

## **REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007**

The business of the committee in fulfilling its remit to deal with the practical aspects of Administration and Finance is to ensure that the affairs of the denomination are dealt with in a considered and meaningful manner that both honours God and is beneficial to the work of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. The committee has met regularly throughout the year to fulfil this task.

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007**

Details of the arrangements for the 2007 General Assembly are contained in the Outline Order of Business in Appendix 1 of the report.

The opening of the General Assembly will take place in Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church on Thursday evening with the Appointment of the Moderator and the Communion Service. There will also be an opportunity for the retiring Moderator to reflect on his Moderatorial year.

The Business Sessions of Assembly will be held in the John McIntyre Centre at Pollock Halls of Residence, Edinburgh University, on Friday and Saturday. Conveners are reminded that each Committee is allocated forty-five minutes for their presentation. Included within this time is the verbal report, which should last no more than ten minutes, questions, discussion, and the paragraphs of Deliverance.

General Assembly concludes in Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church with the Closing Service on Saturday evening at which time the Moderator will give his Address. Commissioners are reminded that they are expected to attend all seditments of the General Assembly including the opening and closing sessions.

The committee would express its appreciation to the Minister and Kirk Session of Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church, for making their premises available for the opening and closing Sessions of General Assembly and for the Meeting of the Women's Home and Overseas Committee on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008**

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly of 2008 should meet within the Presbytery of the West.

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY REVIEW**

Current arrangements for General Assembly mean that Assembly is rotated within the bounds of the three Presbyteries. While the Committee appreciate the value of this practice, it does present certain problems.

Due to the availability and cost of suitable accommodation within Glasgow and Edinburgh, two venues have been required. One to host the Opening and Closing Sessions of Assembly and the Annual Meetings of the Women's Home and Overseas Committee, which require a larger venue, the other to host the Business Sessions of Assembly, where a smaller venue is adequate. Finding two suitable venues with the necessary facilities within reasonable distance, and ensuring that sound systems and other media are adequate is not always an easy task.

Following positive comments on last years General Assembly in Perth, where the Salutation Hotel provided a venue with accommodation suitable to facilitate all General Assembly Sessions and the Meetings of the Women's Home and Overseas Committee, the committee is seeking to identify a centrally located, affordable venue, with suitable accommodation where the General Assembly could meet annually.

### **STEDFAST**

The Stedfast Team have met regularly with the Editor during the past year to review previous issues, plan the themes and articles required for upcoming issues, and have generally sought to develop ways in which the magazine can widen its appeal to members of the United Free Church and beyond. The Committee regrets the continuing reduction in the circulation of the magazine, which now stands at 1,267 copies (a decrease of 107 from the previous year). Production costs have been reduced by changing printers to Hay Nisbet at a saving of over £1,000 per issue.

The committee, as always, is grateful to the editor, Rev J. A. M. McFie for his work in producing Stedfast, and appreciate the valuable assistance and contributions of Mr Bill Imrie and his staff at Stone Agency in the production of the magazine.

### **CHURCH OFFICE**

Following a full building survey by D. M. Hall it was evident that a number of repairs required to be made to the building at 11 Newton Place. Work on the exterior of the building has now been completed at a cost of £36,980 (inc VAT). This included complete re-roofing with new slates, gutters, cupola, valley gutter, lead flashings etc. As scaffolding was required for this work, the committee decided that it made economic sense to proceed with the required repairs to the exterior stonework and pointing, the repainting of the front stonework, and the repairing and repainting of windows, doors, and railings as necessary. Internally, the electrical installation requiring to be brought up to current Health and Safety Standards was completely renewed at a cost of £46,815 (inc VAT). While these repairs were overdue and necessary, they have the supplementary benefit of adding to the value of the Building. Minor repairs to the staircase are required to satisfy health and safety standards, and redecoration of the main hall, entrance and staircase, is required in order to bring the interior up to an acceptable standard.

As always, the committee, greatly appreciative of all the work the Office Staff carries out throughout the year wishes to record its thanks.

### **COORDINATING FORUM**

The Coordinating Forum, consisting of General Assembly Conveners and Vice-Conveners, Presbytery Clerks, and the National and Presbytery Development Coordinators met in October 2006 and March 2007. The purpose of these meetings is to enable the various Committees and Coordinators to share information regarding their ongoing work, any plans for the future, and to discuss budgets for the following year.

