MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL
May 2012

Statement of Purpose:
Resourcing Christ's Mission:
to enable and empower people to engage in Christ's mission
through resourcing worship, witness and discipleship
in the context of the changing contemporary culture of Scotland and beyond

CONTENTS

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:
1. Receive the Report.

Church Without Walls (Section 3):
2. Commend the work of the Council in the support of Presbyteries as they engage with the challenges of mission and ministry in the 21st century and encourage the Council to develop further opportunities for the dissemination of information and resources to congregations and Presbyteries, following the success of the 'Equip' resource days (Section 3.1.3).

3. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to support the events arranged by 'Why Believe?' during 2012 (Section 3.4).
4. Welcome the Council for the successful introduction of the "Pray It Forward" initiative and look forward to future developments to capture the imagination of so many (Section 3.5).

Congregational Learning (Section 4):
5. Invite the Council to research and identify particular training and educational needs of congregational leaders and present further opportunities like the 'Who Cares?' conference in future (Section 4.2.3).
6. Commend those elders who have engaged with the training of elders to act as Moderator of Kirk Sessions and instruct Presbyteries to undertake a survey of all those trained to establish the pattern of their usage and send the results of the survey to the Council by 30 November 2012 and identify the issues which need to be addressed so that they might be used productively in future (Section 4.2.4).
7. Commend the Rural Research on Deprivation Report and bring it to the attention of all Presbyteries in rural areas, noting that it has been sent to every Presbytery Clerk and is available at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/rural_church on the Church of Scotland website for all Commissioners to read and reflect upon (Section 4.5.3).
8. Instruct the Ministries Council, General Trustees and the Mission and Discipleship Council to recognise the particular issues and types of deprivation highlighted in the report, and ensure that these are acknowledged in relation to the training and resourcing offered to congregations and Presbyteries in areas of rural deprivation (Section 4.5.3).
9. Look forward to further developments in the area of children and youth work and the activities of the Council in the support of Presbyteries and congregations in this area (Section 4.7).
10. Refer the work completed on young people and the decision-making process to a working party under the leadership of the Council of Assembly, with representatives of the Mission and Discipleship Council, Church and Society Council, the Legal Questions Committee and the General Assembly Arrangements Committee, and look forward to a report on this issue to the General Assembly in 2013 (Section 4.7.4.1).

Faith Expression (Section 5):
11. Endorse the development of further resources on the 'Starters for Sunday' website and thank all those who have been responsible for making contributions to this valued resource (Section 5.2).
12. Encourage congregations to make use of Pray Now as a versatile aid to devotion (Section 5.5).
13. Encourage the Council, with the support of the Council of Assembly, in the discussions regarding the development of the Scottish Storytelling Centre as part of the Traditional Arts Networks Group, and look forward to a report on the developments achieved in this area to the General Assembly in 2013 (Section 5.7.5).

Resources (Section 6):
14. Congratulate the Life and Work production team on the continued success of the magazine (Section 6.1)
15. Welcome the new developments and express support of the planning for new ventures in forms of communication and publication (Section 6.1.3).
16. Welcome the continued publication of books in the Saint Andrew Press imprint and encourage Hymns Ancient and Modern to liaise with the Council on future titles (Section 6.2.1).
17. Express the thanks of the church to the Rev Ronald S Blakey for his distinguished service as editor of the Church of Scotland Year Book and wish him well in his retirement (Section 6.2.2).

Committee on Church Art and Architecture (Section 7):
18. Instruct congregations to contact the Committee early in developing plans for alterations and development and encourage this practice in all congregations and presbyteries, through the use of the appropriate forms (Section 7.1).
19. Instruct the General Trustees, in collaboration with the Committee on Church Art and Architecture, to examine the impact of the ecological initiatives of the Church on the architectural heritage (Section 7.3).
20. Encourage congregations which are considering their carbon footprint to explore the use of appropriate energy tariffs (Section 7.4).
21. Remind congregations of their obligation to contact the Committee prior to the installation of projection screens and audio-visual equipment to ensure that the worship function and aesthetic quality of the Church building is protected (Section 7.6).
22. Invite congregations to use the internet service of the Committee, Exchange and Transfer, to enable the appropriate recycling of church furnishings (Section 7.7).

Finance (Section 8):
23. Note the steps taken to address the deficit and financial challenges of recent years and encourage the Council to exercise continued responsible stewardship in the future (Section 8.1).

Mission Forum (Section 9):
24. Acknowledge the groundwork which has been accomplished in the area of exploration of mission and support the Council's intention to bring a report to the General Assembly in 2013 on this issue (Section 9.5).

The Well (Section 10):
25. Express support for, and interest in, the new charity which is undertaking the supervision and governance of The Well (Section 10.1).

Appendix I – Marriage Report
26. Receive the Report.
27. Thank and discharge the working group, which has prepared this report, and thank the members for their diligence and commitment over a number of years.
28. Instruct the Council to prepare materials to facilitate the discussion of the Report and develop liturgical resources which reflect the understanding of marriage and its contemporary situation.
29. Commend the Report for study throughout the Church, noting its affirmations of marriage within the wider context of Christian discipleship and its availability on the Church of Scotland website at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/general_assembly/general_assembly_2012

Appendix II – Joint Emerging Church Report
30. Note the formation of the Joint Emerging Church Group as a significant strategy and policy group for emerging and new expressions of church within the Church of Scotland, under the governance of the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils.

Appendix III – Recommended Salary Scales for Organists
31. Note the recommended salary scales which have been prepared by the Scottish Federation of Organists for the guidance of congregations.

REPORT

1. Introduction

1.1 The Great Commission at the conclusion of the Gospel of St Matthew, Chapter 28 verses 19 – 20 is probably one of the best known parts of the Bible.

- *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'*

1.2 It appears in the Scots Confession (1560) and for the early Church of Scotland it was a kind of motto, to be referred to as a source of inspiration and direction. It has been the source of much work in many areas of Church life and witness, and encouraged great ventures in mission and evangelism throughout the world and in many denominations.

1.3 It has, however, an obvious connection with the work of the Mission and Discipleship Council, identifying much of what we do in the service of the Gospel and the Church of Scotland, to enable and empower the witness of members and congregations. At the time of the reorganisation of the central administration of the Church in 2005, this instruction of Jesus may have been the motivation in creating this Council linking worship, witness and congregational learning in one group. It was anticipated that this mix of interests and concerns would enrich and assist each of these areas in their attempt to fulfil this commandment as it applied to local congregations.

1.4 After seven years of operation, and after an internal review and evaluation of core business in 2010, the Council now wishes to report on the progress it has made in effectively enabling and empowering the membership of the Church in these vital areas of service. The work of the Council is subject to continual review and evaluation in the light of its experience and with reference to its remit and principles.

1.5 The Council offers a comprehensive and varied programme of support and education for congregations and is committed to equipping and supporting the membership to undertake mission and offers the insights and resources whereby members and congregations might adapt and use insights and knowledge from a number of perspectives and make it their own. Instead of 'doing mission' for or on behalf of congregations, the Council has determined that its role is to give congregations the skills and means through which our membership can become more effective in mission and more adventurous in discipleship. Examples of how this is being fulfilled on a regular basis by the Council include the following:

- geographical spread and diversity of its contacts
- financial reports of the Council managing to live within its budget
- success of initiatives in Church without Walls
- impact of courses supplied by congregational learning and the developments of the website to support worship leaders here and beyond our shores
- popularity of *Life and Work*
- work which assists congregations in making their buildings and physical 'plant' fit for the mission and worship of congregations in the early 21st century

1.6 While it is not possible to report in great detail on everything that has been undertaken by the Council in the last year, it is hoped that this overview and highlights of various initiatives will assist the Commissioners in their appreciation of the work of this Council whose remit of 'congregational resourcing' was deemed one of the priorities of the Church from 2005 onwards.

2. Information

2.1 Through our work audit log, we are now able to accurately gauge the contacts and interest in the Council's work. We gather information from all of our staff members, from the development team to the administration team, assessing needs and listening to the questions. This informs the work of the Council.

2.1.1 During the past year, the reach of the Council's work has been far and wide. Every Presbytery in the country has had a varying level of involvement or contact with us, some greatly more than others. Other contacts range from New Zealand to Zimbabwe, from Australia to Malaysia, from the Scottish Episcopal Church to the North Carolina Episcopal Church, USA. We have been involved with, and had enquiries regarding, a variety of subjects, including pastoral training requests, art networks, Presbytery planning, building closures, worship audits, interfaith visits, session clerk information, body and soul fairs, Life and Work, Commonwealth Games, vision days, book reviews, funeral service material, eldership, outreach opportunities, *Different Voices*, youth work strategy, dementia seminars, leadership opportunities, entertaining angels, roll away the stone event, dance workshops, exchange and transfer, special trusts, emerging church, mission audits to name but a few.

2.2 Statistics of interest

2.2.1 It has not been possible to give Commissioners accurate statistics of the varied strands of the Council's work in the past. Now, through the use of recent technological developments, the Council may highlight in the following areas as a reflection of those who have sought the services of the Council and been involved in its ongoing work and witness:

- 10,000+ = people reached through our conferences, events and general contact from Oct 2010 to February 2012
- 100+ = people who attended the Who Cares? pastoral care event in June 2011
- 170+ = people who attended the Elders Moderating Kirk Session events in November 2010/2011
- 85+ = people who attended the Session Clerks conferences in October 2010 and February 2012
- 300+ = people who attended the Equip events in Perth, Inverness and Paisley
- 100+ = people who attended the Weaving Worship event in March 2011
- 140+ = people who attended National Youth Assembly in September 2011
- 140+ = variety of resources sold in 2011
- 150+ = people who attended the Dementia Seminars in March and September 2011
- 25,000+ = subscribers to Life and Work each month

2.3 Administration

2.3.1 The many varied enquiries and arrangements for conferences and events are made through the administration team, which supports the work of the Council and the other staff members. Each of the administrative team has their own specific area of interest and responsibility, but all of them are working together under the guidance of the Administration Manager to ensure that those who seek the assistance of the Council receive appropriate and helpful responses as soon as possible. Due to the reduction in staff numbers as a result of the internal review, increasing demands are being made upon the administration staff and they have met this challenge willingly and with good humour.

- *A job well done. Looking forward to the additional material in due course.*
- *I'm not surprised you received many thanks. It was a good day – good speakers – friendly people (audience) – lovely lunch. Good feedback. Sessions. No sense of boredom. Worth while. Good learning curve. What more could a girl want?!!*

2.4 E-news

2.4.1 The e-news of the Council reaches over 750 people and is seen as a valuable resource and source of information to those who subscribe. If you wish to have this resource, please contact the Council at mandd@cofscotland.org.uk.

