

**REPORT OF YOUTH COMMITTEE**  
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007**

*“As part of the Church of Jesus Christ we must seek to meet the confidence of youth with the conviction of our faith and endeavour in all our activities to send the clear undiluted message regarding the claims that Christ has upon them and every other individual regardless of age. We must do this fully reliant upon the Mercy, Grace and Help from the one who called us to follow Him. Christ our Saviour and Lord.”*

As a Committee we have endeavoured to meet the principles set down in the above statement but we are aware that little would be achieved without the prayer support from the members of this denomination.

For this faithful support we give God the praise and you our thanks.

**THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Without the investment of time and prayer by the local church in the lives of the young people of their fellowships and community the work of committee would be greatly impoverished. As a committee we would wish to express our thanks to the individuals who week after week seek to encourage and inform their young people of the claims that Christ has upon them. We are under no illusion as to the difficulty of the task which *you and your* fellowships face but we would seek to encourage each one of you and your Kirk Sessions to

*“hold fast our confession, for we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weakness” (Hebrews 4:14-15)*

It is sad yet true to say that the halcyon days of large Sunday School, Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade etc. are more than likely behind us. But rather than become disheartened the committee would urge Kirk Sessions and youth leaders to see this as a challenge and seek new ways to place the Gospel and its claims into the hands of today's young people. It may require rethinking how we present the Gospel. It may mean that we change the manner and times we choose to gather with the young people. What cannot be allowed to happen in these endeavours is to dilute or soft peddle in any manner the truth of the Gospel. Our young people require and deserve to be told the truth about God and His Love.

We have always endeavoured to support local initiatives where possible and to provide help to fellowships when asked and we are glad to report that this work is growing thanks to the availability of our youth worker and her teams. Several visits have been made to local situations over the past year and several are planned for this current year. This is an area of the work we are interested in developing.

We respectfully ask that you make contact with the office in the first instance regarding any matter you wish to put forward and we will get back in touch with you. If this procedure is followed then there should be no problems regarding what is expected by all parties.

**CAMPS**

Once again we have had the privilege of working with the young people you encourage to come along. It is our belief that the seed sown at these camps, watered and nurtured by the faithful work in the local church, will bear much fruit for the Kingdom and the denomination in the years which lie before us.

Numbers fluctuate every year at the camps and last year was no exception. Due to numbers and other circumstances it was only possible to run two 8 - 13 camps during 2006. Never-the-less those who attended enjoyed the experience of mixing with other young people from across the denomination.

One important and exciting development that is beginning to be established out of this work is the desire of young people to continue to attend even into their later years. The desire to become involved in the work of the wider Church is something that must be nurtured both at a local level and within the youth work itself. This development places new set of challenges before us. We need to have a zeal for these young people and hedge them about with prayer, love and friendship for we have been given the privilege of working with these unpolished gems. Let's not fail in this task. The charge given to us by God for our young people is to share with them the Love and Grace of God and to provide for them a spiritual home where they can develop.

Numbers for camps in 2006: -

- |                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. 8 - 13 camp    | 75 attended from 11 Churches |
| 2. 14 - 16 camp   | 24 attended from 6 Churches  |
| 3. Youth Assembly | 21 attended from 9 Churches  |

In total, 120 young people representing 21 Churches. The cost to the committee this year was £936.83.

Important as numbers and stewardship of funds are we need to always look at what is happening behind the figures. As a denomination we have a richness of young people excited by the opportunity of serving God in Mission work, teaching teams and in giving time to attend courses in training. We commend Laura and her teams of leaders for their dedication, energy and sacrifice to undertake this work for us and God.

Team members for 2007 are: -

David Adamson	James Ledingham
Ian Adamson	Gavin Mackenzie
Jennifer Adamson	Gordon Mackenzie
Alan Brown	Chris McCartney
Lewis Campbell	Sarah Meredith
Karla Fleming	Louise Milne
Fiona Halcrow	Carol Owen
Jamie Halcrow	Nathan Owens
Rachel Keane	Morag Steven

To have 18 young people (most having been brought up within the folds of the United Free Church) who have a desire to serve both God and the denomination is cause for great rejoicing in the faithfulness of our God. Let us hold every one of them by name in daily prayer before the Lord. We are also indebted to a growing number of willing helpers for being responsible for the catering at our camps. This is an important task which goes a long way in having a successful camp. The work of the camps is essential at this point in time for our denomination and we would urge every fellowship to make the utmost use of them, encouraging any youngsters within their care to come along and join in the fun and fellowship that is camp.

## **OUTREACH WORK**

Under this heading we present a record of the work undertaken by our Youth Worker, Laura Mackenzie, and the teams that she leads. Last year two visits were made to Shetland. The first working in the local school in Cunningsburgh, the second visit was a week long residential camp, this time a team accompanied her. This is being repeated in 2007.

