

## REPORT OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2012

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Heb 4:12 ESV*

Society has changed so much; it is constantly in flux with values and standards always changing. Following the fashion is so important to many and to go against the trend is social suicide for some. The message our young people hear from the UF camps and Youth Assemblies is in sharp contrast to what society deems acceptable. We live in a very hedonistic world, described well in the words of the well known hymn by Timothy Dudley Smith: *"Lord, for our land, in this our generation, Spirits oppressed by pleasure wealth and care"*. In such a world we are asking our young people to live following Christ and not the ways of the world.

The young people are taught to look to Christ's standards, to read God's word and be an example to those around them. In the light of this, your Committee is constantly concerned about the teaching that we offer our young people. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that the Word of God is living and active but a question asked is this: "Can we blunt that word by inappropriately handling and teaching it?" The challenge that we face is to so enlighten our young people that the Word of God will be active in their lives. As leaders we are continually reviewing the teaching material we use and the way in which that teaching is taught in order that the young people might have a clear understanding of the whole counsel of God, especially in a society that is unsympathetic to the teaching of the Bible. They need equipping so that they can give a reasonable answer to those who ask them questions about their faith and can have a solid foundation to build their lives upon.

Another concern for the Committee is that the young people will be able to discern what is good from the plethora of Christian teaching, written and video material which is available to them in shops and on the internet. There is a lot of helpful material out there, but some of it is not good. Our concern is that the young people will be taught well and be able to see who they should be guided by and who to avoid. With such diverse beliefs available within the wider spectrum of Christianity, it is vital that our young people are guided in who they read and listen to.

The young people are encouraged to pray and seek the will of God for their lives. They are encouraged to spend time reading and praying, deepening their relationships with God. We would ask that you would cover our young people in prayer. Give thanks to God for them and pray that they would grow in their faith. Working with young people is so important and to teach them and lead them to be grounded in the word of God is vital for the future. This is God's work and we seek his will for the future of our work with the young people. As John Piper says:

*"When we depend upon organisations, we get what organisations can do; when we depend upon education, we get what education can do; when we depend upon man, we get what man can do; but we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do."*

As a Committee we are greatly encouraged by the passion and commitment to Christ that many of our young people have. It was a thrill before, during and after the Youth Visit to see the Word of God 'living and active' in our young people. It is helpful when the young people carry out the request of the leaders but a far deeper joy to see them acting out what God has worked in their lives!

## **CAMPS**

During the camps a question box is on display and the young people are encouraged to ask any question they want and the team will try and answer. What kinds of questions are asked? These are a few examples from the S1-4 camp, (age 12-15).

1. Is Jesus constrained by time, or is he outside of time, is there more than one form of time?
2. If God is a loving God and loves everyone, why does he allow or inflict bad stuff on people i.e. Noah flood, Jonah etc
3. If salvation is found in Jesus, what happened to the people of the Old Testament, are they just forgotten about?
4. Does the Bible tell us when Jesus will return and what will happen?

## **CAMPS 2012**

Again this year a full colour brochure advertising the Camps and Youth Assemblies was produced and circulated among the young people of the denomination. The information regarding the Camps and Youth Assemblies is also available on line on the UF: YC Facebook page [young people can post their memories and comments on page] and booking forms and brochures can be downloaded and printed off from the UF Church website. The committee would like to thank the office staff Rev John Fulton and Mrs Helena Jarvis for all their help with Camps and the youth work of the denomination and Morag Steven and Rachel Keane for their continued work in maintaining and updating the Face book page.

The first camp, in February, was at the Bible Centre, Inchinnan for those in school years S1-4 and took the theme 'Young people in the Bible who had served God'. We had teaching sessions on Timothy, Samuel and Esther. Arising from were the questions 'How can we serve God? How we can live for Him and what is our purpose?' There was an excellent response from the young people and there was good atmosphere among those who attended.

The young people also went home with memory verse cards from each teaching session to remind them of God's word and how it applies to their lives. God is very faithful and we thank Him for these young people. 10 of the 12 were new to the Camp and we give thanks for that. These weekends continue to excite and inspire us as the young people grapple with God's word and how they can apply it to their own lives.

The second Camp in May was for primary 5 - 7 and focused on the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land. The teaching covered the leaving of Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, Joshua and the spies, crossing the river Jordan and the battle of Jericho. The teaching highlighted the issue of obeying God and His Word and the consequences of disobedience.