- *Thank you for e-news – there's always something of real interest – be assured it doesn't simply go off into the digital ether – much appreciated*
- *This is a super thing to send round. So much going on but we don't always find out about it. Thanks for pulling it all together.*

3. CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

3.1 Mission Development

3.1.1 Mission development in congregations and presbyteries is a core part of the work of Church Without

Walls. It provides a wide variety of support and training initiatives which assist congregations in understanding how the values of Church Without Walls can inform and shape the witness of the local church. Key to this are the Mission Development Workers (MDWs) based locally in the North, East and West of the country. It is not possible to give an exhaustive account of their work, but some snapshots will serve to provide a taste of what is happening.

3.1.2 Future Focus

3.1.2.1   Future Focus is a facilitated resource for churches that are evaluating their current life and ministry, dreaming dreams, and making plans for their future direction. It has been widely used and is one of the most versatile tools in the MDWs' kit. Those who have engaged with the process often express surprise at how enjoyable it is. Much of this work is being carried out in the east of the country.

3.1.2.2   For example, Livingston Old Parish undertook a short Future Focus programme of sessions to discern God's vision for the church in five years' time. The minister, Graham Smith, informs us that as the church begins to formulate a strategy in order to start moving towards its dreams, other benefits have emerged, following on from the Future Focus programme. Firstly, at one of the two worship centres, attendances have shot up on Sundays. Nobody can very easily explain this, but there is an "air of confidence" around. This of course, is highly encouraging. Graham also tells us that amongst the Kirk Session members, there is an ever greater sense of unity. Since undertaking Future Focus, elders have started working more closely together. Whilst congregations up and down the country embark upon a long term process of growth towards their respective visions, such short term 'gains' are very helpful in building confidence and provide that satisfying sense of *"we are moving forwards!"*

3.1.2.3   Future Focus is continually being developed to meet the needs of congregations, and we plan to offer training to those who wish to explore being a volunteer Future Focus facilitator. Please contact the Council for more information about this at <u>mandd@cofscotland.org.uk</u>.

3.1.3 'Equip' Resource Days

3.1.3.1   Three 'Equip' events took place in 2011-12: at Bankfoot in May 2011, Inverness in September 2011 and Paisley in February 2012. Around 300 people attended these events, coming from as far apart as Shetland and the Borders. These days of varied workshops and speakers were geared towards supporting a mission focus in local congregations, and allowed those attending to see some of the resources and services available from the Council. The workshops covered topics as varied as 'messy church', emerging church ministries, inter-faith relations, leadership development, models of worship, youth work, apologetics and information on licensing for music and multi-media. Feedback was generally very positive and many people left feeling inspired and, of course, better equipped!

3.1.3.2   Some of the comments received were:
- *"Wish more people from our Presbytery had taken the opportunity to come along!"*
- *"Excellent day and venue – well worth the four and a half hour round trip!"*
- *"I found it a very satisfying day and quite inspiring."*

3.1.4 Supporting Presbyteries

3.1.4.1   Training for facilitators was given in one Presbytery to lead congregational workshops as part of the Presbytery's commitment to create a clearer understanding of the needs and visions of congregations as a foundation for planning and action. Support has also been given to other Presbyteries in the development of the Presbytery Review Pilot Project and assistance has been given with the development of Outward Looking Focus audit tools for Presbytery planning, and the training of facilitators in how to use these.

3.2 Sharing Faith

3.2.1   One of the issues which is regularly highlighted is the need to build confidence in sharing faith naturally. The Council has gone some way to addressing this through the work of the Why Believe? group, and in a workshop day based on the resource 'You're an Angel'. This can be purchased from <u>www.madstuff.biz</u>.

3.3   Networks and Retreats

3.3.1   The CWW team have been involved in the establishment of learning networks in various areas, including:

- a network of the growing number of church based arts workers, in collaboration with "Faith in Community Scotland"; and
- a series of Rural Churches' Forums for Inverness and neighbouring Presbyteries – providing opportunities to explore the particular opportunities and challenges facing rural Highland parishes.

3.4   Why Believe?

3.4.1   'Why Believe?' is a resource to encourage the Scottish churches to provide a reasoned case for Christian belief (apologetics) amid the challenges and opportunities of today's Scotland. It brings together a group of Christians of different denominations, administered by the Mission and Discipleship Council, and also supported by the Action of Churches Together in Scotland. Following an excellent response to the resource leaflets, two conferences have been organised for 2012: 'What can I say?' on 12 May in Edinburgh with Amy Orr-Ewing, author and Curriculum Director for the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, as keynote speaker; and 'How can I say it?' on 27 October in Glasgow with Jeremy Begbie, musician and theologian. The emphasis will be on workshops to help church members explore contemporary ways of responding both to new questions and classic issues, like science, suffering and pluralism, and also to explore the opportunities of today's changing social contexts in presenting the claims of Jesus Christ.

3.4.2   The group has made presentations to a Church and Society's School Chaplains workshop and gave a TV interview on the churches' apologetics work during Assembly week 2011. The Group has also re-launched the website known as www.godsearchscotland.org.uk, providing access to a wider range of resources, including text, audio and video clips, and new preaching and worship resources written by members of the group.

3.4.3   In 2008 the Why Believe? group bought sets of books on apologetic issues to be placed in various libraries in Scotland. Following very encouraging feedback from public libraries in Oban and Perth and Kinross, from Dundee and Glasgow Universities, and from Peebles High School, we are now extending this project to other libraries, with the help of the "Speaking Volumes" organisation.

3.5   *Pray It Forward*

3.5.1   In 2010 Mission and Discipleship launched *Pray it Forward* – a set of eight cards, each with a different scripture-inspired blessing and an invitation to pray for someone else and pass on the card. These high-quality cards are credit-card sized and so fit easily into a wallet, purse or pocket. After piloting the concept at various events in 2011 including Roll Away the Stone, the Royal Highland Show, and the National Youth Assembly, they were made available to congregations in October 2011. To accompany this new resource, some worship possibilities were prepared and are now available on the Church's website (http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/starters_for_sunday). The cards have been very warmly received, and the congregations and individuals who have used them have shown great creativity in using them, including pastoral visiting, outreach events, sharing faith with family and friends, encouraging one another and services of blessing. By the end of 2011 almost 40,000 cards were in circulation, not just in Scotland, but throughout the world. These can be purchased from www.madstuff.biz.

3.5.2   Comments received include:

- *"These cards are really going to be an amazing blessing to thousands of people. They are simple but powerful – any time I have been in a meeting where they have been used, at least one person has been impacted."*
- *"A leader at a Girls Brigade camp went to comfort one of the children who was upset at night, to find another child with her arm around her, reading the blessing from a Pray it Forward card."*

- *"I used the cards at Presbytery. I put one on every seat and when I was speaking as part of the Mission & Discipleship Committee report, I asked everyone to read their card silently and then to identify in their mind someone appropriate to receive the card… It went down well; there was quite a buzz as everyone was reading the prayers aloud… At the end of the evening, only two cards were left on chairs even though there were quite a few empty chairs – folk must have taken extra cards!!"*

- *"Many thanks for this prompt attention and information. I have visited madstuff.biz and managed to place my order and enjoy the special offer that is on at the moment. I can understand why these cards are going so fast, we had an introduction to them at our October Presbytery Meeting and they were well received and such a great idea and just perfect for carrying around in a pocket or handbag. Thanking you again for the prompt service you give."*

3.6   Research
3.6.1   De-churching in the Highlands: Listening to – and learning from – Christians who are not involved in congregational church

3.6.1.1   Research suggests that, in Scotland, more than twice as many people are 'de-churched' as those who count themselves as 'regular churchgoers'. These are people who were once engaged with a local church, but are no longer. Evidence suggests that most of these people have not lost their Christian faith. Rather, they make up one part of that growing sector of the Christian community that lives out faith in a non-congregational way. During 2012 the MDW based in the Highlands and Islands will be conducting research into this trend and reflecting on what we might learn from those who have chosen to leave or, in some cases, never join, a congregational expression of church.

3.6.2   New Models of Church
3.6.2.1   In the West, our MDW is conducting research into new models of church in a Priority Area context; with the rebuilding of community through hospitality and creative engagement using as a starting point the community arts church café at Colston Milton Parish Church, Glasgow.

3.7   Statistics for Mission
3.7.1   The Scottish Census took place on 27 March 2011 and through 2012 and 2013 information from the census will be rolled out and made available to interested parties, including the Church of Scotland. The Statistics for Mission Group, which is a collaborative initiative of the Mission and Discipleship and Ministries Councils, continues to work towards providing:
- a comprehensive platform for using and understanding census and other relevant data about communities in Scotland.
- relevant information on the needs and characteristics of parishes
- a base for further development incorporating other community data from local authorities, health boards, etc.
- a database of priority areas - urban and rural.

3.7.2   The group has made significant progress in collecting and digitising parish boundary information, which is essential for the integrity of the data which will be produced for each parish. The group have enjoyed valuable support from and collaboration with the Census Division of the National Records for Scotland office.

3.7.3   At "Roll Away the Stone" during the General Assembly in 2011, the Statistics for Mission stand, provided by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, was one of the busiest at the event. Hundreds of visitors took away a taster of the information that the project plans to provide for congregations as summary parish profiles were created on the spot.

3.7.4   Part of the project is to help make 'church tourism' information available, and the group will be giving congregations the opportunity of supplying information about their church which is of interest to visitors and newcomers to the area.

3.8   New Frontiers
3.8.1   This area of work intentionally seeks to engage with those currently beyond the reach of the church. This includes working collaboratively with Ministries Council and the Emerging Ministries projects, in partnership with

Fresh Expressions. This is demonstrated in the support by the Council of the training through the Mission Shaped Intro, Mission Shaped Vision and Mission Shaped Ministry Courses. Further information on these courses is available at mandd@cofscotland.org.uk. This is detailed more fully in the Joint Emerging Church Group from Mission and Discipleship and Ministries Councils which appears at Appendix II.

3.8.2 The work has been supported by the New Frontiers Development Worker. David Currie, who held the post, left the Council to take up other challenges in Australia in November 2011. Although at the time of writing, no new appointment has been made to this role, the work of supporting new models of church, training, discerning trends in society, and developing methods of meaningfully engaging with those out with the church continues in the Council.

