

YOUTH COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008

“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.”

Again this year as a committee we have sought to embrace the statement with which we start this report. We do this fully aware of the fact that the work done with the young people of the denomination is only able to be undertaken because of the solid foundation of many prayers from congregations. We give God the praise and you our thanks.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

As a Committee we are grateful for the faithful work done every week by those who teach in Sunday Schools / Bible Classes & Midweek Activities. Your diligence in this, sometimes difficult, task is commendable.

The recent meeting in the Presbytery of the West entitled “Feed your Faith” saw over 30 leaders representing 16 Churches from the West Presbytery meet with representatives from the Presbytery Youth Committee and the Assembly Youth Committee. The open discussion was profitable for both leaders & the committees about the way forward. We pray that in the near future it may be possible to do the same in the other Presbyteries. The Assembly Committee is there to help in any way we can in local situations and will endeavour to respond to any invitation it receives for advice or help in these difficult times. There is a problem however regarding dissemination of information at local level. The committee respectfully ask that every church does its utmost to ensure that the name and address of Youth Contacts etc. are correct and that the information is reaching relevant people in the congregation.

Youth work information is not only for the attention of the Sunday School. It is for all the youth work going on in the Church and we would ask that every leader is made aware of what is going on. We would greatly value your help in this matter. The correct mode of making contact about any matter is by contacting the office in the first instance, and then Laura or someone else will get back in touch with you. If this procedure is followed then there should be no problem or confusion about what is expected by all parties.

CAMPS

Laura and the team have been encouraged by the way in which the young people have responded to the camps programme over the past year. In 2007 the theme was “*Deal or no Deal.*” This programme was designed to help the young people handle the choices that are presented throughout life. By looking at how characters from the Bible dealt with the choices they faced, we pray that this will help to equip the young people to make correct choices in life and learn to live in obedience to God.

We are very aware that in themselves camps are only an opportunity to plant seeds in the minds of the young people. It is the faithful work done at local level that will nurture and, in the fullness of time, the prompting of the Holy Spirit that will bring these young people to the acceptance of Christ as their own personal Saviour.

Numbers at camps reflect the state of the youth work in local congregations. Nevertheless those who attended enjoyed the experience of mixing with other young people from across the denomination.

As reported last year "*the desire of young people to continue to attend even into their later years*" is continuing. More people attended the 14 -16 camp and the Youth Assembly than in previous years. In fact the likelihood of having two 14 - 16 camps in the coming year is a real possibility. This development places a new set of challenges before us. We have been given the privilege of working with young people of all ages who have to live in a world that is far removed from the world of our early years. The committee invite the denomination to continue to take these young people to their hearts and hedge them about with prayer, love and friendship.

Numbers for camps in 2007:

1. (2)	8 - 13 camps	39 attended	from 11 Churches
2. (1)	14 - 16 camp	20 attended	from 6 Churches
3. (2)	Youth Assembly	24 attended	from 9 Churches

In total 83 young people representing 22 of our Churches. The cost to the Committee - £1334.16

The committee does realise that travel to camps a distance from the local church can be an issue, but there are many different factors that have to be taken into account prior to a venue being chosen. The factors that govern the choice are availability, cost, size, plus having to consider local holidays and school curriculums for those that we would expect to be attending. The committee does all that it can to keep travel down to a minimum and we respectfully ask for your co-operation in this matter. For the past three years we have maintained the cost of camps at £50. However with rising costs of accommodation & food etc. there is every likelihood that costs will have to increase in the coming year. We would ask that the local congregation would help by subsidising the cost for their young people who are attending camps.

One concern which troubles the committee at 8 -14 camps is the lack of leaders to accompany the children. It is important for both children and leaders of the camp that there are people who know the children and can give a hand when asked to do so. We are not asking for leaders to take over the teaching or running of events but there are many other things where extra hands would be appreciated. All camps are self-catered and we are very grateful to the small band of workers who provide such great sustenance both for the leaders and the young people. We are in need of some more willing people who could help out at these events in the kitchen. Please give this prayerful consideration.

We are indebted to Laura and her teams of leaders for their dedication, energy and sacrifice to undertake this work for God and us. The work of the camps, we believe, is being blessed by God and is proving to be a fertile ground of growth for our young people. We would urge every congregation to make the utmost effort to encourage any young people in 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 McKenzie and the teams that she leads. Last year 2 visits were made to Shetland. The first visit included working in the local school in Cunningsburgh and the second visit was a residential week's camp. On the second visit a team accompanied Laura. A Summer Mission took place at Leith: Ebenezer and a successful summer mission was undertaken at Burntisland. A team went to Balintore for an Easter outreach to the young people of the area. Several visits to local congregations and groups have been undertaken by Laura in her

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

YOUTH WORKER

The continuing commitment of Laura as our Youth Worker is a crucial part of the denomination's work. Last year, at the General Assembly, the decision was made to recognise Laura as "Full-time Youth Worker". In doing so Laura was given the security of employment that her commitment deserved. The committee stated at the time "*The situation of a congregation seeking to involve Laura for a prolonged period of time would still be an option.*" Our Drumchapel congregation sought to take up that option. As a result Laura works for two days of the week in the "Living Room". The fellowship reimburses the Youth Committee for the hours that Laura is employed on this project. The term "full-time Youth Worker" is therefore slightly misleading in that not all of Laura's time is spent solely on Youth Work. Both the project and the youth work are complementary to each other and important to Laura. The committee is happy with this arrangement and with the stewardship of her time. The committee wishes to publicly record the debt that is owed by them and the denomination to Laura for the manner in which she has dedicated herself to the work of the young people and the project at Drumchapel. We commend her to the Church at large for prayer support as she seeks to serve the Church and the Lord in all 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. You can be put on the mailing list for the Prayer letter if you contact the office.

