Development Track, the ETS World Mission Day on Rural Ministry and plans to host a Rural Ministry conference – more details on these can be found within the report. The Board does feel that there are limits to its ability to secure ministry in rural areas relating particularly to financial resources and the supply of ministers. The Board does not have access to the financial provisions that would be needed to secure the reliable provision of ministry personnel. Most rural congregations are struggling financially due largely to population decline. To secure 'reliable provision' would involve additional funding which local congregations do not have. It was felt that either the Trustees or wealthy benefactors would need to help support this endeavour. Secondly, the supply of Ministers will work best if it is through a denominational recruitment approach recruiting for all areas of ministry. The Board therefore believe that a reworded remit that reflects the Mission Board's commitment to ongoing support and promotion of Rural Ministry is sensible.

5.3 Rural Ministry Remit Request. The Board continues to offer the Development Track, the World Mission Day was held by the ETS Centre for Mission in ETS on 12th February 2020, and there are plans to hold a Rural Ministry Conference in 2021. However, given the large scale and scope of this remit, which was intended to be fulfilled in a year, the Board recommends that the 2021 General Assembly revises the remit and instead to instruct the Mission Board to keep rural ministry as one of their ongoing priorities and to report back each year on the progress made in this area.

5.4 ETS Mission Day. The Board was encouraged by the World Mission Day held by the ETS Centre for Mission in ETS on 12th February 2020 which addressed the topic of rural ministry. The Conference featured several experienced and passionate advocates of rural ministry shared their learning on the unique benefits of Rural Ministry and actively engaged the current cohort of ETS students with this topic. The Board hope that similar this can become an annual event.

5.5 In a Big Country. The Board had organised a Church-wide Conference addressing the topic of rural ministry which was due to take place on Saturday 30th May 2020 in Dingwall Free Church. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board took the decision to postpone this Conference until the end of 2020. Due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic, the Board cancelled the event planned for 2020 and is planning to reschedule the event in Autumn 2021. The Board wishes to thank all those who had agreed to take part in this event and commits the Conference to the prayers of the Church.

(E) CHURCH EQUIPPING

1. Free Church Youth Camps (FCYC).

1.1. 2019 Update. In 2019, eleven Free Church Youth Camps were held in four locations from 4th July to 3rd August, with 98 leaders and 29 cooks hosting 308 campers. Two camps – Harris Shinty (for P6 to S2) and B.A.S.E. Camp (for 18–25-year-olds) – were cancelled due to a lack of campers signing up. Five camps ran with full capacity: Kincaig Kids 1 and 2, Oswestry Juniors 2, Oswestry Seniors and Renfrew Juniors. Three camps ran to almost full capacity: Kincaig Kids, Renfrew Kids and Renfrew Seniors. Three camps ran with slightly lower numbers: Oswestry Juniors 1, Junior Football and Senior Football.

1.2. FCYC 2020 Cancellation. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Board, in discussion with the Camps Coordinator and the Camps Supervisor, made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Free Church Youth Camps programme. This is particularly disappointing as FCYC was due to celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2020 through a celebration at the Assembly and a special camp with 60 campers called 'Oswestry 60'. However, the health and safety of campers, leader and cooks took priority in these matters. The Board commits all those who were meant to be involved in FCYC 60 to the prayers of the Church.

1.3. FCYC 2021 Cancellation and Online Events. Due to the tightening of COVID-19 restrictions, once again, the Board, in discussion with the Camps Coordinator, Camps Supervisor, Government officials and other partners, made the decision in January 2021 to cancel the 2021 Free Church Youth Camps programme. The Camps Coordinator and Camps Supervisor are

now in the process of planning an online event on Zoom entitled “FCYC Connect”. This event entails sessions tailored to the year groups normally covered by the Free Church Youth Camps programme, and it will take place from Monday 12th July 2021 to Friday 16th July 2021 with sessions each evening. The sessions will involve Bible teaching, group discussions, challenges and games. The Board thanks the Camps Coordinator, the Camps Supervisor, and all those who are involved in the planning and hosting of this online event. The Board commits “FCYC Connect” to the prayers of the Church.

1.4. Camps Administrator. The job title of ‘Camps Administrator’ was changed to ‘Camps Coordinator’. The Board wishes to thank Miss Kirsten Macdonald for her ongoing excellent work as Camps Coordinator, despite the many difficulties arising from the global pandemic.

1.5. FCYC Supervisor. Mr Donald A. Macleod, Stornoway, has completed his second year as Camps Supervisor. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, he did an outstanding job overseeing the delivery of the excellent 2019 Camps. Following this, he managed the cancellations resulting from the pandemic professionally and admirably. The Board thanks him for this and for his crucial contribution to the Safeguarding training across the Free Church of Scotland.

1.6. FCYC Oversight. The Church Equipping Sub-Committee has taken an active role in the oversight of Free Church Youth Camps as it comes under this Sub-Committee’s remit. Miss Macdonald and Mr Macleod participate in meetings and report to the Sub-Committee regularly.

1.7. FCYC Governance. The Principal Clerk, in conjunction with Miss Macdonald and Mr Macleod, created a new governance document addressing Free Church Youth Camps. The Board thanks them for their diligence in creating this document and commend it to the Assembly. The revised and updated arrangements appear in Appendix Eight of this report.

2. Big Free Rally.

2.1. Big Free Rally 2019. On Saturday 28th September 2019 around 300 young people attended the Big Free Rally in Smithton Free Church, Inverness. Rev. Robin Gray was the main speaker, and his two talks were entitled “Looking After God’s Creation” and “I Am A New Creation”. The day received hugely positive feedback from all those who attended, and the Board wishes to thank all those involved in organising and running this event.

2.2. Big Free Rally 2020. The Big Free Rally 2020 was due to take place on Saturday 26th September 2020 in Smithton Free Church, Inverness; this was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An online event was created in its place – “Big Free Rally Online” – which featured pre-recorded videos released every half hour on the FCYC YouTube channel on Saturday 26th September 2020 from 11.00am to 4.00pm. The videos included a celebration of the 60th anniversary of Free Church Youth Camps and then focused on answering “Big Questions”, such as “Does God Exist?”. There were also videos from leaders and cooks. The Board wishes to thank both the Big Free Rally organising group for all their hard work in coordinating this online event, and all those who contributed to the Big Free Rally Online through providing videos. The Big Free Rally 2021 is currently being planned for September 2021; this will be done in compliance with any lockdown restrictions which are in place.

3. Youth Conference.

3.1. Youth Conference 2020. The Youth Conference 2020 began on Friday 12th March and was due to run until Sunday 14th March, with Rev. Robin Sydserff speaking on “2 Timothy 2: Fit for Purpose”. However, due to unforeseen circumstances regarding COVID-19, all delegates were sent home on the Saturday morning of the Conference. The Board wishes to thank the Youth Conference Committee for their godly wisdom and efficiency in making this decision, in particular Miss Anna MacRae, the Convener of the Committee. The Committee members were Calum MacAulay (Vice-Convener), Struan MacAra (Seminars), Matthew Macleod (Finance), Megan Davies (Communications) and Kirsty Macleod (Bookings). They had worked diligently to organise this Conference and the Board thanks them for all their work.

3.2. Youth Conference 2021. For 2021, the Youth Conference took place online via Zoom video conferencing on Saturday 20th March 2021. Rev. Robin Sydserff was invited to return as the main speaker, and he was a great encouragement to all those who attended. The Conference also included singing and discussion groups. The Board wishes to thank the members of the Youth Conference 2021 Committee for their work: Calum MacAulay (Convener), Sheona Forbes (Vice-Convener), Matthew Macleod (Finance), Kirsty Macleod (Bookings) and William MacSween (Music).

4. Sunday Schools. The Board wishes to thank all Sunday School teachers and superintendents for their generous serving with their time and talents. Recognising that congregations have different class sizes, age ranges, leader availability, and facilities, the Board continues to recommend these Sunday School materials: Free Church worksheets, Mustard Seed, The Gospel Project, and Go Teach. Each resource is accompanied by explanatory notes and memory work programme except the Free Church worksheets. The Board is in the process of appointing someone to develop and manage the memory work programme to accompany the Free Church Worksheets. The Board is in the process of encouraging the sharing of resources which have been developed locally in congregations. The Board would like to commend the hard work carried out by members in local congregations who created online resources for children in their congregations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Leadership BootCamp.

1.1. Leadership BootCamp 2019. Leadership Bootcamp took place from Monday 24th to 28th June 2019 in Faskally House, Pitlochry. Twenty-five young people attended Bootcamp and spent time learning and growing, with seminars led by Rev. Dr David Kirk, Mrs Louise MacMillan, Rev. Neil MacMillan, Mrs Ishbel Groom, Mr Rod Morrison, Rev. Andrew Robertson, Rev. Derek Lamont and Rev. Tom Muir. The Board thanks all those who taught throughout the week and led the year groups. The Board also thanks Ishbel and John Groom for cooking during the week. The Board commends this programme to the Church and ask that everyone in a place of leadership within the Church takes time to consider recommendations for future years.

1.2. Leadership BootCamp 2020. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Leadership Bootcamp was cancelled for June 2020 and a virtual session was organised in its place via Zoom on Tuesday 23rd June 2020. Rev. Chris Davidson spoke at this session and there were breakout discussion groups for each year group. Thirty-seven campers attended in total. Leadership Bootcamp will once again be carried out online in June 2021 due to the ongoing lockdown restrictions. The Board wishes to thank all those involved in the organisation of Leadership Bootcamp and commits it to the prayers of the Church.

6. National Day of Prayer. The 2019 National Day of Prayer took place on Wednesday 27th November 2019. The Board wishes to thank those who participated in the Day privately and by attending local events. The National Day of Prayer has been passed to the Church Equipping Sub-Committee for oversight. The Church came together for its next National Day of Prayer on Wednesday 25th November 2020. This National Day of Prayer focussed particularly on praying for young people within the Church and for the nation of Scotland. Due to lockdown restrictions, local congregations were unable to meet in person and organised online events for this day. The Board would like to thank those who engaged with this day and the resources provided by the Board. The Church Equipping Sub-Committee continues to plan for the 2021 National Day of Prayer in November.

7. New Testament in a Year. In 2019, the Board distributed a plan for reading the New Testament. This initiative was met with positive feedback and allowed people in the church to spend time reading the Bible and discussing it in a structured way. The Board thanks all those who took part in this initiative.

8. Praying For One Another. In 2019, the Board launched the Praying for One Another initiative, which encouraged the wider denomination to pray for specific congregations by providing prayer points from every Free Church congregation throughout the year. The Board wishes to thank the Church for its support of this initiative and the continuous prayers for congregations across the denomination. Praying for One Another took place in 2020 and is taking place once again in 2021. The Board encourages congregations to continue to use this resource and to also submit prayer points for their congregation in a timely manner.

9. Walking with Me Devotionals. The Board is delighted to report the success of the series of online daily devotionals written by Rev. Billy Graham, an Elder at St Columba's Free Church Edinburgh. Mr Graham wrote a year's worth of daily devotionals, each of which contains a Bible verse, a reflection on the verse and then a prayer, and originally intended these to be used by his family, particularly his grandchildren. The Board wishes to sincerely thank Mr Graham for allowing the Board to publicise these devotionals online, through daily emails and audio recordings. This initiative was intended to be an example of godly wisdom being passed on from one generation to another and the Board is thankful for the positive response which it has received. The Board wishes to thank Mr Dean Montgomery for designing the website for Walk with Me and Rev. Jon Watson for organising the audio recordings which are available for every devotional. The Board would also like to thank the anonymous donor who donated money towards the project in order to continue the daily emails. Walk with Me was initially released in January 2020 and is now continuing in 2021.

10. Resources Pack. The Board is encouraged to report the work of the Church Equipping Sub-Committee and the ETS Centre for Mission in compiling resource packs which are intended to help equip various groups in the church. These packs all have the same structure, which is as follows:

- Introduction
- First principles to always remember
- Details and topics to think about
- Resources to make use of
- Outcomes to aim for
- Next steps to take
- Contact information for more help

The Board has completed two resource packs: *Partnering with Parents* and *1-2-1 Discipleship*. These are due to be published following the Assembly in May.

11. Upper-Secondary Event. Prior to the 2020 Youth Conference, the Board approved the decision to raise the lower age limit for Youth Conference delegates from sixteen to eighteen in accordance with the Free Church of Scotland's Safeguarding Policy. The Board is currently in the process of planning an event for those in the year groups S4 to S6.

12. Online Assemblies. The Board has been involved in coordinating the provision of online assembly resources which can be used by schools across Scotland in conjunction with a Government group involved in digital learning. The Board wishes to thank those who provided advice and videos for this project.

13. Christian Education. The Board notes the remit from the 2019 General Assembly regarding Christian Education. Due to the wide-ranging implications of the remit to consider Christians Education, a working group external to the Board was set up by Mr James M. Fraser, former Chairman of the Board of Trustees, to consider the topic in partnership with the Board of Trustees and various education professionals.

(F) GLOBAL MISSION

1. Global Mission Annual Grant Support. The Board agreed to support the following missions in 2020/2021 with an annual grant.

Person / Project	Support Amount	
	2020	2021
Nepal: Rev. Suraj Kasula	£3500.00	£3500.00
Central Asia (until 30 th June 2020)	£15,000.00	
India: Presbyterian Free Church of Central India	£4,000.00	£4,000.00
India: Kahani Church Plant	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
India: Derhadum	£400.00	£400.00
India: Lakhnadon and Chhapara Schools	£1700.00	
International Mission to Jewish People (Formerly Christian Witness to Israel)	£7,500.00	£7,500.00
Serbia	£10,000.00	
Poland: Christ the Saviour Church	£7,800.00	£7,800.00
South Africa: Dumisani Theological Institute	£13,000.00	
South Africa: Mr Wilbert Chipenyu	£6000.00	£6000.00
Mauritius: Rev. Benjamin van Rensburg	£4800.00	£4800.00
Central Asia (new ministry)		£15,000.00
Vietnam: Rev. Martin Paterson		£15,000.00
Asian Outreach Glasgow	Salary, housing, expenses	Salary, housing, expenses
Turkey	Salary, housing, expenses	Salary, housing, expenses

2. **Global Mission Fully Funded Support.** The Board agreed to support the following missions in 2020/2021 with fully funded packages.

Person / Project	Support Amount	
	2020	2021
Asian Outreach Glasgow	Salary, housing, expenses	Salary, housing, expenses (See Section G.20)
Turkey	Salary, housing, expenses	Salary, housing, expenses

3. **Italy.** Rev. Gavino Fioretti returned to Scotland from Italy at the end of October 2019, finishing his role in Italy. The Board is thankful to Mr Fioretti and his family for their ministry in Italy and commends them to the prayers of the Church as they minister in the Kiltlearn congregation.

4. **Central Asia.** Rev. Seoras and Mrs Sarah MacGillivray returned to Scotland from Central Asia at the end of 2019. They originally intended to return during summer, however, they remained in order to close the ministry and finish well. Grant funding for this ministry finished in June 2020. The Board is thankful to OM for their close partnership in making this decision and their practical help while Mr and Mrs MacGillivray were making plans to return to Scotland. Rev. Seoras and Sarah MacGillivray have now made plans to serve the Central Asia diaspora from a base in Europe. These plans have been hindered by the ongoing travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but ought to come to fruition in 2021/2022. The Board has dedicated financial support to Mr and Mrs MacGillivray for this exciting new ministry. The Board thanks Mr and Mrs MacGillivray for their ministry in Central Asia and commends them to the prayers of the Church as they plan for this new ministry.

5. India.

5.1. **Presbyterian Free Church of Central India Vision Trip.** The Board continues to be in partnership with the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India and were invited to partake in a trip to India in November 2020 to visit those involved in this ministry in India. The Board thanks Rev. Samit Mishra for his willingness to facilitate this trip. This trip was intended to take the form of a vision trip and was intended to connect with the work already happening and witnessing possible future work. The Board planned to send two representatives, Rev. David Meredith and Rev. Iain MacAskill, and the Board also invited two representatives from the Women for Mission on this trip. This trip was subsequently cancelled due to the pandemic travel restrictions.

5.2. **Appeal for India.** Following requests for financial support due to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 outbreak in Central India, the Board created a one-off appeal, which provided the opportunity for individuals and congregations to donate to the crisis relief efforts being carried out by the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India and their partners, Lakhnadon and Chhapara Schools and numerous Church Plants. The Appeal for India was open for donations between Monday 4th May 2020 and Saturday 30th May 2020. The Mission Board committed to match all donations up to £5000. The Board was astonished by the positive response this appeal gained from the denomination and is delighted to report that the following amounts were raised for Appeal for India.

Incoming Donation Total	£51,172.63
Mission Board Donation	£5,000.00
Gift Aid Total	£6,168.65
Total Outgoing	£62,341.28

The Board wishes to deeply thank all those who donated to the Appeal for India for their astounding generosity to support this crisis relief effort for our partners in Central India. The Board also thanks Rev. Samit Mishra for his close collaboration in this appeal and for his numerous updates regarding the spending of the donations.

5.3. **Freedom of Religion in Madhya Pradesh.** The Board notes the continuous negative impact of recent legislation passed in the Madhya Pradesh region of Central India, where many mission partners are located. The Freedom of Religion Ordinances

include the criminalisation conversion to Christianity and the halting of foreign financial aid. The Board is in the process of writing to local MPs regarding this matter in order to raise awareness of these issues.

6. Krakow. The Board continues to partner with the work of Christ the Saviour Church, a Church Plant in Krakow led by Mr Aleksander 'Saško' Nezamutdinov and is encouraged to report that they have purchased a new building in the city centre which is much more suitable to the ministry. The Board commends this Church Plant to the prayers of the Church.

7. South Africa.

7.1. Dr Jack and Nancy Whytock. Dr Whytock finished his time as Principal in Dumisani Theological Institute and Dr and Mrs Whytock completed their final term of teaching in Spring 2020. The Board wishes to thank them for their ministry in South Africa and their excellent work in transferring leadership of the Institute to indigenous leadership.

7.2. Dumisani Theological Institute. The Board reports that the Board of Governors of Dumisani Theological Institute were advised to update the partnership constitution to remove overseas representatives from the Board of Governors of the Institute and create a new category called Partners. The Board wrote to the Board of Governors of Dumisani Theological Institute to officially withdraw from the Board as a Governor, effective from 31st December 2020. The Board of Governors accepted this withdrawal. The Mission Board is hugely encouraged by this development and is enthusiastic about partnering with Dumisani Theological Institute.

7.3. Mr Wilbert Chipenyu. The Board continues to partner with the principal of Dumisani Theological Institute, Mr Wilbert Chipenyu, to whom the Board gives grant funding. The Board commends Mr Chipenyu and his family to the prayers of the Church.

7.4. Mrs Elizabeth Graham. The Board notes with sadness the passing of Mrs Elizabeth Graham on Saturday 27th February 2021. Mrs Graham served in South Africa for many years alongside her husband, Rev. Billy Graham, serving in the Free Church of South Africa and aiding in the founding of Dumisani Theological Institute. The Board thanks the Lord for her years of dedicated service to the Mission Board and to the Church in South Africa and commits her family to the continued prayers of the Church.

8. South America

8.1. Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Peru. The Board notes the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Peru by Rev. John Calvin Mackay, Free Church of Scotland minister, in 1921. A celebration of this event was previously planned to take place in Peru in 2021. However, this has been cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Board reports that plans are in place to recognise this significant anniversary in June 2021.

9. International Mission to Jewish People. The Board continues to partner with International Mission to Jewish People (formerly Christian Witness to Israel) in their work. A tour of the Scottish churches was planned by CWI for Spring 2020, but this has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. OM. The Board's relationship with Operation Mobilisation (OM) has steadily developed over the past year. The Board gives thanks for the sincere efforts made by Mrs Sharon Rose to visit, speak and build relationships with many Free Church congregations and events such as the Youth Conference. The Board reports that Mrs Rose has stepped down from her role with OM in Scotland and Mr Phillip Rose is now the Board's primary contact for OM.

10.1. Logos Hope Visit Cancellation. The Board was excited to announce the planned visit of the Logos Hope ship to Edinburgh in November 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a planned leader's lunch was cancelled in mid-March and subsequently the visit of the ship was cancelled for 2020.

11. EPCI. The Board receives a significant annual donation towards the work of overseas mission from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland (EPCI). The Board wishes to record its thanks to the EPCI for their ongoing partnership in mission.

12. OMF. The Board has continued to develop a partnership with Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), with whom some of our mission partners, e.g., Rev. Martin and Jennifer Paterson (Scotland Representatives) and Miss Muriel Macleod (Cambodia). The Board is delighted to announce that a partnership document has been drawn up between the Free Church of Scotland and OMF in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement. The Board approved the Memorandum of Agreement between

OMF and the Free Church of Scotland prepared by the Global Mission Sub-Committee and they commend it to the Assembly. The Memorandum can be found in Appendix Nine of the report.

13. Rev. Martin and Mrs Jennifer Paterson. The Board is encouraged to report that Rev. Martin and Mrs Jennifer Paterson and their children, are partnering with OMF and are planning to work with a local Bible college in Vietnam. They are members of the Cumbernauld congregation, who is partnering with them in this endeavour. The Board wishes to thank Rev. Paterson for his close partnership with the work of the Board, particularly his dedicated work with the Global Mission Sub-Committee. The Board commends the family to the prayers of the Church.

14. Rev. Benjamin van Rensburg. The Board continues to partner with Rev. Benjamin and Mrs Elaine van Rensburg as they work in Mauritius with the Mauritian Bible Training Institute. The Board is currently giving grant funding to this ministry and commends it to the prayers of the Church.

15. Global Connections. The Board is pleased to report that a partnership is developing between the Free Church of Scotland and the organisation Global Connections, with whom ETS is already a partner.

15.1. GoFest. The Church was invited to attend the GoFest conference run by Global Connections, which was due to take place on Saturday 16th May 2020 in Tilsley College, Motherwell. GoFest was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board was thankful for the opportunity to connect with partners in mission through this event and commits this growing partnership and the work of Global Connections to the prayers of the Church.

16. Lausanne Europe. Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, was invited to attend the Lausanne Europe Conference in Poland in October 2020. As part of this invitation, Lausanne expressed a desire to expand and continue the Lausanne conversation to the wider church through forming an impact group. Mr Meredith is in the process of forming such a group. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the physical Conference was cancelled, however there is an ongoing development of virtual groups across Europe.

17. Global Mission Audit. The 2019 General Assembly requested that a Global Mission audit be carried out by the Board. This audit was compiled and distributed among congregations. Due to a lack of responses to the audit before the original deadline in mid-December, the deadline was subsequently extended to the end of February to allow for more responses to be submitted. The following noteworthy findings were made:

1. 36 congregations responded to the audit.
2. 58% of these congregations considered themselves to be a “sending church”.
3. 51% of these congregations thought young people in their congregation were interested in Global Mission.
4. 11% of these congregations had organised a mission/vision trip.
5. 100 different partner mission organisations/groups were named in responses to the audit.
6. OM was the most commonly contacted mission organisation according to audit responses.
7. 34 different partner individuals/families were named in responses to the audit.

18. Global Mission Strategy. The Board noted the remit of the 2019 General Assembly for a Global Mission Strategy to be produced following an audit of local congregations. The Global Mission Sub-Committee has drawn together and approved a strategy and wishes to thank Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, for his efforts in writing this Strategy. The Board recommends this Strategy to the General Assembly for approval. The Global Mission Strategy can be found in Appendix Ten of this report. The Board also reports that it plans to create accompanying resources for this Global Mission Strategy which are easily accessible to local congregations, such as videos and leaflets.

19. Asian Outreach Review. The Board carried out a review of Rev. Duncan Peters’ ministry initially in 2019/20. However, it did not report to the 2020 General Assembly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Mr Peters’ appointment was extended for one year until May 2021. The Board recommenced its review process in 2020/21 with the following Committee members:

1. Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd
2. Rev. Kenny Macleod
3. Mr Duncan MacPherson

4. Mr Derek Malcolm
5. Rev. David Meredith
6. Mr Tom Walsh
7. Mrs Màiri MacPherson (Clerk)

The Committee met together five times in total over the course of the two years and welcomed Mr Peters to each of these meetings. The vision and aims of the ministry were discussed and clarified, along with the involvement of Mr Peters' local congregation, Dowanvale, and the Free Church of Scotland in the ministry. The Board wishes to thank Mr Duncan MacPherson, who drew together a Development Plan for the ministry for the next five years. This Development Plan was approved by the Review Committee and came to the Board with the recommendation to renew Mr Peters' appointment for a further five years on the same level of funding. The Board discussed the Development Plan and its recommendations and came to the decision to renew Mr Peters' appointment for a further five years. This renewal is subject to an annual appraisal of Mr Peters with the Committee named above and proven engagement of Mr Peters with the Development Plan. The Board thus recommends to the 2021 General Assembly to renew Mr Peters' appointment in Asian Outreach Glasgow for a further five years on a fully funded platform. The aforementioned Development Plan is treated as confidential due to the nature of the work and the Plan will be distributed to Commissioners by the Assembly Clerk when the matter is taken up by the General Assembly.

20. Global Voices. The Board reports that the Global Mission Sub-Committee is in the process of organising resources which give space for different voices in the Church from around the world, both inside and outside the Free Church of Scotland tradition. These resources will be used in conjunction with the Global Mission Strategy and the Generation podcast.

21. Hong Kong Ready. The Board reports a developing partnership with "Hong Kong Ready", an initiative to equip UK churches to welcome people who are expected to arrive from Hong Kong throughout 2021 due to the ongoing political struggles. Members of the Global Mission Sub-Committee joined an online meeting hosted by Dr Krish Kandiah addressing this issue. The Board circulated information regarding Hong Kong Ready and encourages local congregations to sign up to become a "Hong Kong-Ready" Church.

22. Prayer Resources for the Church during Ramadan. The Board reports a series of online articles produced in May 2020 by experienced Muslim ministry practitioners. These articles were highly practical, giving an introduction to Ramadan, guidance in how to love Muslim neighbours during Ramadan, and prayer points to use when praying for Muslim neighbours during Ramadan. The Board thanks those involved in drawing together these practical resources.

23. Global Mission Prayer Notes. The Global Mission Prayer Notes continue to be compiled by Mrs Mairi MacDonald. The Board wishes to thank Mrs MacDonald for her commitment to preparing these on behalf of the Board each month. The format of the Prayer Notes was updated in 2020 and the notes are now also available on the PrayerMate App. Mrs Màiri MacPherson has taken over from Mrs Kirsten Speirs in the role of formatting and distributing the Prayer Notes.

(G) FINANCE

1. Development Fund. The following people/projects were awarded funding from the Development Fund:

Congregation	Purpose	Amount
Broughty Ferry	Leader in Training	£5,000.00
Grace Church Leith	Children's Worker	£10,000

The Development Fund is now empty, as per the remit given to the Board by the Board of Trustees to publicise and use up the fund. The Board wishes to thank the Board of Trustees for the allocation of this funding.

2. Church and Manse Building Fund. The purpose of the Church and Manse Building Fund is to assist congregations (typically smaller congregations) in the upkeep of congregational property through the provision of loan and grant funding.

The details for the awarded funding are as follows:

Congregation	Purpose	Amount
Nairn	Church remedial works	£392.00
Leith Elder Memorial	Kitchen Roof	£1,396.00
Kirkcaldy	Church Audio Visual	£400.00

Kiltarlity	Sunday School	£294.00
	AV Improvements	£518.00
	New Entrance Door	£120.00
	Roof Insulation	£300.00
Falkirk	Repairs for church doors and hall flooring	£395
Govanhill	Remedial work: improved energy efficiency and security	£2000

There is £8,868.00 still available in the Church and Manse Building Fund.

3. **Small Grants Fund.** The following individuals were awarded Small Grants Funds:

Individual	Purpose	Amount
Ms Jane Mann	Operation Mobilisation: Cube Programme	£500
Miss Abigail Morrison	Colegio San Andrés and Tearfund, Go Oversea: Peru	£500
Rev. Alasdair Macleod	Africa Inland Church: Kenya	£500
Rev. Roddy MacRae	Mission International: Myanmar	£500
Rev. Colin Macleod	Dochas Education Trust: Malawi	£500

There is £4,050.00 still available in the Small Grants Fund.

The Board was disappointed to hear of the subsequent cancellation of both Ms Mann's trip and Rev. Colin Macleod's trip. The Board is encouraged to hear that these trips are being rescheduled at a later date.