3.9 Reaching out in Mind, Body and Spirit

3.9.1 In 2011 the Church Without Walls team began to explore the possibilities of working in the arena of 'Mind, Body and Spirit' fairs in Scotland as a way of engaging directly with those who were interested in spirituality, but had no connection with the church. Throughout the year the team had a stand at six fairs in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The stand name was 'Anam Cara' and offered information and resources on Christian prayer, blessing and spiritual practices. This audience demands a less cerebral, more experiential approach to faith and spirituality, and has been a catalyst to some fresh thinking around how to communicate about our faith. One of the direct results of this was the development of the 'Pray it Forward' cards. At all times we have been completely open about being an initiative of the Council.

3.9.2 Through these events, we have engaged with several hundred individuals. Many have attended the free seminars which we have run at the fairs, and we now have a small, but growing, group who have expressed interest in receiving further information about Christian spirituality.

3.9.3 In 2012 we have intentionally been engaging with local clergy and other Christian organisations who would be able to provide suitable follow-up for those wishing to explore further, and have been encouraged by the warm response we have received.

4. Congregational Learning

4.1 Education and nurture are the key elements that equip the Church for mission. We cannot be a missionary church if our members are not learning, discovering and moving deeper into their knowledge and experience of God. The Church of Scotland appears to have a growing confidence about its purpose and mission and sees the need to work with the whole people of God.

4.1.1 The Congregational Learning Team is responsible for resourcing adult Christian education, children's and youth ministry, leadership development, people with learning disabilities, Rural church and interfaith with resources available from www.madstuff.biz.

4.2 Leadership Development

4.2.1 In 2011, leadership development continued to contribute to the enabling and empowering of the whole people of God; from Barra to Lausanne and Orkney to London, in local, regional and national events. Ministers, elders, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries have been equipped at focused workshops, retreats and coaching. The common topics of these events are:
- Discerning the Call to Eldership
- The Spirituality of Leadership
- Kirk Session Management
- Training in Pastoral Ministries

4.2.2 Participants expressed the following:
- *"Thank you for helping us to learn how to turn our vision into reality – courage to confront our blind spots – strength for the journey."*

4.2.3 Who Cares?

4.2.3.1 The Pastoral Care Conference *"Who Cares?"* in Dundee, connected 110 ministers, deacons, PPWs, readers, Elders and kirk members from 27 Presbyteries

for a Pastoral Ministries day; a response to the volume of requests for pastoral care training and resourcing. From a choice of 13 workshops, "How to set up a Pastoral Care Team" and "Faith Sharing in Pastoral Visiting" were most popular. As more and more church members are using their gifts to complement the pastoral gifts of district elders and ministers, we see an increase in the desire to be more articulate and organised in order to be a credible and valued part of Christ's ministry and mission. Please contact the Council at mandd@cofscotland.org.uk if you would like us to help organise workshops on pastoral care.

4.2.3.2   One of the 21 delegates who attended the "Foundations for Conducting Funerals" said,
• *"There have been questions answered and confidence gained."*

4.2.3.3   "Who Cares?" inspired a replica Presbytery event in Kirkcaldy, facilitated by their Presbytery Adult Trainer. A twelve month learning agreement with one Pastoral Care Team, also a result of "Who Cares?", shows the eagerness to follow up national learning in a congregational context.

4.2.4   Elders Moderating Kirk Sessions
4.2.4.1   "Being an Elder Moderating Kirk Sessions" orientated 73 delegates from four Presbyteries to Act VI 2004. Feedback from the 2010 event indicates that delegates are not used as much as they hoped. Many shared the desire to be Moderators, not just in emergencies, but as part of a culture of shared leadership between elders and ministers. The concerns expressed by those who have been trained and not used indicate that there is a problem in the development of this area and the Council would wish Presbyteries, on the instruction of the General Assembly, to report on how these individuals are being used and enable the Council to identify particular issues which need to be addressed in future. There is an obvious hunger to be trained, equipped and used in the service of the Gospel.

4.2.5   Presbytery Adult Trainers
4.2.5.1   Despite retirals, four new Presbytery Adult Trainers (PATs) now make 34 in total covering 24 Presbyteries. They are used in a variety of ways. In Angus Presbytery, following "The Big Ideas Day", a training questionnaire led to 200 requests from individuals for follow up. In Ardrossan Presbytery, 26 people attended a "Leading Worship" course run in partnership with the Faith Expression team. In Irvine and Kilmarnock Presbytery 13 worship leaders were trained and all of them are now regularly contributing to public worship within their own congregations. One participant reflected,
• *"The course has real integrity within the standards it has set, which means it has become and is now recognised as a valuable ministry resource."*

4.2.5.2   This year, the PATs are refreshing their workshop material for Eldership, Pastoral Care, Leading Worship, Developing Prayer and "You're An Angel" (faith sharing), seeking to encourage more volunteers to join in with their work and this material will be available from www.madstuff. biz. They meet as a network twice annually. One PAT said
• *"I feel privileged to be part of this".*

4.2.5.3   In 2012 there are plans for the development of more shared training with other groups in the church, *eg* Ministries Council and The Guild, and participation in the Lead Academy (www.leadacademy.net). The Lead Academy works collaboratively across the Councils, organisations and denominations.

4.3   Interfaith
4.3.1   In March 2011 through an Inter-faith survey, 85% of churches polled stated that Interfaith Work was important to the Church. To serve this work, more opportunities have been made available for congregations to have dialogue with their faith neighbours, from hearing speakers and using interfaith resources, including hosting interfaith events throughout the country, including the opportunities for development of multi-faith chaplaincy.

4.3.2   The Church of Scotland Interfaith Forum
4.3.2.1   The forum seeks to support and highlight areas of Inter-Faith work being carried out by the various Councils of the Church and to meet with local people to learn from examples of successful inter-religious dialogue.

In March 2011, the Forum visited Edinburgh Synagogue and Annandale Mosque and met with representatives of The Three Faiths Forum. During Scottish Interfaith Week the Forum highlighted the role of women in faith and welcomed Maureen Sier (Bahai), Alison Angus (Christianity) and Trishna Singh (Sikhism) who each shared something of their faith journey.

4.3.3   Scottish Interfaith Week
4.3.3.1   During Scottish Interfaith Week, we helped to organise and support over nine events which were attended by over 400 people. The week began with representatives of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths visiting each other's services of worship over the course of the weekend. It began with the Moderator, the Rt Rev David Arnott speaking at Friday prayers at Annandale Mosque before culminating with a service at St Andrews and St Georges West where Rev Ian Gilmour was joined by Rabbi David Rose.

4.3.3.2   The diverse programme over the week explored an interfaith perspective to a variety of issues including Domestic Abuse and Poverty and included a tour of places of worship across Glasgow. As a consequence, there is now demand for further tours for individual congregations in Glasgow and for a day event in Dundee.

4.3.4   Breaking Barriers
4.3.4.1   The results of the March poll indicated that many Churches had a desire to forge stronger links with the Islamic community. One programme which led the way in this was the Christian/ Muslim Youth Conference, Breaking Barriers held in December.

4.3.4.2   This unique residential weekend brought young Christians and Muslims aged 18-30 together for the first time. They explored key concepts in both traditions, contemporary issues from a Biblical/Quranic perspective and heard from positive examples of Christian/Muslim Interfaith co-operatives such as the Discovery Food Initiative, Dundee. The 20 young people who attended developed a greater respect and understanding of others tradition. As a consequence, members have decided to

form their own scriptural reasoning group in Edinburgh and to work together to deliver a soup kitchen in the Edinburgh area. One Muslim delegate explained,

- *"I am excited about what I have learned and I will go back to my community and clear up any misconceptions that people have about Christianity."*

4.3.4.3   The programme was presented in partnership with Edinburgh University and there are plans to host further one day and weekend events in the future.

4.3.5   Spiritual Discipline Programme
4.3.5.1   The Apostle Paul says to, "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7, ASB). Christians over the years have identified certain practices, referred to as 'spiritual disciplines' which. if completed regularly, can help keep our hearts and minds turned towards God. These include celebration, worship, meditation and fasting. Other faith traditions also follow these disciplines. Every month, individuals and congregations are invited to follow the spiritual discipline of another tradition through a programme of articles and short clips from representatives of different faiths featured on the Church of Scotland website. People are then invited to consider how following these practices may help them to grow spiritually and bring them closer to God. To become involved please contact the Council at mandd@cofscotland.org.uk.

4.4   Eldership Reflection Group
4.4.1   In the light of the discussion at last year's General Assembly, it was decided that a small group of elders should be invited to reflect on the heritage and development of eldership in the Church of Scotland. This group has met on several occasions and hopes to produce materials for wide-ranging discussion and debate among elders, ministers and others, on the appropriate means whereby the eldership may develop in future. Part of the process of consultation will involve the use of focus groups and regional meetings to allow the experiences and practices of the eldership in a variety of environments to be recorded and shared. A report in 2013 will offer the Assembly some reflections on innovations in relation to the eldership.

5

4.5   Rural Church
4.5.1   Scottish Pilgrimage Paths
4.5.1.1   Scotland's churches and other historic buildings are a major reason for visitors to come to Scotland, and for Scots to become more familiar with their heritage. Tourism is worth over £4.2 billion to the Scottish economy and supports over 200,000 jobs. Faith tourism is an increasingly important sector. In a single year, over a million people visit Scotland's 20 most popular churches. In 2010, a total of 2,270 people were recorded visiting the Parish Church at Luss in one day, in an area where tourism brings £5 million into the local economy annually.

4.5.1.2   If faith tourism is to develop more widely in Scotland, there is a clear need to create a national network of recognised pilgrim routes, offering walkers, cyclists and other users a unique travel experience in discovering the centres of our Christian heritage. This will be a long term project involving a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies. The Rural Church Working Group along with the Scottish Churches Rural Group of ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) is supporting the establishment of a Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum to take this forward.

4.5.1.3   The network of 'Scotland's Great Trails' recently launched by Scottish Natural Heritage provides an important means of branding and marketing new long distance pilgrimage walking routes. For pilgrim routes to achieve this degree of recognition, paths and bridleways need to be identified and way-marked and appropriate infrastructure support made available for users. Church buildings located at strategic points acting as community facilities can be made available as bases for information and hospitality. Achieving all of this needs many different groups to work together locally as part of a national initiative co-ordinated via the Forum.

4.5.1.4   Our involvement in the Forum is a way of expressing an important civic role for the churches to work towards wider social and economic goals. At this year's Royal Highland Show, church leaders and Richard Lochhead MSP, Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary

for Rural Affairs and the Environment. signed the following statement of intent:

- *"Rejoicing in the growth of interest in pilgrimage, in both the churches and wider society, we, as church and civic leaders, commit to support in principle the development of pilgrimage and of pilgrim routes as spiritual and community-led activities important to Scotland."*

4.5.1.5   The establishment of a Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum would allow key organisations to collaborate in planning and implementing pilgrim routes across Scotland as a practical expression of this declaration.

