

REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Christians in Philippi, encouraged them to: '*... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*' Phillipians 2:13. Whilst we would usually see these verses as applying to the individual believer, it is good to remember that the context is a corporate one; '*... my dear friends, as you have always obeyed*'.. (2:12).

Paul's plea to the Church in Philippi - and therefore to the Church today - is to be obedient to what God is calling them to be and to do. As they - and us - do so, we discover that it is His Spirit within His people that prompts and enables them to be faithful and obedient to His Will.

DUNBLANE EVENT

Our responsibility as a Committee is to help individual Christians and also congregations, to work out their salvation. That is to discern and discover God's good and pleasing purpose for them. One of the ways in which we do this is by overseeing the planning of the annual Dunblane Event in August. As we found last year, our identity as Christians is formed by our relationship with a *Missionary God*. The God we worship is One whose very being, as revealed in the Scriptures, desires to communicate and have a relationship with a People for Himself. 'Mission' is not some add-on in the life of the believer or Congregation, but part of the working out of God's good purpose and will within our lives.

This year, we will be seeking to relate this to the challenges facing the Church in this time of change within Scotland. A wide range of workshops and our main speaker, Dominic Smart, will help us to do that. Saturday 30th August - take note and make it a date!

DEVELOPING WORK

The Committee continues to offer some support to congregations which are seeking to think through God's good and pleasing will for them. However, as stated last year, it is the view of the Committee that a far wider strategic review of the Church is essential if we are going to be able to discern what the Lord's Missional purposes are for us as a denomination. The Presbytery of the West is beginning to do this, and the Committee, through those members who are also members of the Presbytery, are part of that process. It is clear that this is going to be a delicate and controversial process. However, it remains the conviction of the Committee that strategic thinking and planning is required. We need courage to face the difficult decisions that this will entail concerning the allocation of human and material resources within the life of the Church. It also requires creative thinking about models of Ministry and Mission in the 21st Century.

As part of that process, a subcommittee has been formed in partnership with the Ministry and Administration & Finance Committees, to look at the issue of Church Planting/Church Revitalisation! Some possibilities have been identified and patterns of this type of work are being explored. Members of the Committee attended two conferences held in March which looked at this issue. Other members of the subcommittee are looking at practical implications of either planting a new congregation or revitalising an established one. It is intended that we will bring forward some specific proposals in the near future.

The Committee continues to support the work of the Living Room in Drumchapel as it marks its tenth anniversary on the 8th May this year. We all rejoice at the engagements with

people that this provides. We are conscious of the vision and hard work of Robert Owens and Laura & Gordon Mackenzie. Continue to pray for that ministry and for God's good plan for that work in the year ahead. We have also supported Duncan Whitty in his purchase of a decommissioned Ambulance to provide a base from which an evangelistic and pastoral ministry can be exercised at the large scale market held at East Fortune airfield. The opportunity to develop this ministry at other venues in Scotland is being explored.

RESOURCES

The *Tell-it-again* Material has been used by a few congregations. Where people have given time and effort to this, it has been found to be a good vehicle for thinking about some new initiatives. Further resources from the Presbyterian Church of Ireland are available and the Committee would be happy to direct congregations to these. The *God Question* has been used by at least one congregation and this provoked much thought and discussion. All of these programmes often make us aware of how *out-of-touch* we are with the society around us and what the Lord of the Church is often doing despite us! The need to understand the times in which we live is as important as knowing the unchanging truths of our Faith. BOTH have to be held in tension if the Church and individual Christians are going to be able to give a reasoned account for the hope that is within us. There is a vast amount of material available to help God's people consider these things and the Committee remains available to help Congregations think through this.

The Committee want to thank the General Secretary and Mrs Helena Jarvis for their support of the work over this past year.

In the name of the Committee

W. BRUCE MCDOWALL
DEIRDRE P. LYON
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener
Vice-convener
Secretary