4. **Disaster and Relief Fund.**

	Jan-Mar 2021 £	2020 £	2019 £	2018 £
Opening balance	12,662	14,679	11,668	11,191
<u>Income</u>				
Congregational Donations	840	6,511	8,966	8,512
Individual Gifts	2,504	1,085	3,550	1,715
Gift Aid	-	259	350	125
Investment Income	-	136	164	141
	<u>3,344</u>	<u>7,900</u>	<u>13,029</u>	<u>10,493</u>
<u>Grants</u>				
SSDS	2,000	-	-	-
Tear Fund – Coronavirus Appeal (28.04.20)	-	10,000	-	-
Tear Fund - Cyclone Idai	-	-	10,000	-
Tear Fund - Indonesia	-	-	-	10,000
Bank Charges	32	7	18	16
Closing balance	<u>13,973</u>	<u>12,662</u>	<u>14,679</u>	<u>11,668</u>

REV. DR ROBERT J. AKROYD, *Chairman*
REV. DAVID MACLEOD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Mission Board and thank all members of the Board especially the Chairman, Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd, Rev. David Macleod, Vice-Chairman, Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, Mrs Sarah Johnson and Mrs Màiri MacPherson, Mission Coordinators.
2. The General Assembly thank the members and adherents of the Church who by their prayerful interest, financial contributions and ongoing interest support and encourage the sharing of the Gospel in Scotland and overseas.
3. The General Assembly thank the Chief Executive Officer, the Finance Manager, Compliance Officer and members of the Offices staff for their contributions to the work of the Board.
4. The General Assembly declare the post of Mission Director to be a permanent appointment with the appointment to be reviewed every five years. They re-appoint Rev. David Meredith as Mission Director and they thank him for his services to the Church since his first appointment.
5. The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude to God the invaluable and inspiring part played by Mission Support Groups and Women for Mission in raising funds and fostering an awareness of mission activity.
6. The General Assembly thank the Enspire Committee for their ongoing commitment to supporting and providing an opportunity for fellowship among ministers' wives.
7. The General Assembly thank Mrs Mairi MacDonald, Kilmuir, Isle of Skye, for compiling the monthly Mission Prayer Notes on behalf of the Board and commend her to the prayers of the Church.
8. The General Assembly thank congregations for their willingness to allow their Ministers to serve on the Mission Board.
9. The General Assembly thank Mission Board consultants, Miss Ali MacDonald, Mrs Janet Murchison, Mrs Sarah Lytle, and Rev. Malcolm Macleod, for their commitment to serve the work of mission in this way.
10. The General Assembly thank Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd for his committed work as Chairman of the Board during his period of service.
11. The General Assembly thank the Conveners of the Mission Board Sub-Committees and those who serve on these Sub-Committees for serving the work of mission in this way.
12. The General Assembly thank the Communications Officer and Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, for their work on the Generation podcast.
13. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for providing prayer resources for use in the denomination throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

(B) GENERAL MINISTRY

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken in Locally Subsidised Charges and Alternative Ministerial Arrangement Charges.
2. The General Assembly note the new settled ministry in South Uist and Benbecula and thank the Mission Board for its financial commitment to the ministry for the first three years. The Assembly note the further two-year financial commitment of the Mission Board and the Western Isles Presbytery to the ministry in South Uist and Benbecula and thank them for this commitment. They extend the first three-term of Rev. Thomas Penman's appointment by two years due to the COVID-19 restrictions on revitalising ministry in the congregation with the appointment to be reviewed in October 2024.
3. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the congregation of Campbelltown and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They grant permission to the congregation

of Campbeltown to call a Minister on the restricted terms of a five-year reviewable appointment in accordance with the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 anent the Sustentation Fund, Paragraph 3.4.

4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding the appointment of an Assistant Minister to the congregation of St Columba's and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They grant permission to the congregation of St Columba's to appoint a Minister in accordance with the terms of Act 18, Class 2, 2013, anent Assistantships, such permission to lapse at the General Assembly of 2020.

5. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Western Isles regarding the appointment of an Assistant Minister to the congregation of Stornoway and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They grant permission to the congregation of Stornoway to appoint a Minister in accordance with the terms of Act 18, Class 2, 2013, anent Assistantships, such permission to lapse at the General Assembly of 2020.

(C) CHURCH PLANTING

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken in Church Planting Charges.

2. The General Assembly note the commencement of the role of Church Planting Director, which has been filled by Rev. Neil MacMillan. The General Assembly thank the Board of Trustees for their financial contribution to this role and commit Mr MacMillan to the prayers of the Church as he pursues the vision of planting 30 churches by 2030.

3. The General Assembly note the progress made in fulfilling the goal of planting 30 churches in Scotland by 2030, including plans for assessment, training, coaching and funding in order to create a pipeline of Church Planters. The General Assembly thank City to City Europe for their partnership and encouragement in this effort. The General Assembly note the need for fundraising in order to fulfil this vision and commit it to the prayers of the Church.

4. The General Assembly give thanks for the Gospel generosity expressed by the UK Partnership towards Church Planting in Scotland.

5. The General Assembly note the progress made in securing a successor to the ministry in Govan G51. The General Assembly note the urgent need to maintain this ministry and they empower the 2021 October Commission of Assembly to receive a report from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll through the Mission Board regarding this matter.

6. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding the application of Cornerstone Church Plant to become a fully sanctioned charge and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the Church Plant status of the congregation of Cornerstone, and they grant the Congregation the status of a fully sanctioned charge under the ongoing ministry of Rev. Neil MacMillan. They declare that Mr MacMillan's appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge and without restriction according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, paragraph 3.3.

(D) CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken by the congregations involved in the Church Development Track.

2. The General Assembly thank those who became involved in Generation19.

3. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for carrying out the Annual Health Check and for the recent development of the Congregation Survey. They also thank Congregations for taking part in the Annual Health Check and Congregational Survey and commend future Congregational Surveys to the Church.

4. The General Assembly commend the Conference addressing rural ministry, *In a Big Country*, which has been rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to the Congregations and to the prayers of the Church.

5. The General Assembly note the remit given to the Mission Board by the 2019 General Assembly to demonstrate how the Church will secure the reliable provision of ministry personnel for the Church's rural congregations. They recognise the large scale and scope of this remit, and the impracticality of fulfilling this remit within a year. They instruct the Mission Board to

maintain rural ministry as one of its ongoing priorities and to report to the Assembly annually on the progress made in the area of rural ministry in the Church.

(E) CHURCH EQUIPPING

1. The General Assembly thank Miss Kirsten Macdonald for her work. They note the change of the title of the role from Camps Administrator to Camps Coordinator. They commend Miss Macdonald to the prayers of the Church.
2. The General Assembly thank Mr Donald Macleod, for his work as Camps Supervisor. They commend Mr Macleod to the prayers of the Church.
3. The General Assembly thank all leaders, cooks and others who have contributed to the success the Camps Programme in 2019 and urge Congregations to be active in support of this work in prayer.
4. The General Assembly thank Deacons' Courts and individuals who have contributed to sponsorship for campers and leaders.
5. The General Assembly give thanks for those involved with organising and helping at the Big Free Rally.
6. The General Assembly note the cancellation of the Camps Programmes which were due to run in Summer 2020 and Summer 2021. They thank those who made this decision for their wisdom. The General Assembly commend the online event "FCYC: Connect" to the prayers of the Church.
7. The General Assembly note with thankfulness the 60th anniversary of Free Church Youth Camps and thank all those involved in Camps since its conception in 1960.
8. The General Assembly thank the Youth Conference Committees for arranging the Conference in 2020 and the online Conference in 2021. The General Assembly note the sudden cancellation of the Youth Conference in 2020 and thank the Committee for its wisdom in making this decision. They commend the new Youth Conference Committee to the prayers of the Church.
9. The General Assembly thank all teachers for their devoted service in our Sunday Schools.
10. The General Assembly welcome the report of the Leadership Bootcamp from June 2019. They thank all who were involved in helping to lead this week. They note the cancellation of the Leadership Bootcamp which was due to run in June 2020. They also note the online sessions which took place in June 2020 and those which are due to take place in June 2021.
11. The General Assembly commend Praying for One Another to all Congregations to make use of.
12. The General Assembly thank Rev. Billy Graham for his series of daily devotionals and those involved in publicising the daily devotionals entitled *Walk with Me* and commend *Walk with Me* to individuals in the church to make use of.
13. The General Assembly commend the use of Resource Packs to all Congregations.

(F) GLOBAL MISSION

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken by those involved in Global Mission.
2. The General Assembly send greetings to all Free Church members working with mission organisations.
3. The General Assembly thank the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland for their ongoing partnership, prayerful and financial support of the overseas work of the Board.
4. The General Assembly note with their approval and thankfulness the compilation of a Memorandum of Understanding between Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Free Church of Scotland. They also note that an official partnership is now in place between Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Free Church of Scotland.
5. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for the completion of a Global Mission Audit and note the relevant findings.

6. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for the production of a Global Mission Strategy. They approve the strategy as the Global Mission Strategy of the Church.
7. The General Assembly note the report and recommendation of the Mission Board regarding the review of Asian Outreach in Glasgow and the appointment of Rev. Duncan Peters. They re-appoint Mr Peters to the work of Asian Outreach for a further period of five years according to the terms of the approved Development Plan, with the work fully funded by the Mission Board, and with the work and the appointment to be reviewed at the 2026 General Assembly. They thank Mr Peters for his services to the work of Asian Outreach over the years of his appointment and they commend him to the prayers of the Church.
8. The General Assembly thank the Board for coordinating the Appeal for India and note with thankfulness the generosity of the Church in its giving towards the Appeal.

APPENDIX ONE

Mission Director's Report

It has been a difficult season for the Church. Only the most Pollyannaish person could fail to see the challenges of the last 14 months. Our places of worship have been closed for a significant amount of time and when do open we are restricted by masks, we cannot sing, doors are left open to the elements and if ever the term 'social distance' was antithetical to all that Christian church family means, it is now.

Productivity in ministry is always difficult to measure at the best of times. Perhaps we have to concede that the result of our efforts will only be seen at the great day. I think that a relevant book in this season is the Epistle of James, not simply for the teaching on suffering and the use of the tongue but for the warning that "you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes?" By God's grace, our ministries are transient, but they have eternal consequences for good and for bad. (Rev 14:13)

1. Covid-19

Like everyone within the denomination my diary evaporated after 17 March 2020. The first few weeks were spent assisting many congregations to move to an online presence. It is to the credit of our people that they adapted. Ministers suddenly became cinematographers, IT specialists and audio-visual technicians. The task was to remind the denomination of the main thing when there were many possible distractions. It was a pleasure to instigate and organise a series of webinars for encouragement and instructions. The level of engagement among ministers was high as we were ALL able to meet in one place at zero cost. The work of the gospel went on. There are stories of people coming to faith through the Covid crisis and we rejoice in this. Honesty and realism also demand that many were hit hard through the pandemic.

2. Church Development

One of the key objectives of the Mission Director position is to 'facilitate revitalisation of local churches through training and coaching'. In the past year, we have run two cohorts, 16 ministers in total, involved in a Church Development Track. Speakers have led us in seminars covering a range of topics relevant to churches which require revitalisation. We build on this course by steering a congregation towards a development plan and provide coaching if required. Implementation is the most challenging phase. Scott Belsky famously said, "It's not about ideas. It's about making ideas happen." We have been considering ways of dealing with congregations which require radical revitalisation even to the extent of replanting. Some are called to build new, others have a calling to renovate.

3. Rolling out Strategy Document

Another objective is to 'roll out and implement the Mission Board Strategy document across the Church.'

The *Going, Making, Growing* plan approved by the 2017 General Assembly produced a number of positive results. It has now reached its end and we plan for the post-Covid world. The Board of Trustees have begun work on a new strategy using the vision statement: **a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland**. The *Healthy Church* document will involve all elements of the denomination as we refocus on our single mission to make Christ known. I have been heavily involved in both these initiatives and our team will continue in a coordinating role throughout Presbyteries and congregations.

4. Partnerships

The contemporary Free Church requires partnerships more than ever. The task of reaching every community in Scotland will never be done solely through our own resources. In the last year we have forged a new relationship with OMF International.

We have also met with partners in OM, Pioneers, Frontiers, International Mission to Jewish People, 20 Schemes, Redeemer City to City, Acts 29, Mission to the World (MtW) and many others. The purpose of these partnerships is to provide personnel, training and funding to supplement what we can provide. In overseas mission, the input of mission organisations is essential as they can provide back up and expertise where we are unable.

5. Culture of Mission

One of the objectives set for me is to 'develop a culture of mission at all levels of the denomination.' Culture is a most difficult issue to define. Basically, it's the way we do things. From my perspective, there is a slow but significant culture change within the denomination as we begin to look out more and more. Mission is at the heart of the agenda of every Committee and Board I attend. We are by no means reaching our full potential, but we see the problem or opportunities and we are beginning to grasp them. The fields are white unto harvest.

6. Global Mission

We present a new strategy for Global Mission to the General Assembly this year. It has been satisfying to see national leaders taking over churches and institutions initiated by brothers and sisters who gave faithful service establishing the foundations. We aim at increasing awareness of Global Mission throughout our congregations.

Some of our portfolio of Global Mission interests are seen in the main report. Be assured that the work of international mission has not diminished within the Free Church of Scotland. It is greater and more diverse than ever.

Conclusion

May I thank our team who work harmoniously and even joyously together. They are Bob Akroyd, Sarah Johnson, Màiri MacPherson, Kirsten Macdonald and of course, Neil MacMillan.

This report has only touched on the main objectives set by the Mission Board. These will be changed and developed as the spiritual and cultural landscape changes. I often say that the sweet spot is when we realise that some things always change and some things never change.

May the never-changing God be our anchor.

APPENDIX TWO

Mission Director: Role Review

Representatives from the Mission Board:

Rev. Bob Akroyd, Chairman

Rev. David Macleod, Vice-Chairman

Dr John Morrison

Rev. Jeremy Ross

On Thursday 4th and Friday 5th February 2021, the representatives met with:

Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director

Three-year Review of Post and Postholder: Mission Director, Free Church of Scotland

Meeting Overview:

1. The process and the Mission Director job description was discussed.
2. Mr Meredith had submitted written responses to a series of questions.
3. Several follow-up questions and areas were raised to explore further.
4. The review group met with Mr Meredith and asked these questions and others which arose.
5. Mr Meredith was given the opportunity to raise questions or concerns with the Mission Board.
6. The meeting was opened and closed with prayer.
7. The review group met briefly together after meeting with the Mission Director to discuss recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. The Mission Board wholeheartedly supports both the extension of the post of Mission Director and the reappointment

of Mr Meredith as the post-holder.

2. The Mission Board proposes that the Mission Director be appointed for a five-year term instead of three.
3. The Mission Board proposes that the Mission Director post should be made permanent.
4. The Mission Board suggests that the role of the Mission Director be reviewed in year four of the five-year term.
5. The Mission Board agrees that Terms of Appointment should be drawn up for the Mission Director by the Chief Executive Officer.
6. The Mission Board agrees that the Terms of Appointment contain a provision for an annual review and appraisal which would take place at the year-end with the Chair of the Mission Board and the Chief Executive Officer.

APPENDIX THREE

Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll

Campbeltown

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, appointed to meet in Edinburgh on 17th May 2021, the petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll humbly shows that:

1. Whereas Act 32 of Class 2, 2026 granted the congregation of Campbeltown the status of a Locally Subsidised Charge for three years in terms of Act 14, Class 2, 2013.
2. Whereas Rev. Dr Rodger Crooks was inducted to the charge in December 2017.
3. Whereas during Dr Crooks' ministry those attending public worship has increased to on average 24 persons.
4. Whereas the congregation's ordinary income as increased from £29,563 in 2017 to £42,091 for 2019 as shown on the latest Sustentation Schedule.
5. Whereas Dr Crooks has intimated his intention to retire on 30th April 2021.
6. Whereas the Kirk Session, Deacons' Court and Congregation have approved the completion of a Sustentation Schedule requesting that the congregation be allowed to call a minister on the basis of a five-year reviewable appointment.
7. Whereas at their November 2020 meeting the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll approved the said Sustentation Schedule and application to allow the congregation to call a minister on the basis of a five-year reviewable appointment.

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to receive the petition and to grant its crave, to the extent that the General Assembly grant the congregation at Campbeltown permission to call a minister on the basis of a five-year reviewable appointment under the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, Section 3. Or do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem best; and your petitioners will ever pray.

APPENDIX FOUR

Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth

St Columba's – Assistant Minister

To the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland which is commissioned to meet online on the 17th May 2021 a Petition from the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth in the following terms:

1. Whereas St Columba's Free Church has had the privilege of an Assistant Minister for the last three years.
2. Whereas Rev. Thomas Davis has delivered an effective training programme for Ministers in Training and apprentices, he has helped to further develop the discipleship structures in the church, as well as preaching, pastoring and involvement in wider church responsibilities. He will be greatly missed.

3. Whereas Mr Davis' appointment, by mutual consent, comes to an end on Sunday 13 June 2021, after which time his name will be placed on the Register of Ministers without charge.
4. Whereas St Columba's maintains a burden to resource Kingdom growth through conversions, church planting, equipping disciples and training future leaders, as well as being sensitive to God's guidance into new avenues of service.
5. Whereas with the assistant minister post now established, the increased ministry capability that it has provided is critical moving forward in order to further establish and develop the life and work of the congregation.
6. Whereas St Columba's meets the requirements of Act 18, Class 2, 2013 anent Assistantships in respect to remitting twice the full ministry costs, the appropriate administration levy and accommodation and expenses for the Assistant Minister, as highlighted in the supporting sustentation schedule document.

Wherefore, we request that the General Assembly grant permission to the congregation of St Columba's Free Church Edinburgh to call an assistant minister in terms of Act 18, Class 2, 2013 anent Assistantship or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may see fit. And your petitioners will ever pray.

APPENDIX FIVE

Petition of the Presbytery of Western Isles

Stornoway – Assistant Minister

Unto the Venerable, the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet at Edinburgh on Monday 17th May 2021 the petition of the Free Presbytery of the Western Isles, humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the demands of the pastorate in the Stornoway Congregation, currently comprising 377 communicant members, with an additional 300-400 adherents, greatly exceeds what can be undertaken by one Minister.
2. Whereas it is not the mind of the Kirk Session or congregation to divide the charge into a plurality of charges.
3. Whereas the current Assistant Minister, Rev. Kenneth I. Macleod, has submitted his notice of retirement, accepted by the Presbytery on Tuesday 23rd February 2021, the retirement to be effective from 3rd August 2021.
4. Whereas it is in the best interests of the congregation and of the wider Free Church that a vacancy in the Assistantship at Stornoway Free Church be as short as possible.
5. Whereas the permission of the General Assembly is required for renewal of the post in terms of Act 18, Class 2, 2013.
6. Whereas the Mission Board has approved a Sustentation Schedule relative to the post.

Wherefore, taking these premises into account the Free Presbytery of the Western Isles humbly requests the General Assembly to receive its petition and grant its crave. They renew the post of Assistant Minister at Stornoway Free Church, in accordance with Act 18, Class 2, 2013, the post to be effective from 3rd August 2021. Or do otherwise as to their wisdom they deem best. And your petitioners will ever pray.

APPENDIX SIX

Church Planting Director's Report

It's a pleasure for me to be able to submit a brief report now that I am up and running as Church Planting Director. It is a part-time, two-day-a-week post. The rest of the time I am ensconced in my happy place – Cornerstone Church in Morningside. I started the post in November 2020, and I am feeling my way into the job. I am on Sabbatical later this year and hope to use that time to develop the depth of thought and clarity of process that being a church planting denomination requires.

This report is mainly my opportunity to say thanks. Thanks to the denomination for trusting me with 30 x 30. Thanks to Cornerstone for supporting me in taking this on. Thanks to Rev. Colin Ross (Associate Minister) and Anna Lauren Packer (Pastoral Worker), for taking over many of my responsibilities at Cornerstone. Thanks to the Board of Trustees, St Columba's Free Church, First Presbyterian Church Orlando, Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, TN, and others for providing the funding to allow this to happen. Thanks to my family for their patience with me as I take on another 'project.' Thanks to God for His heart of mission and mercy towards me and the joy of the Great Commission.

I don't need to say much here about 30 x 30 as it is the main body of the report. Suffice it to say, our plans for new churches stretch from Caithness to the Borders and from the schemes to the suburbs. Thirty new churches is a tall order but achievable with the blessing of God and the hard work of many. I won't plant thirty churches. The Board won't plant thirty churches. It is local churches that will do the real work. Thanks then to congregations in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, Dundee, Inverness and beyond who are willing to roll up their sleeves and become church planting churches. We can't do this without you. Generation Church Planting seeks to be a catalyst for church planting in the denomination and beyond it. It's great to work with some really amazing Baptist and FIEC planters as well.

It's been a tough season to be a church planter – so thanks to the planters for keeping going in hard times. And of course, thank you Sarah, Mairi, David, Bob and others for being a great team to work with. It's a joy to see how much you love Jesus and the passion you each have for mission here and across the world.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth

Cornerstone

Unto the Venerable General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on the 18th May 2020, the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the congregation of Cornerstone was designated a Church Plant in August 2015 according to Act 15, Class 2, 2013 anent Church Planting and Evangelism.
6. Whereas such designation included the appointment of a minister for a five-year term.
7. Whereas Rev. Neil MacMillan was duly inducted to Cornerstone on 25th October 2015.
8. Whereas the congregation of Cornerstone greatly benefits from the ministry of Rev. Neil MacMillan.
9. Whereas the work and witness of the congregation of Cornerstone has developed into being an established part of the community.
10. Whereas Presbytery satisfied itself on the wishes of the congregation and their answers in the Sustentation schedule in meeting with representatives of the congregation.
11. Whereas it is the considered opinion of the Presbytery and of the congregation of Cornerstone that it is now appropriate to consider the arrangements for the future of the congregation.
12. Whereas the congregation's ordinary income for 2017 was £33,852, for 2018 was £50,593 and for 2019 was £59,031.
13. Whereas the congregation is committed to remitting the cost of ministry and the appropriate levels of Missions Levy and Administration Levy and is in a position to do so.
14. Whereas it is the sincere desire of the congregation that their current minister, Rev. Neil MacMillan should remain in the charge.
15. Whereas Presbytery satisfied itself that Rev. Neil MacMillan wished to continue as minister in the congregation in the event of it becoming a fully sanctioned charge.

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to receive the petition and grant its crave, to the extent that the General Assembly terminate the Church Plant status of the congregation of Cornerstone and place the congregation on the Equal Dividend Platform as a fully sanctioned charge under the ongoing ministry of Rev. Neil MacMillan and to declare that his employment be continuous with his original induction to the charge And to further declare that the minister's appointment be without restriction according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, paragraph 3.3.

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

APPENDIX EIGHT

Free Church Youth Camps Organisation

- 1. Church Equipping Committee.** It is the duty of the Church Equipping Committee to encourage discipleship across the generations.
 - 1.1 *Governance.* The Committee has an overall governance role over the work of Free Church Youth Camps, as well as providing support to the Camps Supervisor and Camps Coordinator in their roles.
 - 1.2 *Policy Decisions.* The Committee will bring recommendations for changes in policy to the Mission Board. The Committee will provide support and advice in implementing the Board's policy as and when required.
 - 1.3 *Communication and Discipleship.* The Committee are kept informed by the Camps Supervisor and Camps Coordinator. In addition to supporting the work of the camps, the Committee and Free Church Youth Camps will work together to develop appropriate discipleship provision for campers once they return home from camp.
- 2. Camps Supervisor.** The Camps Supervisor is appointed by the Board and shall be a communicant member of the Free Church of Scotland, in good standing. The appointment will normally be for a term of four years initially.
 - 2.1 *Appointment.* The Camps Supervisor will report to the Church Equipping Committee and will attend relevant meetings of the Committee.
 - 2.2 *Camps Coordinator.* The Camps Supervisor is the Line Manager and the first point of contact for the Camps Coordinator.
 - 2.3 *Free Church Youth Camps.* The Camps Supervisor has strategic oversight of Free Church Youth Camps and will ensure that the Camps' policy is being implemented.
 - 2.4 *Duties.* The duties of the Camps Supervisor include the following:
 - 2.4.1 To maintain regular contact with the Camps Coordinator and to advise and assist as necessary.
 - 2.4.2 To work with the Camps Coordinator to make recommendations on which camps will run the following year.
 - 2.4.3 To comment on amendments to existing policies and on new policies drafted by the Camps Coordinator.
 - 2.4.4 To assist the Camps Coordinator with the appointment of team leaders and the provision of leaders' and cooks' training.
 - 2.4.5 To process details provided by team leaders in camp reports and feedback from other leaders and cooks, and to work with the Camps Coordinator to maintain a record of team leaders', leaders' and cooks' past service and performance and team leaders' availability for the future.
 - 2.4.6 To address any spiritual or disciplinary issues arising from camps.
 - 2.4.7 To address any complaints in accordance with the Free Church Youth Camps complaints procedure.
 - 2.4.8 To visit a number of camps each year to provide support to teams. The Camps Supervisor will also take note of the suitability of the leadership team and of any spiritual matters to be addressed.

- 2.4.9 To assist the Camps Coordinator with the preparation of a summary report of camps for the Mission Board in September of each year.
- 2.4.10 To bring specific recommendations on matters within the Church Equipping Committee's areas of responsibility to the Church Equipping Committee for discussion and a decision.
- 2.4.11 To advise the Camps Coordinator on matters not covered by existing policy decisions and on occasions when changing circumstances make Church Equipping Committee decisions inoperable.
- 2.4.12 To approve any significant spend requested by the Camps Coordinator in accordance with the finance policy.

3. Camps Coordinator. The camps programme is coordinated and administered by the Camps Coordinator, who is a member of staff of the Free Church Offices and reports to the Camps Supervisor.

3.1 Duties. The duties of the Camps Coordinator include the following:

- 3.1.1 To maintain an up-to-date record of premises being used by Free Church Youth Camps and potential premises which could be considered for camps in the future, including cost, terms of use, public liability insurance certificates and the facilities provided.
- 3.1.2 In discussion with the Camps Supervisor, to assess the needs of the young people for whom the camps programme caters and to decide on the number, age range, nature, location and cost of the camps running each year.
- 3.1.3 To take into account nationwide holiday dates when setting dates for camps.
- 3.1.4 To amend existing policies and draft new Free Church Youth Camps policies, in discussion with the Camps Supervisor and the Church Equipping Committee, for approval by the Mission Board.
- 3.1.5 To work with the Camps Supervisor on the appointment of team leaders, leaders and cooks in accordance with the Free Church Youth Camps policy and guidelines for suitable recruitment, and to implement the leaders' and cooks' training policies.
- 3.1.6 To maintain good communication with team leaders on all matters relating to camp including proposed teams and activities.
- 3.1.7 To review annually the leaders' handbook, in accordance with which all leaders are to operate.
- 3.1.8 To work with the Free Church Finance Manager to draw up budgets for Free Church Youth Camps and to anticipate large items of spend as far in advance as possible.
- 3.1.9 To draw up training programmes for camp leaders and to coordinate locations and dates for training.
- 3.1.10 To work with the Church Equipping Committee to develop discipleship for campers after they return home from camp.
- 3.1.11 To discuss with the Camps Supervisor and the Church Equipping Committee any possible new developments of the work.
- 3.1.12 To implement the Free Church Youth Camps policy.
- 3.1.13 To maintain an up-to-date record of team leaders, leaders and cooks.
- 3.1.14 To publicise the work of camps on the Free Church Youth Camps and Free Church websites and social media pages, as well as in *The Record* and the Free Church Youth Camps brochure (printed or online).
- 3.1.15 To ensure that adequate and appropriate equipment and other facilities are available at each camp.
- 3.1.16 To confirm with the Chief Executive Officer that there is adequate insurance cover in place against accident, injury or theft occurring at camp and on the way to and from camp.