4.5.2   Royal Highland Show
4.5.2.1   Once again we continued to help staff and resource the church stand at the Royal Highland Show at Ingliston, Edinburgh. As a key player within the Scottish Churches Rural Group, the Council provided continuous staff presence, as well as supplying the marquee, equipment, literature and considerable administrative and financial support. Some 180,000 people visited the show over the four days in June 2011 and a significant number visited the tent or, in the case of younger visitors, attended the puppet shows, or even had their faces painted. Those coming into the tent were able to sample excellent hospitality, enjoying a free hot or cold drink.

4.5.2.2   This year the tent picked up the theme of pilgrimage pathways and visitors were invited to reflect on their spiritual journey, to write on a pebble the name of a place that was significant in their journey and to place it on the ground thus creating over the course of the four days, our own pilgrimage pathway that led from the Celtic cross and meandered towards the tent entrance. For many visitors though, the stand continued to be a restful sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of the showground. Some wanted a refreshing drink, some wanted literature, others sought prayer, whilst yet others simply wanted to sit and rest their weary feet!

4.5.3   Rural Research on Deprivation
4.5.3.1   Over the last two years, Dr Alistair Geddes and Dr Donald Houston, lecturers at Dundee and St Andrews

Universities respectively, have undertaken research in order to determine the nature of deprivation amongst our rural parishes. By doing so, they have been able to draw up a method of measuring deprivation based on two main types. The first is by using the Scottish Government's official "Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation" (SIMD), which comprises of a set of criteria relating to income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and geographic access to services. The second method is by focussing on the main issue for rural areas, which is that of geographic access to services (such as public transport provision, shopping facilities, etc).

4.5.3.2 Much work involved matching up parishes with official census "output areas" and "data zones" (from post codes) and where these areas straddled parish boundaries, having to provide a "best fit" policy based on a majority population rather than area.

4.5.3.3 The report is now ready and available at www. churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/rural_church on the Church of Scotland website. The report describes the findings and lists the 50 most 'deprived' rural parishes based on SIMD, and the 50 most 'deprived' rural parishes based on a lack of geographical access to services. The two lists are distinctly different, with the second list featuring many of the most remote rural parishes. It is the hope of the Council that these lists will enable appropriate support, training and resources to be made available to those rural parishes most severely affected by deprivation. The technical report is also available for Commissioners seeking more information on this important issue affecting the life and witness of congregations in rural areas.

4.6 Learning Disabilities
4.6.1 Over the past year the Learning Disabilities Task Group has met to discern ways of engaging its three sponsoring Councils – Mission and Discipleship, Crossreach and Ministries.

4.6.2 Whilst recognising that we all come to the table from different perspectives and backgrounds, there is an emerging agreed vision for the task group agenda around the following thoughts:

- Policy is changed and developed by good practice; where is it happening?
- Church needs to be more innovative because through recent financial cuts people with learning disabilities are being neglected in their communities
- We need to find out who in our own streets and locale have needs and create links – check resources – find out who to contact – hear stories
- There is an opportunity for the Church to make a contribution and to "see the ability and not the disability".

4.6.3 As well as promoting existing good practice through the work done by Prospects and Crossreach, the question of inclusion needs to be raised regularly and widely to make sure we make connections and build relationships with those who experience worship and church life as inaccessible to them.

4.6.4 To this end, the task group exists to give those with Learning disabilities a voice (as opposed to physical disabilities for whom there is legislation) by keeping "inclusion" on the agendas of all Councils.

4.6.5 Some areas of work which are working well include input into the Probationers' Conference; Crossreach offer of a work placement; Conferences are good and well attended (although we often preach to the converted) and our work in training Clergy and Study leave options. This work involves the current three Councils but we recognise that a very natural link to the work of Church and Society Council keeps arising with regards to lobbying, so we would welcome their presence in the Working Group.

4.7 Children and Young People
4.7.1 Each year there are more and more calls for resources, advice and help with children and youth work. The Council has recognised that this area needs to be more fully resourced and has, therefore, agreed to a new post of Children and Young People's Development Worker. The post will seek to explore ways of developing the faith and discipleship of children and young people, and to provide support to local congregations, presbyteries and church leaders in finding effective ways of engaging children and young people in the life of the church.

4.7.2   Youth Strategy resource pack

4.7.2.1   The Church's first Youth Strategy was published in 2006 and offered a number of possibilities for congregations to consider how they shape their work with children and young people. This year the Council has been working on a Youth Strategy resource pack for children and youth workers (paid or voluntary) which will offer them training and will provide an effective way of implementing youth and children's work within our congregations This resource will be available during 2012.

4.7.3   World Youth Day

4.7.3.1   World Youth Day took place in Madrid, Spain. As with previous World Youth Days, the Church of Scotland was invited to send a delegation by the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, and a group of 17 adults and staff made the trip to Madrid via Lisbon where they spent some 'exposure time' getting used to Catholic culture and they were wonderfully looked after by the congregation of St Andrew's Kirk and the Rev Graham McGeoch. Their visit included a trip to Fatima where thousands of other World Youth Day pilgrims converged from all over the world on their way to Madrid; an afternoon with young people from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal; and leading worship at St Andrew's Church in Lisbon.

4.7.3.2   World Youth Day in Madrid saw over 2.5 million pilgrims from all over the world converge in the city for a week of culture, exploring faith, worship, and making friends, culminating in a weekend where the Pope was present leading worship, meeting delegates and affirming the worth that young people bring to the world and to faith.

4.7.3.3   Many people there asked why the Church of Scotland was present at such a large Roman Catholic event. We go because we are invited, but also because for many of the young adults who go on the pilgrimage it provides a significant step of growth in their journey of faith. We go also because it is important to stand beside our Catholic partners so that we can better understand something of ourselves and acknowledge the differences we have, but more importantly, what we have in common in relation to our faith. The experience of the young people was highlighted in an article by "The Herald" newspaper and it was good to see the ecumenical work of the Church of Scotland given such a positive profile.

4.7.4   Young people and the decision making process

4.7.4.1   Extensive consultation with young people involved in the life of the Church took place in 2012-2013. As a result of this process, several ideas and possibilities have been formulated.   As the possible developments have both budgetary and constitutional implications, it is now appropriate for these to be considered, under the guidance of the Council of Assembly, and a report prepared with any recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly in 2013.   the Mission and Discipleship Council, the Church and Society Council, the Legal Questions Committee and the Assembly Arrangements Committee are all likely to be affected by any proposals, and it is recommended that they are all represented in the working party set up by the Council of Assembly to address this issue.

5.   Faith Expression

5.1   The Faith Expression team has worked to enhance the quality and volume of the online worship resources of the Council in the service of the Church of Scotland. Many of our users are from Scotland and the rest of Great Britain and Ireland, but often we are contacted by churches from America and Australia thanking us for the quality of the material.

5.2   Starters for Sunday

5.2.1   Focusing on "Starters for Sunday", http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/starters_for_sunday, we have seen our monthly site visits increase from a steady 10,000 hits per month to 16,000 per month – the highest ever.

- *"I want to thank you for the 'Starters for Sunday' I have used your outline and am grateful for the help. I believe you have managed to get something for everyone – quite an achievement. I never fail to be amazed at the team's ability to pull all of this together so regularly and with consistent quality."*

5.3 Preachers' Perspectives

5.3.1 Our new free online monthly resource, 'Preachers' Perspectives', publishes contributions from Scottish preachers on why and how they preach. It has been extremely well received. In its first month the materials were downloaded 750 times by a mixture of experienced and new preachers, ordained and lay. Copies of the resource have also been circulated to over 3,000 preachers and trainers who have responded very positively – see http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/starters_ for_sunday/preacher_perspectives.

- *"It is immediately apparent to me that the advice, comments and reflections will be very valuable indeed to me. I am a Reader …. and although I have ready access to the local ministers, I am conscious of the disadvantages of working to a large extent on my own, and the difficulties of accessing refresher training."*
- *"As I approach my first Christmas as an ordained minister, every bit of help is much appreciated. I look forward to the monthly pieces. Thank You."*

5.4 Different Voices

5.4.1 We have also moved from a hard copy of the Church music magazine Different Voices to an online version. This move increased circulation from around 500 readers to 25,000 in its first free issue. It is hoped that all current subscribers and a large number of new subscribers will be engaged for the next issue which will be paid for through an online facility. The digital format allows for embedded music files, quick links to other sites, and heightened interactivity as well as increased likelihood of user generated content. To subscribe, please contact the Council at mandd@cofscotland.org.uk.

- *"The online version of Different Voices is very good with beautiful colour photos, I look forward to reading it properly later this evening. I have already forwarded a copy to an organist friend and have recommended it. Thank you!"*

5.5 Pray Now

5.5.1 Pray Now continues to be published by Hymns Ancient and Modern, but will also be available as an online application via 'App Stores'. This year our theme is 'Time' and the focus on the well-known passage from Ecclesiastes has allowed us to explore the many facets of human life, offering each to God in prayer. The writers' group were moved and encouraged when they heard that one minister, visiting a parishioner in hospital who had suffered a stroke, used the section from Pray Now on 'A Time to Heal' The parishioner said,

- *"I found this really helpful because I have been struggling".*

5.6 Marriage Report

5.6.1 Commissioners will be aware that the Council has reported on a number of aspects of theology and human sexuality in the past few years and this year we present the third and final report of the Group designated to produce the reports on such issues. The report entitled "Believing in Marriage" is in Appendix I and the section of the Deliverance indicates that we would hope that this report will be received by the General Assembly and the membership of the Group which has produced it will be thanked and discharged. The Faith Expression group then anticipates the instruction of the General Assembly to develop liturgical and study resources, based on this report, for the use of the Church in future.

5.7 Scottish Storytelling Centre – Coming Home to Story

5.7.1 Through 2011 the Scottish Storytelling Centre has seen a steady increase in the use of live storytelling in worship, education and outreach. This is paralleled by the growing emphasis placed by most theological traditions on the vital role of imagination and creativity in Christian faith and its expressions.

5.7.1.1 This movement of renewal may best be described as a rediscovery rather than a reinvention. It is a return to our shared storytelling roots in scripture and tradition, opening up the rich interactions between faith, culture, and theology.