The Youth Committee would like to thank the teaching team who give up so much of their time with the work of camps. The Camps would not be possible without their excellent input and dedication. The commitment shown by the team is very much appreciated. Camps do not just happen; there is a lot of time and energy put into each weekend. 'Thank you' to the team who voluntarily come along and teach the children and young people at each event and who also take part in taster sessions in various churches to enthuse the children and young people who may not have attended before. Thank you also to the leaders who accompany the children at the younger aged camps, without the youth work of the individual congregations, Camps would not be possible. It is such an encouragement to see young people coming through the camp system as young people and progressing to the teaching team. God is very faithful as we see young people growing in their faith. 'Thank

you' again to Andrew Brown, Alison Scott, Rachel Keane, Gordon Mackenzie, Jennifer Paterson, Morag Steven and Ross McNaughton for leading the Camps. The Committee would also like to thank Julie Hubbert, Gordon Mackenzie, Diane Ledingham, George and Rewa Banks and Cat McKenzie for cooking at the various Camps and Youth Events. We would like to commend all those working with children and young people in our denomination and to recognise the commitment people show to this work. Without people working week by week in our congregations, there would be no young people for Camps and Youth Assemblies. Please remember the work among our children and young people it is so important.

## **YOUTH ASSEMBLIES 2012**

The Committee has organised two Youth Assemblies for 2012 to allow the young people aged between 16-25 to come together and share in fellowship, worship and Bible study and to look at some of the issues of the denomination and the wider Church. At the first weekend the teaching focused on 'Who is God?', 'What is His plan for His world?', and 'Where do I fit in?' We also spent time looking at Biblical interpretation and helping the young people to learn tools to help them to read God's word, put it in context and teach it to others.

At the request of the young people, this weekend was extended until the Monday as many of the young people travel from Shetland to be with us and this would give more time. The Youth Assembly is always a real encouragement to those in leadership as we have the privilege of seeing young people growing in their faith and walk with God. For some of the present group this was their last Youth Assembly as they have reached 25 and have attended every Youth Assembly since they were 16. They are now in positions of leadership within their congregations and we give God the glory for that, what a faithful God we have and what an encouragement also to see new young people coming along and learning. We have a real core group of committed young people within our denomination, what a blessing they are and their passion for the word of God is amazing!

The second Youth Assembly will take place in October and we look forward to exploring with the young people points from this year's General Assembly as well as continuing to look at the word of God and understanding why Christians believe what they believe.

## **INVITATION FROM SHETLAND**

The Shetland young people have faithfully made the long trip to the main land for the Youth Assemblies and October 2011 was a time for a visit to Shetland. Seven young people travelled to Shetland for the youth camp organised by Cunningsburgh UF Church. Around 20 young people enjoyed teaching on the 'Names of Jesus'. The sessions were led by Rev Martin Whitehead, Rev Bruce Rossetter, Nathan Owens, Martin Paterson, Gordon Mackenzie, Alistair McPherson, Andrew Adamson and Liam Adamson.

There were excellent times of discussions on the questions given by the speakers and the young people were challenged and encouraged throughout the weekend. 'Thank you' to Cunningsburgh UF Church for organising the weekend and to those who cooked for us. The young people who travelled up had a great time and it was good to strengthen the relationships between the young people within the denomination.

## **YOUTH VISIT 2011 WITH A TEAM FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA AND SCOTLAND**

The Youth Visit was a sharp learning curve for a number on the team! The group of 30 travelled around Scotland sharing the Gospel in a variety of interesting ways. The

Scottish half of the team was:- Alasdair Keane, (St Ninians), Rachel Keane, (St Ninians), Carol Owen, (Chryston), Kirsten Boettcher, (Cathcart), Ruth Fulton, (Cathcart), Andrew Brown, ((Darnley), Ross McNaughton, (Darnley), Allan Brown, (Drumchapel), Nathan Owens, (Drumchapel), Jenifer Wilson, (Uddingston Park), Martin Paterson, (Uddingston Park) and Catherine McKenzie, (Torry). The UCCSA group:- Rev Alastair Arrends, Wellington, Meegan, Greyling, Nico, Sunshine, Aroshelle, Dudu, Jade, Macmillan, Lisa, Loreen, Elliot, Thamiso and Desira. It was an excellent three weeks!

The teams worked in schools, clubs and outside in communities and shopping centres. They sang in St Giles Cathedral, a Pizza Hut and a Tesco! They handed out leaflets, invited people to church and held cultural evenings. Everything done was done to the glory of God by young people and church members with a passion to share the Gospel. The team gelled well and learned from each other. They sang in various languages and enjoyed praising God together.

The Committee is indebted to and grateful to all those who provided accommodation, hospitality and finance to enable us to carry out the mission. The Committee thanks all the congregations who had teams working with them. Thank you also for the vital prayer support of which we were very aware throughout the three weeks. The young people were taken out of their comfort zones and their faith was deepened.