- 3.1.17 To receive and record applications, booking confirmations, travel arrangements, consent forms and medical/additional support needs forms.
- 3.1.18 To arrange transport for campers where appropriate, including supervision for campers in transit.
- 3.1.19 To prepare and issue campers' travel instructions, information and kit lists.
- 3.1.20 To keep team leaders informed of the premises to be used, amenities in the area, equipment and facilities available, and names and details of campers and travel arrangements.
- 3.1.21 To liaise with team leaders and chief cooks on the budgets available and the payment of these, and to ensure that the correct paperwork and receipts are submitted to evidence spend.
- 3.1.22 To manage camp finance in discussion with Camps Supervisor and Free Church Finance Manager, as required.
- 3.1.23 To receive and collate leaders' and cooks' feedback and team leaders' camp reports on the general running of each camp, the suitability of the premises, facilities, equipment etc, and to present a summary report to the Mission Board in September of each year.
- 3.1.24 To maintain communications with the Church Equipping Committee and to update the Committee on the work as required.
- 3.1.25 To consult with the Camps Supervisor on matters arising which require advice, and when circumstances force changes to previously agreed Free Church Youth Camps policy and protocol.
- 3.1.26 To draw up a detailed memorandum of administrative and procedures to be followed, and to keep this under ongoing review as the work develops.
- 3.1.27 To organise the annual Big Free Rally, including coordinating meetings with the Big Free Rally Committee.
- 3.1.28 To keep up to date on current requirements for First Aiders and cooks.
- 3.1.29 To ensure that all leaders are members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, or equivalent, and that all have undergone the required safeguarding training and are willing to adhere to the Free Church's Safeguarding Policy.
- 3.1.30 To carry out duties required as the Safeguarding Coordinator, including dealing with any safeguarding issues that arise.

APPENDIX NINE

Free Church of Scotland and Overseas Missionary Fellowship

Memorandum of Agreement

For over 150 years both the Free Church of Scotland and OMF have existed to give people the opportunity to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This conviction remains the same today and shapes OMF's vision and mission. We aim to see indigenous biblical church movements in each of the people groups of East Asia, evangelising their own people and reaching out in mission to other peoples.

To do this, we share the good news of Jesus Christ in all its fullness with the peoples of East Asia, to the glory of God. Our desire is to serve in partnership with the Free Church of Scotland so that, together, we may see people come to know Jesus, healthy churches established, and believers equipped for works of service.

God's Mission Today

Although there have been significant changes in the world over the last fifty years, God's mission has not changed. His people exist for his glory, to call the nations to know him, so that all things will come into unity under Christ (Ephesians 1:7-10). However, these changes mean that God's people need to engage in appropriate ways with the realities and peoples of a globalised world.

Muslim Peoples

Whether it is the silk road in China or the islands of Indonesia, East Asia is where the majority of the world's Muslim peoples call home. We long to see East Asia's Muslims loved and blessed with the good news of Jesus.

In a variety of sensitive ways, such as business, prayer, equipping, evangelism and creation care, people are reaching out to make Christ known.

East Asian Diaspora

Many people from East Asia are now living in the cities and towns of Scotland. This may be home for a few months, a number of years, or a lifetime. The Free Church of Scotland is well placed to serve these peoples and OMF are passionate about inspiring and equipping local churches in this ministry.

Over the last ten years, OMF has developed a team across the UK to serve East Asians living here. They are happy to partner with local churches seeking to reach out cross-culturally in their context.

Urban Growth

The rise of the mega city has changed the landscape of ministry in East Asia. Increasingly people are relocating for work, study and a better life. This sort of growth brings great opportunities and challenges when it comes to sharing the good news of Jesus.

These mega cities are home to millions who have never heard of Jesus and are unlikely to ever meet a Christian. For the church, this is a call to serve in large urban centres.

Training Leaders

Healthy churches are led by healthy leaders. Across various contexts in East Asia there are good options for people to be equipped for ministry and mission. However, there are also many places where this is not the case. At OMF we know that we don't have all the answers, but our desire is to use locally appropriate ways to help nurture mature disciples who will lead the church well in God's mission.

Student Ministry

OMF works in close partnership with IFES in East Asia. A good example of this is in Japan. At a time in life where Japanese young people are more open to explore new ideas and ways of thinking about the world, student ministries give them opportunities to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus on campuses.

Serving the next generation of cultural and social leaders of the peoples of East Asia presents many opportunities for gospel partnership and growth.

Dr Patrick Fung, General Director, OMF International

"World mission is not a competition. We partner with sending churches globally; with local churches across East Asia; and with like-minded Christians and mission agencies wherever they are."

"When the Disruption Church took up its missionary responsibility it was motivated above all by its awareness of God's sovereignty over all the nations of the earth. This Sovereign Lord still challenges us, indeed commands us, to 'go and make disciples of all nations.'"

How to get involved

Prayer

The privilege of praying that the Lord's will to be done on earth as in heaven is at the heart of God's mission. Whether it is individually, in small groups, or as a church family, we desire to see every believer equipped to pray for the peoples of East Asia.

We would be happy to provide resources to assist churches in praying for the world and for their mission partners. Perhaps there may even be a specific day or event to pray for East Asia with an OMF speaker serving the local church.

Financial Support

OMF is committed to a non-solicitation policy. This means we will never ask for funds. However, it does not mean we are irresponsible when it comes to practical provision. Where a partnership between a church and an OMF worker exists, it is acceptable to make these needs known.

Vision Trips

With three workers (Caitriona, Muriel, and the Patersons) already serving with OMF in various locations, this would be a great way to engage local churches across the denomination in God's mission. Not only that, but it would also lead to a deepening of relationship with mission partners and their ministry context.

OMF would be happy to facilitate this, through our short-term mission discipleship programme, Serve Asia.

Short-term Service

Serve Asia is a mission discipleship programme, which, through short-term experiences, equips and encourages the individual/team and their sending community to find their place in God's mission long-term. Placements range from two weeks to twelve months and are co-ordinated by a dedicated team who will lead applicants through the interview process.

Here is a flavour of some of the opportunities: Football outreach in Thailand; Waste management consultation in Mongolia; Student outreach in Japan; Supporting new workers and their families in Singapore; Media production that engages the global church in God's mission.

Long-term Service

The Church still needs to send people to serve long-term. However, how this looks varies, depending on the gifting of each individual and the location of their ministry. We believe that in order to communicate the gospel well it is important to understand the local language and culture. As such new workers, like the Patersons, will be in full-time language and culture learning for the first two years in East Asia.

After this initial period, workers are encouraged to continue developing their language and cultural awareness in their ministry placement. They are also connected to a team who share similar goals, which helps provide fellowship and oversight. For example, Caitriona is part of a science and faith network which draws together others who have similar gifting and expertise.

We recognise the important role of the local church in God's mission. Long-term workers have regular periods of home assignment to reconnect with churches and individuals who sent and support them. It is also a time to join the OMF UK team in inspiring and equipping the church to share the good news with East Asians.

Partnership in Scotland

As part of our partnership, we would be delighted to help facilitate discussions on global mission, serve local churches in developing global mission strategy, and enable believers to share the gospel with East Asians living in Scotland.

We have recently developed East Asian worldview training which we would be happy to deliver for local churches or larger groups. The purpose of this training is to equip the church for the work of cross-cultural evangelism.

Throughout the year we seek to host a number of events to equip and inspire local churches to participate in God's mission among East Asia's peoples. Some Free Church congregations may like to host these events and would be well placed to advertise them in Presbyteries and local churches.

The Free Church hosts a number of events and training initiative throughout the year. OMF would be delighted to help serving at Minister's training, Free Church Youth Camps, Generation weekenders and the annual Bootcamp for new leaders. Appropriate content and workers would be happy join and participate at these events to deepen the relationship between the churches and OMF.

Many of our workers have experience in theological education and currently contribute to the life and ministry of ETS, Tilsley College and HTC in Scotland. We would be happy to explore ways where we could contribute in a meaningful way at ETS and the Centre for Mission.

In all of this we want to serve well together, side by side, in a genuine and meaningful partnership which sees many people in East Asia and Scotland come to know and love Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX TEN

Global Mission Strategy

Introduction

A Healthy Gospel Church for every Community in Scotland is our aim. What of the rest of the world? Many things define a healthy gospel church. A desire for the good news of the gospel to spread beyond the shores of Scotland to the ends of the earth is a key component of signs of life and health.

A woman once anointed the feet of Jesus with a very expensive jar of perfume. She was surrounded by critics. She had a limited amount of perfume and she had a narrow time to show her adoration. Jesus famously said, "She did what she could." "World evangelism requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world." The Mission Board and Generation-Global Mission can be part of global evangelism. We must do what we can.

This strategy is our contribution to the ongoing story of global mission. The story began in creation and continues to the consummation at the end of time. The centre of the story is the lion who is the lamb, the king who was the pauper: Jesus Christ.

A few simple questions ...

What?

What is mission? Chris Wright, provides this helpful definition, "Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation." The greatest ever missiologist said, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." The idea of being 'sent' is fundamental to mission, 'How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?' ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Our task is to proclaim a message which will lead to personal salvation and structural transformation. Christians must go and tell; go to their families, colleagues, neighbours and to every nation on earth. The first moderator of the General Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland, Thomas Chalmers, said, "Nature does not go forth in search of Christianity; but Christianity goes forth to knock at the door of nature and, if possible, awaken her out of her sluggishness [...] It is the way of it in every missionary enterprise."

Salvation involves discipleship. Mission involves entry level information about how to become part of the kingdom, but it also involves being taught the great truths of the Christian faith and carrying out deeds of justice and mercy.

There is a second question.

Why?

God is not simply global, He fills the heavens, He is universal, “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; for He founded it on the seas and established it upon the waters” (Psalm 24:1). When we worship God, we are immediately drawn into a perspective that is bigger than we can imagine. The contemplation of God takes us beyond our own immediate circumstances and gives an international vision.

God has always worked globally. In the Old Testament, the perspective is of the Lord gathering together the nations with the covenant people of God. Part of the promise given to Abraham was that through him, “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:1). In the New Testament you witness the thrill of a movement moving out from Jerusalem to the edges of the known world.

“Mission is what the Bible is all about.” The Bible is not simply a container of inspiring missionary texts, but mission is the ‘grand narrative’. Reading the Bible this way changes our whole view of church, preaching and the sacraments.

The Lord Jesus has commanded us to go. Looking at Matthew 28: 16-20 we see that “The Lord’s last command is the Church’s first instruction.” It is very simple: “go and make disciples of all nations.” We speak of the centrifugal nature of the New Testament church i.e., a force which draws a body away from the centre. The Church is called to be a mission machine, declaring the gospel and persuading all people groups, wherever they live to rise up and follow Jesus.

As a family of churches, there is much that we can do together and as individual congregations, to be involved in global evangelism. Participation in world mission is something we can all do. One of the purposes of this paper is to stimulate that potential.

Part of the Global Church

Much of global mission has been greatly influenced by the Lausanne Movement. The ‘spirit of Lausanne’ is summed up by the two aspirations of Michael Oh, Executive Director of Lausanne from 2013, “(i) to share wisdom with the global church which is biblical in content and strategic and timely in application; and (ii) to produce, and to share, teaching of enduring worth and global and eternal impact.”

For more information refer to the Lausanne documents: The Lausanne Covenant (1974), The Manila Manifesto (1989) and The Cape Town Commitment (2010). I can think of no better preparation for a congregational mission committee than a joint study of The Lausanne Covenant.

Our Story So Far

Our denomination has invested heavily in international mission since its origins in 1843 and its reconstitution in 1900. At the Disruption, all of the Church of Scotland missionaries identified with the Free Church. There were a number of firsts: Alexander Duff was the first Presbyterian missionary to India, Dr John A. MacKay was sent by the Free Church to be the first missionary to be sent by a Scottish church to South America, Rev. John Ross who identified with the Free Church was the first ordained Church of Scotland minister to go to South Africa. Evangelism to the Jewish community was pioneered by Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray M’Cheyne who published *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland* in 1839.

The story of cross-cultural mission from 1900 onwards is marked by tales of heroism, deprivation and courage carried out by ordinary women and men. It is easy to understand how the names and legacy of our forebearers remains honoured in distant lands.

These pioneers did not see themselves as remaining as key leaders in the churches, they wanted to hand the baton on as soon as possible to national leaders and become self-sustaining. Dr Alexander Duff, one of the leaders in the Indian revival of 1859 was strong in the belief “that the real evangelistic work in India should be carried out by Indians.”

We have now reached an important stage in our relationships with our international partners. We have transitioned from pioneers to partner, from parent to sibling.

One leading mission thinker has said, “It is rather to say that dramatic changes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have made the traditional paradigm of mission inadequate for our time.”

The New Reality

Critique of a Colonial Mind-set

Any global mission strategy written today must take into account the legacy of the colonialist paradigm. One cannot deny that the contours of the missionary enterprise of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries mirrored Western colonialism. From 1878 to 1914, European countries laid claim to in excess of ten million square miles of land and governed a half billion people. The effect of this cannot be over-emphasised. Andrew Walls wrote, “Events so welded Christianity and the West together, and the domestication of Christianity in the West was so complete, the process of acculturation there so successful that the faith seemed inseparable from the categories of European life and thought.” If proof were needed one can only think of David Livingstone’s famous ‘three Cs’: Christianity, commerce and civilisation.

However, Western influence was not all bad and indigenous culture was not always benign. Most missionaries were motivated by the Great Commission and a phrase which is becoming unfashionable in these days - ‘zeal for God and a desire for saving souls.’

For our most recent strategy we must eradicate a colonial mind-set, and its related attitude of paternalism has to be eradicated from our approach to global mission today. Racism in its many forms is a weed which has entangled our history at various points and our emerging strategies must never play host to any mindset which, however inadvertently, suggests national superiority.

The Global South

The move of the centre of Christianity from the north to the Global South looks as if we have turned the globe “upside down and sideways.” In 1910, 66% of Christians lived in Europe; now the figure is 25%. In 1910, 2% were located in the continent of Africa whereas the figure is now 22%. 1981 was a key year because for the very first time the Global South held the majority of Christians. Three quarters of the world’s Christians live outside the West. Philip Jenkins observes, “The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning.” Our only quibble with this assessment is the tense: it has dawned, there is a new day.

A standard quotation in any current missional analysis is, “Already today, the largest Christian communities on the planet are to be found in Africa and Latin America. If we want to visualise a ‘typical’ contemporary Christian, we should think of a woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian *favela*. Soon, the phrase ‘a White Christian’ may sound like a curious oxymoron, as mildly surprising as ‘a Swedish Buddhist’. Such people can exist, but a slight eccentricity is implied.”

In 1822 when James Thomson arrived in Peru, he arrived in a country dark with the legacy of animism and ritualistic grip of an unreformed medieval Church. Now, Peru has an evangelical population of nearly 12% and a growth rate approaching 5%. Within these figures there is a degree of complexity, but they reveal huge progress in the last 100 years.

The growth of the Church in this majority world context has many implications for the way we do mission through Generation-Global. The mission flow is no longer from Europe and North America to the rest of the world but as Michael Nazir-Ali says in the title of his book on mission published in 1990, mission is “from everywhere to everywhere.”

Diaspora

One of the most obvious signs of a changing world is the movement of people from one nation to another and also internal movement from rural contexts to cities. Diaspora is simply the mass dispersion of a people to an area outside their established homeland. The statistics are staggering. The number of international migrants is estimated to be almost 272 million globally. The total could be 405 million by 2050.

In Scotland, we note that 5% of the population of Glasgow identifies as Muslim, mostly from South Asia. There are 5000 Roma people in Scotland, 3500 of them live in Glasgow, the majority being located in Govanhill.

The Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology speaks of a “missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin.” In simple terms, we have an opportunity to engage people groups with the gospel who have been previously locked into countries either closed to the gospel or difficult to enter.

Globalisation

If you want to understand globalisation, think Coca Cola. Coke is the most recognised brand in the world. Two billion people drink Coke each day in over 200 countries. A Western product which is now not only recognisable in most of the world but is embedded in the culture of most nations.

In terms of mission, globalisation is a challenge. Rene Padilla has stated that globalisation is “the greatest challenge that the Christian mission faces.”

The challenge comes from the growing economic disparity which it brings, damage to our ecology, massive displacement of peoples as well as the imposition of Western cultures on the rest of the world. West is not best.

Our mission enterprise began in a day when Annie Soper rode through the Andes on a donkey and John A. MacKay took months to sail to Peru. We now live in the fast lane of the information superhighway which not only facilitates multiple communication platforms but is a conduit for an over-stimulated consumerism. Michael Goheen observes, “Information overload leads to disorientation, apathy, chronic boredom and decreasing wisdom. We also see a new, postmodern spirit that is suspicious of truth claims and authority, that longs for relationship, that values subjective experience, that is rooted in a local context, and that is sceptical of certainty.”

Partnership

Global mission requires partnership. Finance, both personal and denominational is limited. More than that, we are commanded to work with others in the kingdom. A spirit of isolation would be disobedient and also risks missing out in sharing the blessings and experience of others.

The Church is God’s chosen vehicle for world evangelism. Our primary partner in other countries must be the national church. The indigenous churches set the agenda and request help if required.

We will also work alongside parachurch organisations who respect the Church and who view their work as resourcing churches. In 1960, Operation Mobilisation was founded by George Verwer with the goal of, “seeking to mobilise local churches for global missions which would be led by indigenous rather than foreign missionaries.” OMF has the same philosophy, “We serve the church and seek to bring the gospel to all the peoples of East Asia.” This partnership approach in the face of the extent of the challenge and in the changing world was well put by Andrew Wells, “Together we can be a new community – a hundred places learning from each other, with no one single centre of Christianity or single type of mission activity.”

The City

By 2050 more than 75% of the world’s population will live in cities. In 1950, New York and London were the only cities with a population over 10 million (a megacity has a population of over 10m). There are now 34 megacities in the world. In the next 30 years half a billion people will move to cities in Africa and Asia alone. There will be a city the size of Rio de Janeiro (pop 6.7m) established every 2 months.

Mission to the city does not deny mission to rural areas. It is, however, easier to reach the suburbs through the city than the other way around. The growth of the modern city takes us back to the idea of the ‘city state’ e.g., there is a good argument to be made that London is like another country.

Reaching Other World Religions

Religion is a universal phenomenon. The modern world is inexplicable without an understanding of religion. We know there is only one true religion: Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no-one comes to the Father except through Him. This truth requires wisdom in its communication as it is associated with “our imperialistic past and cultural arrogance.” Courage is also needed because, “the question of whether there is the promise of salvation in the name of Jesus, and in no other name, is fast becoming a life-and-death issue facing contemporary Christianity. In the churches this issue will become the test of fidelity to the gospel, a matter of status *confessionis* more urgent than any other.”

In pure statistical terms Christianity in its most broad definition is the major religious group the world, estimated to have 2.4 billion adherents or 29% of the world population. The next three faith groups are: Islam, 1.9 billion (24%), Hinduism, 1.2 billion (15%) and Buddhism, 506m (6%).

Secularism is just another form of religion. J.H. Bavinck wrote presciently, “we have forgotten that our culture, too, is ... a religious phenomenon ... It is time for us to acknowledge frankly that our modern civilisation ... is based on certain presuppositions about man, his place in the world and his responsibility towards God, and this implies a definite worldview.”

Historically religion was highly compartmentalised. Each group was found within fairly well-defined geographical limits. Globalisation and diaspora has resulted in Christianity living closer to other religions. We now witness the pressure of pluralism and see the opportunity of engagement.

Unreached People Groups

Unreached peoples are defined as ethnic groups where there are no known believers and no churches among them. Most of these areas will have no engagement with the gospel and few attempts are being made to reach them with the good news. Some missiologists describe these people groups as ‘frontier people’.

It is of interest to note that an older definition of unreached people put a figure of less than 2% evangelical as a benchmark. This led many to say that Scotland was approaching this figure and was almost in the unreached zone. The situation in Scotland is needy but it is by no means unreached, although there are many pockets which are.

It is estimated that 42% of all people groups fall into this category which is 3.23 billion people. Fewer than 1% of missionaries serve frontier people.

Mission Vision

Is interest in international mission increasing or declining? Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is older people who come to missionary meetings. It is the older generation who generously fund international mission.

On the other hand, we know that an increasing number of young people go on short-term mission trips. Millennials access information and prayer resources through social media and other digital platforms.

The goal of the Mission Board and Generation-Global Mission is to inspire a vision for international mission and to inform the whole denomination of the needs and opportunities which are presented to us.

Free Church Strategy: Reflecting this Change

In the light of these new realities, how do we respond to these challenges and opportunities? We are approaching international mission in a new way. We desire unity of purpose and a sense of anticipation as we adopt this new model.

The new emphasis is now based on the following principles ...

Mission strategy is similar at home and abroad

The General Assembly of 2015 agreed to unite the Home Missions Board with the International Mission Board. The new Missions Board had a simple brief, “The Board shall assume responsibility for developing appropriate denominational partnerships at home and abroad, as well as partnerships with other organisations and agencies, in order to enhance the Church’s ability to reach out with the Gospel.” In 2016 it was agreed to change the name of the Board to the Mission Board.

The change of name was significant. As the term ‘missions’ was used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it referred to cross-cultural mission. Increasingly it is accepted that God’s purpose for the Church is not to divide international mission from other mission activity at home. The Church does not then embark on missions as a separate work, the whole Church is called to mission for the whole time.

The methodology used in evangelism and church planting in overseas settings was no different to those required at home in Scotland. Experience gleaned from international mission has been useful in mission at home. In particular we note the need for contextualisation.

We can think of no congregation within our denomination which is not in a mission situation. In this post-Christendom age, there are no ‘ordinary’ congregations. A mission mentality has not to be employed to simply keep the congregation going, our churches have a calling to their communities.

Our members are called to mission in our places of work and in the communities where we live. The calling of a teacher in Motherwell has the same value as a teacher called to Mumbai. This distinction should not lead to a diminishing of the international calling, it should rather promote the privilege of service in any and every context.

We have a wide portfolio of mission interests within the denomination

The Mission Board through Generation-Global Mission initiated an audit of all the global mission activity within the denomination. 38 congregations responded. The audit showed an encouraging situation. Although the sample was smaller than we would have liked it revealed that 42% of respondents were so involved in international mission that they regarded themselves as 'sending congregations'.

There is a significant range of mission interest. The larger mission organisations are seen as partners e.g., OMF, AIM, OM, WEC and Pioneers, but there is also involvement with smaller units e.g., God is Good Africa and ABU.

In terms of potential, there are opportunities for short term mission service, vision trips, local conferences as well as supporting members who wish to commit to longer term mission service.

Support for mission which is wider than the former 4 focussed areas of Peru, South Africa and India is not new. The evidence reveals that it is growing. It is the desire of the Mission Board to not only stimulate this diverse mission interest, but to also bring a focus and rationale to each supporting decision.

The local church is better equipped to support mission

The local church is the engine of global mission. The more responsibility given to local congregations the more there is a sense of ownership in supporting missionaries. We suggest a range of actions which will make your local fellowship more interested in global mission at the international level. We should see ourselves in a particular context which equates to one of the following: Jerusalem, Samaria and the ends of the earth. The passage applies to both town and village but also to the whole world. There should be constant reference to events and situations abroad which are brought to the congregation for prayer and reflection.

- **Mission Team:** Each congregation would benefit from a small team tasked with developing mission interest with churches. They would communicate, fund-raise, stimulate prayer and have a key role in the support of missionaries through all phases of their call.
- **Tiered Levels:** We recommend that you support missionaries from 1 of 3 tiers. This brings clarity to the relationship which enables both congregation and missionary to plan. A suggested tiering would be as follows:

Tier 1: Missionary is a member of the congregation and has been commissioned by that congregation to serve. There is a priority in terms of funding, prayer exposure and commitment to give pastoral support. There will be opportunities for visiting the missionary on the field and for providing short-term mission support if circumstances permit.

Tier 2: Missionary is given sustained financial support at an agreed level. There is a commitment to prayer support and advocacy of the work within the congregation.

Tier 3: Missionary is supported to the extent of a one-off gift (and expenses) when speaking to the congregation. There is a commitment to pray for the missionary.

We can all foster a culture of international mission.

- **Mission Day/Weekend.** Each congregation commits to a Mission day or Weekend which will focus on international mission. This would be fixed in the regular calendar of congregational events.
- **Mission Display.** A well-presented and frequently updated mission display will be placed in each church building. It will be in a prominent position and will be frequently referred to during congregational activities.

- **Regular Zoom Contact.** A year ago, Zoom belonged to the domain of business. How things have changed. It is now possible to speak with mission partners virtually anywhere in the world through video. Let's do this within our churches.
- **Short-Term Mission/Vision Trip.** Most countries in the world can be visited within 24 hours at a realistic cost. Congregations can easily organise a few people to help and encourage missionaries. Effective help usually involves a longer period of time but this can also be facilitated by congregations in conjunction with mission agencies.

The new model brings financial sustainability and a sense of ownership

Financial support is best led locally. The relationship between the missionary and the local church is made more meaningful if there is a personal relationship and frequent communication. The primary funders of missionaries should be a series of local churches acting as portfolio sources of funding. We recommend that you select a limited number of missionaries to support at an agreed level for 5 years which will be reviewed after each period. Funding would be allocated according to the tiered principle as outlined above.

The Mission Board

Denominational Projects

The number of centrally funded and denominationally governed mission positions has been reduced in the last 10 years. Much of this has been transferred to local leadership. The future mission context rightly sees international mission managed at the national level. We recognise that, in the providence of God, we have a number of ministers who are unusually gifted and equipped for ministry to the Muslim community. There are 2 projects, one in Scotland and another in the Eurasian transcontinental area. The denomination remains committed to these works as having vital strategic importance. They note that they fall within the International Mission Priority Areas (IMPAs) identified in *Going. Making. Growing: A Mission Strategy for the Free Church of Scotland (2017)*.

The following principles have been agreed and will be applied to our 2 denominational ministries:

1. Financial support will be offered primarily for the purpose of establishing, equipping and sustaining ministries which are Word-based.
2. The Board will offer up to 50% of the required funding. In some cases they will provide up to 100% for a time limited period.
3. The Board will provide assistance in accessing additional funding.
4. Congregations should intentionally contribute to these ministries through the Missions Levy and the Missions Fund.

The ministers involved in these projects will cover two Presbyteries each year in rotation to inform our congregations about the work.

The Role of the Mission Board

The role of the Mission Board is changing from that of manager to facilitator, from organiser to co-ordinator. The following activities are crucial to the role of the Mission Board:

- Facilitating a growing portfolio of international mission.
- Developing and fostering an interest in global mission at all levels in the denomination.
- Identifying areas of shared interest and partnerships.
- Advising on deployment and resourcing of missionaries.
- Bringing together specialists in a variety of fields.
- Liaising with other Boards and the Centre for Mission (ETS).

- Developing strong ecumenical links and partnerships with mission organisations and denominations who share our vision.
- Assisting in fundraising.
- Communicating global mission activity throughout the Church.
- Gathering and sharing helpful mission resources.
- Maintaining an up-to-date website.

REPORT OF THE EDINBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BOARD

Needless to say, the past year has caused difficulties that were unforeseen and indeed, could not have been anticipated as to their extent. Nevertheless, the Board of Edinburgh Theological Seminary is pleased to report that, despite the effects of the pandemic, the Seminary was able to provide relevant and accurate theological and practical instruction online for its students. The Board records its appreciation to Principal Martin in his running of the Seminary during this recent difficult period when normal classroom education was not possible. The Board also expresses its gratitude to the lecturers for providing quality online teaching and to the administrative staff for their work in running the seminary during this year of pandemic.

The Board gratefully acknowledges the excellent relationship that ETS has with the University of Glasgow and its continuing validation of our undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

The Board and the Seminary gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Free Church of Scotland for the ongoing work of the Seminary. They are grateful too, for the prayerful commitment that Free Church congregations, as well as others, have for its work. In addition, the Board affirms its willingness to work in harmony with the Board of Ministry and the Mission Board regarding the preparation of students for future roles within the Church.

Board Membership Changes

Two new members were appointed to the Board last year: they are Mr Ross Finlay (Inverness Free North) and Mr Willie Mackenzie (Tain and Fearn). Two advisers have also been appointed, following the instructions of the recent Quinquennial Review: they are Professor Marjory Harper (Aberdeen University) and Dr Marten Walker (Stornoway Free Church). Rev. Thomas Davis comes off the Board this year and the Board thanks him for the many excellent contributions he has made to the work of the Board over the last eight years, particularly in the areas of marketing and fundraising.

Quinquennial Review

One ongoing task of the Board is to encourage and help the Senate implement the recommendations of the Quinquennial Review. Principal Martin, in his section of the Report, provides information concerning progress so far. It is now a standing item for each meeting of the Board to consider progress on those recommendations.

(A) ETS STAFF

1. The Board expresses its gratitude to the current teaching staff at ETS, both full-time and part-time, for providing a comprehensive explanation of the Reformed Faith and for modelling methods of Christian discipleship to the students.