### **APPEALS COMMISSION**

As requested by the General Assembly the committee gave further consideration to the proposals regarding the establishment of an Appeal Commission.

The proposals to establish such a Commission arose as a result of ongoing concerns about the ability of the current procedures to handle such appeals efficiently and expeditiously. Such cases arise very infrequently in the life of the Church and as a result some commissioners are unfamiliar with the procedures set out in the Manual of Practice and Procedure (Blue Book).

In presenting proposals for such a Commission it must be emphasised that such a Commission would not bypass Presbyteries, nor remove the responsibility of Presbyteries to first of all deal with such cases and arrive at their own decision. The appeal would be against the decisions of a Presbytery which has first dealt with any matter arising.

In considering the responses of Kirk Sessions it was found that there was considerable agreement with the principle of establishing such a Commission. The main concern was over the potential size of Commission if meeting with just a quorum. The revised proposals presented below are for a fifty percent increase in the size of both the Commission and quorum. While it might be argued that it should be larger it is the view of the committee that given the size of the Denomination and the resources available it would not be practicable to appoint a Commission larger than this.

The procedure to be followed by the proposed Commission is the same as that already followed by the General Assembly in hearing appeals.

The opportunity is also taken in the revised overture to remove any doubt as to how the proposed Commission would act in the event it was unable to fulfil the remit given to it.

The committee further considered the concern raised by some Presbyters that such a Commission was 'unpresbyterian'. However the Manual of Practice and Procedure already provides for the establishment of a Special Commission to deal with any matter. Such a Commission acts with the full authority and power of the General Assembly unless the General Assembly appointing the Commission specifically limits its powers.

*"The General Assembly may remit any cause before it to a Special Commission of its members with such powers as the General Assembly shall see fit. And, unless it is otherwise provided in the terms of its appointment, the Special Commission shall have power to travel in, decide, and pronounce sentence in the cause; and its decision and sentence shall be final, and shall have the force and effect of a decision and sentence of the General Assembly, and shall be reported to the next General Assembly." (Manual p70 para 7)*

While the General Assembly has not used this procedure often in recent times it did so in a matter brought before the General Assembly in the 1975. In that particular situation a Commission consisting of the Principal Clerks and one minister was appointed. It was made clear to the General Assembly that such a Commission was to act in the name of the General Assembly and with the full powers of the General Assembly and that it had the powers to decide the matter before it and to merely report back its findings and decision with no further appeal being possible.

Rather than being unpresbyterian the establishment of a Commission is in fact a significant part of our long established procedure. In establishing an Appeal Commission the General Assembly is being asked to remit the causes defined in the overture (and only those specific causes) to a standing Commission whose membership the General Assembly would be required to appoint each year.

The revised proposals are contained below.

1. The Appeal Commission is established, appointed and authorised by the General Assembly to act for and on behalf of the General Assembly in the hearing of appeals, and adjudicating finally thereon, against the decisions of Inferior Courts in cases of Trial by Libel affecting the character or conduct of ministers or probationers, in the case of congregations in an unsatisfactory state and in matters arising from the employment of

individuals by General Assembly Committees, and for this purpose the General Assembly delegate to the said Appeal Commission all powers necessary to act in such cases as if the General Assembly themselves were acting, including inter alia power, where necessary, to require the attendance of witnesses, to examine witnesses on oath, and to call for the production of all documents and matters of any nature connected with or relevant to the appeal. Any decision arrived at shall be on the basis of the balance of probabilities having given due consideration to all the evidence produced.