5.7.2 Workshops and Courses

5.7.2.1 The education and training offered by the Centre has had nearly one thousand participants from all parts of Scotland, and from all walks of life. Creative Scotland has

endorsed the programme as "an international leader", and Church and cultural delegations from all parts of the world have visited during 2011 to explore the activities of the Storytelling Centre in its purpose built home, and across Scotland.

5.7.3   Events
5.7.3.1   The public events programme has also enjoyed an increased audience at the Centre and for touring programmes such as 'Scotland's Year of Islands'.

5.7.3.2   The 2011 Scottish International Storytelling Festival, took an island theme, bringing together storytellers from 14 Scottish and 7 Mediterranean islands. Over 20,000 people participated in the Festival which was awarded funding support through the Scottish Government's Festival Expo Fund.

5.7.3.3   The role of Scotland's culture in attracting visitors is gaining increasing recognition, and the Storytelling Centre is delighted to be working in close co-operation with Scotland's Churches Scheme to design and promote major Pilgrim Ways across Scotland, as well as to encourage localised pilgrim walks/routes. The aim is to heighten awareness of and access to the faith dimension of Scotland's heritage and living culture.

5.7.3.4   An important aspect of the 2011 programme was a successful series of BSL (British Sign Language) storytelling events, which were strongly featured on BBC television, and the outreach to single and separated fathers. The Life Stories work in care homes has also grown, demonstrating that storytelling is a prime way of community building and inclusion.

5.7.4   Business Plan
5.7.4.1   The Centre's staff team has continued to progress the Business Plan, 'Scotland's Culture; Our Resource'. Significant progress has been made in technological improvements, customer service and external finance.

5.7.4.2   After fruitful discussion with a range of traditional arts organisations, the Storytelling Centre will widen its scope in 2012 to include more music and dance events.

5.7.4.3   The Centre offers models of resources that are relevant and applicable to the engagement of every parish church with its community, through creativity and culture.

5.7.5   Traditional Arts Networks Group (TANG)
5.7.5.1   The Church's involvement with the support of the creative arts began many years ago and continued through the Gateway Theatre and the Netherbow and its redevelopment in 2007. The Council, as reported to previous General Assemblies, believes this work, while important, is not strategic to the remit given to the Council by the General Assembly. It anticipates, therefore, that an appropriate arrangement with the Traditional Arts Networks Group will continue the life of the Scottish Storytelling Centre without continuing the annual financial contributions from the budget of the Council.

6.   Resources
6.1   Life and Work
6.1.1   The magazine of the Church of Scotland continues to operate in a difficult and challenging commercial climate, but once again delivered a six figure surplus. It was redesigned for 2011 and the changes have met with wholly positive reader feedback. Two of the responses received reflect this:
- *"Love the new magazine, especially The Big Question."*
- *"Loving the new Life and Work. What a welcome burst of energy."*

6.1.2   Around 25,000 copies of Life and Work are distributed each month and the title remains one of the biggest selling monthly magazines published in Scotland.

6.1.3   Development
6.1.3.1   Development plans for the magazine – as approved by the 2010 Assembly – are in hand, and 2012 promises to be a landmark year for the Church's historic magazine, with plans for a website and investment in marketing planned. A three year programme of investment in *Life and Work* started earlier this year. The £32k plans will prepare the magazine of the Church of Scotland for the future and for the challenges of change

sweeping across the world of magazine publishing. By the end of it, the magazine will have its own website, will have gained advice in subscription sales and marketing and will be ready to meet the challenges posed by the digital age.

6.1.3.2 Social networking sites continue to be helpful in promoting the magazine and give added value to our readers who use Facebook and Twitter.

6.1.4 Awards
6.1.4.1 Life and Work was shortlisted for the third consecutive year in the Member Magazine of the Year category and was highly commended at the Scottish Magazine Awards 2011

6.1.5 *Life and Work* Advisory Committee
6.1.5.1 The *Life and Work* Advisory Committee met twice during the year but was utilised on many more occasions. The Editor is grateful for the continued presence of the committee and gives thanks for its valued advice, opinion and support on the issues which arise.

6.2 Saint Andrew Press
6.2.1 In January 2011, management of Saint Andrew Press moved from the Church of Scotland to Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd in London. A great deal of work has been involved in making the transition, but this is now largely complete and the integration has taken place successfully. A particular highlight of the year was the publication of *George Mackay Brown: The Wound & the Gift* by Ron Ferguson. The title was highly and very widely acclaimed and was shortlisted for the Saltire Research Book of the Year Award. Other new titles published included the final three titles in the *Sacred Places* series; *the Church of Scotland Year Book; Who Needs Words?* by Richard Littledale; and *Insights – Miracles* by William Barclay.

6.2.2 The Council would particularly like to thank the Rev Ronald S Blakey for his 11 years of dedication as Editor of the *Church of Scotland Year Book*. Ron retired from the role in December 2011 and his colleagues would like to record their appreciation for his unfailing determination, insightful knowledge, care and good humour. He successfully produced the *Year Book* every year in all circumstances and within very tight timescales – and with the highest degree of accuracy. He will be greatly missed in his role.

6.3 Resources
6.3.1 The Mission and Discipleship Council Resources Group has been established as a general support in the development of resources such as DVD, video, web and print as practical means to support congregations.

6.3.2 The Resources Group is comprised of complimentary skill sets and a breadth of experience. It is responsible for identifying and securing best value propositions from suppliers, whilst offering efficient and effective solutions to the day to day challenges the Council faces as it endeavours to resource the church through the commissioning of such resources.

7. Committee on Church Art and Architecture
7.1 The Committee members have greatly appreciated the willingness of congregations to contact the Committee early on in the process of planning new developments and creative options for their buildings. The use of the forms, as agreed previously by the General Assembly, is commended as this assists all parties in the consideration of requests. This has allowed the Committee, often with the General Trustees, to offer advice, guidance and alternative perspectives which have encouraged the congregations to dream dreams and plan even more exciting and imaginative projects. One of the congregations who took advantage of the opportunity wrote to thank the Committee in these words
- *"We would never have imagined the plans and developments that have been possible without the active encouragement and affirmation given to us by the visitors for the Committee and we are most grateful to you".*

7.2 A "first" for the Committee was when two of its members were invited to attend, and be involved in, a "Vision Day" in one church in December. To be included from the beginning of a transforming project was a real honour and privilege.

7.3 The Committee is very aware of the importance of the Church as a whole being sensitive to the ecological imperatives of the Gospel. It is supportive, with the General Trustees, of many new initiatives for economic heating and lighting, and the general commitment to lower energy consumption and a shrinking carbon footprint of buildings within the Church's ownership.

7.4 Concerns surround the process of reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption, which may have a very negative effect on some of the most important parts of the Church's architectural heritage. The Committee would contend that this issue is of such importance as to require a planned and considered holistic approach which recognises the particular requirements of our inheritance. It is therefore proposing that the General Trustees may be instructed, in collaboration with the Committee and Historic Scotland, to examine the impact of the General Assembly's regulations regarding carbon reduction and bring forward proposals to a future General Assembly.

7.5 In the meantime, the Committee would encourage congregations to take advantage of the energy tariff schemes which are offered to the Church, which may result in important savings in energy consumption and expenditure. Congregations are encouraged to contact the General Trustees and seek the guidance of their heating adviser who will be able to give practical guidance and information on all possible steps to reduce heat loss and expenditure.

7.6 The number of congregations which have approached the Committee for advice regarding the installation of projection screens and audio-visual equipment to enhance their worship is increasing. The Committee is always keen to assist them in locating and installing the best system possible, often suggesting that they make a "mock up" to have some idea of how this may look. The critical issue in the installation is that the screens and equipment should not be invasive, or insensitive, to the beauty of the church building and become obtrusive or, indeed, a distraction to worshippers.

7.7 The number of church buildings liable to closure appears to be increasing. This imposes a considerable demand on the Committee as it supports congregations in locating appropriate places for surplus furnishings and fittings. The internet site of the Committee, *Exchange and Transfer* (http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/exchange-and-transfer) provides an easy way of 'recycling' furniture, which is much appreciated by those who are fortunate enough to find what they need advertised on it. This site has recently been seen to be of great value and interest to other denominations who are seeking to find appropriate homes for surplus church furnishings. One congregation collected items from three different church buildings to provide furnishings for a new chapel and wrote to the Committee saying:

- *"… we are delighted to have had contact with these congregations who have been so pleased to assist us in the achievement of our project."*

7.8 The support of presbyteries is essential in enabling the Committee to achieve its purposes and fulfil its remit. The Committee wishes to record its thanks to all of those Presbytery officials who regularly keep the Committee informed of proposals and cooperate so effectively in ensuring that congregations have the best possible advice offered to them.

8. Finance

8.1 Following on from the re-organisation of the Council in 2010 and the inescapable costs that were incurred, the Council worked diligently in 2011 to ensure that expenditure was reduced as much as possible, and that the set budgets were adhered to. More rigour was introduced into the budget setting process, with a proposal brought to the Council for each major area of work, which was then discussed to ensure it was work the Council should be doing. A more thorough budget monitoring and reporting process has also helped the process. As a result, the Council has a surplus at the end of 2011, compared to a deficit in 2010 of £720,000.

8.2 The outsourcing of Saint Andrew Press management has led to a saving of over £190,415 for the Council in the past year. The Scottish Storytelling Centre has continued to be supported by the Council, recognising the Church's long-term commitment to the creative arts. In the last year the financial contribution of the Council to the operation of the storytelling centre is in the region of £90,000. Other significant savings have been made through the closing of the regional offices and a better focus on the core business of the Council.

8.3 The Council had a large deficit in its general reserves at the end of 2010, and as such, has worked in 2011 to ensure that this was reduced. The Council took the decision towards the end of 2011 to sell a number of its investments to help reduce the deficit, and will do the same in 2012 to ensure that the deficit is fully cleared by the end of this year.

9. Mission Forum
9.1 The Mission and Discipleship Council has responsibility to establish and support the Mission Forum with representatives of relevant Councils. During the first few years of the Council, the Forum brought a large number of representatives from most Councils of the church together with a focus on mission. It would often take the shape of an overnight conference and many who attended benefited from their participation.

9.2 Over the past year, with a heightened awareness of the careful stewardship of resources, and aware of the wealth of material on mission, the Forum has been re-established in a new form based on a small group undertaking research and discussion and reflection on what mission means in the 21st century. The Forum's current consideration of Mission was initiated at last year's General Assembly when Commissioners were invited to respond to questions posed by the Mission and Discipleship Council. The responses received at last year's General Assembly, and those made through the 'Big Blether' website, have all contributed to the discussion and development of Mission as it is understood in the early 21st century. The Council is grateful to all those who have contributed thoughts, suggestions and questions through these various means to the ongoing debate and discussion.