2. The Course Organisers for the Seminary Departments in the coming year are:

Old Testament	Rev. Daniel Sladek
New Testament	Rev. Professor John Angus Macleod
Systematic Theology	Rev. Professor Bob Akroyd
Practical Theology	Rev. Professor Bob Akroyd
Church History	Rev. Nigel Anderson
Church Principles and Practice	Rev. Professor John Angus Macleod
Centre for Mission	Rev. Dr Alistair Wilson

They will be assisted by part-time lecturers appointed by the Board and approved by the University of Glasgow.

In the past year, several part-time lecturers taught classes. Principal Emeritus Donald Macleod and Dr Harrison Perkins taught in ST1 and ST2 and Rev. Thomas Davis taught in ST2. Mr Will Traub taught OT2. In PT1, Mrs Louise MacMillan taught Christian Counselling and Care, Dr Mark Stirling taught Christian Maturity and Leadership, and Derek Newton taught Our

Great Commission. In PT2, Mrs Louise MacMillan taught Healthy Relationships, Rev. Neil MacMillan taught Evangelism and Mission, Rev. Duncan Peters taught Engaging with Islam, and Dr Mark Stirling taught Christian Ethics.

3. The Board is also grateful to Dr Alistair Wilson for his work as Director of Postgraduate Studies.

4. The Board is grateful to Mrs Heather Watson and Mrs Ruth Smith in the ETS Offices for fulfilling the various administrative tasks connected to their roles, and also to Mr Ewan Smith as IT Systems Administrator.

5. The Board is delighted with the appointment of Dr Zachary Purvis to his position in the Church History Department. Dr Purvis is an alumnus of Westminster Seminary California, where he earned an MA in 2011. He then completed his DPhil at the University of Oxford in 2014. Dr Purvis has taught and researched widely. In 2019–21 he was Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the University of Göttingen (Germany), and in 2018–19 he was Robert M. Kingdon, Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA). In 2015–18 he held the Leverhulme Early Career Postdoctoral Fellowship in Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. He is currently a member in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

6. Professor John Angus Macleod has indicated his intention to retire in 2022. The Board thanks Professor Macleod for his many years of teaching New Testament and also for the immense additional contribution he has made to other areas of the Seminary's life and work.

(B) STUDENT NUMBERS

The Board is grateful for the number of students taking the range of courses offered by ETS. In the recent academic year, there were 298 students.

Degree Programmes	Full-time	Part-time	Total
BTh.	30	34	64
Master of Theology (Research)	6	12	18
Master of Theology in Scottish Church History and Theology (taught)	1	4	5
Master of Missiology (Taught)	6	7	13
Other Programmes			
Certificate in Theology/Diploma in Christian Studies (Saturday Course)			156
Access to Theology			13
Diploma in Christian Youthwork			8
Certificate in Presbyterian Church Ministry			7
Individual Study Programme			12
Licentiate in Theology			2
Total			298

(C) CHURCH HISTORY

Over the past year, the Church History Department has continued to function in the interim absence of a full-time Course Organiser. The acting Course Organiser, Rev. Nigel Anderson, has been ably supported by Principal Iver Martin in the latter's teaching of CH101, CH201 and CH 202, with Mr Anderson teaching CH102.

At the start of September 2020 Principal Martin took over responsibilities in the teaching of CH101 after Rev. Thomas Davis stepped aside from his teaching commitment in the Department. Furthermore, Dr John Ferguson continues to oversee Church History postgraduate studies on a temporary basis. The Department is grateful for the contribution of the External Supervisor, Dr Emma Macleod, Stirling University, who has provided valuable advice and support in the formulating of assessment.

The restrictions lockdown has placed on the Department have necessitated a full focus on online teaching and learning. This has not detracted from the Department being able to continue to provide a balance of lecture and student-centred learning.

The appointment of Dr Zachary Purvis as Programme Leader/Lecturer from 1st July 2021 will consolidate the Department's crucial role in grounding students in the historic foundations of the Church.

(D) ETS CENTRE FOR MISSION

The ETS Centre for Mission is a core part of Edinburgh Theological Seminary and exists to encourage and support the Church, in the UK and throughout the world, to engage in mission rooted in careful theological reflection and responsible and effective practice.

At the 2019 General Assembly, the following remit was approved for the ETS Centre for Mission:

- To promote serious engagement with mission studies, and reflective participation in mission practice, among ETS staff and students by means of formal academic courses and other mission-focused events.
- To engage in, and foster, constructive interaction with students, mission agencies, and serving missionaries (local and global) so as to ensure effective training for those preparing for, or engaged in, various forms of mission service.
- To encourage serving missionaries (local and global) by providing opportunities for theological development and biblical research in topics of relevant interest.
- To provide education in mission studies to the wider church.
- To respond to specific requests for theological and practical training of leaders and key workers by the wider church, mission agencies, and, in particular, by the Mission Board and the Board of Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland.

This approved remit is helpful both to those who work in the context of the ETS Centre for Mission and to the wider church as it provides clarity and direction for the activities of the Centre for Mission.

1. **Impact of Covid-19.** Since March 2020, the activities of the Centre for Mission have been significantly affected by the necessary constraints imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, it has not been possible to proceed with World Mission Days or sabbatical study opportunities during this time, both significant aspects of the work of the Centre for Mission. Nonetheless, there have been some important developments in the past year which I will outline below.

2. **ETS Centre for Mission Sub-group of Senate.** As part of the restructuring and augmenting of the ETS Senate initiated by the recent Quinquennial Report, a new Sub-group will be formally proposed to the Senate in March 2021, with a view to facilitating greater strategic thought regarding the Centre for Mission and ensuring more effective communication with various stakeholders regarding the activities of the Centre for Mission.

3. **World Mission Days.** Although it has not been possible to meet together for World Mission Days in their previous format, there is ongoing discussion regarding how redesigned World Mission Days might be offered most effectively in future.

4. **MTh in Missiology.** The MTh in Missiology continues to be an effective means of developing serious academic engagement with the disciplines of Mission Studies and World Christianity. The new intake of students in September 2020 reflected a good mix of male and female students, reflecting a range of ages and backgrounds, including some experienced cross-cultural missionaries. At present, more than half of the registered students on the MTh in Missiology programme are women. Two students successfully completed their MTh in Missiology degree in the past year and will graduate shortly.

5. **Postgraduate Seminars.** While only a portion of the postgraduate students at ETS are on the MTh in Missiology programme, the Centre for Mission has also hosted a series of postgraduate seminars for all our postgraduate students. Since March 2020, these have been arranged as online seminars, which has limited contact between students but has also opened up new opportunities for involving a wide range of speakers. The programme of seminars includes, normally, six general seminars each semester. These are intended for all postgraduate students, regardless of the programme on which they are registered. Invited speakers address a range of topics in a variety of disciplines. These seminars provide an opportunity for ETS postgraduate students to meet together and to engage with both established scholars and other postgraduate students. The online format has allowed us to draw on a greater variety of speakers from a variety of locations, including Kenya, the Netherlands, and the USA. The programme of seminars also includes subject-specific seminars relating to the MTh by Taught Courses programmes. Seminars for MTh in Missiology students have involved reading and discussing a book together. During the 2020-21 session, we have been able to arrange for the authors of the selected books to meet with the students during the final online seminar. In recent months, seminars have also been initiated for the MTh in Scottish Church History and Theology programme.

While the postgraduate seminars have been designed as an important part of the academic formation of postgraduate students, the online format has also allowed us to open the seminars to visitors. We have had numerous visitors at the seminars during the past six months from all over the UK and also from many other parts of the world including Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, France, and the USA. This opportunity has enabled us to increase engagement with people from the academy and various different churches and so generate awareness of, and relationships with, ETS.

6. **Eldership Training.** Professor John Angus MacLeod has continued to provide a series of training sessions for Elders and Deacons to congregations which have requested them. These moved online when COVID-19 restrictions came into force and appear to have worked well in that format.

Dr ALISTAIR WILSON
Coordinator, ETS Centre for Mission

(E) FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING

The main development over the past twelve months in terms of marketing, has been the creation and launch of a new website for ETS. The previous website was launched in 2014 and served well for several years, but it was recognised that there was a need for both refreshment and improvement on the Seminary website. The new website has a clearer layout and a more user-friendly design and gives a wide range of information about the courses and opportunities available at ETS. The new website also has extensive improvements for facilitating enquiries and applications as well as improvements to the student areas of the site. This has helped to streamline application processes and general administration. The Seminary is immensely grateful to Sharon Macleod of Fivepenny Media for her work in designing and building the new website.

The restrictions due to COVID 19 have limited opportunities for marketing and fundraising, particularly in relation to spending time at conferences and with congregations to promote the work of ETS. However, we have continued to work to maintain the Seminary's profile on social media and through regular columns in *The Record*. In terms of marketing and fundraising, we are in the process of launching a new initiative called Friends of ETS. This aims to strengthen existing contacts with the Seminary and to establish new ones with people across the world who have an interest in the life and work of ETS. Those who sign up as Friends of ETS will be given regular updates about the life and work of the Seminary as well as being kept informed about opportunities and needs for supporting the Seminary financially.

Over the past seven years, Rev. Thomas Davis oversaw the Marketing and Fundraising Sub-Committee of the Seminary Board, but his time in this role has come to an end as his term on the Seminary Board ends at this Assembly. We are very grateful to Mr Davis for all the work he did in developing means of increasing the profile of the Seminary in the theological world and in the perception of Christians and churches. The Seminary Board are delighted that Mr Willie Mackenzie has agreed to help co-ordinate this work going forward.

(F) RESEARCH LEAVE FOR FULL TIME ETS ACADEMIC STAFF

The Board agreed in principle to grant research leave to full-time members of ETS academic staff for the following reasons:

- Raising and maintaining the Seminary's profile through publications by academic staff is key to attracting post-graduate students.
- Research leave will enhance Continual Professional Development (CPD) by creating time and space for doing research and producing publications.
- Providing leave to produce academic publications is a means of meeting the expectations of validation and accreditation bodies that look for evidence of academic engagement.
- Research leave serves to help keep the staff member mentally and spiritually stimulated and also helps to keep lectures abreast of contemporary trends in the subject taught.
- Research leave will not be an automatic right; it will require to be requested and justified by the staff member concerned.

Research leave will be limited to one per academic year. The possibilities of funding research leave will be explored, including seeking guidance from academics in other teaching institutions. Eligible full-time staff are encouraged to submit specific proposals for research leave. The Board has remitted the management of research leave to the Senate.

(G) TITLE OF PROFESSOR

Paragraph 1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 anent Staffing Arrangements for Edinburgh Theological Seminary and the Status of Rev. Daniel Sladek states that: ‘The General Assembly approve the discontinuation of the automatic conferral of the title of Professor and direct that staff who have responsibility for specific departments and who are appointed after 2013 be referred to as Course Organisers. The title of existing Professors shall remain the same as at present.’

The ETS 2014 Report gave the background to this decision as follows: ‘The title of Professor is conferred by the Free Church and does not correspond to the practice within the wider academic world. It is therefore being proposed that, as of this year, the automatic conferral of the title of Professor be discontinued. (This will not affect those who already possess the title).’

The presupposition behind the 2014 decision was that the title is an *academic* one. Whilst it may be true that the title ‘Professor’ was once conferred upon a teacher by the Church, it is no longer understood to be an *ecclesiastic* title. In the UK, it is universally understood to be an academic designation, and one which is earned by way of tenure and publication.

While affirming that the title of ‘Professor’ is an academic designation, the present Board wishes to be able, where appropriate, to recognise and reward academic excellence in accordance with clear criteria. Therefore, the Board is requesting the 2021 Assembly to adjust the 2014 decision by making provision for the Seminary Board to consider conferring the academic designation of Professor on a lecturer who substantially meets the following criteria which are commonly followed by Scottish universities: ‘The lecturer has published three monographs (or fifteen academic articles or equivalent); has shown academic leadership within the Seminary and outside (involvement in learned bodies, speaking at academic conferences, leading an international research project); has experience of teaching at Postgraduate level; is asked by others to write references for book proposals, research proposals; has done PhD examining, or has been an external examiner in more than one institution.’

(H) STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

The past academic year has been unlike any other. However, there are still many things that the ETS students are thankful for. The following points are some of these areas.

Staffing and Teaching. Students do not doubt that this has been a challenging year for lecturers. We are grateful for the high level of commitment and enthusiasm that the Seminary staff have shown; the lecturers, Mrs Heather Watson and Mrs Ruth Smith in their administrative roles, Mr Ewan Smith as he helps support the IT system and Mr Byron Goodwin as he maintained the ETS building. The students would also like to thank the Seminary Board and Senate for enabling and maintaining such a high level of godly staff.

Spiritual Life of the Seminary. Restarting a time of daily communal worship has been a time of refreshment for many students. Not simply as we read the Bible and pray together, but it is also the only forum where students regularly see others who are not in their lectures. Rather than the usual afternoon time in regular Seminary life, daily worship was moved to 8:40 am with much success.

Student Life. It has been a difficult year to maintain a sense of collegiality; however, we are thankful for what we have been able to organise. Students hosted two Zoom quizzes per Semester which provided an opportunity to help maintain a sense of collegiality and enabled students to get to know one another better in a social setting. We are particularly aware of first-year students, most of whom have not met any other ETS student in the flesh. These quizzes have provided opportunities to meet older students. The SRC also restarted the buddying system in the second Semester to help facilitate this and help support and encourage one another, particularly those struggling during the lockdown. The Student Theology Society enjoyed rigorous lectures looking at Christology in 2 Peter and Theological Knowledge. The Mission Society took the theme of Mission in 21st Century Scotland and enjoyed lectures looking at Mission in the Suburbs and Teaching the Bible in a Post-Christian Country.

Higher Education Review. The students would also like to thank Principal Iver Martin as he led the Seminary through their recent Higher Education Review, conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. We look forward to seeing the report in due course.

Church History. It was great to hear the news of Dr Zachary Purvis being appointed as Programme Leader and Lecturer in Church History. As students, we look forward to learning from him and enjoying all that he has to bring to Seminary life.

Thankfulness. The students are thankful for the opportunity that they have to study at ETS. Most of all, we are thankful to the Lord for this privilege. Every week we learn more but, in some ways, we realise we know less as we see more of the glory of God as He has revealed Himself to us in His Word and through the history of His church.

MR CRAIG T. ANDERSON
Student Representative

(I) PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

I wish to pay tribute, first of all, to all of our staff who have adapted admirably, to an entirely new set of circumstances and have overcome unforeseen obstacles which have proved highly challenging. In the same breath, I wish to pay tribute to our students who have endured the challenges of COVID with tremendous patience and understanding. We sincerely hope that we can return to some kind of (even restricted) normality as we begin a new academic session in September.

2020-21 – An Academic Year Entirely Online

In the Summer of 2020, it became clear that teaching, at least during the first Semester would have to be entirely online. As things turned out, one online Semester became two, which meant that, while ETS has, for some years, made a measure of distance learning provision, this year we were forced by circumstances to conduct classes entirely online. ETS has thus broken new ground, which means that, because our online facilities have rapidly improved, such provision may well become a lasting feature of our educational portfolio. While this may appear to be, and in some circumstances is, welcome progress, online learning can never compensate for the many benefits of an authentic collegiate experience which can only happen in a room full of fellow students.

The COVID year involved a new set of parameters which included an arrangement to facilitate a click-and-collect library service, the provision of teaching material online and the adjustment of contact time to ease the strain of “Zoom fatigue” (for everyone). Assessments also had to be significantly modified to take the new circumstances into account. These modified arrangements were all made in consultation with the University of Glasgow and our external examiners who provided invaluable assistance.

Retirement of Professor John Angus Macleod

Professor John Angus Macleod has announced his forthcoming retirement which will be effective as of mid-2022. God willing, there will be opportunity to fully express our thanks to him for his extraordinary devotion to the life and work of ETS over many years. Meanwhile, we will seek to make the most of his final year as Professor of Greek and New Testament. The Board has begun the search for a replacement.

Major Government Reviews (October 2020 – January 2021)

To add to other burdens, ETS was required to undergo two major government reviews which took place between October 2020 and January 2021. The first was conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and involved the submission of a large (sixty-five page) self-evaluation document and a two-day virtual visit from the Quality Assurance Agency. I am thankful to report that ETS successfully met the stringent and wide-ranging criteria set by the QAA.

The second review was conducted by the Welsh Government and provides a platform by which other Governments assess their criteria in order to grant student financial support. At the time of writing, this review has not been concluded.

Implementation of Quinquennial Recommendations from 2019

Government reviews, COVID responses, and some other unforeseen factors unfortunately resulted in a delay to the implementation of the Quinquennial Review Committee (QRC) recommendations, approved by the General Assembly in 2019. Nonetheless, despite the many obstacles, I can report the following:

Enlarged Senate

The first major change was the enlargement of the Senate to incorporate two additional members, a student representative, the Chairman of the Seminary Board and two additional advisers from the wider church. I can report that Professor George Coghill and Ms Karina Macleod agreed to join the Senate as members, and Rev. Dr Robin Sydserrff (Chalmers Church) and Mr Andy Hunter (FIEC) accepted our invitation to join as advisers. The enhanced Senate met, therefore, for the first time in June 2020. Unfortunately, because of the complex challenges of COVID, teaching commitments and the workload involved in completing requirements for the government reviews, a further Senate meeting that year was impossible, but we did have a second meeting in January 2021 and a third in March 2021. It is the intention that the Senate will meet at least three times per year, as per the recommendation of the QRC report.

Educational Strategy

At its first meeting in June 2020, a structure of Sub-groups was agreed upon, in which most of the “talking” would be done, with reports being brought to the Senate for the additional input of our advisers. These Sub-groups have met several times to give considerable attention to the issues identified by the 2019 QRC Report. It was expected that these items would have been given full Senate discussion before this report, but, because of lack of availability of members, this was not possible.

Four Year Validated BTh?

The QRC Report recommended that priority be given to a four-year training programme to incorporate church-based training at the same time as ETS. For the sake of clarity, it should be emphasised that ETS currently does give priority to a four-year academic programme which aligns with concurrent church-based training. While this can no doubt be improved, and while desired progress has been attenuated by current circumstances, the Assembly should be in no doubt that there is currently a successful working model.

A considerable amount of time was spent on exploring the feasibility of a validated four-year BTh programme which incorporated a church-based component. However, because of the enormous complexities in determining the feasibility of such a prospect, the Board of Ministry, understandably, fell from this idea in favour of the status quo which is proving to be the most effective model.

Specific Senate Recommendations

The Quinquennial report then specifically directed the Senate as follows:

The General Assembly instruct the ETS Senate to devote a substantial portion of its time to the regular and sustained consideration of the following aspects of its educational strategy, in order to produce within a period of twelve months, clear and shared institution-wide policies on the following, with a stated implementation period for such changes as considered appropriate:

1. *Overall course management and coherence.*
2. *Coherence of assessment policy and practice.*
3. *Course progression.*
4. *Modular flexibility.*
5. *Teaching methodology.*
6. *Addressing and balancing the needs of content, ministry skills and personal spiritual development.*

Apart from Number 6, which was thought best discussed by the Board of Ministry, the Senate Sub-groups have given sustained consideration to each of the above as follows:

Summary of Progress so Far

For the benefit of commissioners an instant summary of progress so far is as follows:

1. Overall course management and coherence - Complete
2. Coherence of assessment policy and practice – In process
3. Course progression – In discussion
4. Modular flexibility – In discussion
5. Teaching methodology – In discussion

It is important that, for the sake of transparency, some detail of the above discussions be reported, and these are as follows:

1. Overall Course Management and Coherence

The QRC Report suggested that the course content was heavy (perhaps even excessive) and the overall coherence of course content across disciplines was not sufficiently evident, resulting in some unnecessary overlap. The Report suggested that ETS would benefit from a Programme Committee which looked across departments and sought to iron out any excessive overlap. This Committee has since then been established.

During the discussion at Sub-group level, some typical examples of overlap were identified as the Lord's Supper which was covered in Systematic Theology, Church History and New Testament. Another example was the Doctrine of Man which was germane to both Systematic Theology and Old Testament. A further example was the Doctrine of the Trinity which was covered in Church History and Systematic Theology.

While on the surface, some overlap may appear wasteful, a distinction was recognised between “necessary” and “unnecessary” overlap. There is also a difference between duplication and reinforcement.

The Sub-group agreed that unnecessary overlap, such as two differing assessments on the Lord's Supper should be avoided. However, such avoidance did not necessitate a policy as such. Rather, it was suggested that, as a first step, Course Organisers should make a point of conferring among themselves to ensure the avoidance of unnecessary overlap as well as possibly sharing proposed exam papers to avoid duplication. It was also suggested that each lecturer should clarify that, in the course of classes, there would be some repetition which would serve as reinforcement as opposed to duplication. Finally, it was suggested that the annual Student Feedback Form should include a question on whether there has been overlap.

2. Coherence of Assessment Policy and Practice

The QRC Report had suggested that assessment practices varied from department to department, according to the nature of the material being taught, and according to the individual Course Organiser's preferences. The Report suggested that there should be an overall coherence of practice, with clear criteria for success. The Report also noted that an examination requiring a three-hour hand-written essay was considered by some students as an alien experience in an era when computer-generated work is the norm.

Additionally, the Report noted that there were shortcomings in candidates' abilities to cope with assessments which required the student to demonstrate critical and analytical thinking, rather than merely repeating memorised lecture content. This was linked to what appeared to the QR Committee as an over-reliance on using the lecture as the main vehicle for conveying information to students. The Report suggested that peer assessment be considered as a possible alternative method in some instances.

At Sub-group level, extensive attention was given to each of the observations above. Firstly, during initial discussions it was observed that some disciplines lent themselves to different forms of assessment and some liberty was given to Course Organisers, in consultation with their external examiners, to produce their own forms of assessment.

Then, interestingly, the recent COVID outbreak had necessitated a greater variety of assessments (particularly summative). As we “speak” these are still being tried, and we are still evaluating their merits or otherwise.

In respect of examinations, when these were discussed in depth, once again it was agreed that some subjects lent themselves more to examinations than others. The merits of examinations lie in the focus given to a wide range of topics; they are

opportunities for concentrated revision. At the same time, it was generally agreed that emphasis should be given to the importance of analysis, which may be assessed in some cases in a shorter time than three hours.

Whilst the use of laptops may sound plausible, and while nobody objects to the idea in principle, a decision on their use comes down entirely to the practicalities, like, for example, the danger of crashing or the temptation to access data. Besides, it was noted that some students, depending on their age and experience, find writing easier than typing.

Team Peer Assessment already takes place in Practical Theology which lends itself more to this form of assessment. However, this can be problematic when one student invests lots of time into it, but the others do not.

At ETS, decisions are taken on the question as to what form of assessment will best measure the intended learning outcome of the course, and not the adherence to traditional forms of examination for their own sakes. Assessment strategy is an ongoing discussion and will be a standing item on future agendas, as recommended by the QRC report.

3. *Course Progression*

The QRC Report had suggested that the “content-driven approach” to the courses does not lend itself easily to progression in analytical skills and outcomes. The report continued: “It seemed strange to the Committee that there was little evidence of a progression away from lecture-centred teaching between first and final years.”

When this was discussed at Sub-group level it was conceded that within the traditional model, students receive a uniform diet of material, taught in lecture style, designed deliberately to replicate and demonstrate regular exposition. To be fair though, when done properly, not only is there information transfer, but students are inspired and stimulated in their interest. However, the question as to whether this model lent itself to self-motivation, progression, research skills and critical analysis, is valid and was extensively discussed.

The QRC Report recommended the exploration of other models which would encourage student centred learning and progression. The Sub-group has begun to explore other models, such as, for example, instead of a uniformly distributed two-year course (where each year would consist of a uniform diet of material), the first year might be a survey course which covered the entire corpus of material at introductory level. In the second year, there would be more of an in-depth study of a range of select topics which would involve some lectures, some seminars, and student-centred learning.

Within this suggested model, all students would be provided with a survey course, then at second year stage, they would be encouraged to take initiative, read and carry out research in a manner that would prepare them for regular self-motivated study in ministry. It is argued that this model would facilitate student progression and teach study skills.

Not everyone is entirely comfortable with this approach. Arguments are that student-centred learning may deprive students of the benefit of “listening to a teacher”. Furthermore, it appears to differ from some other Seminaries. There are also fears that while more academic students would benefit (and thrive), this model might work against the less academic who may benefit more from the traditional model.

At present, discussions are ongoing, and it is hoped that the benefit of a “both-and” approach might satisfy several aims.

4. *Modular flexibility*

The QRC Report recommended that over a period prior to the next validation process, a shift towards greater flexibility in course content for individual students should be explored. The Report recommended that consideration be given to making room for more electives and not prescribing an over-packed core of compulsory modules. Further, when it came to what might be adjusted, the Report said that, from the perspective of training candidates for Free Church ministry, there were two areas which should be addressed: original languages and preaching.

Original Languages. The Report said that, because for a long time, students have complained that the one-size-fits-all approach to languages (particularly Hebrew), students spent so much time on Hebrew that other vital subjects were neglected, a different approach should be explored. The Report suggested that a full two-year course, similar to the current arrangement, be provided for the linguistically able. For others, less gifted in linguistics, a new one-year course should be made available.

Preaching. The QR Committee believed that a greater focus on preaching – hermeneutics, homiletics and crucially a wider focus on examples of preaching from the various genres of scripture – would be helpful, involving course organisers in each

genre, along with other gifted practitioners. The report suggested discussion around the question as to whether preaching should be part of the Practical Theology accredited course.

General Discussion on Modular Flexibility

Of all of the specific areas of discussion, a shift towards modular flexibility is the most complicated, and revolutionary. Furthermore, changes of such magnitude will involve additional resources, time, effort and funding. Nonetheless, the time window between now and the next university validation (2024) gives an opportunity to plan and consult thoroughly before embarking on a radically different curricular arrangement.

We note the QRC's deliberately measured language in recommending that we "*shift towards greater flexibility... making room for more electives*" which we understand to mean a modification of our existing curriculum, as opposed to a complete rebirth.

Discussion at Sub-group level has begun in somewhat of a "brainstorming" fashion, with suggestions ranging from the sheer number of possible elective modules that could be offered, to the degree to which core courses could be modified to allow for more flexibility.

This discussion is at an early stage, but it is clear already that the way ahead needs to be guided by the overall principle that ETS exists primarily to provide theological education in preparation for pastoral ministry, particularly within the Free Church of Scotland, and our partner churches.

Thereafter, two additional challenges should be recognised. One is the fact that many students apply to ETS without a prior university education, and indeed some straight out of high school. The assumptions therefore that once could be made, namely that students were already adept at critical analysis or even basic sentence construction, is no longer a reality. Secondly, since the rebranding of ETS, a greater number of students have applied to study in preparation for other forms of church and gospel work, most notably women. It is therefore important to accommodate a greater variety of student with a greater variety of final objective.

The current discussion around flexibility is therefore at an initial stage in which we are working to identify what our ultimate goals should be.

Curriculum

Inevitably, the discussion has included the question over whether the current uniform credit and contact level of all courses was valid, and whether it accorded with the needs of the Free Church and other trainers. While the issue of languages was identified in the QRC Report, other curricular areas were explored at Sub-group level, such as Biblical Studies where it was asked whether it is necessary to cover the whole of the Old Testament or New Testament. For example, does a module on "The Minor Prophets" have to cover every book? Or, should a module on "The Gospels" necessarily lend equal weight to all four, or could it focus on one?

Additionally, the question of core-ministry curriculum is not simply about what subjects constitute that core, but whether there ought to be a review of the "equal dividend" which is currently operative. Assuming that any change should be a modification of our existing working model, additional elective modules will inevitably have a knock-on effect on the core curriculum which is taught presently.

All of these questions are currently being explored at an initial level and will require extensive discussion including input from the Board of Ministry and other stakeholders.

It is also crucial that the views of student cohorts should be listened to, and that should include female students, some of whom wish to see a female track offered.

Finally, it should be stressed that while hard questions are being asked, the introduction of some flexibility should be viewed as a positive development. And crucially, it is not necessarily the case that offering more modular flexibility dilutes the quality or standard of educational provision at ETS. In fact, depending on what is offered, quality could be enhanced.

Preaching

Initial Sub-group discussion about preaching began by asking whether ETS is responsible for preaching practice or whether it should be done in a local church context. It was argued that while regular preaching was more natural in the local training church, if it is left entirely to local churches, there is not a level playing field. Within ETS, workshops have a significant role to play where there is uniform quality and equity of feedback.

In a recent survey conducted by the Board of Ministry, quality preaching was identified as a major objective. The greatest task is teaching students how to interpret scripture. The Senate recognises the challenge to teaching *with respect to preaching* and will work towards developing and improving our provision with respect to that ultimate goal.

The discussion about modular flexibility is at an early stage and, at the time of writing, is heading towards the full Senate.