2. (a) The Appeal Commission shall consist of eighteen ministers and elders, appointed by the General Assembly.
  - (b) The General Assembly shall appoint one of the members to be Chairman, and another to be Vice-Chairman of the Appeal Commission,
  - (c) The Clerks of Assembly act as its Clerks and may also be members.
  - (d) Any six members shall form a quorum and the Chairman shall have a casting vote only.
  - (e) In the event of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman being unable to preside at any Sederunt of the Appeal Commission, the members present shall elect one of their number to act as Chairman, who shall continue to act until the close of that Appeal.
  - (f) In the event of the any of the Clerks not being present at any Sederunt of the Appeal Commission, the members present shall elect one of their number to act as Clerk.
  - (g) No member of any Court whose decision is under review, nor anyone who has taken part in the cause at any stage as Adviser or Assessor, shall act as a member of the Appeal Commission when an Appeal in such a cause is being heard.
  - (h) No member of the Commission who has not been present during the whole proceedings in the Appeal shall vote or take any part in the finding or findings of the Commission.
  - (i) An Appellant shall have the right on special cause shown to object to any member of the Commission acting when his Appeal is being heard, and such objection, if sustained, shall disqualify the member or members objected to from acting in that Appeal; provided that such objection shall be stated and disposed of at the commencement of the hearing of the Appeal, and the members of the Commission then present, other than the member or members objected to, shall be the sole judges as to whether the objection is to be sustained or repelled, and their decision on this matter shall not be subject to review.
3. The findings and final judgement of the Appeal Commission in appeals shall be incorporated in a written Report to the General Assembly, but shall not be subject to review by the General Assembly.
  4. Where for any reason the Commission is not able to reach a decision on an appeal or take up an appeal it shall report to the General Assembly which shall take up the appeal.

## **PRAYER UNION**

The committee appreciates the valuable contribution the Prayer Union continues to make to the life of the church in providing an opportunity for focused prayer throughout the

denomination. Mrs W G Billows and her committee are to be commended for the quality and content of the Prayer and Study Guide, which is widely used throughout the church.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

The Committee is grateful to Mr John Skinner the National Child Protection Coordinator and to Mrs Sheena MacKenzie, Miss Jackie Ramsey, and Mr Nicky Kyle, Presbytery Coordinators for their ongoing work regarding Child Protection.

Following a meeting with the National and Presbytery Coordinators, training material as used by Mr Skinner is being adapted and prepared for use by the coordinators. It would be hoped in cooperation with Presbyteries to arrange training events to cover those who have not yet attended any training events, and to raise awareness of the issues involved regarding Child Protection.

## **QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION SCHEDULE**

The current schedule was approved by General Assembly in 1998. The Committee have reviewed and amended the content of the schedule to ensure that it remains applicable. The revised schedule is printed in full in Appendix 2. Prior to the visit a copy of the schedule is to be sent to the Congregation to be visited so that the Kirk Session and Temporal Court may give prior consideration and preparation for the visit. Deputies are reminded that the schedule is intended to act as a guide and that they are free to omit irrelevant sections and to cover any areas not included in the schedule. Deputies are also reminded that the report to Presbytery should be concise and relevant.

## **QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION**

Visitations were made during this year to the following congregations:

**East:** Burntisland: Erskine, Portobello: Wilson Memorial, West Calder: Limefield.

**West:** Glasgow: Langside & Shawlands, Partick; Milngavie, Stonehouse: Paterson, Wishaw.

**North:** Balintore, Dundee.

## **MODERATORIAL VISITATION**

The Committee record their appreciation to Rev A McMillan and Mrs M McMillan for their visits to congregations during the past year and for the encouragement these have brought.

**East:** Burntisland: Erskine, Dysart, Corstorphine, Portobello: Wilson Memorial, St Ninians.

**West:** Bellshill: St Andrew's, Fort William, Glasgow: Langside & Shawlands, Millerston, Shieldhall & Drumoyne; Kilmaurs: Maxwell & Kilmarnock, Milngavie

**North:** Aberdeen: Torry, Arbroath, Carnoustie: Erskine, Balintore, Boddam, Cunningburgh, Dounby, Newport, Tayport, Sandwick, Westray

The committee is reviewing the rota for visits by the Moderator. Current arrangements mean the Moderator visits Orkney and Shetland every year, congregations in the former Aberdeen Presbytery are visited every two years, while all other congregations are visited every

three years. Consideration is being given to changing the arrangements for Orkney and Shetland and ensuring that visits to all other congregations are made on an equal basis, such as every third year.

Demands upon the Moderator's time through invitations to attend various events has increased. The committee is concerned that the Moderator should not be overburdened, since they have other responsibilities. Any requests for visits by the Moderator should be made through the Church Office.