9.3 Currently the Mission Forum meets regularly. Its membership includes individuals drawn from community projects, *eg* Milton Community Arts Project, and Faith in Community Scotland, and others who are currently engaged in advanced studies relating to mission.

9.4 Over the past six months the Forum members have studied the context of Mission in 21st Century Scotland and have reflected on what might be a working definition of mission and questions such as the purpose of mission, the role of the church in mission and the who, what, where why of mission?

9.5 It is the aim of the Forum to prepare a significant piece of work on mission for consideration at a future General Assembly, with a report on progress made in 2013. This work will include consultation and the co-operation of other Councils of the Church, thus fulfilling the remit of engaging with representatives of relevant Councils in the work of the Forum.

10. The Well
10.1 The Council has continued, as agreed by the General Assembly in previous years, to support the transition of The Well to a separate charity dedicated to its purposes in the support of the Asian community. The charity is now operational and steps are being taken to transfer the lease of the property to the new charity while the Council continues to pay for the lease until the end of the agreed period.

11. Conclusion
11.1 In the words of Eugene Peterson (The Message – New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs, Nav Press, Colorado. 1993), in the language of our time, the text which began this report reads
• "Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you".

11.2 This is indeed the call and the privilege of this Council to attempt in the name of the Church and in the service of the Gospel. We look forward as a Council to continue this work in new and challenging ways as the years ahead beckon. While we cannot dictate the events or environment in which the Council will be called to serve, we can assure the General Assembly of our willingness to engage creatively and responsively with the challenges.

In the name of the Council

MARK E JOHNSTONE, *Convener*
DAVID CAMERON, *Vice-Convener*
RODDY HAMILTON, *Vice-Convener*
SHIRLEY BILLES, *Vice-Convener*
STEVEN MALLON, *Council Secretary*
NIGEL J ROBB, *Team Leader: Faith Expression*
FIONA FIDGIN, *Team Leader: Congregational Learning*
LESLEY HAMILTON-MESSER, *Team Leader: Church Without Walls*

In the name of the Committee on Church Art and Architecture

ELEANOR MACALISTER, *Convener*
IAN PATERSON, *Vice-Convener*
NIGEL J ROBB, *Team Leader: Faith Expression*

ADDENDUM

Rev Eleanor Macalister

The General Assembly this year brings to a conclusion the term of the Rev Eleanor Macalister as Convener of the Committee on Church Art and Architecture. Throughout her time on the Committee and in particular during her four years as Convener, she has brought her infectious sense of humour and enthusiasm to the work, enabling lively discussion of difficult cases, and encouraging all members to participate fully in the debate and reflection required. Her leadership has impacted on the congregations she has visited on behalf of the Committee and many have expressed directly how much they have valued her affirmation of their efforts and the opportunity to envision how their building may become more effectively a mean of mission.

Her commitment to the Church and knowledge of its processes and procedures has enabled the Committee to ensure that the aspirations of congregations proposing new developments and alterations do meet the highest standards possible. She has consistently reminded the Committee during its meeting that it exists to support congregations in fulfilling their mission and worship goals and has assisted the Committee in its efforts to develop imaginative and creative responses to the varied and intriguing requests which are often forthcoming.

During her convenership, Eleanor has been an active member of the Executive of the Council. Her input to their discussion and the debates in the Council meetings has been appreciated and valued. She was extremely supportive of the Staff and the whole Council throughout the process of the internal review of the Council's work and assisted in the major transitions involved.

At this time when she 'retires' from this role in the work of the Council and the committee, we wish to express our deep appreciation of the gifts, energy and enthusiasm she has brought to all she has undertaken on our behalf. This is an opportunity for the Church to recognise her contribution to its life and to wish her well for new avenues of service in future.

In the name of the Council

MARK E JOHNSTONE, *Convener*
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RODDY HAMILTON, *Vice-Convener*
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FIONA FIDGIN, *Team Leader: Congregational Learning*
LESLEY HAMILTON-MESSER, *Team Leader: Church Without Walls*

In the name of the Committee on Church Art and Architecture

IAN PATERSON, *Vice-Convener*
NIGEL J ROBB, *Team Leader: Faith Expression*

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APPENDIX I
BELIEVING IN MARRIAGE
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1. Introduction

Marriage is a holy estate, instituted by God, and hallowed by our Lord's gracious presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. It is commended in Holy Scripture as honourable in all, and consecrated as signifying the mystical union between Christ and His Church.

1.1 These words, from the 1940 Common Order, encapsulate much that has been believed about marriage in the Christian church – its origins, nature and significance. While marriage is celebrated within many different cultures, Christian belief in marriage is rooted within our faith in the God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. The church rejoices with couples in their marriage.

1.2 There is a deliberate ambiguity in the report's title: *Believing in Marriage*. On the one hand, it is written and offered to the church to uphold marriage in the presence of a number of alternatives: long-term partnership and cohabitation; widespread marital breakdown, separation and divorce; serial partnerships/marriages – in this sense it is a report which presents reasons for believing in marriage. It is also offered as a reflection on Christian marriage in scripture, theology and practice, and the connections between marriage and Christian discipleship – in this sense it presents reflection on the place of faith with regard to marriage: believing in marriage.

1.3 There is firstly, then, the rather basic question of why we should believe in marriage. What is good about a man and a woman being joined together in lifelong commitment "for better or worse"? How should a man be a husband to his wife and a woman be a wife to her husband? How should they act one to the other? How does being a disciple affect the choice of and relationship with ones spouse? What significance does marriage carry within the wider Christian story? While there have been various important shifts in understandings of what marriage means throughout human history, Christian reflection focuses on the enduring insights contributed by both scripture and later church practice. In the Christian faith, our approach to marriage and indeed all our human relationships connects with an understanding of our all being created in the image of God; for Christians, this approach is further deepened by our call to discipleship.

1.4 Marriage continues in its vital significance for individuals and society today. It is, therefore, worth noticing here in the introduction something of contemporary social patterns:

- The number of marriages per year in Scotland has remained fairly steady over the past 20 years, fluctuating between 27,000 and 33,000.
- Scots are marrying later: the mean age for a first marriage for men in 2010 was 32.5, while the figure for 1991-2000 was 28.8, while for women's first marriage, the mean age has risen from 27 in 1991-2000 to 30.7 in 2010.
- The mean age for subsequent marriages over the same years is also rising both for divorced men, from 41.1 to 47.4, and divorced women, from 38.4 to 44.6.
- Over the past 15 years the percentage of marriages which were first marriages for both men and women dipped slightly before returning to a similar figure to that of 1995 at just over 70%.
- Since 1990 the percentage of marriages conducted by Church of Scotland ministers has nearly halved from 40.6% to 21.1% in 2010.[1]
- Roman Catholic ceremonies have similarly halved over the same period from 11.6% to 6.2% of marriages in Scotland.
- Other "religious" marriages (both Christian and non-Christian) have shown a spectacular increase, from 6.8% to 21.9% of all marriages. That included, in 2010, 2092 marriages conducted by the Humanist Society of Scotland, some 316 more than the Roman Catholic Church celebrated, and 7.3% of the total number. (Humanist marriages are religious marriages according to law.)

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[1] In our survey, only 11% of our respondents reported they are conducting more weddings per year than 10 years ago while 33% are conducting fewer.

- Civil marriages have increased over the last 20 years from roughly 40% to 50%, with nearly half taking place in a registry office, and the other half in another licensed venue.
- The number of divorces has taken a slight downturn over the past 20 years. The average figure for 1991-5 was 12,614, but for 2010 there were 10,034, a marked decrease from the high (or low) water-mark of 13,076 in 2006.
- Of 2010 divorces, the most common length of marriage before divorce was 5-9 years, with roughly equal figures for 0-4, 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24 years duration. The most common age for both men and women to divorce in 2010 was 40-44.[2]
- Government surveys in England and Wales in the past decade have revealed that 9 to 28% of children of divorced or separated parents have no contact with their non-resident parent after 2 years.[3]

1.5 This survey of statistical data reveals that while the numbers of people marrying in Scotland is not in decline, they are marrying later, the number of divorces remains fairly steady at about one-third of the number of marriages per year, and the number of church weddings is falling significantly. Given both the continuing prevalence of marriage as a form of human partnership, and of divorce with its consequences for couples, any children they have and family and society more widely, the church and its ministers do well to take stock of what exactly their role is and should be in preparing and supporting people before, in and beyond the rites of marriage. While we note the declining number of church weddings, many of these and other weddings involve great expense and complexity in attempting to fulfil expectations for a perfect day – which also requires the church to reflect on its proper role.

1.6 A second broad and closely connected strand to which the report attends is how marriage relates to other forms of commitment and cohabitation. There is nothing new about people having sex, bearing children, and indeed arranging families where there is not one man and one woman in a formalised and exclusive connection. While the New Testament is more clear-cut than the Old Testament in a critical assessment of this (which is the underpinning for mainline church tradition) questions remain in the light of very enduring and monogamous commitments, and family patterns, being sustained without the rites of marriage. These questions arise both within and without the church. When the Church of Scotland General Assembly last received reports on marriage in the mid-1990s, there was a consideration of homosexual as well as heterosexual relationships; in 2011 there has been a Scottish Government consultation as to whether same-sex marriage might be introduced. So part of the context for our report are debates around the definition of marriage.

1.7 A further cluster of questions surrounds the permanence of the marriage relationship. Again this is commonly raised by contemporary experience, though it is certainly not new, since it has been asked about frequently in earlier generations. For millennia, divorce has been an issue in society at large, and both the Old and New Testaments give consideration to it. Yet there is also a strong strand of thought in Scripture that marriage may reflect or give language for the faithfulness and exclusive love of God for Israel and, in Christ, for the church. Thus the church in different times and forms has defended to a greater or lesser extent the indissolubility of marriage. So can or should marriage only last as long as it can be felt to work or can it model a higher calling? What measure of commitment does marriage ask for?

1.8 What is it to believe in marriage? Clearly as Christians we need to heed the witness of the Old and New Testaments. We need to take stock of how the church

2   Statistical data for Scotland from http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/vital-events/general/ref-tables/2010/marriages-and-civil-partnerships.html and http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/vital-events/general/ref-tables/2010/divorces-and-dissolutions.html. 2010 is the latest year for which figures are available.