5. Teaching methodology

The QRC Report noted, “the predominant pedagogy employed at ETS is by lecture, with an emphasis on information transfer, with mostly passive participation by students, and with less time devoted to prior reading, seminars and interactive learning. Courses are content-driven, aiming to cover as much material as possible, with less emphasis on acquisition and development of analytical and other transferable skills and outcomes. The QR Committee felt strongly that this limited the impact of the training. The combination of student-centred learning techniques and team assessments would prepare students much better for the pulpit where they would have to continue to learn without the spoon-feeding of lectures and where critically, success is dependent on teamwork. The combination of student self-learning and seminar discussion would enable lecturers to impart their experience to students in those areas where the need for help is revealed and, in that sense, would make much better use of both student and lecturer time.”

In the discussion at Sub-group, it was felt by some that the QRC Report’s description of the teaching methodology at ETS as “spoon feeding” was exaggerated and unfair. In addition, it was made clear that students value lectures and hope was expressed that they should continue to play a large, even predominant part.

Nonetheless, it is conceded that the value and effectiveness of lectures depend on how engaged students are. Besides, it is argued that if we are training ministers, we should perhaps be preparing them for the autonomy in which they will have to live. If a good deal of content can be acquired by assigned reading, a greater proportion of time can be spent teaching students the skills for research and analysis. In this regard, the term “student-centred learning” is perhaps an unhelpful and even misleading term. It should perhaps be replaced by “directed learning” to emphasise the fact that there is no intention of lecturers abandoning their classes.

Once again, it was emphasised that the present discussion, as with the other topics, should not be seen as a dichotomy between either-or, but both-and. We should teach skills and deliver content. We should deliver rousing lectures, shape minds and teach students how to think.

Finally, in seeking to move towards the implementation of the 2019 recommendations, three things ought to be borne in mind:

1. ETS needs to be realistic about the measure and rate at which such developments can take place. We are a small institute working within strict cost constraints.
2. Partnership with local churches is key. ETS needs to improve communication with our sending churches.
3. We need to manage expectations and make sure that in our effort to progress, there is no detriment to the quality of our current provision or the ethos that is enjoyed by all of our students.

PRINCIPAL IVER MARTIN
Edinburgh Theological Seminary

REV. MALCOLM MACLEAN, *Chairman*
REV. FERGUS MACDONALD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report, and thank the Board, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, for its work.
2. The General Assembly express their thankfulness to God for the ongoing growth of Edinburgh Theological Seminary. They commend the work of the Seminary to the prayers of the Church.
3. The General Assembly thank Principal Iver Martin for his leadership of the Seminary and encourage him to continue with his work of leading and promoting the Seminary.
4. The General Assembly thank the full-time staff of Edinburgh Theological Seminary for their relevant, accurate and dedicated teaching of the Reformed Faith. They also thank visiting lecturers and others for their contribution to the instruction of students.
5. The General Assembly thank Rev. Nigel Anderson for his work as the acting Course Organiser of Church History. The General Assembly also thank Dr John Ferguson for overseeing Church History postgraduate studies.
6. The General Assembly welcome and approve of the appointment of Dr Zachary Purvis as Programme Leader and Lecturer in Church History and grant him a seat on the ETS Senate.
7. The General Assembly thank Mrs Heather Watson for her work as Seminary Secretary and Mrs Ruth Smith for her work in administration and in looking after the Library.
8. The General Assembly thank Mr Ewan Smith for his work in supporting the IT system and Mr Byron Goodwin for his work in helping maintain the building that ETS shares with the Free Church Offices.
9. The General Assembly give thanks for the good relations between the Seminary and the University of Glasgow.
10. The General Assembly note their encouragement arising from the number of students attending ETS and commend them to the prayers of the Church.
11. The General Assembly thank Rev. Thomas Davis for his work in Marketing and Fundraising in connection with the Seminary.
12. The General Assembly thank the Board for initiating the exploration of research leave for full-time academic staff. They encourage the Senate to take advantage of this opportunity when it becomes available.
13. The Assembly grant the Board authority to confer the academic designation of Professor on a lecturer who substantially meets the following criteria: 'The lecturer has published three monographs (or fifteen academic articles or equivalent); has shown academic leadership within the Seminary and outside (involvement in learned bodies, speaking at academic conferences, leading an international research project); has experience of teaching at Postgraduate level; is asked by others to write references for book proposals, research proposals; has done PhD examining, or has been an external examiner in more than one institution.'
14. The General Assembly instruct the Seminary Board to ensure that, from 2022 onwards, the Principal's Report incorporates developments in educational strategy, curriculum development, assessment reviews and pedagogical methodology as standing items so that the Assembly is fully apprised as to the teaching practices and curriculum at ETS.
15. The General Assembly encourage Free Church Ministers to consider the Master of Theology degree.

REPORT OF THE ETS QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. The Remit. The 2019 General Assembly approved the following deliverance of the ETS Quinquennial Review Committee's Report:

"The General Assembly directs the QRC to liaise with the Seminary Board and Senate prior to the 2020 and 2021 Assemblies and report back on the implementation of any recommendations agreed by the Assembly."

The provision for feedback on progress of the Committee's report is in line with current good practice whereby institutional change is monitored and slippage in implementation of change is minimised. The Committee's report contained significant recommendations, not least being its proposals for a new model of Training for Ministry candidates of the Free Church of Scotland which would entail the Seminary and training churches working together.

Prior to the General Assembly of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the first lockdown commencing 23rd March 2020 disrupted all of Church life. Because of the extra workload generated by the need to adjust to these circumstances, online meetings with the Senate and the Seminary Board had to be cancelled. A verbal update was given by the Convener to the 2020 General Assembly.

2. The Process. In the past 12 months the Committee has met online with the Seminary Senate and received an additional email update on progress from the Principal. The Chairman of the Seminary Board has updated the Committee on new appointments to the Board and responded to questioning on the extent to which the Board has held the Senate accountable for progress regarding the Report. The Seminary Board's Five-Year Plan for the Seminary (updated in January 2021) was supplied to the Committee and examined. Finally, a questionnaire was circulated to members of the Senate regarding progress in matters of educational strategy and preparation for the new Minister-in-Training partnership with churches.

3. The Report. The Committee reports as follows:

3.1. The Senate and Board met with considerable challenges arising from the COVID19 pandemic and some slippage is therefore to be expected.

3.2. The Senate now benefits from an enlarged membership and has organised itself into working sub-groups with responsibility for progressing the Committee's report being given to the Programme Design and the Programme Delivery Sub-groups.

3.3. Progress in some key areas has been partial.

3.4. There has been some discussion of educational strategy but there is still no set of agreed policies with stated implementation periods (Deliverance 4 of the Report). This was asked for within a period of 12 months from the 2019 Assembly.

3.5. There has been little reflection on changes that may be necessary for the Seminary to partner with training churches to deliver ministerial training. The Seminary Board document "ETS - the next 5 years" makes no mention of Minister-in-Training programmes. Whilst the Board of Ministry remains committed to this new model of training some of the questionnaire responses indicated a belief that this was no longer the case. The Board of Ministry is committed to a four-year training model but one that does not require the added complication of validation for the church-based activities. Whilst the Board of Ministry is ultimately responsible for setting the training requirements of our students, it is important for the Senate to have a position on the desirability or otherwise, of some areas that are currently the responsibility of the Seminary being devolved to local churches. There are numerous issues to be anticipated such as the interaction with church-based programmes and the desirability of greater flexibility of course content to enable Free Church candidates to pursue electives.

3.6. The Committee met with some defensiveness regarding the Senate questionnaire survey and there was a poor overall response. This was disappointing. Best practice should mean that accountability is welcomed and that those involved in governance are trusted to give fair and useful feedback.

3.7. The Seminary Board is tasked by the General Assembly to ensure that the Senate fulfil its remit. The Board has, by its own admission, not held the Senate accountable for progress in relation to the 2019 Quinquennial report. Moving forward, the Board should ensure that progress is made.

REV. IVOR MACDONALD, *Convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive the Report of the ETS Quinquennial Review Committee. They discharge the Committee and thank it for its work.
2. The General Assembly commend Edinburgh Theological Seminary Senate for its commitment to the work of the Seminary amid challenging circumstances. They note the progress made and they encourage the Senate to address those areas still requiring attention.
3. The General Assembly instruct the Senate to liaise with the Board of Ministry regarding components of training impacted by the new four-year Minister-in-Training model. They further instruct the Senate to address issues of flexibility regarding content.
4. The General Assembly instruct the Seminary Board to ensure the delivery of those elements of the 2019 ETS Quinquennial Review Committee report which are still to be implemented. They instruct the Board to report back to the 2022 General Assembly on all the outstanding items.

REPORT OF THE PSALMODY AND PRAISE COMMITTEE

*How good it is to praise the LORD;
To sing a joyful song,
And to your name, O God Most High,
Make music all day long. Psalm 92:1 (Sing Psalms)*

(A) INTRODUCTION

1. Constitution and Remit. The 2015 General Assembly agreed new terms of reference for the Committee as follows:

- *To promote high standards of praise, including encouraging and assisting with training at congregational level, the promotion of workshops, the preparation and updating of praise manuals, and the participation of ministers.*
- *to report to the General Assembly on issues relating to the praise of the Church including the balance between the Book of Psalms, other scriptures, canticles and hymns, the choice of versions of the Psalms, other scriptures and hymns, issues of precenting and accompaniment.*
- *to oversee the production and printing of praise manuals; copyright and use of materials by other agencies; commercial and IT issues.*

2. General Business. The Committee met twice in 2019/20 and once in 2020/21 under the convenership of Rev. Ruairidh MacLean. This report, therefore, covers a two-year period due to the ongoing pandemic. The primary activity of the Committee in this period has been the granting of copyright requests.

(B) COPYRIGHT REQUESTS

- 1.** Permission to use the words of *Sing Psalms* was granted to the North West Publishing House, publisher for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and to the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- 2.** Permission to use selected portions of *Sing Psalms* was granted to Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Castle Rock, Colorado, United States, and to Lynden United Reformed Church, Lynden, Washington, United States.
- 3.** Permission to stream words from *Sing Psalms* in live broadcast services was granted to Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Orland Park, Illinois, United States.
- 4.** The Committee granted permission to the Free Church in Prince Edward Island to print copies of *Sing Scripture*.

(C) FREE CHURCH PSALMODY AND PRAISE COMMITTEE FACEBOOK PAGE

1. The Free Church Psalmody and Praise Committee Facebook page now has 525 followers. It provides a link to the Free Church website's Praise page and promotes the Committee's resources such as Pointers for Precentors, access to PowerPoint slides, the *Sing Psalms* App, and the stories behind favourite hymns. There has been a period of limited activity over the last couple of years but with more members of the Committee having become involved with this it is hoped that a period of greater activity will follow.

(D) PRAISE WORKSHOPS

1. Praise Workshops proved to have been a useful means of promoting the sung praise. Plans for workshops in 2021 were put on hold, and the Committee hopes to revisit these once restrictions are lifted.

(E) SALES OF PRAISE AND PSALMODY TITLES**1. Sales figures for 2019 and 2020:**

	2019	2020
<i>Sing Psalms with The Scottish Psalter</i> , Words only	530	123
<i>The Scottish Psalmody</i> , Sol-fa	14	1
<i>Sing Psalms</i> , Sol-fa	38	2
<i>Sing Psalms</i> , Staff	652	49
<i>Sing Psalms</i> , Words only	318	36
<i>Sing Psalms</i> , Large Print	10	14
<i>Sing Psalms</i> , Music only	40	3
<i>Sing Scripture</i>	20	7
<i>Psalms for All Seasons</i> CD	16	7
<i>Tutor</i> CD	6	3
<i>Songs of the Spirit</i> , Sol-fa	4	1
<i>Songs of the Spirit</i> , Staff	4	1

2. Sales commentary. The Committee is grateful to the staff of the Free Church of Scotland offices for fulfilling sales orders for the Committee's publications. Stocks of the sol-fa version of *Sing Psalms* are running low. In view of the perception that fewer people make use of this form of musical notation, and in view of the likely cost of re-printing, it was agreed not to pursue any re-printing of this edition at this time. Stock of the *Sing Psalms Words* edition are running low, and the Committee is obtaining costs to reprint this edition.

REV. RUAIRIDH MACLEAN, *Convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Psalmody and Praise Committee and thank the Committee for its work.
2. The General Assembly remind congregations that the Book of Psalms is a unique manual of praise, which should be given a central place in our worship services. They again urge upon precentors, congregations and ministers a duty of intelligent and skilful psalm-singing, and the maintenance overall of a high standard of praise.
3. The General Assembly note the usefulness of the workshop service offered by the Committee to give practice in precenting and in better congregational singing and they encourage the Church to make use of this facility.
4. The General Assembly encourage congregations to set up regular sessions for psalmody practice, with a view to improving the standard of praise, learning any as yet unfamiliar items from *Sing Psalms* and *Sing Scripture*, and for congregational fellowship.
5. The General Assembly support the Committee in its endeavours to provide digital resources on the Free Church website and on the Free Church Psalmody and Praise Committee Facebook page.
6. The General Assembly remind congregations that where praise items are projected on screen or printed on orders of service, copyright acknowledgement must be made for each item, for all *Sing Psalms* and for all hymns still in copyright. *Scottish Psalter* items do not require this, being out of copyright. Further guidance is available on the Free Church website, including links to PowerPoint slides.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(A) GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

1. Vision and Strategy. During the past year, the Board of Trustees has spent considerable time developing the vision and future strategic direction of the Free Church. The Trustees feel that under God, our vision as a denomination should be for “A Healthy Gospel Church for Every Community in Scotland”. This overarching vision statement has been around for more than a year, but the Trustees were keen to take time to consider if this was indeed the right vision for the Free Church. The Trustees engaged in a SWOT analysis identifying the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the denomination. They have begun to think through what will be needed in terms of training ministers, establishing new congregations, revitalising congregations, working in partnership with others, communication internally and externally, and the financial model needed for growth. In the coming months they will be working with boards and engaging with Presbyteries and congregations to learn how this can be worked out at a local level.

2. Personnel. There has been a significant change in personnel in the Board in the past year, and therefore effort has been put into the induction of the new Board members. Mr James Fraser stepped down as Chairman in May 2020 and from the Board in August 2020. Mr Donald Forsyth took over as Chairman. Rev. Paul Clarke left the Board in June 2020 to take up the role of Chairman of the Board of Ministry. Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod left the Board in September 2020. Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod, Mr Gordon Macleod and Rev. Neil MacMillan filled the vacancies pending approval from the General Assembly. Mr Donald Macleod (Stornoway), Mr Mark Robinson, Mr Neil Longwe and Mr Gordon Macleod agreed to serve as trustees for Finance, Treasury, Property and Compliance respectively. The Board has further been served by two new advisers with HR and legal skills. Mr Scott Matheson finished as CEO in September 2020 and Mr Andrew Giffen started in November. Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean now comes to the end of an eight-year term and Mr Callum Macdonald has also indicated his intention to retire from the Board. The Board would like to thank all these people for their faithful service to the Church.

(B) FINANCE AND TREASURY

1. 2020 Financial Summary. At the time of writing, the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2020 were in preparation. The commentary below is based on draft figures. It is expected that audited accounts will be available by the time of the General Assembly.

The Board of Trustees would like to thank congregations and individual members for their efforts to maintain remittance levels and mission donations during 2020. It has been a difficult and challenging time for all of us with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the restrictions imposed on congregations.

The draft statutory accounts show a negative net movement in funds of £33,000 for the year. The total income for the year was £5,117,000. Income from congregational remittances and other donations was lower than budgeted but increased by around £18,000 (0.4%) year on year. Total expenditure of £4,358,000 included spend of £3,397,000 on ministry and mission, and £624,000 on Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Expenditure was considerably below budget.

	2020	2019
	£000s	£000s
Congregational Remittances	4,112	4,080
Donations	181	195
Legacies	8	79
Charitable Activities	417	567
Investment Income	199	228
Gain on Disposal of Assets	199	450
Income	5,117	5,597

Ministry & Mission	3,397	3,672
Edinburgh Theological Seminary	624	615
Other	337	418
Expenditure	4,358	4,705
Gain/(Loss) on Investments	104	495
Gain/(Loss) on Pension Scheme	(895)	816
Net movement in funds	(33)	2,204

The financial results noted above include a number of required accounting adjustments. From a management accounts perspective, the operating surplus for the year was £131,000 (2019: £24,000). We give thanks to God for the generous congregational giving which helped the Free Church of Scotland to meet its expenditure in 2020 and start the new year in a good financial position with the ability to continue its mission and ministry.

The Board of Trustees is forecasting a deficit for 2021. Although we cannot sustain recurring deficits, a deficit in the current year is a better option than curtailing the work of our denomination as a reaction to conditions that should only persist for the short-term. The Board will continue to work with other boards and committees in monitoring income and expenditure. Where cash flow permits, the Board will utilise any free funds to support growth and the implementation of the vision and strategy for the denomination.

2. Stipend. As part of the budgeting process for 2021, the Board approved an increase in stipend to £25,000 per annum from 1st January 2021. This represents a £500 increase from the previous year.

3. Investments. The General Fund and Pension Fund investment portfolios were monitored by a Joint Investment Committee, comprising representatives of the Board and the Pension Trustees. The funds continue to be managed by Brewin Dolphin.

- General Fund - As at 31st December 2020, the General Fund was valued at £5,183,000. This represented an annual increase in the portfolio of around 2%. Annual income from the investments (yield approximately 2% in the year) was used to help fund various activities of the Church. The fund also produces income for some congregations that have funds invested with the Board via the share pool. The value of each unit in the share pool was worth £4.93 at the end of 2020 compared with £5.13 in 2019. Interest on the capital sums held for the major funds and committees of the Church was distributed at 14.0p per unit.
- Pension Fund – As at 31st December 2020, the Pension Fund was valued at £7,215,000, a slight increase on the value at the start of the year. Annual income from the investments was used to help pay pensions in payment.

The Board thanks Mr Callum Macdonald, who will stand down at the May 2021 General Assembly, for his service to the Free Church as Chairman of the Investment Committee and as a director of the Pension Scheme Trustee.

4. Pension Scheme Deficit. The Pension Scheme had a deficit at 31 December 2020 of £3,880,000 (2019: £3,315,000). An interim valuation of the Free Church of Scotland Pension Scheme's assets and liabilities as at 31st December 2020 was carried out by the Scheme Actuary, Barnett-Waddingham. This showed, on an FRS102 basis, total assets of the Scheme (including bank cash deposits) were £7,463,000, an increase of £123,000 on the previous year. The Scheme liabilities increased over the same period to £11,343,000 (£10,655,000 in 2019).

The Board remains committed to the funding of the Scheme in order that the retirement benefits of Scheme members (ministers and employees) of the Church are protected. During 2020, the Church paid £428,902 (2019: £419,416) into the Scheme as part of a plan to reduce the deficit. The current deficit recovery plan anticipates a clearing of the Scheme deficit during 2028. The next full actuarial valuation of the Scheme will occur as at 31st December 2021.

5. Trustee Loans. As at December 2020, the Board had loans outstanding to congregations totalling approximately £1,661,000, (2019: £1,785,000). In addition to loans outstanding, the Board had a further £700,000 of previously committed loans to congregations which are awaiting drawdown. The Board reassessed its ability to lend during the year and has started to grant some new loans in 2021.

6. Presbytery Accounts. Congregation accounts are submitted to Presbyteries and to the Central Office by each congregation. The Trustees think that for the sake of good governance, Presbyteries should also send in their accounts to the Central Office finance team.

(C) PROPERTY

1. Property Transactions. The Board of Trustees is regularly approached for permission to sell unused manses and church buildings. Funds are held centrally for the benefit of the congregation to be used for such purposes as agreed with the Trustees. The Church Solicitor is also involved in helping congregations purchase new buildings.

2. Sale of London City Presbyterian Church Manse. London City Presbyterian Church have applied for permission to sell their manse in Woodford Green in London and purchase a new manse closer to the church. Because of the unusual title deeds, this sale needs to be approved by the General Assembly. Presbytery approval has been received and the Assembly Clerk has confirmed that the paperwork is in order.

(D) LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

1. COVID Group. In light of the global pandemic the Board set up an emergency COVID-19 Response Group in March 2020. Since then, the Group has provided guidance and advice to the Free Church in how best to comply with government restrictions. They have also petitioned the Scottish Government on matters relevant to the Free Church. The Trustees would like to thank the COVID group for their advice and leadership. The Group comprises the Moderator, the Assembly Clerk, the Mission Director, the Principal of ETS / Media Officer, Chairman of the Mission Board, the Church Solicitor and the CEO.

2. Compliance. The Board recognises the ongoing need for good risk management across the denomination and also the breadth of compliance issues facing the Church. Mr Gordon Macleod agreed to serve as Compliance Trustee to support the work of the Church Solicitor and CEO. A Compliance Sub-group has been formed to help support the Board, and local congregations, in dealing with compliance issues. Mr Donald Macleod (High Free Church, Stornoway) has also agreed to serve as Safeguarding Training Coordinator and is working to improve the provision of safeguarding training across the denomination.

3. Project Management Group (PMG). The 2018 Assembly appointed a Project Management Group to review the Church's internal business practice and procedures. The main part of the Group's work this year has been the revision of the Church's disciplinary procedures and draft proposals for a new Discipline and Pastoral Care Act. The draft proposals are at an advanced stage and they will be presented to the General Assembly or to one of its Commissions when the final consultation process has been completed. The Group has also worked with the Board of Ministry on a new Journey to Ministry Act.

4. Principal Clerk Secondment. The 2019 General Assembly instructed the Board to make necessary arrangements to secure three months special leave for the Principal Clerk in order that he may serve the Church, under the supervision of the Board of Trustees, in preparing consolidating Acts for all Boards and Committees and in any other tasks as instructed by the Board and its Project Management Group. The secondment was completed in January 2020 and the PMG are continuing to work towards preparing consolidating Acts for all Boards and Committees.

(E) COMMUNICATIONS

1. Communications Oversight Group (COG). Over the last few years, the Communications Oversight Group (COG) has been working to produce a Communications/Information Strategy for the Church. The group, which is chaired by Rev. Thomas Davis, was due to report to the 2020 General Assembly, but the reduced Assembly programme meant that the report was delayed until 2021. The Trustees wish to thank Rev. David Meredith, Mr Murdo Murray and Mr Alastair Oliver for their involvement in the COG, and Rev. Thomas Davis in particular for the huge amount of work he has put into developing the Communication Strategy.

2. Principles for Communication. The COG previously identified and presented *Biblical Principles for Communication* to the General Assembly in 2019. The Board of Trustees recommends that these Biblical principles now be formally adopted. The *Biblical Principles for Communication* document accompanies the Board's report in a separate document.

3. A Roadmap. The full report from the Group, *Communicating with Grace and Wisdom*, is a helpful and substantial piece of work. The Board of Trustees is recommending that it be used as a roadmap setting the general direction for the development

of our communications, allowing for improvements to be made in phases. The full report of the Communications Oversight Group accompanies the Board's report in a separate document.

4. Communications Group. The Board of Trustees is also recommending the setting up of a new Communications Group under the Board of Trustees to assume responsibility for all internal and external communication for the Free Church. This Group will take over the work of the COG and will progress the communications strategy. They will also take over the remit of the current Media Group, so that there is one group looking after communications for the Free Church. The Board of Trustees will appoint the members of this group, and as considered necessary, the Communications Group will also include the CEO, Media Officer, the Editor of *The Record*, Communications Staff, Parliamentary Liaison Officer, and Public Engagement Co-ordinator.

5. Additional Staff Member. The Board of Trustees recognises the significant need for improvement in the area of communication and is considering the appointment of an additional communication staff member to complement our part-time Communications Officer.

6. Public Engagement. The Trustees recognise the importance of, and current opportunities for, engagement in the Public Sphere. They propose that this be part of the remit of the Communications Group, and that the Communications Group will work to encourage and support Congregations and Presbyteries to engage with Public Issues.

6.1. Public Engagement Working Group. In addition, the Board recognises that it will be helpful at times to have a Public Engagement Working Group that can identify key Public Issues and put together responses to Government Consultations. The Board envisages that this will be an ad-hoc group drawn from the membership of the Free Church, with advisors added as necessary. As has been the case with recent consultations, the Public Engagement Working Group will circulate their draft reports to Presbytery representatives. The Public Engagement Working Group will have a permanent Co-ordinator (appointed by the Trustees) who will sit on the Communications Group. The Board of Trustees and the Communications Oversight Group are of the view that this Public Engagement Working Group being part of a single Communications Group for the Church, is a better solution than having totally separate groups or boards. The Trustees will review the situation after three years.

6.2. Thanks. The Trustees wish to thank Rev. Stephen Allison, Mr James Fraser and the various people who have worked with them during the year in developing responses to Government Consultations on Hate Crime, the Equally Safe strategy, Early Medical Abortion and Climate Change.

7. Parliamentary Liaison Officer. The 2019 General Assembly noted the resignation of Rev. David Robertson as Parliamentary Officer on his departure to Australia and the October 2019 Commission of Assembly was empowered to receive a report on the appointment of a successor. The Board has not yet identified a suitable person, but they will continue their endeavours to find someone to fill this important role, and they will report to the General Assembly when an appointment has been made.

(F) GENERAL ASSEMBLY REMITS

1. Outstanding Remits. The following Board of Trustees remits from the 2019 General Assembly have not been completed in time to report to the 2021 General Assembly: (1) to develop protocols for the governance and financial arrangements of Church Plants and Preaching Stations, including the protocols surrounding the securing of charitable status and congregational status; (2) to establish a sub-group to look at the question of Christian Education and to report to each future Assembly; (3) in conjunction with the Mission Board to investigate methods of funding Church planting efforts in areas of social deprivation; (4) in consultation with the Assembly Clerks' Office and the Board of Trustees' Project Management Group, to bring forward proposals for the management of conflicts of interest regarding Commissioners at the General Assembly and its Commissions; and (5) the *Project Management Group* to consult with Presbyteries, individuals, the Board of Ministry, and to seek legal advice as required, regarding in conducting a review of the Questions and Formula. Significant progress has been made on some of the above remits but the COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and meetings have made it impossible to report on their completion at this Assembly. The Board requests that the outstanding remits are carried over for the Board to report on them at the 2022 General Assembly.

MR DONALD C. FORSYTH, *Chairman*
MR CALLUM MACDONALD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Trustees and thank the Chairman, members of the Board and the Church's staff for their work.
2. The General Assembly specifically record thanks to Mr James Fraser, Rev. Paul Clarke, Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean and Mr Callum Macdonald for serving on the Board, and to Mr Scott Matheson for his work as CEO.

(B) FINANCE AND TREASURY

1. 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.
2. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to send in their accounts to the Central Office finance team each year.

(C) PROPERTY

1. The General Assembly grant permission to London City Presbyterian Church to sell their manse. They declare that the proceeds from the sale shall be used for the purchase of a new manse.

(D) LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

1. The General Assembly thank the COVID Group for their advice and leadership during the past year.
2. The General Assembly thank the Board and its Project Management Group for the work done on revising the arrangements for disciple and pastoral in the Church. They instruct the Board to bring proposals to the General Assembly or to one of its Commissions when the consultation process has been completed. They empower the Commission of Assembly to take up a report from the Board with final proposals on this matter.

(E) COMMUNICATIONS

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Biblical Principles as outlined in Communicating with Grace and Wisdom.
2. The General Assembly note and endorse the emphases and direction of Communicating with Grace and Wisdom as a general roadmap for improving communication across the denomination.
3. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to set up a Communication Group under its oversight. They direct that the Communications Group will seek the approval of the Board of Trustees before any action is taken which may incur institutional risk.
4. The General Assembly delete Paragraph 1 of Act 24, Class 2, 2017 regarding the Review of Communications Arrangements, and they renumber the remaining paragraphs as Paragraphs 1-3.
5. The General Assembly amend Act 6, Class 2, 2014 by deleting Paragraph 1.1.3 on the Media Office. They insert a new Paragraph 1.1.3 regarding the Communications Group and its remit as follows: to have overall responsibility for all internal and external communication; to progress the communications strategy developed by the now defunct Communications Oversight Group; to implement improvements in communications across the whole Church; to support the Media Officer in responding to media enquiries on behalf of the Church and to take over the remit of the current Media Group; to promote Public Engagement and to submit responses to Government consultations on behalf of the Church; to consult widely with Boards, Presbyteries and Congregations as required.
6. The General Assembly further amend Act 6, Class 2, 2014 with the insertion of new Paragraph 1.1.3.1 regarding the membership of the Communications Group as follows: The membership and the Chairman of the Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.
7. The General Assembly direct that the existing Paragraph 1.1.4 regarding the membership of the Board of Trustees be renamed 'Membership of the Board' to avoid confusion in the reading of the Act.

8. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office in consultation with the Board of Trustees to revise Act 2, Class 2, 2008 regarding Appointing the Media Officer and Terms of Appointment and to bring revised proposals to the 2022 General Assembly.
9. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Communications Group, to consider the appointment of an additional communications staff member to work with the Communications Group to improve internal and external communication.
10. The General Assembly recognise the importance of the Church's engagement in the Public Square. They declare that this engagement shall be part of the remit of the Communications Group. They instruct the Communications Group to encourage and support Congregations and Presbyteries to engage with Public Issues.
11. The General Assembly recognise that from time to time it will greatly assist engagement in the Public Square to have a group with a particular focus in this area. They authorise the Communications Group to establish a Public Engagement Working Group to identify key Public Issues and put together responses to Government Consultations. They direct that the Working Group will be an ad-hoc group reporting to the Communications Group, with its membership drawn from the membership of the Church and with power to appoint advisers as required. They instruct the Public Engagement Working Group to circulate draft reports on public consultations and engagements to Representatives appointed by Presbyteries, for comment. They declare that the Group shall have a permanent Coordinator appointed by the Board, who will sit on the Communications Group.
12. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to renew efforts to appoint a Parliamentary Liaison Officer.
13. The General Assembly recognise the need for greater coordination between Boards, and greater communication and sharing of prayer points between Boards, Committees, Presbyteries, and Congregations. They specifically instruct the Communications Group to take steps to improve this.
14. The General Assembly also recognise the need to provide ongoing training, in the various aspects of good communication, to Ministers and other Office-bearers throughout the Church. They instruct the Communication Group in conjunction with the Board of Ministry to consider suitable training options.

(F) GENERAL ASSEMBLY REMITS

1. The General Assembly note that the following remits from the 2019 General Assembly have not been completed by the Board of Trustees: (1) to develop protocols for the governance and financial arrangements of Church Plants and Preaching Stations, including the protocols surrounding the securing of charitable status and congregational status; (2) to establish a sub-group to look at the question of Christian Education and to report to each future Assembly; (3) in conjunction with the Mission Board to investigate methods of funding Church planting efforts in areas of social deprivation; (4) in consultation with the Assembly Clerks' Office and the Board of Trustees' Project Management Group, to bring forward proposals for the management of conflicts of interest regarding Commissioners at the General Assembly and its Commissions; and (5) the *Project Management Group* to consult with Presbyteries, individuals, the Board of Ministry, and to seek legal advice as required, regarding in conducting a review of the Questions and Formula. They instruct the Board to report on all outstanding remits to the 2022 General Assembly.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF MINISTRY

The Board of Ministry supports the mission of the Free Church of Scotland to bring the life-changing gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ to the people of Scotland and beyond. We work in close partnership with local congregations, Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, the Mission Board and Edinburgh Theological Seminary (ETS) *‘to equip gospel workers for Christ.’* We could not function without the active cooperation and good will of these gospel partners, and we thank God for them.

The work of the Board is divided between the ‘Student Team’ and the ‘Ministry Team’.

The Student Team seeks to:

- work with local Churches and Presbyteries to identify, equip, and select godly and gifted individuals to serve as future gospel workers and Free Church ministers.
- work with training Churches and Presbyteries to provide well-planned, well-resourced and well-supported training schemes at Foundation and Core levels.
- work with ETS to ensure that our future ministers receive an excellent theological education and are equipped to fulfil the great commission in the diverse communities of 21st Century Scotland.

The Ministry Team seeks to:

- work with Presbyteries to ensure that every Minister and ministerial family receive the care and support they need to do their work effectively.
- work with the Free Church Offices to ensure that, in season and out of season, every Minister is treated not only in accordance with the law, but excellently.
- work with Presbyteries to ensure that every Minister receives the mentoring, continual professional development and ongoing training that they need to grow and thrive as men of God and ministers of the gospel.

The Board gives thanks to God for each candidate under our care and we commend them to the prayers of the Church. We thank the dedicated staff at ETS, ministers and elders in Training Churches, Placement Supervisors, our Consultants and our Clerk, Mr Charlie Anderson, for all their expertise and care.

(A) GENERAL

1. **Candidates for the Ministry.** Since the October General Assembly, the Board has recognised five men as candidates for the ministry. They are Mr Alex Ferrier, Mr Iain Morrison, Mr James Burnett, Mr David de Paula, and Mr Robin Silson. We are extremely grateful to God for these men, but we recognise that they represent only a tiny fraction of the gospel workers needed to fulfil our vision to see ‘a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland.’ The Board calls upon the whole Church to continue to pray for the Lord of the harvest to thrust out more labourers into His harvest field.

2. **Applications for Free Church Ministry.** The Board interviewed and processed an application for Free Church Ministry from Rev. Dr Cory Brock, currently serving in the Presbyterian Church of America. The Board recommends that he be admitted as a Free Church minister. A separate report on his application will be presented to this meeting of the General Assembly in private session. The Board has also received ‘Notes of Interest in Free Church Ministry’ from a handful of Ministers ordained in other denominations and has begun informal discussions with each of these men. We will report to future General Assemblies or Commissions of Assembly if any of these ‘Notes of Interest’ become formal applications.

(B) JOURNEY INTO THE MINISTRY

1. **Journey to Ministry.** Following on from these early discussions the Student Team has worked with others in preparing a Journey into Ministry pathway and proposed legislation is presented with the Board’s report for the Assembly’s approval and is located in the Proposed Deliverance Section (B).

The changes recognise the need to prevent “unstoppable progress” in an applicant’s travel by ensuring that there is rigorous assessment at an early stage. To that end, we are recommending that the Kirk Session should be proactive in identifying potential ministry candidates, in providing opportunities for gifts to be tested and should be given the opportunity to weigh up whether the application should proceed to Presbytery. The previous mechanism of a joint Session/Presbytery committee meeting with the applicant was driven by an awareness that the Kirk Session might be too close to the candidate to be totally objective. However, there are also clear advantages in the Kirk Session having a high degree of early involvement as it is in the context of the local church that suitability for ministry is most clearly seen.

The Candidate Assessment Day allows the Board of Ministry to co-opt panel members with specialist skills and this unhurried programme of interviews is now given greater prominence and will invariably precede the final Board of Ministry interview. The final Board interview will weigh the Assessment Day findings and propose pathways of study for the successful applicant.

(C) STUDENT TEAM

As one of two “teams” addressing the Board of Ministry’s workload, the Student Team is responsible for considering the recruitment and selection of ministers and their training, development, and care. Our responsibility as a Student Team therefore extends from the identification of potential candidates to their care as they await their first call.

1. **Priorities.** We have benefitted from time devoted to reflecting on our current practice in these areas and consideration of some of its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities as well as roadblocks to our work. This resulted in some of the following areas being highlighted as a priority for our work as a team.

- (1) The need to communicate the demand for more gospel workers at venues such as the Youth Conference and to encourage Kirk Sessions to become more proactive in identifying potential candidates.
- (2) The need to clarify what is understood by a call to the ministry.
- (3) The need for a more logical progression in the selection process so that there is greater rigour earlier in the chain of screening activities.
- (4) The need to ensure, as we move towards a Minister in Training partnership between ETS and training congregations, that there is consistency across the participating congregations and an avoidance of overlap with work done at ETS.
- (5) The current lack of a funding model for Minister in Training programmes.

2. **Training Model.** One of the major developments taking place in the training of ministers is the new default of a four-year B.Th. utilising training churches for the development of practical ministry skills. A major hurdle to overcome is the fact that the present model is regarded as part-time by SAAS so that students are not eligible for loans during their training. Two alternatives – a four-year ordinary degree with church-based components validated academically and a three-year degree followed by a one-year probationary year attached to a church – have been explored. The unanimous view of the Board is that the present arrangement whereby practical training and personal development takes place over four years and is not complicated by the requirements of academic validation is the preferred option.

3. **Vision for Training.** There are challenges ahead regarding uniformity of training, the allocation of certain aspects of Seminary training to the church and the avoidance of overlap. The team have issued a questionnaire to past and present participants of Minister in Training schemes to ascertain areas of unnecessary overlap, strengths, and weaknesses etc. The Board’s ‘Vision for Training’, which summarises previous decisions of the General Assembly is located in Appendix One of this report. The Board plans to bring more detailed proposals, along with any necessary legislation, to a Commission of Assembly within the next year.

4. **Final Year Students.** One group of people who have to some extent been overlooked, have been those close to considering taking up a charge. It is now proposed to have Board of Ministry members meet up with students in their penultimate and final year to discuss their future ministries. The Board will also liaise with the Chairman of the Mission Board and the Director for Church Planting before these meetings to discuss options.

5. **Probationers.** The increased familiarity with video conference platforms such as Zoom has made it possible to envision the bringing together of probationers awaiting a call and Interim Moderators of vacant charges. Such a development would be a step towards a more proactive way of connecting vacant charges with suitable ministers.

6. **Scripture Examination.** Finally, the student team has been reviewing the Scripture examinations taken by candidates for Free Church ministry. We remain committed to the importance of ensuring that all ministry candidates have a strong Biblical knowledge. To ensure this, we are looking at proposals for students to learn and memorise scripture together in ways that will also benefit their fellowship.

(D) MINISTRY TEAM

The Ministry sub-team of the Board of Ministry is responsible for the section of the Board's remit which covers Pastoral Care, Working Conditions and Further Training (post ordination) and reports monthly on its progress to the main Board.

We recognise the vital importance of having a clear vision of what we want to achieve in the long term. As a Board, we want to serve and support our Ministers well, and have good policies in place that are helpful and not burdensome. We want to build on the good work that has already been done in our three areas of responsibility, but focus much more on simplifying, communicating and coordinating what we do on behalf of Ministers and Elders, Church staff and Presbyteries. Our aim is to help each of us to better fulfil our calling by having a positive focus on care and protection for each other, a professional and easily accessible online resource for practical aspects of ministry, and a structured provision of post-ordination training to inspire, further equip and support our ministers in an ever-changing world.

1. **Long-term Aims.** Our longer-term aims are as follows:

Pastoral Care

- An integrated package of pastoral support available for every minister and family which is easily accessible, maintained and developed by the Board of Ministry and implemented through the Pastoral Support Groups (PSG's) at Presbytery.

Working Conditions

- A complete and regularly updated online resource where all technical, professional and employment related information is easily accessible to all our ministers and staff, in partnership with other relevant Boards.

Further Training

- A coordinated post-Seminary lifelong training programme in partnership with the Mission Board and other relevant parties to cater for ongoing ministry training, theological development and cultural understanding.

We are aware that there are already good resources that lie unused and largely ignored, other initiatives that have been sent to Presbyteries, sometimes with very little explanation or communication, and also a sense among Ministers that some of what the Board demands of them ends up as no more than tick box exercises and add to their stress, rather than alleviate it, or help them.

For the Ministry Team, the last year has involved a great deal of reflection, information gathering and discussion with various stakeholders as to how best proceed, and so this report is for the most part, asking the permission of the General Assembly to allow us to continue this process and come to the 2022 General Assembly with longer- term proposals.

2. **Pastoral Care.**

2.1 Panel for Pastoral Care and Pastoral Support Worker. We are grateful for the work of Rev. Alex MacDonald as the Pastoral Support Worker, and for Rev. Dr John Nicolls, Dr Ann MacRae, Mrs Louise MacMillan, Dr James Finlayson and Dr Helen Macleod, on the Panel for Pastoral Care. Only Mrs MacMillan and Dr Helen Macleod are available for re-appointment, and the Board wish to consider further how best to provide pastoral care at this level and report with recommendations to the General Assembly in 2022. They wish to acknowledge the work of Rev. Alex MacDonald and the panel members and thank them for their willingness to serve in this area of the church's life.

2.2 Presbytery Pastoral Care Teams. We recognise that progress has been made in this area, and that good resources are available, but there is inconsistency of care at a Presbytery level through the Presbytery Pastoral teams. We recognise that this is such an important area in developing brotherly concern, trust and support for the wellbeing of each other, and our families. We want to communicate our updated aims and objectives much better and offer more effective support to each PPC team. We are currently working out how best to do this.

3. **Coaching.** In partnership with the Mission Board, there is a small team, headed by Rev. Jeremy Ross, who have the goal of being able to provide a trained Gospel coach (from within our own ranks) for all church planters, those completing the development track and for newly ordained Ministers by the end of 2022. The aim is to do this in partnership with CMM, who have already trained several of our ministers. Gospel coaching is an intentional gospel conversation with focused discussions about the leader's relational, personal, missional and spiritual life.

4. **Working Conditions.** The Ministry Team are updating the Minister's Working Conditions document and are also compiling an updated resource library for Ministers and Church staff. They are in consultation with the Board of Trustees and the Project Management Team about how best, along with other Boards, to have their relevant documents available online in a way that is easy to access, kept up to date and professionally presented.

We are also in consultation about the provision of a safe online portal where personal information (i.e., applications for Candidacy for Ministry) can be made available to Board members in a secure way to comply with GDPR regulations.

5. **Further Training.** The Ministry team seek permission to bring a more comprehensive post-ordination training programme to the General Assembly in 2022. We are grateful to Rev. Iain MacAskill (Positively Presbyterian) and Rev. David Court (In-Service Training) for the hard work that they have put into organising these training events over the last number of years. They have both indicated their desire to step back from their organisational roles. We would also like to thank the Committee who organise 'Enspire' (for ministers' wives) for the work they put into organising a yearly conference, and the support they offer to ministers wives through it.

We are aiming to bring together the various strands of ongoing training (In-Service, Positively Presbyterian, Continuous Professional Development, Mentoring and Coaching) and produce a more coordinated and simplified package of provision. We hope to appropriate some consultant help from beyond the Board to help us develop a proposal.

We also recognise the real need to help Ministers and Kirk Sessions who are responsible for staff, apprentices and Ministers-in-Training to manage them sensitively and well, especially having good protocols with female staff members and their oversight.

There is a great deal to be encouraged about in this area of the denomination's work, but we recognise that there is still a huge amount to do in order to support and protect our Ministers, our Office-bearers and Church staff. Our aim is to take steps towards providing a package of good pastoral care at Presbytery level, up-to-date and easily accessible ministry resources, and a lifelong, post-ordination training programme to encourage development and stimulate fresh thinking.

REV. PAUL CLARKE, *Chairman*
REV. IVOR MACDONALD, *Vice-Chairman*
REV. DEREK LAMONT, *Ministry Team Coordinator*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, and especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their work.
2. The General Assembly recognise the enormous amount of work carried out by Rev. Alex MacDonald as the *Pastoral Care Worker*, and they thank him for his service.
3. The General Assembly thank those who have served on the Panel for Pastoral Care, and all the consultants and advisers who assist the Board of Ministry, along with those who facilitate In-Service Training.
4. The General Assembly welcome the progress made by the Student Team of the Board of Ministry, as reflected in its 'Vision for Training' document. They instruct the Board to bring details of its updated Minister-in-Training programme to a Commission of Assembly.

5. The General Assembly welcome the progress made by the Ministry Team of the Board of Ministry. They instruct the Board to come to the May 2022 Assembly with clear proposals to take forward its work.
6. The General Assembly agree to meet in private session to take up and dispose of a Supplementary Report from the Board of Ministry concerning the Application to Free Church ministry of Rev. Dr Cory Brock, including the signing of the Formula, should the application be successful.
7. The General Assembly note that the Board has not been able to bring a report to the Assembly on the question of ordination as a requirement for the administration of the sacraments as instructed by the 2019 General Assembly. They instruct the Board to report on this remit to the 2022 General Assembly.

(B) JOURNEY INTO THE MINISTRY

1. The General Assembly, seeking to revise and update arrangements and procedures regarding the application process to become a Candidate for Free Church Ministry and oversight and support of such Candidates before they are licensed to preach the gospel, enact and ordains as follows:

The General Assembly note that the biblical qualifications for pastors and teachers do not focus entirely, or even primarily, on their academic achievements, natural gifting or theological knowledge (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). They declare that the Free Church of Scotland seeks to identify and train faithful, reliable and humble men of God, motivated only by love for Christ and his people, who are called by God into a life of service.

SECTION A – Pre-Application

1. Prior to an applicant completing an application form, intending applicants should hold informal conversations with their Minister and Kirk Session and be given opportunities to test their teaching gifts within a local church. If candidacy looks likely, the Kirk Session should inform the Presbytery.
2. The Presbytery will then inform the Board of Ministry, who may then appoint a training mentor, in consultation with the Presbytery, and assist in training and developing the candidate's gifts.
3. The Board of Ministry will prepare guidance to assist congregations and Presbyteries in the pre-application stage.

SECTION B - Application Process

1. In order to apply to be a Candidate for the Free Church Ministry the applicant must be:
 - 1.1. Male.
 - 1.2. Over the age of eighteen.
 - 1.3. Have been a Communicant Member of a Christian church for a minimum of two years.
 - 1.4. Have been a Communicant Member of a Free Church congregation for a minimum of six months.
 - 1.5. Have not applied as a candidate for ministry in the Free Church within the previous two years.
2. All Applicants shall complete the Application Form produced by the Board of Ministry.
 - 2.1. A Minister or Session Clerk shall make the Application Form available to any potential candidates within their congregation.
 - 2.2. The Applicant shall give their completed Application Form to the Minister or to the Clerk of the Kirk Session.
 - 2.3. Applications may be received by the Kirk Session at any time of year.
 - 2.4. In order to begin studies at Edinburgh Theological Seminary in September the Application Form must be processed by the Kirk Session by the end of February of the same year.

3. Upon receipt of an Application Form, the Kirk Session shall discuss the suitability of the Applicant for the role of Minister.

3.1. The Kirk Session will interview the Applicant as soon as possible after receipt of the Application Form.

3.2. If the Applicant is married the Applicant and his wife will also meet with the Minister and his wife (or if the Minister is unmarried by the Minister and another married couple) to assess whether the Applicant's wife is supportive of his candidacy. The Board will provide a list of questions for discussion. The minutes of the discussion will be given to the Kirk Session and taken into consideration when they are making their assessment of the candidate.

3.3. The Kirk Session shall meet without the Applicant to come to a decision on whether his Application will progress to the next stage.

3.4. The Kirk Session shall inform the Applicant of their decision within seven days of the meeting.

4. Where an Application proceeds to the next stage the Kirk Session shall inform their Presbytery within seven days of their decision.

4.1. The Presbytery Clerk should be given a copy of the Application Form.

4.2. The Presbytery Clerk should send notice of the Application to all members of Presbytery taking care to secure the confidentiality of personal information.

4.3. Presbytery and Kirk Session Representatives should listen to sermon recordings of the Applicant prior to interview.

5. The Presbytery shall appoint a date to interview the Applicant and may appoint a Committee to carry out this stage of the process.

5.1. At the end of this interview, the Presbytery shall come to a view on whether the application should progress to the next stage of the process.

5.2. The Interview can be conducted by the Personnel Committee of the Presbytery, or other similar committee, where this role has been delegated to them by the Presbytery.

5.3. At least two members of the relevant Kirk Session must be present at the interview.

5.4. The Board of Ministry shall provide all Presbyteries with appropriate interview questions and guidance.

6. At its Ordinary Meeting, the Presbytery shall take up consideration of the Applicant and the Application Form. It shall be moved, seconded and agreed that the Applicant can proceed to the next stage of the process if the Presbytery decide the Applicant is suitable.

6.1. The Presbytery will receive the report of the interview committee with their recommendations.

6.2. The Applicant shall appear before the whole Presbytery and any further questions can be put to him by any member of the Presbytery.

6.3. The Applicant will be asked to leave the room and the Presbytery will then decide on whether his Application will be approved and recommended for consideration by the Board of Ministry.

6.4. The Presbytery shall come to a decision on the approval of the application by way of a suitable motion recording their approval of the Application.

6.5. The Presbytery shall inform the Applicant of progress with his application no later than seven days after the decision is taken.

7. The Presbytery must inform the Board of Ministry of any successful applications within seven days of approving an application, and they shall pass on all relevant documents to the Board at this time.

8. The Applicant will be required to attend an Assessment Day.

8.1. Assessment Days shall be organised by the Board of Ministry.

8.2. The Board of Ministry, and several others appointed by them, will assess Applicants' suitability for Ministry.

8.3. At least one female assessor shall be present at each Assessment Day.

8.4. Assessment Days will take place as required.

8.5. The Board of Ministry or Representatives of the Board will conduct an interview with the Applicant during or shortly after the Assessment Day.

9. After the Assessment Day and Interview, a Report will come to the Board of Ministry.

9.1. The Board of Ministry shall come to a decision on whether the Applicant is a suitable Candidate for Free Church Ministry. They shall also assess his training requirements in the context of becoming a suitable person to be licensed for Ministry.

9.2. The Board of Ministry shall inform the Applicant of their decision regarding his candidacy within seven days of the next Board meeting. This must be in writing.

9.3. If the Applicant is accepted as a Candidate for the ministry, the Board of Ministry must inform the Applicant of their decision regarding the training requirements within twenty-one days. This must be in writing.

10. When an Applicant is married then due consideration for his wife must be taken at every stage of the Application Process

10.1. The Board of Ministry shall ensure that the Application Form includes a section for wives to complete.

10.2. Wives should also attend the Assessment Day where possible.

SECTION C - Application Form

The Board of Ministry hold the responsibility for creating an Application Form and providing interview questions for Presbyteries.

1. The Board of Ministry shall create an Application Form to be used for Applicants for Free Church Ministry.

1.1. The Board of Ministry shall create Regulations to govern the content of the Application Form.

1.2. The General Assembly reserves the right to review the Application Form and any Regulations related to the Application Form.

1.3. The content of the Application form must comply with civil legislation.

1.4. The Application Form shall be reviewed by the Board of Ministry on a yearly basis.

2. The Board of Ministry shall create an Application Information Sheet to be released with the Application Form.

2.1. The Application Information Sheet will detail how to complete the Application Form and provide information on the process to become a Candidate for Free Church Ministry.

3. The Board of Ministry shall create interview questions to be used by Presbytery during the Application process, including questions regarding sensitive information, and provide these to each Presbytery.

- 3.1 The Board of Ministry shall create Regulations to govern the content of the interview questions.
- 3.2 The General Assembly reserves the right to review the interview questions and any Regulations related to the interview questions.
- 3.3 The interview questions shall be reviewed by the Board of Ministry on a yearly basis.

4. Retention of Records

4.1 The Board of Ministry is responsible for storing all information gathered during the Application Process in a manner that complies with civil law.

SECTION D - Decisions on Route to Ministry

Upon offering Candidacy to an Applicant, the Board of Ministry shall devise a study plan for each candidate. The Board of Ministry will arrange this study plan in conjunction with Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

- 1. All Candidates should complete the full course of study available to Edinburgh Theological Seminary and achieve a pass of the BTh.
- 2. All Candidates must complete the Presbyterian Church Ministry Module and attend Preaching Seminars as required by the Board of Ministry before being licensed.
- 3. Exceptions to the requirement for all candidates to complete the full BTh can be made in particular circumstances:

3.1 When the Candidate has already completed theological studies, he may be required to undertake courses at ETS at the discretion of the Board of Ministry.

3.2 ETS shall devise an examination which will assist the Board of Ministry in assessing the Candidate's knowledge if he has already completed theological study.

3.3 The Board of Ministry can in exceptional circumstances waive the requirement to study the Biblical languages.

4. The Board of Ministry shall publish a Candidate Information Guide in conjunction with ETS each academic year. This shall be distributed by the Board of Ministry to all Candidates at the beginning of each academic year.

SECTION E - Support for Free Church Ministry Candidates

Free Church Candidates have a responsibility to live a life above reproach, suitable of that of a Minister of the Gospel and must make themselves available for mentoring and accountability.

1. Every Candidate will be provided with a mentor by Presbytery. The mentor will typically be a member of that Presbytery.

1.1 Mentors shall contact their assigned Candidate at least twice per semester.

1.2 Mentors shall discuss matters of personal and professional development with the Candidate.

1.3 All discussions between Mentor and their assigned Candidate shall take place in strict confidence unless a safeguarding issue is disclosed, or any matter that may call into question the integrity of the Candidate and their suitability for Ministry.

1.4 The Board of Ministry are responsible for ensuring that Mentors are in place and that Mentors are in contact with their assigned Candidate at least twice per Semester.

2. ETS shall appoint a Director of Studies to each Candidate.

- 2.1. The Director of Studies shall send a report to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry on the Candidate's academic progress at the end of each academic year.
- 2.2. The Director of Studies should also report on any other issues that have arisen over the course of the year.
- 2.3. If any issues regarding the academic progress of a Candidate emerge during the year the Director of Studies shall report this to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry as soon as is practicable.
3. The Board of Ministry reserve the right to hold a meeting with a Candidate at any point.
 - 3.1. The Board of Ministry can use such meetings to discuss any matter regarding the progress of the Candidate.
 - 3.2. The Candidate may bring a friend or their Mentor to any of these meetings (such a friend should be a communicant member in the Free Church or another Christian church).
 - 3.3. The Board of Ministry shall bring any concerns regarding a Candidate to the Presbytery as soon as is practicable.
 - 3.4. At the end of each academic year the Board of Ministry shall report to Presbytery on each Candidate's progress.
4. The local congregation where the candidate is serving shall send a report to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry on the Candidate's involvement with the local congregation at the end of each academic year.
 - 4.1. Where this is a training congregation, details of training undertaken by the candidate should be provided in the report.
5. At the end of each academic year, Presbytery shall certify that the Candidate is able to continue in his role.
 - 5.1. They shall review all information received from the Board of Ministry, the local congregation and ETS on the Candidate's Progress.
 - 5.2. They will interview the Candidate and discuss matters related to his Candidacy and continued suitability for ministry.
 - 5.3. If any particular issues are raised by a Candidate's Mentor, Accountability Partner, Director of Studies or the Board of Ministry these will be discussed with the Candidate.
 - 5.4. In their assessment of the Candidate, the Presbytery shall satisfy themselves as far as possible that the Candidate is a suitable person to sign the Formula.
 - 5.5. The Presbytery will issue a certificate, before the commencement of the ensuing academic year, to the Candidate, ETS and the Board of Ministry to certify his continued status as a Candidate.
6. A Candidate is under the pastoral oversight of the Presbytery of the Congregation in which he is a Communicant Member.

SECTION F - Ending a Candidacy

1. The candidacy shall be kept under review by the Presbytery and the Board of Ministry. This review may on occasions lead to the conclusion that there are potential grounds to end the candidacy.
2. If ETS Senate has cause for concern about a candidate, they shall report this to the Presbytery and the Board as soon as possible.

3. Prior to the commencement of a formal process of terminating the candidacy, the Presbytery and the Board shall seek to help the Candidate to resolve the problems leading to concerns over their suitability as a candidate for the ministry.
4. Should such efforts fail to resolve the situation, a review committee will be established comprising three members of the Presbytery and three members of the Board of Ministry. The Board's representatives shall include the Chairman who will also act as Convener of the Review Committee.
5. The Review Committee shall have powers to interview the Candidate, to arrange support for the Candidate, and to recommend to the Board of Ministry to terminate the candidacy should the concerns raised regarding the candidacy be confirmed.
6. The candidate shall be given every opportunity to find a resolution of the problem.
 - 6.1. The Committee shall consult with the ETS Senate and receive a report from them on the Candidate's progress, character and suitability as a candidate for the ministry.
 - 6.2. The Committee shall consult with the Minister of the candidate's training Church, where he is on a Minister-in-Training programme.
 - 6.3. The Committee shall consult with the Presbytery and receive a report from them on their oversight and examination of the Candidate.
 - 6.4. The Review Committee shall consider the candidacy and the problems that have arisen, taking cognisance of the Senate's report, the Presbytery's report, and the record of the Board's previous deliberations on the matter, before proceeding to interview the Candidate.
 - 6.5. The Candidate shall be invited to appear before the Review Committee, accompanied by a friend or his mentor, to address the concerns that have been raised and to seek a solution. The process may require more than one meeting with the Candidate before a final recommendation is made.
 - 6.6. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Committee considers the details of the interview and come to a recommendation on the matter.
7. Should the Review Committee find that the potential grounds for terminating the candidacy have been confirmed by the review process, they shall report to the Presbytery and the Board accordingly, with their conclusions and recommendations. The Committee shall also inform the candidate of their conclusions and recommendations
7. The Board of Ministry will meet to reach a final decision on the Committee's recommendation.
 - 8.1. The Candidate and a representative of the Presbytery will have a right to address the Board of Ministry before the Board reaches its decision.
 - 8.2. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Board considers the details of the recommendation on the matter.
 - 8.3. The Candidate will be informed of the final decision in writing within 7 days.
 - 8.4. The Board will ensure that suitable pastoral support is made available to the Candidate.
8. Any decision made by the Board of Ministry regarding ongoing candidacy can be appealed by the Candidate or the Presbytery to the General Assembly or one of its Commissions.
9. After losing their position as Candidate, a period of at least two years must pass before they can reapply.