In Lochwinnoch Laura and team were involved with the local congregations in running a holiday club. A day event was held in Balintore. A successful summer mission at Burntisland was undertaken by Nathan Owens, Sarah Meredith and Lewis Campbell. This is being repeated in 2007.

Visits to local congregations have been undertaken by Laura in her role as Youth Worker. They include Bargeddie, Bannockburn, Aberdeen: Northfield, St Ninians and 20/20 vision. A team is going up to Balintore for an Easter outreach to the young people of the area. A small team will be working with our Leith fellowship during a Church mission outreach during the summer.

This work requires a great deal of forward planning and involves not only Laura but the various team members in many hours of preparation. As a denomination we are indebted to the dedication of all those who are involved in this vital work for the Kingdom.

## **YOUTH WORKER**

The input of Laura as our Youth Worker is an essential part of the denomination's work. God has blessed her faithfulness. The committee feel that as a denomination we need to show our commitment to Laura and the vital work that she undertakes for God and the denomination. At present Laura is employed 3 days per week by the committee and 2 days by our Drumchapel congregation. The committee feel this is not an ideal arrangement either for Laura or the denomination. We are therefore asking that the appointment of Laura Mackenzie as our Youth Worker be made a full-time appointment. The situation of a congregation seeking to involve Laura for a prolonged period of time would still be an option. The intention of the committee is to give a payment that is a true reflection of the work that is already being undertaken by Laura and to give her security of employment. It will also send out a message to the young people within the denomination regarding the commitment and investment of the Church towards them.

The committee wish to put on record the debt which is owed by this denomination to Mrs Laura Mackenzie for the manner she has dedicated herself to the work of the young people both of our denomination and beyond. We commend her to the church in general for prayer support as she seeks to serve this church and her Lord in all the work that she does.

## **PRAYER SUPPORT**

We are delighted with the response of those fellowships who have asked to be prayer partners with us in the work. If the work does not have the covering of prayer then it is left wide open to attack from Satan. Thank you all for your faithful prayer support in this past year. We are, as a committee, indebted to Laura for compiling the monthly prayer letter.

## **EASTER SCHEME**

Last year's Easter Scheme went to support the work of Signpost International particularly in their "Children Headed Villages" project. The amount raised was the largest ever for any Easter Scheme. A staggering £10,981.70 was donated to the work of Signpost. Our thanks to all the fellowships who got behind their young people to raise this fantastic sum of money.

This year our Easter Scheme is going to help the work of "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf". This organisation celebrated its 25th anniversary this year and has provided much needed help to those who require the help of a trained companion in their home.

### **PROSPECTIVE NEW LEADERS**

As you will already have read in the report this work is bearing fruit with many of our young people now actively involved in the work. We plan to continue these courses during 2007 and beyond. Our main problem is not finding young people to be involved but in finding a suitable time to hold them. Please be prayer partners and encouragers of these young people as they seek to find the avenues which God can and will use their enthusiasm, vitality and zeal to serve Him.

### **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE REVIEW**

The Rev. Alexander Ritchie has kept the committee abreast of the developments within the group of the Scottish Executive.

### **WORKING TOGETHER**

Mr. Ron Bingham has reported on the deliberations of the Scottish Executive on the report entitled "Respect and Responsibility Strategy and Action Planning for Improved Sexual Health".

### **NEW VENTURE**

Arising out of a point made at last year's General Assembly the committee feels that the time is right to look towards sending some of our young people over to Southern Africa in 2008. We have formed a small working party that has started a dialogue with our sister Church in Southern Africa. The size of the team which will be lead by Laura and her husband Gordon has not yet been decided nor have the projects that they will undertake. We are looking at a two / three week trip and would like to be involved in at least two different projects. As the picture becomes clearer we will keep you informed. But at this point in time can we ask that this whole exciting venture be wrapped in prayer in respect of who will go, where they will be of the most use, and that all of the planning will be in accordance with God's will.

### **CONCLUSION**

This committee has endeavoured to serve the spiritual needs our young people and be true to the guidance of God. It is exciting and very rewarding to see the hand of God at work in so many young lives. Our prayer is that we will always be ready to meet the challenges of our young people as they seek to grow in their faith and to be faithful to the tasks that God has given us for them. We invite you to join in this prayer.

The Convener would like to thank the Vice-Convener as well as the committee for their work, their support and prayers during the last year. We are extremely grateful to the General Secretary, General Treasurer and Mrs. H Jarvis for all their help, advice and encouragement throughout the year.

In the name of the committee

IAN N. ROBERTSON	Convener
ELIZABETH McNAUGHTON	Vice-Convener
JOHN O FULTON	Secretary