3   See University of Oxford Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Family Policy Briefing 3: Child contact with non-resident parents, at http://www.spig.clara.net/reports/hunt.pdf, p 3.

has evolved in its teaching and practice, and, in our own context, will do this most usefully by looking at how the Reformed tradition responded to the inheritance of early and medieval Christian thought. As we are, therefore, engaged on a theological task, we have to attend to realities – realities on the ground in this world in which sin persists, but to which Jesus Christ has come. To that end we have incorporated some results of an online survey of Church of Scotland ministers which was conducted over the summer of 2011, which received 373 responses.

2.   Recent Debate in the Church of Scotland

2.1 This report is the third in a series prepared by the Working Group on Issues in Human Sexuality, and presented by the Mission and Discipleship Council. The first, in 2007, was on same-sex relationships, and the second in 2009 explored singleness in church and society.[4] This third and final, on marriage, is offered as an integral part of the series, intended to augment and deepen the reflections shared before.

2.2 Although the previous two reports were not centrally about marriage, they were written with the understanding of marriage as the normative Christian expression of sexual and family relationships, and they reflected, as does this report, the Church of Scotland's ongoing discussion of marriage. Before 2007, the most recent period of church engagement with this subject was 1991-1994, when a number of papers were presented to the General Assembly on marriage, summarised as follows.

2.3 In 1991, the Joint Commission on Doctrine reported on its consideration of marriage, with particular reference to 'inter-church' marriages.[5] The Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church affirmed much common theological ground: that marriage is instituted by God as a covenant of love made by husband and wife that

is ordered 'to the wellbeing of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children'.[6] At the same time, the Church of Scotland reiterated its Reformation foundation in not understanding marriage as a sacrament, recognising the possibility of divorce and allowing for the re-marriage of divorcees.

2.4 In 1993, the Panel on Doctrine offered three contributions pertinent to a theology of marriage:[7] on 'Marriage and Heterosexuality in History and Christian Traditions: Some Signposts', 'A Reformed Theology of Marriage',[8] and a Church of Scotland response to the Roman Catholic understanding of marriage presented within the Joint Commission on Doctrine.

2.5 In 1994, the Panel on Doctrine offered its Report 'On the Theology of Marriage'.[9] At its heart, the Report broadly reaffirmed the traditional view of marriage. However, it also offered an appraisal of non-marital sexual relationships and ventured the view that such relationships might possibly possess 'qualities of which [those related] sincerely believe God approves'.[10] There was a reluctance either to condemn extra-marital sex or same-sex relationships, or to offer a strong affirmation of marriage *exclusively*. This appraisal occasioned a dissenting Minority Report,[11] which took the view that the Panel Report moved too far from Scripture and towards culture,[12] and reaffirmed that the form, as well as the content, of a relationship is important.[13] For that reason, it called to attention the doctrine of creation,[14] as well as the pastoral implications of its teaching.[15]

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4   "A Challenge to Unity: same-sex relationships as an issue in theology and human sexuality," 2007 General Assembly, 4/9-4/39, and "Being Single: in Church and Society," 2009 General Assembly 4/58-4/102.

5   1991 General Assembly, 233-254.

6   1991 General Assembly, 233.

7   This report is found in the reports to the 1993 General Assembly, 195-231.

8   1993 General Assembly, 216-223.

9   1994 General Assembly, 257-285.

10   1994 General Assembly, 280.

11   1994 General Assembly, 285, for the brief statement of the dissenters, and the pamphlet entitled 'Why Dissent?' for the full statement.

12   'Why Dissent?', 1 and 2.

13   'Why Dissent?', 4.

14   'Why Dissent?', 5.

15   'Why Dissent?', 7.

2.6 In 1994 the General Assembly also heard a report from the Board of Social Responsibility on "Human Sexuality"; dissent from three members of the Board was recorded. Both reports – from the Panel on Doctrine and Board of Social Responsibility – were received, but the General Assembly took no view as to which of either, or any of the dissenting views, best reflected the opinion of the General Assembly and mind of the Church. Instead, further reflection and discussion were recommended, which led to a study booklet, *Marriage Today?* in 1995, and, indirectly, the formation of the Working Group on Issues in Human Sexuality in 2004. Throughout its studies, the Working Group has been conscious of the need to reflect on issues in human sexuality in the awareness of contemporary social movements and attitudes, but to do so in the light of a theology attentive to God as Creator of all, including human sexuality, and discipleship as the pre-eminent Christian context for sexual ethics.

2.7 The debate within the church in the early 90s reveals something of the tensions which are present in offering a report on marriage at all. One tension is over whether we seek primarily to describe the Christian landscape of views on marriage, with a Reformed focus, which are expressed in the church today, or whether we are attempting to judge between these views, and offer something more prescriptive to the church. The 1990s reports leant on the prescriptive side, one consequence of which was that the Panel on Doctrine was explicitly divided. The reports since 2007 have been more cautious, presenting a spectrum of Christian views on sexual matters, offering critiques, affirming common ground, often making genuine progress in understanding, but also exploring areas in which we remain unable to share the same perspective. This report is offered in the same spirit, and attempts to explore difficult issues, aware of the tensions between Christian views, as we develop and offer a theology of marriage in the Church of Scotland.

2.8 A further tension, very much in evidence in the reports from the 90s, is the relative weight given to different sources for theological reflection. Marriage is found and discussed in the Bible, not least by Jesus; there are two millennia of developing church practice and theological interpretation, responding to questions which arose in separate contexts; and there is the ever-shifting experience of human beings in sex, love and marriage. The Church of Scotland acknowledges Scripture as the supreme rule of faith and life, but how we approach the interpretation of Scripture is hotly disputed. Quite disparate theological understandings are developed from Scripture depending in large part on how much weight is given to reason, experience and tradition, and on which questions we approach Scripture with, or indeed, do not ask.[16] This report is primarily focused on substantive issues around marriage rather than on what criteria should be used for interpreting texts (known as hermeneutics); nevertheless, debates on these criteria and the sources for theology will never be far from the surface.

2.9 One more preparatory comment, before we explore Scripture and theology more fully, is that this report is, at least in part, about love. Perhaps more than any other term used in the pages which follow, love requires careful attention. Although the meaning and nature of marriage cannot be reduced to a definition of love, clearly love and marriage are connected. What do we mean by love? Love certainly involves practical caring, a devotion to the other, a working for the counterpart's good. Love also means the area of romantic feeling, of passion, of sexual desire. This sense of love is clearly involved in becoming and being married, though the weight attached to it may vary in time and place.[17] In contemporary society, however, romantic love and marriage are obviously separable in thought and in fact. Moreover, as we shall see in Sections 3.3.12-13 and

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[16] The report of the Panel on Doctrine called *The Interpretation of Scripture*, presented to the General Assembly of 1998, explores in greater depth questions around scriptural interpretation particularly within a Reformed context.

[17] See Philip A. Mellor, "Sacred Love: Religion, Marriage and L'amour fou", in Adrian Thatcher, ed., *Celebrating Christian Marriage* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001), pp. 119-41, especially pp. 126-7, which reports that anthropological surveys of ethnographic data suggest that romantic love is a human universal or near-universal.

5.6-7 below, marital love in Scripture, while not neglecting the role of passion, also reflects different emphases – faithfulness, exclusivity, self-giving. Furthermore, love in marriage throughout the Church's history has not been a fixed idea: so part of the purpose of this report is to explore the role of love in contemporary Christian marriage. We are aware of course of the difficulty of putting into prose something which may best be expressed in experience, in commitment over time, in emotion, in touch, in music, or if in words, in poetry. Nevertheless, we present this report as a statement of why and how we, in the Church of Scotland today, believe in marriage.

3.   The Bible: Introduction

3.1   We turn first to the Bible to explore what we find there about marriage, in Old and New Testaments, in the variety of contexts and genres in which marriage and marriages are described and discussed. We do so conscious of the different ways in which Scripture is read, interpreted and considered authoritative, conscious also of the theological presuppositions that affect our approach to the text. Elements of the presentation of marriage in the Bible clearly belong to contexts and cultures far distant from ours: Christians may generally agree as to the necessity of exploring the original meanings and contexts as thoroughly as possible, but differ as to the significance of what is discovered. Different readers bring different principles to bear in developing theology and ethical understanding in the light of Scripture. For example, Christians ascribe varying importance to the details of narratives, of legal material, of the teaching of Jesus and of Paul. In reading Scripture as a whole, Christians use different scriptural insights and beliefs to guide their reading of individual texts. Influences from beyond Scripture are also brought to bear with different forces in our thinking – from Christian tradition, from our reflection on the faith, from our own experience as well as that of others (as we saw above in section 2). Different Christians, in faithfulness to Scripture, may, therefore, approach questions around marriage, yet may emerge from study and reflection with different understandings of the will of God for marriage today.

3.2   Furthermore, and complicating this picture still further, in reading the Bible in order to understand what it may be saying to us today about marriage, we should be aware that we may affect our interpretation by virtue of the very questions we ask: and so we also need to allow Scripture to shape the issues and questions with which we are concerned. What guides the following discussion of marriage in the Bible is the conviction that, while no theology can proceed without critical exegesis of texts and passages, theology also goes beyond exegesis, finding truth across Scripture as a whole, while also aware of the contributions to our thought made by reason, experience and tradition. Moreover, developing an ethical understanding in questions around marriage may involve, in its encounter with contemporary experience, applying theological insights in and to new situations.

3.3   Marriage in Old Testament Perspective

3.3.1   The Old Testament frames the questions of marriage, gender and procreation together. It does so throughout its different genres and often with different emphases. No Old Testament theology of marriage can be read off from a single text or family of texts alone – rather, different themes and emphases have to be explored, weighed up, and fundamental directions discerned, which may still leave tensions within the text unharmonised.

Gender and procreation

3.3.2   The obvious starting-place is Genesis 1 and 2[18]. In the first chapter, male and female human beings are created as a combined unity-in-diversity in the image of God, and commanded to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth (Genesis 1:27-28). This strong impulse towards procreation, creaturely fruitfulness, reflects God's creative fruitfulness. In Genesis 2, after Adam is given the task of tilling the ground, God notes that aloneness is not good. That something in Creation is "not good" is striking, in the face of God's sevenfold observation "that it was good" in the first chapter. Thus, the importance of companionship and complementariness is stressed, but also neediness

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[18]   Bible quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

and incompleteness. The man needs "a helper as his partner" (2:18), but nothing in creation will suffice, and thus the woman is created from the man. Here "helper" does not necessarily mean inferior assistant, as elsewhere the same noun is used of God himself: "the Lord is my helper" (*eg*, Psalm 118:7, 121:1-2). A helper – an other – is created from man's sameness (not a different creature) that aloneness might end. The man and the woman are brought together and, since they have been created by God, from the same flesh, they may come together and be one flesh without shame. It would seem from this that the "one flesh" union of male and female is basic to Creation and to what it means to be human and be somehow in the image of God. Here "one flesh" includes, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse.