SECTION G - Repeals

The General Assembly repeal the following Acts: Act 19, Class 2, 2016, Act 38, Class 2, 2015, Act 48, Class 2, 2012 and Act 37, Class 2, 2012.

APPENDIX ONE

A Vision for Training

Seeking Gospel Workers to be raised up through the Free Church of Scotland

Introduction

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

The vision of the Free Church of Scotland is given us by Jesus himself; to make disciples of all nations. Disciple making is of the essence of the Church at all her levels, national, local and individual. The *work* of disciple-making is at the centre of what it means to *be* a disciple.

That is particularly true of those who are gospel workers, who are to set an example to the pilgrim flock of Christ in godliness, knowledge and speech. They are to be growing in Christ-like character, convictions, and competence, that they might model and teach the Lord’s way such that others are equipped to engage in his work.

Jesus himself tells us that the harvest is plentiful yet that such workers are few, and that His church are to pray for more workers (Mt 9:38). Our Training Vision therefore seeks to prayerfully equip men and women to be disciple-making disciples in Scotland and the world. Our prayer is that through our Church God will raise up and send out into His harvest field new and successive generations of men to serve as Ministers and office bearers, and numerous men and women as workers of many types who will live for, and speak for, Jesus.

This Vision is one that is thoroughly grounded on the principle of gospel partnership: we have a wonderful opportunity and responsibility to work together to fulfil the commands of Christ. This is particularly true for us as a Presbyterian denomination, looking to train workers who serve the wider Free Church and Christ’s people more broadly. The Training Vision therefore is based on partnerships between the local church and providers of biblical training, principally Edinburgh Theological Seminary, within the context of Presbyteries and overseen by the Free Church Board of Ministry.

This document looks to lay out the above principles in four chief areas: the features of the gospel worker, a framework for training, the facets of that training itself, and how we can finance such training. It is not seeking to be a policy document; more detail can and will be given under each of these headings. This is addressing the “What?” and the “Why?” In full knowledge that the specifics of “How?” are critical in due course.

A. The Features of the Gospel Worker

God’s Word is clear as to the distinguishing features of those who are to be full-time workers in His church. Described explicitly in the Pastoral Epistles and implicitly elsewhere, the gospel worker is to be someone who is exemplary and growing in Christ-like:

1. Character

The greatest Scriptural factor in one’s qualification is that of character, as laid out in 1 Tim 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. We long to see men and women in gospel work who are exemplary and growing in their love for Christ and others; who are above reproach in their dealings with the church and the world; who care for their families well; and who live lives of godliness, uprightness and self-control in faithful endurance and perseverance. They are to be loving and gentle to all, never domineering (2 Tim 2:22-

26), but rather caring for Christ's flock after His pattern as the great Shepherd. They are to have a stable and growing desire to serve in the work of the gospel.

2. *Convictions*

Along with exemplary character, the worker is to be strong in their convictions about the *content* of gospel work; in other words, of sound doctrine. They are to know the apostolic gospel as handed down (2 Tim 1:13-14) and to cling to that truth in the face of the hostility of the world, the flesh and the devil. They are to be stable and steadfast in the truth, students and stewards of Divine revelation. Further, they are to have strong convictions about the core *nature* of their ministry; sharing themselves and the gospel message (1The.2:8) both privately and publicly (Acts 20:20), whatever the season in which they minister and the implications for their own personal comfort (2 Tim 4:2). In all things they are to see themselves as servants of Christ and His people (1 Cor 3:5), patterned after Jesus himself (Phil 3:7-11). Finally, they are to be convinced of the *goal* of their ministry; to see believers growing and joyful (Phil 1:25), mature in Christ the Lord whom they proclaim and serve (Col 1:28-29), and seeing those who do not yet know Christ turning to Him in repentance and faith.

3. *Competence*

The final strand to the DNA of the worker is competence; narrowly but non-negotiable they are to be able to teach the Word of God as an approved worker, rightly handling it and making it plain (2 Tim 2:15), prayerfully proclaiming it in the power of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:4). This teaching, like the Word itself, is double-edged; they are to teach the truth *and* guard against error (Titus 1:9). Therefore, the worker needs to be well-taught themselves, and grounded not only in sound doctrine but in ways by which that doctrine is undermined, that they may better guard Christ's flock. This teaching will take place publicly and privately, with the preaching of God's Word as the minister of a local church the most authoritative and foundational form (1 Tim.2:12), but also including leading small group bible studies through to more private settings (Col.3:17).

We know that ministry is nothing less than teaching, but it always involves more. The effective Church leader will also be a fully orbbed worker, competent in relating to others wisely and warmly from a Kirk Session through to members and unbelievers, and able to discharge administrative and ministry responsibilities locally, regionally and, where asked to, nationally.

Too often, the Church through history has been conformed to the world rather than in Christ in what it looks for in her servants, and so it is critical that we stay close to the biblical DNA of the gospel worker in these times of great need.

B. A Framework for Training

Can a gospel worker be trained?

We freely, and gladly, acknowledge that those who teach the word in and to the Church are gifts from God himself (Eph.4:9), raised up by Him and gifted by His Spirit for the work that He appoints (1 Cor 12:27-28). In that sense, the Church cannot by will "create" the gospel worker. It is though the Church's privilege and role to identify and train such workers (Tit 1:5), and for the workers themselves to actively apply themselves to fan the gifts given them into flame (2 Tim 1:6). Therefore, we suggest that, with prayer and the involvement of the local church, Presbytery and national church through her Boards, gifted people can and must be trained that they might serve the Lord as fruitfully as possible for as long as possible.

Where then should a gospel worker be trained?

This training, which is intentional and cultivated growth in character, convictions, and competence, happens over time and in a range of settings. Its most foundational components however occur within the basic sphere of all Christian discipleship, the local church. As such, the common factor uniting both of the proposed stages below is committed and consistent service of a church. It is here that the prospective worker will learn from their fellow saints and grow in the day-to-day work of the gospel, speaking the truth in love and being shepherded by their elders.

Alongside this, they will receive focussed input from other training providers who are better equipped to stretch them in certain areas. The local church is the best place to learn being a disciple-maker, for example. The Seminary, however, is the best place to learn the biblical languages and doctrine. Through it all, they will be overseen and accountable in each sphere (see "Foundations of Training" for more on this).

A Framework for Training

1. *Foundation training*

A two-year course of training, normally undertaken full-time, in a local church. This is for men and women who have been identified as having the signs of godly character, convictions and competence, and who are then exposed to, trained and tested in the foundational work of teaching God's Word in various and appropriate settings.

This will comprise personal mentoring with a trainer, practical opportunities to serve the local church, live teaching opportunities from 1-1 to public settings, and formal input, potentially from external providers, on handling God's Word and living a godly life, both in the church and the world. Not all will go on to be full-time gospel workers, but all will be better equipped for a life of service wherever the Lord calls them.

2. *Core training*

The next level of training is for men being encouraged to pursue the work of the pastor-teacher as Ministry Candidates within the Free Church. Some will enter this having completed Foundation training within a Free Church, but we would also welcome in, people from other training churches suitable in character, conviction and competence. Core training would ordinarily be a four-year, full time course, pursuing studies at ETS while remaining rooted in the daily life of a local church and all that entails. Such training would include:

- Regular meetings with a trainer
- Live opportunities to preach and teach God's Word
- Input and feedback on preaching
- Regular and meaningful exposure to Session and Presbytery meetings
- Diligent engagement with ETS studies

All of this would go towards a deeper formation of character, conviction and competence, in a way that equips the individual for, under God, a life of gospel ministry. This would be undertaken under the oversight of the local church in question, but in close partnership with Presbytery, ETS and the BoM. Where appropriate, this would take place entirely in one church, but with the option of placements in other churches within the denomination or indeed, of two years in one location and two in another. There would need to be a tailored approach depending on the needs of the Candidate in question.

Consideration too would be given to *Specialist training* where appropriate for the individual, such as in church planting or revitalising, either alongside or subsequent to the Core training itself.

C. **Facets of Training**

Here, we will outline in a bit more detail what the training in each of those levels might look like. This cannot be exhaustive but should serve to give a feel for what is being spoken of.

Both levels: personal supervision within the local church

A unifying factor, as outlined above, is involvement in the local church, and a non-negotiable component of the training vision is that the prospective worker is overseen and discipled by one (or more) godly Christians who are themselves able to train others. This is a crucial feature in ensuring that the gospel learning being engaged in is translating into gospel living; that the worker, of any age, is growing in Christ-like character and convictions, not *merely* growing in competence. This supervision will be broad-spectrum; mentoring that focuses on discipleship and service, including preaching, teaching, godliness, mission, as well more formal aspects of line-management.

This presupposes an ecclesial commitment too; training churches that host trainees of either level will be committed to the growth of these workers, being willing to free up human and material resources to invest in them. Each Session should be involved in the growth of these men and women, and active in playing their corporate part in the identification and prayerful shepherding of them through their time.

Foundation Training: specific features

Here, the worker will be exposed intentionally to a broad cross-section of church life and evangelism. She will have opportunities to serve people both like and unlike her; he will encourage and disciple people of varying ages and stages; they will in short receive exposure to the foundational nature of church life.

Alongside this, they will receive specific input on the foundation stone of gospel ministry, teaching God's word to God's people. This will happen within the church, but that is often hugely aided by input from more specialist institutions, such as the Cornhill Training Course and other providers.

Core Training: specific features

Given that the Core Training is specifically focused on those, Lord willing, going into pastor-teacher roles, the particular aspects of training here are narrower but deeper. The principal non-local plank is pursuing studies at ETS, either through the BTh, MTh or Individual Study Programmes, as is deemed appropriate. Here they will be grounded in the biblical languages, grow in convictions as to systematic theology, see the sweep of the Church's ministry in historical perspective and be equipped with the tools to be a lifelong student of Scripture in biblical studies.

This all will be grounded locally with a greater focus on and exposure to preaching itself, with rigorous input and feedback from a more seasoned preacher. They will take more of the responsibility of leadership formally and informally and see what it is to be part of a Session and Presbytery (becoming an elder where that is proper, as each Session and body determines). They will also play a full part in pastoral care and other ministries of the church. It is important here, that they learn that ministry in a Presbyterian context is never a solo work, but one that takes place in the context of our wider church network such that they labour for the common as well as local good.

D. Financing Training

The training of workers will operate through a combined structure of paid employment and voluntary service. This reflects the dual benefit of the scheme, to the local and national church but also to the trainee, of any level. This will approximately, with some local variation, look like the structure below. This is a model that has proven to be sustainable in Scotland both within and without our denomination.

Employment: Full-time participants will typically be employed locally for 10-15hrs per week, comprising their involvement in the daily life of the church; from preparation to participation, whether that is practically or personally oriented.

Voluntary: Study, hospitality and external commitments will normally be voluntary

The average costs of a *Foundation* worker are c.£10-15k per annum, with a *Core* trainee's costs (dependent on family circumstances) being c.£15-20k per annum.

These funds will be provided by/sought from three funding streams:

1. Paid employment salaried by the local church

(with funding from the BoM for candidates who have been approved for training for Free Church Ministry)

This would amount to c.£5-8k per year, with an agreed contribution from the local church.

2. Grants from external bodies and Trusts

Participants would be expected to apply for these, with support from the training church, for sums that are at least matched by the wage from the local congregation.

3. Personal contribution

The final third is the personal responsibility of the Trainee, through their own personal funds and also including private support from personal supporters.

Conclusion

Our hope and prayer is that this vision for training is something that our Church will adopt, and that will enable us under God to play an even more effective role in fulfilling our Lord's great commission. He has given His church the privilege of being co-labourers with Him (2 Cor 5:20-21), and one of the most effective ways we can serve that end is in prayerfully making every effort to identify, train and send out workers into the harvest field. May God be gracious in both raising them up and fitting them, and us in our generation, for the task.

OVERTURE
REV. IAN WATSON AND OTHERS
THE ESTABLISHMENT PRINCIPLE

It is humbly overtured as follows by the undersigned Commissioners of the Assembly to the Venerable the General Assembly.

1. Whereas in 1843 those who left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland did so confirming their adherence to the Establishment Principle, a Principle to which the Free Church of Scotland continues to adhere.
2. Whereas no Government of Scotland in the 21st century recognises or even understands its obligations under the Establishment Principle.
3. Whereas at various times during the recent pandemic, the Scottish Government legislated for the closure of places of worship including churches and at other times has limited the number of those permitted to attend public worship.
4. Whereas the necessity of this legislation has divided opinion within the Church.
5. Whereas a Judicial Review in the Court of Session of the said legislation and concomitant regulations declared them to be unlawful.

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to take these premises into consideration and declare that the General Assembly receive the Overture and grant its crave. They form a Committee to consider how the Church should interpret and apply the Establishment Principle in the 21st century and advise the Church accordingly. They instruct the said Committee to report their findings to the General Assembly of 2022.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may deem best.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed *Rev. Ian M Watson*

Insert name here

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Rev. Benjamin Wilks

.....
Rev. Dr Rodger Crooks

.....
Mr Alan Court

.....
Mr Robert Miller

Date *8th April 2021*

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OVERTURE

PRESBYTERY OF INVERNESS, LOCHABER AND ROSS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GROUP

Unto the Venerable General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet at Edinburgh on 17 May 2021, the Overture of the Free Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross humbly shows that:

1. Whereas we recognise that the predominant worldviews in our society are hostile and opposed to the Gospel and the Christian church. We also see the increasing influence of the New Atheists, Secularism, Scientism and the promotion of other ideologies opposed to a Biblical worldview in our society.
2. Whereas the Free Church of Scotland holds to the Establishment Principle, recognising our responsibility as good citizens to pray for our political leaders and to speak out publicly on issues of importance to us as Christians. Proverbs 31:8-9 specifically calls us to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
3. Whereas we live in a democracy where, relatively speaking, we still have the benefit of a high degree of free speech and free thought. We have opportunities as a Church to contribute to public debate and consultations.
4. Whereas until 2008 we had a central committee, Public Questions, whose remit included “to watch over questions bearing on public morality, the interests of religion and questions of Christian doctrine, the relation between Church and State, and whatever bears on the honour of Christ, the great Head of the Church, and the spiritual and moral well-being of the community; to take such action as may seem best fitted to further the great ends of a Christian Church in connection therewith.” This Committee was abolished and has not been suitably replaced. This has inhibited our ability to speak effectively in the public square on political issues. Our failure to grapple with the increasing secularisation of our justice, social and education system is a serious deficit. Moreover, our failure to appoint a suitable Parliamentary Liaison Officer in recent years has contributed to our lack of effectiveness.
5. Whereas in the past there was some dissatisfaction with the topics, tone and quality of the work of our predecessors in this arena, notwithstanding some excellent reports which surfaced from time to time. However, that does not excuse the Church of her responsibility to speak up on such issues but to do so with grace and truth, commending and supporting the Government where she can and respectfully challenging the Government where the Government is acting in opposition to God’s word.
6. Whereas recently the Board of Trustees has approved responses on behalf of the Church to Government consultations on Transgender, the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, the Equally Safe Consultation (Challenging Men’s Demand for Prostitution), the Future Arrangements for Home Abortions Consultation and the Draft Public Engagement Strategy relating to Climate Change. This has been done on an *ad hoc* basis and relied on individuals consulting with suitable qualified advisors on the issues and then drafting responses which have been approved by the Board. Despite the limitations of this approach, it was encouraging that the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament invited a representative of the Free Church to give evidence in relation to the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill and the evidence was taken on board by the Committee in the preparation of their report.
7. Whereas the recent successes which we have had have arisen simply because a very few people have felt sufficiently concerned to secure appropriate drafting groups and seek the approval of the Board of Trustees to turn their work into a Free Church position or response. This is too unsystematic and too *ad hoc* to be sustained without Assembly legislation. The system as a method of reaching good drafts should, however, be retained within an appropriate governance framework.
8. Whereas it is difficult, working to Government timelines, to be able to state a particular opinion is the position of the Free Church as a whole if we rely on the General Assembly as the only body which can speak on behalf of the church. It is therefore necessary for the Assembly to empower through legislation a suitable body to speak on behalf of the church. To ensure the body truly speaks for the wider Church it should consult with a sounding body which will include members of each of the home presbytery alongside some suitable Central Church representatives including a member of the Senate who can provide suitable theological support. Publications will also be approved by the Board of Trustees who retain an interest in the reputational issues involved in this work and the potential for damage if a stance is taken which alienates all or a substantial portion of the Church’s members.

Wherefore, it is humbly overtured by the Free Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross that the Venerable the General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and enact and ordain that:

1. The General Assembly receive the Overture of the Free Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross and grant its crave.
2. The General Assembly create the position of Public Engagement Coordinator. The declare that the Coordinator will be responsible for leading the Church's public engagement. The further declare that the Coordinator will be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.
2. The General Assembly establish a Public Engagement Group, under the Board of Trustees, with the following remit:
 - 2.1. To engage with and prepare responses to consultations from both the UK and Scottish Parliaments, and to arrange for suitable representation to be made if the Free Church is invited to give verbal evidence.
 - 2.2. To establish ad-hoc committees, relating to particular areas of policy, as required which can prepare an initial draft response to consultations.
 - 2.3. To establish a sounding body who will be asked for comments on proposed publications by email. The sounding body will include a representative from each home Presbytery, a representative of the Mission Board, a Member of the ETS Senate, and other representatives decided by the Public Engagement Group. The comments from the sounding body will be considered by the Public Engagement Group when approving the final response to ensure that the Group's response to any issue is fairly representative of views across the Church.
 - 2.4. To liaise with the Board of Trustees (or its executive) ahead of any publication, via the Chairman and CEO, to protect the institutional reputation of the Church.
 - 2.5. To support Presbyteries or Kirk Sessions seeking to engage with Local Government, Health Boards, or other public bodies.
 - 2.6. To work with and support the work of a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer.
3. The General Assembly declare that the Membership of the Public Engagement Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator, and that Group will have a maximum of five members including the Public Engagement Coordinator *ex officio*, who will chair the Group and the Principal Clerk, *ex officio*, who will act as Clerk to the Group. They further declare that the Parliamentary Liaison Officer, *ex officio*, is appointed as an advisor to the Group.
4. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to appoint a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible, to ensure appropriate influencing takes place and to assist in generating the work required by the committee. They declare that Parliamentary Liaison Officer position may be a voluntary, part-time position.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they deem best.

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

The Commission of Assembly appointed by the 2020 General Assembly met using the Zoom Audio-visual platform hosted by St Columba's Free Church Edinburgh on Wednesday 3rd March 2021. There being a quorum present, Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly was called to the Chair and the meeting was constituted with devotional exercises.

1. Note of Business

The Principal Clerk submitted a note of the business to come before the Commission of Assembly as authorised by the General Assembly, *Act 21, Class 2, 2020*.

2. Admission of Letter. The Principal Clerk gave notification of a letter submitted from Rev. Garry Brotherston and Mr Alasdair Smith, Elder at Knox Free Church, Perth, regarding the Report and Proposed Deliverance of the Board of Trustees. The Commission of Assembly agreed to admit the letter into Commission papers in fairness to its signatories and proceeded to consider the contents of the letter and its request that:

‘the Commission of Assembly to not approve this deliverance and to simply depart from the matter, carrying it forward to the full General Assembly in May, at which time, the will of the Church may be appropriately discerned through the proper channels of brotherly discussion and collegial debate.’

The Principal Clerk presented the letter to the Commission of Assembly, explaining its contents, commenting on the key points raised in it, and highlighting the fact that the Proposed Deliverance of the Board's Report does not ask the Commission to declare the Free Church's position on the judicial review. The Commission recorded with gratitude the attendance of fifty-two Commissioners at the meeting.

It was therefore moved, seconded and agreed that the Commission of Assembly note the letter with its contents, and proceed to take up the Report of the Board of Trustees. The Principal Clerk was instructed to respond to the letter, explaining the decision of the Commission.

3. Board of Trustees – COVID-19 Group

The Commission of Assembly called for the Report of the Board of Trustees regarding the current coronavirus pandemic and the Board's COVID-19 Group. The report was presented by Rev. David Meredith, member of the Board of Trustees.

3.1 First Motion. It was moved and seconded in the following terms:

16. The Commission of Assembly thank the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group for its services to the Church during the coronavirus pandemic and the direction it has taken at a time when Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions have once more closed churches for public worship.

17. The Commission of Assembly recognise the closure of churches at this time as a necessary element of the latest public health measures put in place by the Scottish Government in their effort to control the virus, prevent our health services becoming overwhelmed, and limit the loss of life. They give thanks to the Lord for the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and pray that this programme, together with the public health restrictions, will accelerate the return of the country to normality.

18. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Free Church of Scotland has no role in the pre-action letter written and signed by 27 church leaders on 15th January 2021, claiming that closure of churches in Scotland has led to the criminalising of public worship, or in the subsequent action which has resulted in them being granted a judicial review of this aspect of the Scottish Government's policy. They further declare that Free Church Ministers or Office-bearers who have supported the said action are expressing their personal views and that they are not representative of the Church's position on the matter.

3.2 Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that Paragraph 3 of the Proposed Deliverance be deleted and replaced by the following:

The Commission of Assembly declare that those ministers and officer-bearers who signed the letter of 15th January 2021 claiming that closure of churches in Scotland has led to the criminalising of public worship, or who are party to a judicial review of this aspect of the Scottish Government's policy, did so in a personal capacity only.

3.3 Third Motion. It was moved and seconded that the first sentence of Paragraph 2 of the Proposed Deliverance be deleted and replaced by the following:

The Commission of Assembly recognise that the intention of the Scottish Government in closing churches at this time is to control the virus, prevent our health services being overwhelmed and limit the loss of life.

3.4 Fourth Motion. It was also moved and seconded that Paragraph 4 be added to the Proposed Deliverance in the following terms:

The Commission of Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group to make representations to the Scottish Government to prioritise the re-opening of churches as part of the easing of lockdown restrictions, given the importance of gathered worship to the wellbeing of our members. The Board of Trustees will publish on the Free Church website this representation to the Government for the sake of transparency.

3.5 The Finding. With the permission of the Commission of Assembly, Mr Meredith accepted the third motion and the fourth motion. On a vote being taken between the second motion and the first motion, the first motion was carried. The finding of the Commission of Assembly was as follows:

1. The Commission of Assembly thank the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group for its services to the Church during the coronavirus pandemic and the direction it has taken at a time when Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions have once more closed churches for public worship.
2. The Commission of Assembly recognise that the intention of the Scottish Government in closing churches at this time is to control the virus, prevent our health services being overwhelmed and limit the loss of life. They give thanks to the Lord for the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and pray that this programme, together with the public health restrictions, will accelerate the return of the country to normality.
3. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Free Church of Scotland has no role in the pre-action letter written and signed by 27 church leaders on 15th January 2021, claiming that closure of churches in Scotland has led to the criminalising of public worship, or in the subsequent action which has resulted in them being granted a judicial review of this aspect of the Scottish Government's policy. They further declare that Free Church Ministers or Office-bearers who have supported the said action are expressing their personal views and that they are not representative of the Church's position on the matter.
4. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group to make representations to the Scottish Government to prioritise the re-opening of churches as part of the easing of lockdown restrictions, given the importance of gathered worship to the wellbeing of our members. They declare that Board of Trustees will publish on the Free Church website this representation to the Government for the sake of transparency.

The Commission of Assembly met in Private Session

4. Business Committee Report

The Commission of Assembly called for the Report of the Business Committee on the following documents from the Northern Presbytery submitted for the attention of the Commission of Assembly in relation to the Presbytery's decision not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence: (1) Reasons for Dissent and Complaint; (2) Presbytery Responses to Reasons; (3) Petition in lieu of Appeal from Mr Iain R. Morrison.

4.1 The Finding It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

4.1.1 General

2. The Commission of Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Business Committee.
3. The Commission of Assembly note the declaration of interest stated by the Principal Clerk and the Assistant Clerk, Rev. Stephen Allison. They declare that the Principal Clerk and Mr Allison shall not participate in the discussions and debate over the substance of all the submitted documents, or in any voting arising from discussions on them, either at the General Assembly or its Commissions, but that they shall be available to give advice on procedure as required.
4. The Commission of Assembly declare that Rev. Nigel Anderson, Assistant Clerk, shall take the place of the Principal Clerk at the General Assembly or its Commissions when the substance of the documents is under discussion.
5. The Commission of Assembly note the declaration of interest of the Presbytery of the Western Isles having previously processed and turned down Mr Morrison's application to be taken on trials for licence. They declare that the Presbytery of the Western Isles may participate in discussion and debate on the substance of the documents but shall not vote on any matters arising from discussions, either at the General Assembly or its Commissions.

4.1.2 Admission of Papers

1. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Reasons for Dissent and Complaint document submitted by members of the Northern Presbytery, the Northern Presbytery's Response to Reasons document, and the Petition from Mr Iain R. Morrison, be received by the Commission of Assembly as admissible and acceptable for their specific purposes and aims.
2. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Reasons for Dissent and Complaint document submitted by members of the Northern Presbytery, the Northern Presbytery's Response to Reasons document, and the Petition from Mr Iain R. Morrison, be taken up by the Commission together in the light of the fact that they are addressing the same matter.
3. The Commission of Assembly declare that the whole matter be taken up in private session and that the relevant documents be read to Commissioners during the private session and questions answered on the supporting documents and appendices as required.

4.1.3 Business

1. The Commission of Assembly appoint a committee to examine all the documents submitted from the Northern Presbytery regarding the Presbytery's decision not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence, and to investigate the matters of concern contained therein, comprising Rev. Derek Lamont, St Columba's Edinburgh, Rev. Daniel Sladek, ETS, Rev. Andrew Longwe, Cumbernauld, Rev. Colin L. Macleod, Gairloch and Kinlochewe, Rev. Rory Stott, Fortrose, Mr Andrew Murchison, Glenurquhart and Fort Augustus, Mr Iain K. Macleod, Coatbridge, and Mrs Fiona Cameron, Glasgow and Argyll, as Clerk and Adviser, with Mr Lamont as Convener.
2. The Commission of Assembly declare remit of the Committee as follows:
 - To examine the Reasons submitted by the Complainants.
 - To examine the Responses to Reasons submitted by the Presbytery.
 - To examine the Petition submitted by Mr Iain R. Morrison along with its supporting appendices.
 - To examine, as required, the papers and reports which before the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February 2021.
 - To interview as required all parties associated with, or have an interest in, the Reasons, the Responses to Reasons, and the Petition as mentioned above.
 - To report to the May 2021 General Assembly on their findings and with recommendations.
3. The Commission of Assembly further declare that the Committee has the rights of Church Courts in cases of Dissent and Complaint & Appeal to access documents and to interview all parties in fulfilling its remit without any prejudice to the rights of parties to be heard at the Bar of the General Assembly.

4. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Principal Clerk to issue an extract minute of proceedings to all parties to inform them of the agreed course of action regarding their individual submissions.

The Commission of Assembly met in Open Session

5. **Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting were read and approved.
6. **Close.** There being no further business, the meeting was closed with prayer.

STANDING ORDERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. 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 8, Assembly 1853, and Act 9, 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 Clerks' Office shall consider in the month of January annually any changes in Presbyteries which may have occurred in the course of the previous year, for the purpose of ascertaining the effects as regards representation and shall immediately thereafter intimate to the Presbyteries concerned what will be their representation in the ensuing General Assembly.
6. That each Presbytery shall appoint Commissioners to the General Assembly comprising an equal number of Ministers and Elders according to the notification of representation issued by the Assembly Clerks' Office.
7. That the decision of the Assembly Clerks' Office, so intimated to Presbyteries, shall be subject to review by the General Assembly, if appealed against or dissented from.
8. That should any question arise between the month of January and the meeting of Assembly, not provided for by these Orders, the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider these and how to dispose of such questions.

