

REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2016

“Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her ... to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” Ephesians 5:25 -27.

In hearing that description of Christ’s intent for His Church, His bride, it could appear as so far removed from the picture of the Church within our own contemporary society as to be a hopeless daydream. However, the Apostle Paul reminds us that Christ “feeds and cares” for the Church and through the “*cleansing with water through the word ...*” enables the Church to make that transition increasingly into what – at the last, it will be!

Our calling, as leaders of the Church, is to facilitate that work of Christ to renew, revitalise and reform that part of the Church for which we have responsibility. As a Committee, we have led the way in provoking much thinking amongst the other Committees of the Church and the fruit of that is seen in the Report of the Reshaping for Mission Group.

As much of the time of the Convener and the members of the Christian Education and Evangelism Committee has been taken up with this work, some other areas of the Committee has lapsed. It is the hope of the new Convener, the Rev Dr David Miller and his colleagues, to see these area rediscovered and redeveloped.

DUNBLANE EVENT

As a Church, we gathered in Dunblane High School on 29th August 2015 for our annual day conference and celebration. Once again, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The main speaker and workshop leaders acquitted themselves well and the warmth of fellowship and tangible sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit was experienced by all. We will gather on Saturday, 27th August 2016 in Dunblane High School under the heading ‘Sweeter than Honey: Food for Growth’ and our main speaker will be Adrian Armstrong of the Scottish Bible Society. A wider range of workshops have been arranged and we would commend this event to the wider Church for prayer and practical support.

RESHAPING FOR MISSION

Much time has been spent on prayerfully identifying places where the opportunity for revitalisation and mission are available. More information about this work is given later. However, it would be the view of the Committee that this area of work has to be the CORE VISION that stands at the heart of ALL that the Church does and should be the determining factor in many practical decisions concerning Ministry and Finance. It is essential that Presbyteries order their structure and activities around it.

AGORA

Dr David Miller, since the closure of the International Christian College, has been exploring with former colleagues, the opportunity for continued theological and missional training and development. Agora has been formed as a theological training network for non-clergy members of the Church to help them be better equipped for everyday life, mission and ministry. After discussions with ourselves and the Ministry Committee, Agora will be hosting its first series of regional day conferences in May and June on the theme of “Ears to hear, Eyes to See”. Park Church, Uddingston, is hosting the June event and details of this event have been circulated and are available at the Assembly. We would commend every opportunity for continued spiritual development for ALL members of the Church.

FUTURE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

With the development of the revitalisation work, some of the traditional roles of this Committee have now been undertaken elsewhere. When formed in 2007, it was the intention that this Committee might be the instigator of fresh thinking concerning mission and Christian education. The Committee has taken time to consider its remit which was drawn up some years ago:

1. To encourage and support evangelism within the life of congregations
2. To promote cooperation with other local churches and agencies.
3. To identify and promote suitable methods and tools to aid the work of evangelism.
4. To encourage congregational development and personal spiritual growth by providing resources, events and training.
5. To help equip people to integrate faith and life in everyday experience.
6. To be responsible for the selection, employment, training, deployment, and supervision of any staff employed by the committee.

The Committee considers that this remit is still appropriate but recognises that in recent years they have not been able to give time to some of these areas because of their involvement in the 'Reshaping for Mission' process. Now that this is moving forward in a number of places, the committee intends to take up other areas of the remit with a view to supporting and encouraging work that is taking place – or could take place - in congregations.

It would be helpful to find out from congregations and individuals what they feel would be helpful to them for growth to take place in their congregation and community, and what would help them bridge the gap with their community.

In the name of the Committee

W BRUCE MCDOWALL	Convener
ROBERT O OWENS	Vice-convener
JOHN O FULTON	Secretary