

## REPORT OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006

#### INTRODUCTION

The Committee has had its usual heavy workload - spread over five main Committee meetings (three of which were held at St. Ninians U.F. Church, Stirling). Underpinning a lot of its work has been the discussion paper which was presented to the Assembly last year and the responses to it. In addition to the main Committee meetings there have been numerous sub-Committee meetings and interviews in which members and others have been involved.

While it awaits the deliberations of the Panel on Doctrine re 'Ministry', the Committee has been engaged in its on-going work on behalf of the General Assembly. Some of the Committee's work has already borne fruit, others are 'works in progress' and will come to the Assembly at some other time. What is contained in the report below is mainly new information and matters on which the Committee is seeking decisions from this year's Assembly.

Commissioners are asked to carefully scrutinize the paragraphs of Deliverance which, in some cases, contain more of the detail of new practices/schemes being put forward for the Assembly's consideration.

#### NEW MINISTERS

##### From within [Scotland]

Rev Deidre Lyon, having completed all the Committee's requirements was ordained and appointed into her first charge at Cumnock on 30 September 2005.

##### From UCCSA [South Africa]

The Committee has been greatly encouraged by the arrival of our colleagues from UCCSA through the overseas partnership developed by our Overseas Committee in consultation with ourselves. Rev Joey Naika was appointed as Minister to Leith: Ebenezer on 5 Nov. 2005; Rev Patrick Coltman to Stonehouse on 24 Jan. 2006 and Rev Peter de Villiers to Wishaw on 2 Feb 2006. They also attended an orientation course at St. Colms in February at which our vice-convenor had some input to the programme on the history and principles of the United Free Church of Scotland.

There is no doubt that the quality, experience and deep Christian faith and commitment of all three men will add richly and deeply not only to the individual congregations and communities which they will serve, but to the life of our denomination in the coming three years. It has been an exciting project and one which the Committee will endeavour to evaluate and perhaps develop in the future in partnership with the Overseas Committee.

#### STUDENTS IN TRAINING FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

This time last year it was reported that we had no students in training for the Ordained Ministry. This year the Committee is glad to report that we have two: **Mr Robert Allan** of our Balintore Congregation and **Mr Martin Whitehead** of our Newport congregation.

Mr Allan is currently undertaking two modules of an MTh course at Glasgow University and would hope to conclude these successfully along with all our training requirements by the spring of 2007. He has also completed his first placement.

Mr Whitehead presented with acceptable academic qualifications and is now actively involved in his first attachment. He too requires to fulfil satisfactorily all our in-house training and would hope to complete these by 2008

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The new Professional Development scheme for Ministers is now being implemented under the guidance of Rev David Cartledge to whom we are indebted. Early indications are encouraging. The Committee is also delighted to have been able to provide a small budget for the possibility of sabbaticals and/or other means of implementing any such development. It is hoped that in the future this scheme may be extended to include Part-time Pastors.

## **MINISTERS' WORKING CONDITIONS**

In a voluntary agreement with the Department of Trade and Industry Churches throughout the UK are expected to draw up a document setting out their 'Terms and Conditions for Ministers.' Keen to encourage best practice, the Committee has prepared a document collating information which sets out our current situation regarding issues such as the responsibilities of a Minister; terms and conditions of work; the settlement and ending of ministries; discipline and grievance procedures; and opportunities for development and support. All the details can be found as an appendix at the end of this report.

## **REVIEW OF APPOINTMENTS OF MINISTERS**

Traditionally Ministers have been inducted into a charge for an indefinite period of time. Circumstances, on occasion, are now dictating the introduction of an 'Appointment' of a Minister to a charge for a specific period of time (normally 5 years). This practice has prompted the Committee to draw up procedures to ensure that, where a Presbytery decides that an 'appointment' would be the best way forward, any such arrangements are processed properly and with uniformity across the Presbyteries.

[See paragraphs of deliverance at the end of this report]

## **LONG-TERM ILLNESS OF MINISTERS**

The long-term illness of a Minister can be an anxious and difficult time for both Minister and congregation. In view of this the Committee has given considerable thought to having procedures in place to cope with such situations. The procedures, thought to be the most helpful, can be found in the paragraphs of deliverance at the end of the report.

## **PART TIME PASTORS**

This role continues to provide invaluable service to the church. Since the General Assembly of 2005 the Committee has added two new part-time pastors to the list; one part-time pastor has fulfilled the criteria and been accepted and trained to conduct the sacrament of communion; one part-time pastor has had their number of days worked increased; and one has concluded their work preparing the way for a new ministry to begin. The Committee takes this opportunity to express its sincere thanks to Mr Nicky Kyle for his much

appreciated contribution to the congregation in Cumnock.

## READERS

The relatively recent introduction of Study Days for our current Readers has hopefully enriched the service which they are able to give to the denomination and is therefore something which the Committee is keen to continue.

This year's study day on the theme of 'Reflective Practice' took place at Dunblane Churches House on 20 May. It was expertly led by Mrs Mary Stobo, who recently retired as Readership Secretary with the Church of Scotland.

## AUCHTERARDER: CHURCH RE-EXTENSION

Last year's Assembly granted the Committee an extra year in which to review Auchterarder as a Church Re-extension charge. Over the year meetings have taken place between representatives of our Committee and representatives of the Presbytery of the North and Auchterarder.

It should be noted that although Auchterarder is the congregation designated as a church re-extension charge it's life is inextricably linked to the congregations of Perth and Balbeggie.

The Committee recognise that the congregation of Auchterarder, along with their much respected Part-time minister, Rev Jim Gregory, is still pursuing imaginative ways and means of outreach in the community. In addition, the Committee is aware of the Presbytery of the North's concerns for the future position of all three congregations. With this in mind, the Ministry Committee recommends to the Assembly that the status of 'church re-extension charge' should continue for up to a further two years while served by Rev Jim Gregory. The Committee could not see the period extending beyond that.

## CONFERENCES

The **September 2005 In Service Conference** of Ministers and Pastors explored the theme of "Mission-Shaped Church". We were extremely fortunate to have Roger Carswell (Evangelist) speaking on 'Evangelism and the Local Church' and David and Mary Robinson (OMF Cambodia) on 'Cross-cultural evangelism and church planting in Asia and Scotland'. Not only did our speakers give excellent talks on their subjects they also shared something of themselves and their deep-rooted enthusiasm for evangelism.

Plans are now well ahead for the **2006 Conference** on 19 - 21 September 2006 when the main speaker will be Rev. Dr. Robert Fyall of Rutherford House speaking on the theme of Ministry.

The Students and Pastors conference took place at Scottish Churches house, Dunblane on 24 - 25 April. The subject under examination was 'The Sermon'.

In the name of the Committee

JAN CROSS	Convener
IAN A BOA	Vice Convener
JOHN O FULTON	Secretary