B. AS TO THE TRANSMISSION TO THE CLERK OF ASSEMBLY OF PAPERS

FOR THE ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. That all Commissions shall be sent by Clerks of their respective Presbyteries so as to be in the hands of the Clerk of the General Assembly not later than one week before the meeting of the Business Committee referred to in C.1 below. The Assembly Clerk shall give due notice to the Clerks of Presbyteries of the date of the meeting to facilitate this. The Assembly Clerk shall report on all Commissions and Elders' Certificates to the Assembly Business Committee when it meets, and the Committee shall examine these Commissions and Certificates and include an item on them in its report. All Commissions and Certificates outstanding at the opening of the Assembly shall be reported to the Assembly by the Assembly Clerk at the First Session.
2. That all papers intended to be transmitted to the Assembly - namely, Memorials, Overtures, Petitions, 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 - shall be transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly not later than 15th April 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. The Clerk of Assembly shall lay such papers before the Assembly Business Committee and parties concerned shall be in attendance at the meeting. The Committee shall report to the First Session of the General Assembly on the receivability of the documents. In the event of the Committee resolving not to receive a particular document, the parties concerned shall have a right of appeal against the finding of the Committee to the General Assembly.

3. That Presbyteries shall transmit to the Clerk of Assembly their Returns to Overtures not later than one week before the meeting referred to in C.1 below; 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.

4. 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.

5. That these regulations shall not apply to Applications for authority to sell congregational property, which Applications shall be forwarded from the relevant Deacons' Court (or Finance Committee), through the Presbytery of the bounds, to the Principal Clerk who shall lay each Application before the Board of Trustees in accordance with the procedure stipulated in Act 14, Class 2, 2015.

6. 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.

C. AS TO ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND ASSEMBLY CLERKS' OFFICE

1. That the Business Committee of Assembly shall comprise the Principal Clerk, the Assistant Clerks and the Clerks of all the home Presbyteries and shall meet at a convenient point not later than 15th April annually, to examine all papers in the hands of the Principal Clerk due to come before the Assembly. The Committee shall appoint its own Convener and the Principal Clerk shall act as Clerk to the Committee.

2. That the Committee at this meeting shall formulate a programme of business for the Assembly, after giving due consideration to the following:

- a) the number of Reports from Committees and Boards and the length of time thought to be required for each, taking account of which Reports, or sections of Reports, should be the subject of less formal discussion.
- b) the periods of informal discussion rather than formal debate that the Assembly may wish to take up.
- c) all other items of business due to come before the Assembly and estimated time thought to be required for each.
- d) the number of delegates expected at the Assembly.
- e) any Appeals, Dissents and Complaints, Overtures, Petitions or References or any other cases coming to the Assembly from the inferior courts.

3. That the Business Committee take up the examination of Presbytery records at the April statutory meeting and report on their findings in the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

4. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall present its report to the Assembly at the first session and its report shall be bound with all the other reports to be distributed in advance of the Assembly.

5. That the Clerks shall in their Report designate as routine those Petitions they consider ought to be in this category, and to recommend this to the Assembly in its report, at which point amendments to the contrary may be given in without prior notice, the final decision on whether any Petition be so treated to lie with the General Assembly; that if there be no objection to a Petition being classified as routine the Motion relating to it in the Proposed Deliverance of the Report shall be moved and seconded. An objection to a proposal to treat a Petition as routine or an amendment to the Motion relating to it, will require that the Petition be taken up at a suitable point in the Assembly Programme.

6. That the Assembly Clerks' Office 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 Assembly Clerks' Office shall not receive any paper which is not authenticated, unless upon special cause shown, to be reported by them to the General Assembly.

D. AS TO PRINTING OF PAPERS IN CASES COMING UP TO THE ASSEMBLY

1. That all such papers shall be printed by the Clerk, except any papers which he considers may lead to discussions in the meeting referred to in C.1 above; that he shall retain these in manuscript, and submit them in that form to that meeting, and that a list of them shall be appended to the volume containing the papers passing the Clerk.
2. 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 Clerk's Office; 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.

E. AS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Use of Audio-visual Technology

1. That when exceptional circumstances prevail where the General Assembly is unable to meet physically in one location to constitute the Assembly in the normal way due to restrictions on public gatherings, the Assembly Clerks' Office in consultation with the Moderator and the Assembly Business Committee will appoint the General Assembly to meet using audio-visual technology platform according to the general provisions of Act 5, Class 2, 2020 and the principles set out in Act 33, Class 2, 2010.
2. That meetings constituted using audio-visual technology shall be hosted in the Assembly Hall, St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh.

2. 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 session 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.

3. Committee for Printing the Acts

1. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall make arrangements for the printing the Acts of Assembly and that they shall arrange that the Acts be divided into two classes: Class 1 – those which have passed the Barrier Act; Class 2 – Acts which are of General Interest to the Church.

4. Reports of Committees

1. That the Reports of all Boards and Committees reporting to the General Assembly [excepting only a report from any meeting of the Assembly Business Committee with the purpose of reporting on changes to nominations to vacancies on Board and Committees] 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 shall be bound together electronically 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 except by express leave of the Assembly.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

5. The Submission of Amendments and Addenda

1. That amendments and addenda to the proposed deliverances of reports taken during the first session may be moved without previous notice.
2. That amendments and addenda to the proposed deliverances of all other reports taken in subsequent session shall be given in and read by the Clerk as specified in the following table. Amendments or addenda given in after the specified deadline shall not be accepted.

Reports due to be taken up during:

1st Session (Monday evening)

2nd Session (Tuesday morning)

3rd Session (Tuesday afternoon)

4th Session (Wednesday morning)

5th Session (Wednesday afternoon)

6th Session (Thursday morning)

Amendments and addenda to be given in before:

Beginning of the Session

Adjournment Monday evening

Adjournment of 2nd Session

Adjournment Tuesday afternoon

Adjournment Wednesday morning

Adjournment Wednesday evening

6. The Reading of Speeches and Length of Speeches

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. That, when meetings of the General Assembly are constituted using audio-visual technology due to restrictions on in-person meetings, in the discussion of any question the proposer of each motion may address the House for not longer than 15 minutes, and the seconder for 10 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 5 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 or Chairman, not being a member of Assembly, is permitted to present the Report of his Committee or Board, the Convener or Chairman 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 E.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 or Board'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 E.4.3.

6. That with the exception of those permitted to present a Committee's Report or Board'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 the 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.

7. Sessions of Informal Discussion

1. That Sessions for informal discussion may be held during the Assembly in addition to the formal discussion specified in 4 above, on a recommendation in the Assembly Clerks' Report. The Assembly Clerks' Office shall make its recommendations at the First Session through its Report to the Assembly. All commissioners shall be expected to attend these discussion sessions. While no formal proposal or motion may be presented at these sessions the discussion ought nevertheless to give prolonged consideration to the items specified by the Assembly. The Sessions shall be chaired by the Moderator.

2. That Committees and Boards shall highlight with an asterisk items in their annual Reports which they consider require substantive debate, in order to assist the Assembly Clerks' Office with its recommendations about informal discussion sessions and to aid commissioners in their preparations for the Assembly. This shall not preclude any commissioner asking questions about, or speaking to, other items in reports.

8. 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 Commission of Assembly, 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.

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".

4.1. 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.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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

9. 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. E.7.6 below, and that when an amendment raises an issue different from that in other amendments, it shall be dealt with as a direct countermotion.

4. That where there 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 countermotion or amendment.

10. 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, or by an electronic polling function when audio visual equipment is being used.

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.

11. 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 session, 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.

12. 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 session of the Assembly 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.

13. 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 Assembly Business Committee, who shall advise the Moderator as to the way of disposing of them.

14. 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 Assembly Business 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 Assembly 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 Business 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 Assembly Business Committee, that they may advise in the matter.

15. Examination of Presbytery Records

1. That Presbytery Records shall be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office as soon as possible after any restrictions on in-person gatherings have been removed and at the request of the Principal Clerk.
2. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall examine the Presbytery Records and report to the October Commission of Assembly through the Business Committee on the results of the examination.

3. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to attest as correct such records as have passed the examination with regard to form and content.
4. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to issue a statement of attestation, with an instruction for such a statement to be engrossed in the records of the Presbytery, when notice of the attestation is not possible physically.
5. That the Business Committee report on the examination of Presbytery Records be sent to Presbyteries and engrossed in their records.

16. Examination of Minutes of Boards and Committees

1. That the Minutes of Committees and Boards shall be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office for examination not later than Friday 12th June 2021.
2. That the Assembly Clerks shall fill up a schedule with the information required by the Assembly regarding each book.
3. That the Assembly Clerks shall report on the examination of records to the October 2021 Commission of Assembly.
4. That a copy of the Assembly Clerks' Report, as sustained by the Assembly, shall be transmitted to Boards and Committees, and engrossed in their Record.
5. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to issue a statement of attestation from the minutes of the Assembly or of its Commissions, with an instruction for such a statement to be engrossed in the records of Boards and Committees, when notice of the attestation is not possible physically.

17. Additional General Assembly Committees

1. That a Committee be appointed to prepare a report on deceased minister and elders for the period commencing from the last Assembly with the report presented to the General Assembly at the last Session.
2. That a Committee be appointed to act as the Receiving Party for the visit of the Lord High Commissioner.

18. 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.

19. Minutes

1. That the minutes recorded at any of the Sessions of the Assembly shall be passed by the Clerks to Commissioners at the end of each day in electronic form where possible.
2. That proposed corrections be submitted to the Clerks for notice to the General Assembly when the minutes are called for approval.
3. That the minutes be called for approval of only at a morning Session of the Assembly, 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.
4. That when the minutes are called for approval, they will not be read, but that submissions for corrections will be reported on by the Assembly Clerks.

20. Standing Orders

1. That the Standing Orders be held as read by vote in the First Session of the Assembly, and immediately before the appointment of Committees of the Assembly, and that they be printed in the first day's proceedings.
2. That the operation of Standing Orders may be suspended on a motion without notice, and by resolution of the Assembly, carried by a majority of at least two thirds of its Commissioners.
3. That a proposal to change Standing Orders must come by overture from the floor of the General Assembly or from the Assembly Business Committee.
4. That a proposal to suspend Standing Orders may not be made for the purpose of introducing new items of business to the General Assembly other than for emergency items or items of a time-critical nature.

21. Conduct of Commissioners

1. That courtesy demands that all Sessions of the Assembly be attended by Commissioners, and that private meetings should not be held during the Sessions of the Assembly.
2. That with the exception of comfort breaks the Moderator shall require the permission of the Assembly for absence from the chair during sittings of the Assembly. The Moderator shall not undertake visits on behalf of the Assembly without their prior authority.
3. That the use of all forms of social or electronic communications media during private sessions of the Assembly when confidential matters are being discussed or debated is prohibited.
4. That the use of all forms of social media for the purpose criticising or passing judgement on decisions of the General Assembly or on its Commissioners is prohibited for the sake of the honour and good name of the General Assembly.

22. 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 Business 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 Business 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.

23. 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.

F. AS TO BOARDS AND 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 the Assembly Business Committee. Membership of committees, boards and panels 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.

2. *Composition of Standing Boards and Committees*

1. That Standing Boards and Committees shall consist of the following:

1. **Board of Trustees** to discharge the functions of the Board of Trustees as presently constituted; to continue to have members of the Board appointed as directors of the Free Church of Scotland General Trustees' Limited; and to assume oversight of an **Executive Office** comprising the following functions:

1.1. **Administrative Office** to monitor and prepare regular reports on financial performance; to oversee the annual budgeting process; to keep under review matters of legal compliance and risk management; and to provide general administrative support to the Church. The Board shall receive regular reports on financial performance, legal compliance and risk management from the Administrative Office and shall allocate time within its meetings for consideration of these.

1.2. **Assembly Clerks' Office** to make all arrangements for the General Assembly reporting to the General Assembly, either directly or through the Business Committee of the Assembly, in relation to matters connected with the conduct of business at meetings of the General Assembly or meetings of the Commission of Assembly; to receive nominations from Presbyteries for vacancies on committees and boards when they occur, and, following consultation with the relevant committee or board, to make recommendations from these submissions, through the Board, to the General Assembly; to advise on matters of Church practice and procedure in light of the rules and procedures laid down in *The Practice* and in Church legislation and to initiate reviews of the practice or procedures of the Church where these might benefit from modification; to maintain formal relationships with other churches and ecclesiastical bodies; and, in the case of the Principal Clerk of Assembly, to act as Custodian of Titles.

Any proposals from the Assembly Clerks' Office to modify Church practice or procedures shall be reported to the General Assembly through the Board. The Assembly Clerks' Office shall be at liberty to enlist additional assistance as required, and at its discretion, to assist with the fulfilment of the various aspects of its remit.

1.3. **Media Office** to manage relationships with the media, acting as the primary contact point for media enquiries and sourcing comment from appropriate personnel within the Church; to exercise oversight of the Church's website including matters of design and content and similarly to oversee and develop the Church's social media presence; to oversee denominational publications; to identify issues of contemporary interest and importance, develop position papers on such issues and communicate the same effectively to internal and external audiences; and, more generally, to facilitate the flow of information around the Church with a view to stimulating interest and involvement in the Church's work.

1.4. **Membership:** Thirteen members in total including the Principal Clerk of Assembly *ex officio*. The remaining membership shall comprise at least four ministers and at least six office-bearers, of whom up to two might be deacons, appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the Board, who shall always be an elder, as Chairman, for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three trustees.

1.5. **Communications Oversight Group** to produce, on an annual basis, material relating to public questions in which the church has an interest with a view to fulfilling our duty to speak the Word of the Lord to those in power in the nation and to maintain a prophetic witness; to exercise oversight of digital communication output and denominational publications; appoint editors and content editors; to facilitate the flow of information about matters of general interest to and from individuals, congregations, presbyteries and Boards of the Church; to oversee the Church's website and social media and to promote the application of new technology to the work of the Church where appropriate; and to secure an overarching information strategy for the central church.

1.6 **Membership:** Six members in total. The Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees (in consultation with the Mission Board), and other members shall be appointed by the Mission Board (two members) Seminary Board (one member), Board of Ministry (one member) and Board of Trustees (one member in addition to Chair). The Group members will be ministers or elders with an interest and passion for the area. Expert advisers in relation to technology and social media would be invited to input to the Group as and when required. The Group is expected to obviate travel time and costs through the use of communications technology.

1.7 **Media Oversight Group** to support the Church's Media Officer and Parliamentary Officer; to help respond to matters which represent a significant threat to the reputation or impact of the Church; to be consulted on, and help shape major responses to, government consultations and the Church's reaction to government legislation and policy.

1.8 *Membership:* Chairman of Mission Board, Chairman of Board of Trustees, Assembly Clerk, CEO and Mission Director. Given the nature of the work, the Group will conduct its business by telephone and email.

2. **Board of Ministry** to discharge the functions of the Board of Ministry as presently constituted; to assume oversight of matters relating to the working conditions of ministers and other personnel, excluding those connected with the Free Church Offices and the Free Church College; to work with Presbyteries in seeking to further equip ministers and others in areas such as mentoring, leadership and management skills; to consult with Presbyteries and the missions boards in assessing and specifying training needs for ministry candidates in the areas of knowledge, skills and character and to develop appropriate delivery mechanisms prior to, during, and following a formal academic training programme; and to assume responsibility for issues currently remitted to the Panel of Pastoral Advice.

2.1 With reference to the provision of pastoral care and advice, the Board of Ministry shall be at liberty to enlist such additional expertise from around the Church as might be required to deal with situations as they arise.

2.2 The Student Finance Scheme shall be overseen by the Board of Ministry in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer.

2.3 *Membership:* Ten members in total including the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary *ex officio*, one additional member of the College Senate appointed annually by them on an *ex officio* basis, and one additional member who shall be a minister in a Training Congregation nominated by the Board of Ministry. The remaining membership shall comprise three ministers and four elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board. The Board shall be empowered to appoint Consultants and Advisors as required, particularly to liaise closely with the Mission Board and to assist with interviews and other functions of the Board.

3. **Mission Board** to discharge the functions of the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board as previously constituted, and to assume responsibility for developing appropriate denominational partnerships at home and abroad, as well as partnerships with other organisations and agencies, in order to enhance the Church's ability to reach out with the Gospel.

3.1 *Membership:* Eight members in total comprising six ministers and two elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

4. **ETS Board** to discharge the functions of the Edinburgh Theological Seminary Board as presently constituted.

4.1 *Membership:* Nine members including the College Principal, one member of the College Senate, the Chairman of the Board of Ministry and the President of the Students' Representative Council, all *ex officio*. The remaining membership shall comprise two elders and three ministers appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. Elders appointed to the College Board shall have suitable qualifications or experience in education, preferably tertiary education, or in the administration or promotion of education. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall not be a member of the College Senate. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

5. **Ecumenical Relations Committee** to promote, foster and develop relations with other denominations and like-minded believers in seeking the propagation of the gospel and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in Scotland and beyond. The Committee will take steps to promote and protect the position of the Free Church of Scotland with respect to her place in the wider Church. The Committee carried out its remit as defined by this Act and as the General Assembly may appoint.

5.1 *Membership:* Seven members in total comprising the Mission Director, the Mission Board Chairman, the Principal Clerk, Assistant Clerk Representative, the Moderator, the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary, and one Elder, appointed for a four-year term, with the Convener appointed by the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk appointed as Clerk to the Committee.

6. **Psalmody & Praise Committee** to discharge the combined functions of the Psalmody Committee and the Special Committee on Praise.

6.1 *Membership:* Six members in total comprising at least two ministers and at least two elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Convener shall be appointed from the membership of the Committee by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Committee.

2. That the termination of the appointment of any member of the Boards and Committees specified above in 1.1-1.6, by death, resignation or discipline, shall be reported as soon as possible after the event to the Assembly Clerks' Office. Upon notification, the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the relevant Board or Committee, shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the relevant Board or Committee shall report on the same.

3. That Presbyteries may nominate Elders and Ministers from other Presbyteries to fill vacancies on Boards and Committees when there is a shortage of eligible and available nominees within their own bounds. The General Assembly, noting the above declaration, amend Paragraph 2 of Act 48, Class 2, 2008 as follows: The Committee when seeking nominations from Presbyteries shall outline for their information the skills and expertise expected of nominees for each vacancy. Presbyteries shall normally nominate candidates from within their own bounds. When there is a local shortage of available and eligible Ministers and Elders, Presbyteries may nominate candidates from outwith their own bounds. If a Presbytery is unable to identify a suitable candidate, the Assembly Clerks' Office 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. Presbyteries are directed to ensure that nominees are available, willing and able to serve *before* submitting their names.

4. That in accordance with Act 24, Class 2, 2003, paragraph 5, a Minister shall not normally be nominated to serve on any Assembly Board or Committee during the first three years of his ministry. This restriction shall also apply to Ministers newly admitted to the Free Church from other denominations.

5. That 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.

6. 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 Assembly Clerks' Office accordingly before 31st January of the ensuing year. Upon notification the Assembly Clerks' Office shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the Clerks shall report on the same.

7. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider in October annually impending vacancies to Committees and Boards due at the ensuing General Assembly. After this meeting, and not later than 31st October, the Assembly Clerk 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. Not later than 15th March the Assembly Clerks' Office shall formulate its Report to the ensuing General Assembly giving due consideration to these submissions and any other matters affecting Committee and Board appointments.

8. That with the exception of the Board of Trustees and the Psalmody & Praise Committee, each Committee and Board referred to in 1-6 above shall hold three statutory meetings per annum, with the liberty to arrange additional meetings as required.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. That no Committee shall sit while the Moderator is in the Chair at any session of the Assembly's meeting.

APPENDIX ONE

Act 33, Class 2, 2010 - Act anent Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business

The General Assembly, recognising the advantages to be obtained from the use of modern technology in conducting the business of Church courts, committees and boards hereby enact as follows:

1. Technology such as video conferencing may only be used for the conduct of meetings where all members of the court, committee or board have reasonably ready access to such facilities.
2. The minutes of a meeting conducted by video or telephone conferencing shall indicate the location of the meeting as being that of the chairman or convener and should also note that some members were present by way of video or telephone link.
3. The sederunt of a meeting conducted by video or telephone conferencing shall be read out by the secretary or clerk once all participants have joined the meeting.
4. It is preferable that matters requiring a vote to be taken be held over until a subsequent face to face meeting. If a vote needs to be taken on a particular matter, at the instruction of the chairman or convener, the secretary or clerk shall record the vote of each member in turn and after totalling the votes, advise the board or committee accordingly and record in the minute as normal.
5. All members of courts, committees or boards must ensure that normal rules governing confidentiality are adhered to in the conduct of meetings held by telephone or video conferencing.
6. Any decisions relating to the business of a court, committee or board, taken outside of a formal meeting (for example, decisions taken following email consultation) must be recorded formally in the minute of the next meeting.

APPENDIX TWO

Act 5, Class 2, 2020 – Use of Technology in Exceptional Circumstances

The General Assembly, recognising the need to make use of audio-visual technology in the carrying out of Church business in exceptional circumstances, enact and ordain as follows:

1. *General Principles.* The General Assembly declare that the following general principles apply for the purposes of this Act.
 - 1.1. The General Assembly declare that exceptional circumstances for the purposes of this Act are circumstances where, due to restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the Government or other legislative authority, Presbyteries are unable to meet physically in one location to constitute a meeting in the normal way.
 - 1.2. Where such exceptional circumstances exist, a Kirk Session may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting to elect a minister to fill a vacancy, and a Presbytery may proceed to hold a meeting to moderate a call, license a student, and conduct an induction or an ordination using audio-visual technology without the need for people to be physically present in one location.
 - 1.3. Such a meeting will be governed by the principles in Act 33, Class 2, 2010 – Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business alongside the additional principles outlined in this Act.
2. *The Signing of the Formula.* The General Assembly declare that, where, during a meeting of Presbytery conducted using audio-visual technology, a person is required to answer the Questions and sign the Formula the following procedure will be used.
 - 2.1. The Clerk will provide the person with a copy of the Formula in PDF in advance of the meeting.

- 2.2. The Moderator will ask the person the Questions via videoconferencing at the appropriate time during the meeting.
- 2.3. On giving satisfactory answers to the Questions, the Moderator will then instruct the person to sign the Formula.
- 2.4. The person will show the unsigned Formula to the Camera.
- 2.5. The person will sign the Formula on Camera.
- 2.6. The person will show the signed Formula to the Camera.
- 2.7. The signed Formula will then be posted to the Presbytery Clerk.

3. *Congregational Meetings to Elect Minister.* The General Assembly declare that, in exceptional circumstances, Kirk Sessions of a vacant congregation may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister to fill the vacancy using audio-visual technology.

3.1 The Kirk Session shall meet using audio-visual technology to consider steps to filling a vacancy in the congregation. If they consider the time is right for this, they will appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister.

3.2 The Kirk Session will give due intimation of the congregational meeting to all communicant members and supporting adherents and shall ensure that they are all informed of the meeting and of its purpose.

3.3 The Kirk Session shall explain to members and adherents that the meeting will take place using audio-visual technology. They shall ensure that arrangements are made for members and adherents who do not have access to audio-visual technology to connect with the meeting using landline or mobile telephone. They shall issue a separate document explaining how to join the meeting and how to participate in the meeting for the purposes of the election.

3.4 At the congregational meeting, the Moderator will call for nominations to fill the vacancy in the usual way. Communicant members and supporting adherents will show their support of nominations when asked to do so either by raising their hand and keeping their hand raised until such time as the Moderator and Clerk have recorded the number of votes, or by the use of the polling function when this is available on the audio-visual platform in use at the time. Communicants and adherents participating in the meeting using landline or mobile telephone will declare their support verbally.

3.5 On the successful completion of the election process, and on there being a clear majority support for one nomination to fill the vacancy, the Kirk Session shall decide to ask the Presbytery to moderate in a Closed Call.

3.6 The Kirk Session shall report to the Presbytery on the congregational meeting, giving details of the process of informing all communicant members and adherents of the meeting and also giving details of the process of informing the regarding participation in the meeting.

4. *Meetings to Moderate a Call.* The General Assembly declare that, where a Congregation requests Presbytery to Moderate in a Call, and Presbytery agrees that exceptional circumstances exist, the Presbytery shall conduct the meeting to moderate the call via audio-visual technology.

4.1. The Presbytery shall receive a report from the Kirk Session and shall satisfy itself that the steps outlined in Section 3 above have been followed without any detriment to the rights of the people in electing a minister. The Presbytery shall record its satisfaction with this report before proceeding to appoint a meeting to moderate in a Call.

4.2. In order for a meeting to Moderate a Call to be conducted by audio-visual technology, the call must be a Closed Call with the name of the Minister or Probationer agreed and elected by the congregation and inserted in the Call.

4.3. A form of Mandate should be prepared and circulated to each communicant member of the congregation and any adherents who wish to sign the Concurrence in Call.

4.4. The Form of Mandate shall authorise one of the Elders of the congregation to sign the Form of Call or the concurrence in Call on behalf of the member or adherent.

4.5. During the meeting to Moderate the Call there should be a facility for the Presbytery to meet apart from the wider congregation (either a separate conference or placing the congregation on Hold while the Presbytery meeting).

4.6. The Kirk Session will submit to the Presbytery written confirmation that every communicant on the Roll has had the opportunity to complete a mandate form before the Presbytery proceeds to moderate in the Call. The Kirk Session shall also report on the opportunity given to adherents and regular worshippers in the congregation to sign a mandate for concurrence in the Call.

4.7. The meeting to Moderate the Call will be conducted as normal via audio-visual technology.

4.8. At the point where Members and Adherents would normally be invited to sign the Form of Call or the Concurrence in Call, the Elder authorised to sign mandates will sign on behalf of all members and adherents who have granted authority to do so.

4.9. The Presbytery shall consider the Call and, if they decide to sustain the call, the Presbytery Clerk will report to the Congregation and call for any dissents which can either be made via the technology or if some members of the congregation are merely watching a live-stream a telephone number of the Presbytery Clerk can be provided for dissents. If the Presbytery Clerk provides a telephone number for dissents, they must wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.

5. *Licensing.* The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to conduct the Licensing of a candidate to preach the Gospel via audio-visual technology.

5.1. The Presbytery may carry out both the trials for licence, and the Presbytery meeting to license the candidate, via audio-visual technology.

5.2. The Presbytery shall carry out the trials licensing process in line with the recognised practice with meetings conducted according to the general principles outlined in Section 1 above.

5.3. On successful completion of the trials for licence, the Presbytery will proceed to the signing of the Formula in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.

6. *Inductions.* The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to proceed with the induction of a minister using audio-visual technology.

6.1. The Presbytery shall proceed with the induction service according to the Church's recognised practice with two exceptions:

6.2.1. Firstly, when the Presbytery Clerk reads the Second Edict calling for anyone who is prepared to substantiate objections to the life or doctrine of the Probationer or Minister, he shall provide a telephone number for the raising of any objections and wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.

6.2.2. Secondly, asking of the Questions and signing of the Formula will be conducted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.

7. *Ordinations.* The General Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that the laying on of hands is an essential element in the Church's current process for ordination to the office of the holy ministry, declare that in exceptional circumstances it shall be competent for Presbyteries to proceed as follows:

7.1. When the Presbytery has sustained a Call to a Probationer according to the process outlined in Section 3 of this Act, the Presbytery may decide to proceed with the ordination process with the use of audio-visual technology.

7.2. The Presbytery shall then follow the procedure outlined in Section 5 of this Act with regard to trials for licence for students for the purpose of completing the trials for ordination.

7.3. The induction service will be carried out as outlined in Section 6 of this Act.

7.4. Having satisfactorily answered the Questions and signed the Formula, the Presbytery shall proceed with the prayer and declaration of ordination after which the person is formally inducted to the congregation and granted a seat in the Presbytery.

7.5. As soon as possible after the exceptional circumstances have ended and the Presbytery is able to meet in the normal way, they shall conduct a service of dedication when the Moderator will lead the Presbytery in prayer and when they will lay hands on the individual before the gathered congregation.

8. *Additional Regulations.* The General Assembly declare as follows regarding additional regulations:

8.1 In exceptional circumstances where people are unable to physically gather for constituted meetings, the Assembly Clerks' Office is empowered to make regulations consistent with this Act for the conducting of any Church business via technology in accordance with the principles of the Free Church of Scotland making suitable accommodation to the exceptional circumstances.

8.2 Such regulations must be communicated to each Presbytery Clerk and made widely available to the Church.

8.3 Any regulations made under this Act will be reviewable by the General Assembly or the Commission of the Assembly.

9. *Restrictions.* The General Assembly declare that the provisions of this Act are for exceptional and emergency situations only and not to be adopted for meetings of Church courts in normal circumstances