EASTER SCHEME

Last year the Easter Scheme was for the work of "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf." The total raised was £6,451.29. This allowed a black spaniel cross called "Gamble" to be trained for a lady in Aberdeenshire. This year we are endeavouring to raise funds for the work that the young people will be undertaking on their visit to two areas in Southern Africa.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The excitement is palpable across the denomination in what Rev A Ford describes as "*another exciting journey filled with uncertainty and opportunity*". The vision in 2006 of being able to send a team of young people on this "*exciting journey*" to Southern Africa is drawing closer to being a reality. This is a journey of faith which God is inviting us to make with Him. God has heard the prayers and felt the tears from our African brothers & sisters. He has commissioned us with the challenge. Let us rise to this challenge and, as our young people step out on this journey of faith, let us surround the whole venture in prayer. As a Committee we are indebted to several individuals who have, by their support and advice, helped us on this journey of "*uncertainty and opportunity*."

After last year's General Assembly an open invitation was sent to every congregation for anyone between the ages of 18 - 25 to apply to be part of this venture. The response for forms was encouraging. When all the application forms and references were received applicants were invited to attend an interview in Glasgow. The team of Rev P Johnston, Rev P Coltman, Rev A Ford and Laura & Gordon Mackenzie interviewed all applicants. The panel was very impressed by the standard of all the applicants and excited and encouraged

that in our denomination we have young people of such a high calibre who have a hunger to be involved in the things of God. After prayer and much deliberation eight of the applicants were invited to join the team. One of the applicants was abroad at the time of the interviews and was interviewed on his return by members of the interview team and invited to join the team giving a complement of nine young people with Gordon & Laura as leaders. We pray they will be the first of many to make this journey.

Having the team selected was a big step forward on this journey. Each member of the team has to raise £1,000 towards the cost of travel and, as a Committee, we would like to acknowledge all the support given to them by many of our congregations. It is a reflection of the hearts of the young people that every one of them is not content just to raise their own £1,000 but is willing to go the extra mile by looking to contribute to financing the projects as well. The initial challenge was for the orphanage in KwaZulu-Natal to build a schoolroom, but after the orphanage decided to move nearer Durban a new challenge was placed before us. The 'new' house was very run down so could the money we were proposing to send out be used to build a house and the schoolroom left as to do both would take £15,000? After prayer and consultation we sent the message "build the house and the schoolroom and we will meet the cost" - "*uncertainty and opportunity*." The resulting rise of the budget from £10,000 to £15,000 does take us out of our comfort zone but it gives us the opportunity to go forward fully dependent on faith in God and His supplying. Already the architect has been commissioned to draw up the plans and a builder has been found to carry out the work. So when the team arrives at the orphanage in KwaZulu-Natal they will be able to decorate the buildings and help lay out the grounds.

The vision for the "Lephoi Centre" is to provide a much needed 'Sensory Play park'. This was the request from the centre. The material for the construction of the sensory play park will be awaiting the team on their arrival. Their task is to assemble the units and no doubt they will also test them! At both projects there are other areas of work which will keep the team busy during their visit. We also propose to supply Braille Bible teaching material and other incidentals to help the work in both areas. The team are looking forward to learning from their Southern Africa experience - but this is not a one way experience - much will be learned by the team from their contact with their African brothers and sisters which will remain with them for the rest of their lives. We are using land travel internally to keep the cost of this three week visit to a minimum. The team will be able to take in some of the wonderful sights on their journey.

Dates for the visit are 19th July – 9th August 2008. At this stage we are still putting the finishing touches to the trip and we will be able to say more in the verbal report at the General Assembly. What is needed at this time is prayer: Pray for those who are going to be visited. Pray for the buildings to be finished in time for the team's arrival. Pray for the safe delivery of the material at Lephoi. Pray for every member of the team by name and, yes we would welcome any contribution towards the cost of this "*exciting journey*".

The team consists of:

Liam Adamson - *Cunningsburgh*

Allan Brown - *Drumchapel*

Lewis Campbell - *Lossiemouth*

Jillan Forbes – *Sauchie & Fishcross*

James Halcrow - *Cunningsburgh*

Gavin Mackenzie - *Balintore*

Gordon Mackenzie – *Lochwinnoch: Calder*

Laura Mackenzie – *Lochwinnoch: Calder*

Sarah Meredith - *Drumchapel*

Louise Milne - *Carnoustie*

Nathan Owens – *Drumchapel*

CONCLUSION

This year, as well as the camps and other important events, the majority of the work that the Committee has been involved with is the trip to Southern Africa. The Committee has endeavoured to serve the spiritual needs of all our young people and be true to the guidance of God. It is exciting and very rewarding to see the hand of God working 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
ELIZABETH McNAUGHTON
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener
Vice-Convener
Secretary