What a joy it was to see the young people openly sharing their faith through schools work, drama, music and talking with people. Lochwinnoch, Torry, Croftfoot, Corstorphine, Drumchapel, Cumnock, Bo'ness and Cunningburgh all had teams working with them, along with some of our congregations including Sauchie & Fishcross, St Ninians and Knightswood who had a team for a mid week meeting or morning/evening worship. The committee would like to thank you for your partnership in this venture and also to thank Uddingston Park UF, St Ninians UF and Milngavie UF for organising a ceilidh, meal in Stirling and a trip on Loch Katrine which were enjoyed by all. The young people returned to their home congregations both in Scotland and Southern Africa with a renewed passion to share the Gospel. In continuing the links with Southern Africa the Committee have begun to explore a return visit with a team to Southern Africa in 2014.

## **SUMMER MISSION**

Letters were sent to congregations offering the involvement of a Summer Mission team to assist them in their work.

## **THE SATUDAY FELLOWSHIP**

This is the new name for the Prayer and Bible Study days which are organised by the young people of the denomination to encourage the family of the United Free Church of Scotland to come together for refreshment, encouragement, worship and prayer. The young people organise four days in the year and are very grateful to the speakers who came along and shared with them in the previous years. Last year, 2011 the theme was The 'I Am' statements of Jesus. 'Thank you' to all who attended these days, we pray that you were encouraged by coming along and 'thank you' to all who gave of their time to speak including Mr Frank Hartley, Rev Bruce McDowall and Mr Martin Paterson.

This year the theme will focus on serving God and mission and the speakers include Rev John Fulton, General Secretary, Mr Gordon Leiper of France Mission, a representative of Glasgow City Mission and Mr Duncan Whitty a student for ministry within the UF church. The young people have a real passion for all to come together to pray and study God's word and are excited about these days. Posters have been sent to each congregation as well as bookmarks with the dates for the year on them.

## **STUDENTS FOR THE MINISTRY**

The Youth Committee is delighted to hear that 3 of those who have been involved in Camps and other events, Martin Paterson, Gordon Mackenzie and Duncan Whitty, have been recognised in the past year as candidates for the Ministry with the UF Church. The Committee wishes them, along with Mr Nathan Owens, every blessing in their studies and as they serve God in this way.

## **EASTER SCHEME**

The Youth Committee would like to thank sincerely everyone who contributed towards the Easter Scheme last year in aid of the work of The Flying Mission, specifically for the work they are doing in Zambia. The amount of £6,405 was presented to Dr Malcolm McArthur at the General Assembly. This year the Youth Committee commends the work of the R. N. L. I., or Life Boats, as the charity for the Easter Scheme. Information was sent to congregations and we look forward with you to supporting the R. N. L. I. this year.

## **YOUTH LEADER TRAINING**

The Committee sees the need for training and help for those working in our churches with young people. In the light of this we are organising courses in food hygiene and basic paediatric first aid. Letters have been circulated among the churches to advertise these events and ascertain the demand for them. People have responded and so these training days will be held at the Church Office in September and October at a cost of £45 for each course or £80 if booked together. We believe that these practical courses will help people in their work.

## **PRAYER EVENT FOR YOUTH WORK**

The Committee asks that as congregations you would join us in praying for the youth work, the events that we offer and the young people. We have circulated a pack for each congregation inviting you to hold a prayer event specifically for this work. Included in this pack are: prayer points, tips on running a prayer event, a poster left blank for you to include your own details, suggested Bible readings and some passages that highlight the importance of working with young people. It is vital that this work is covered in prayer and so we thank you for your support!

'Thank you' also to those who receive the Youth Work Prayer Letter each month. Again it is so important that we cover each event in prayer as well as youth issues in the wider denomination and our communities. It is such an encouragement to the Youth Worker and the teams to know that the church is remembering each Camp, Youth Assembly and other events in prayer. If you do not receive the Youth Work prayer letter and would like to do so, please contact Church Office and it can be posted to you or sent by e mail.

## **TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE**

The Youth Committee along with the Ministry Committee and the Christian Education and Evangelism Committee met with the intention of preparing a series of teaching sessions to help those who have a desire to study the Word of God for their own benefit but also have a desire to use the gifts given to them for the work of the kingdom of God.

It is proposed to include topics such as:-

- How to read the Word of God
- How to recognise the various genres in the Bible
- The importance of the context of a verse
- How a verse fits in to the message of the Bible.

It is the desire of the Committees to enable those who attend to be able learn skills in handling the Word of God and to pass the truth on to others. The following verses exhort and encourage us all to do that:

*“Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading”.* Neh. 8: 7-8

*“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.”* 1Tim4:12-16

*“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 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.”* 2Tim 1:1

*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness...”* 2Tim 2:15

*“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”* 2Tim3:14 - 17

We have much to thank God for in the youth ministry of the denomination! We have a great group of young people who are committed to their walk with God, but we have many more still to reach in our communities.

In the name of the Committee

ROBERT O. OWENS  
ELIZABETH MCDOWALL  
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener  
Vice Convener  
Secretary