**STATISTICS**

**Presbyteries:** The number of Presbyteries remains at 3.

**Congregations:** The number of Congregations at the end of 2006 was 64 following the dissolution of Edinburgh: Blackhall and Forglan.

Name of Presbytery	Number of Congregations
1. East	16
2. West	29
3. North	19

**Roll of Ministers, etc.**

Ministers:

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
a) Retired .....	26	26
b) In Pastorate.....	25	25
c) Others .....	5	5
Total	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>
Ordained Pastors.....	1	1
Part-time Ministers & Pastors.....	9	11
Students.....	1	2
Widows of Ministers.....	13	13
Widows of Pastors.....	2	2

**Persons and Agencies:** In the table appended to this Report the analysed details of schedules received from Congregations will be found with the corresponding figures for previous years.

**Communicants:** The number of Communicants on the Roll at 31 December 2006 was 4,006 compared with 4,200 at the end of 2005.

Admissions were as follows: -

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
By Profession	30	23
By Certificate	34	41
By Resolution	15	14

Removals were as follows: -

By Death	141	159
By Certificate	43	59
Without Certificate	81	54

**Office-Bearers:** The number of Elders was 542 of whom 249 were women. There were 373 Deacons, Managers or Board Members who are not Elders, of whom 284 were women.

**Baptisms:** There were 40 Baptisms of which 3 were adult.

**Sunday Schools:**

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Schools	39	41
Classes	82	80
Teachers	138	135
Children	409	402

**Bible Classes/ Youth Fellowships:**

Groups	29	25
Membership	142	128

**Youth Organisations:**

Number	62	60
Membership	972	938

**Adult Organisations:**

Number	166	165
Membership	2,364	2,282

**Roll of persons not yet Communicants:** The Committee recommend to the Kirk Session the practice of keeping a careful record of all persons not yet communicants who are in any way connected with the Church either by attendance or by affiliation with any organisation of the Church.

In the name of the Committee,  
GARY J A BARCLAY                      Convener  
WILLIAM R MACMILLAN              Vice-Convener  
JOHN O FULTON                         Secretary

**Appendix 1**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007  
OUTLINE PROGRAMME**

**THURSDAY 7th June Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church**

- 11.00 & 2.15 Women's Home and Overseas Committee.  
Meeting of the Prayer Union at close
- 7.00 General Assembly Constituted  
Roll of Assembly submitted  
Appointment of Moderator of Assembly  
Reflections from Retiring Moderator  
Communion Service - Preacher: Retiring Moderator: Rev A McMillan  
- Communion conducted by Moderator: Rev D Cartledge  
- Roll of Departed
- Loyal Address to the Queen  
Appointment of Business Committee  
Appointment of Committee to Examine Records and Minute Books  
(Close approx 8.30)

**FRIDAY 8th John McIntyre Centre**

- 09.45 Opening Devotions  
Open Prayer  
Memorial Tributes  
Reception of Delegates from other Churches  
Report of Assembly Business Committee  
Presentation by Youth Committee  
Presentation by Panel on Doctrine  
Presentation by Ministry Committee  
Presentation by Ecumenical Relations Committee  
Presentation by Overseas Committee  
(Close approx 8.00)  
*Breaks will be: Lunch 12.30 – 1.45, Buffet tea 4.30 – 6.00 with tea/ coffee from 11 – 11.15 and 3.00 – 3.15 p.m.*  
*The Annual meeting of the Friends of the Students Association will be at 4.30 p.m.*

**SATURDAY 9th John McIntyre Centre**

- 09.45 Opening Devotions  
Open Prayer  
Representative of Scottish Bible Society  
Report by Women's Home and Overseas Committee  
Presentation by Administration & Finance Committee  
Presentation by Christian Education Committee  
Presentation by Evangelism Committee  
Presentation by Church & Society Committee  
Report by General Trustees  
Committee on Records and Minute Books  
Any business left over from previous diets/ closing items  
Opportunity to share what is happening in congregations  
*Breaks will be: Lunch 12.30 – 1.45, and tea/ coffee from 11 – 11.15 and 3.00 – 3.15*

**Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church**

- 6.30 **Closing Service**  
Moderator's Address  
Closing Items  
**(Close approx 8.00)**