3.3.3 In the subsequent story of the fall, one partner leads the other to disobedience, causing first shame, and then discord and recrimination between man and woman (3:9-12). Explicitly, tribulation, neediness, driving desire, and female subjugation only enter the Creation as a result of sin (3:16). Yet despite this frustration of Creation by sin, the union persists in its procreative purpose and togetherness.

3.3.4 However, whilst the early chapters of Genesis appear to assume that male-female union is intended to be 'monogamous and for life', there are a number of stories about, and references to, polygamy and concubinage. The legal material includes provision for the well-being of each wife in a polygamous situation, indicating that the practice, though hardly normative, was not regarded as controversial. The Old Testament on balance assumes marriage to be between one man and one woman, and clearly regards its immediate purpose as being for the production of children and heirs. There is no vaunting of celibacy and childlessness is considered to be pitiful, though it should be noted that the Old Testament associates childlessness and the associated cultural stigma with women, since male infertility was an unknown

factor.[19] Psalm 128 offers a portrait of domestic happiness in the household of a man who fears the Lord. His wife is compared to a fruitful vine, which connotes the bearing of children, but may also refer to Israel itself – a significant allusion. Yet, to suggest that the Old Testament presents procreation as the sole purpose of marriage would be one-sided. The most complete portrait we have of a marriage is in Proverbs 31:10-35 which presents us with a powerful woman who evidently holds her family together and enables her husband to maintain his place and dignity in the public arena. Indeed, it may well be that this wife is also a model for the wisdom of God. Furthermore, the Song of Songs positively hymns an erotic, physical, and tender relationship between a man and a woman (in which the woman is notably the principal actor) with no mention of children whatsoever. In its declaration "My beloved is mine and I am his" (2:16), it reflects the sexual intimacy and antipathy to aloneness (but also perhaps the neediness) we find in early Genesis. This is a "good" in itself.

Marriage in law and custom

3.3.5 So far as actual custom and practice in the Old Testament is concerned, in normal circumstances marriage partners were chosen by men (or their representatives) in negotiation with the father of the potential bride[20], with evidence of the payment of a dowry or bride-price.[21] Formal wedding ceremonies are not attested, though there is evidence of celebration and feasting.[22]

3.3.6 The Decalogue clearly prohibits adultery as being incompatible with the covenant relationship with God (Ex 20:14, Deut 5:12). The proscribed punishment for adultery, where the woman was married, was death for both parties (Lev 20:10, Deut 22:24). Exceptions existed for the married slave-girl who was not free to refuse (Lev 19:20-22) and in cases where the woman's cry indicated

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19   See "Being Single: in Church and Society", General Assembly 2009: 4.1-4.3.
20   See Gen 24; 28:1-5; 34.9; Deut 7:3; Josh 23:12; 1 Sam 18:17-27; 1 Kings 3:1; Ezra 9:12; 2 Chron 18:1.
21   See Gen 34:12, Ex 22:17, Deut 22:29, 1 Sam 18:25.
22   See Ps. 19:5, Ps. 45, Song of Songs 3:6-11, Joel 2:15-16.

unwilling participation (Deut 22:24). The requirement for two or three witnesses in capital cases (Deut 17:6-7) may have rendered such penalties largely symbolic and divorce or the payment of ransom may have been more practical options. Given the provisions in Exodus concerning a man who has more than one wife (21:10-11), and the ruling that a man (whether married or not) who seduces "a virgin who is not engaged to be married" must either marry her or pay her father compensation, it is clear that adultery need not necessarily be deemed to have taken place in such cases. This stands in contrast with the clear rulings in Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:23-24 that both a married woman and an engaged woman who "lies with" another man (regardless of his marital status) are guilty of adultery – as, of course, is the man. In short, adultery is primarily defined as sex with another man's wife.

3.3.7 Indeed, in legal material in particular, instructions around marriage are firmly in the context of a male point of view; moreover, women are scarcely portrayed as free agents.[23] Such rights as they have are within the gift of significant men: fathers, husbands, brothers and brothers-in-law and sons, and daughters are subsequently restricted as to whom they may marry. The concept of an independent unmarried woman was so abnormal as to be the subject of special prophetic attention: hence the repeated injunction to be just to widows who, like orphans, are unnaturally deprived of their protecting environment. Isaiah 3:18 – 4:1 paints a dramatic picture of the societal disintegration which takes place when such norms are violated. In the Pentateuch women can be spoils of war (Deut 10-14), sold by their fathers (Ex 21:7), raped by predatory men (Deut 22:28-29), sent away when they are no longer wanted (Ex 21:7-11, Deut 24:1-4), subjected to humiliating virginity tests (Deut 22:13-21), and expected to endure a judicial test process should their husband even suspect infidelity (Num 5:11-31) – and all of this under the rubric of what passes for marriage.

No doubt the Old Testament here reflects cultural norms around patriarchy in the Ancient Near East more widely. Nevertheless, in developing a Christian theology of marriage, we must read such sources in the light of the New Testament's and subsequent understandings of relationships between men and women.

3.3.8 The Old Testament does not present a uniform account of intermarriage. Some passages, such as Deuteronomy 7:1-4 and many parallels, indicate that the ban on intermarriage derived from a fear of idolatry; hence the inclusion in Numbers 25:6-15 of the shocking account of the killing by Phineas of an Israelite man and his Midianite wife.[24] However Ezra 10, which describes the thorough purging of all foreign wives and their children, makes no direct reference to idolatry, and the motivation here might be more straightforwardly ethnic. A further complication arises from Deuteronomy 21:10-14, which sanctions the practice of marrying women taken captive from other nations.

3.3.9 As is often the case, narrative passages offer a different perspective. Ruth the Moabitess marries Boaz the Israelite, and becomes an ancestress of David; as indeed does Tamar the Canaanite, who gave birth to Perez – an ancestor of Boaz – as a result of an arguably incestuous relationship with Judah. Interestingly Matthew's genealogy of Jesus includes both Tamar and Ruth, adding for good measure information not found in the Old Testament to the effect that Rahab, a non-Israelite prostitute from Jericho, was Boaz's mother. The Rabbis partly square at least one of these circles by holding that Ruth converted to Judaism before her marriage to Boaz. The basis for this is probably Ruth's famous declaration, 'Your people shall be my people, and your God my God' (Ruth 1:16).

Divorce
3.3.10 On the question of divorce, Deuteronomy strictly speaking neither commands nor permits divorce, despite

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[23] Legal passages pertaining to various marital situations include Ex 20:14, 17, 21:7-11, 22:16-17, Deut 5:18, 21, 21:10-17, 22:13-29 and 24:1-5, and Num 5:11-31.

[24] This action is exalted in the Apocrypha by the inclusion of the same Phineas in the list of 'famous men' to be praised in Sirach 45:23-25.

later debates, but rather assumes that men can divorce their wives with relative ease, as a simple and accepted process. However, the case law restricts this right in certain circumstances (22:19, 29), and in 24:1-4, presupposes a husband's right to divorce his wife for some defilement, by giving her a certificate of divorce, but then forbids him to re-marry her, should there be an intervening marriage ending either in divorce or widowhood. In the absence of more explicit regulation, the Rabbinic schools were later to see this text as regulating divorce in general, and debate the meaning of "defilement" – famously the school of Shammai restricting it to unfaithfulness, and that of Hillel allowing anything unpleasing to the husband – a debate later reflected in the gospels.

3.3.11   However, alongside Deuteronomy's assumption of divorce and later uses of that tradition in Rabbinic ethics must be placed the prophetic critique. Malachi, in delivering Yahweh's judgment against Israel, explains his anger by stating:

> *You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was a witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did not one God make her? Both flesh and spirit are his. And what does the one God desire? Godly offspring. So look to yourselves, and do not anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless. (Malachi 2:14-16)*

Despite obscurities in the text which make it hard to know the precise meaning of the words translated "godly offspring" and "divorce" above, this passage still clearly conveys a strong emphasis on the importance of faithfulness within marriage, and does so within the context of God's covenant with his people: v. 10: "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another profaning the covenant of our ancestors?"

Love and covenant

3.3.12   One of the most important characteristics of God in the Old Testament is mercy or compassion. The very terms – *rachim*, 'compassionate', *rachum*, 'merciful', *racham*, 'to be compassionate', and the associated noun *rachamim*, 'compassion' – are derived from the noun *rechem* which means "womb", and is a way to understand how an essentially female characteristic was transformed into an aspect of God. Furthermore, there are instances of God being portrayed as displaying the kind of emotions associated with wives and mothers.[25]

3.3.13   However, with the exception of the word group derived from racham, the Old Testament generally uses the same vocabulary for divine and human love – ahav – and it is used of everything from mundane love of things to the raw emotion that drives people into each other's arms to the most exalted divine relationship with humankind. Indeed, the Old Testament connects divine and human love when it clearly relates marriage between husband and wife to God's covenant with his people. Yet, the connection is not simply in analogy, for whereas all humanity is given the command to procreate and subdue the earth, the specific covenant, given to Abraham, relates the divine blessing to his promised offspring (Genesis 22). Thus children are a sign of covenant blessing, and barrenness of curse. Marriage is thus an assumed duty of the Covenant people.

3.3.14   The principal references to the covenant relationship between husband and wife occur in relation to God's covenant with Israel, in particular Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16 and Hosea 1-3. Whereas, outside of Genesis 1-3, the Old Testament's laws on marriage nowhere explicitly require monogamy, the theological analogy of Israel-as-bride to her husband Yahweh requires a strong norm of permanence and exclusivity. Israel is to worship no other God than the jealous God Yahweh. Monotheism and monogamy are connected. As Moses renews the covenant, threatened by the idolatry with the golden calf, Yahweh states "for you shall worship no other god,

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[25]   See *eg* Hos. 11:1-4, 8, Is. 49:14-18.

because the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex 34:14), and this precludes not only polytheism, but indeed any covenant or coexistence with the people of the land who might become a snare to them (Ex 34:12). God's holiness is connected to his demand for faithfulness, so that any encroachment provokes his jealousy, and endangers the covenant (*eg* Deuteronomy 32:16 cf. Psalm 78:58). Thus Israel is presented as Yahweh's betrothed, or as his wife, whom he loves tenderly and jealously, and from whom he expects faithfulness. Idolatry, or apostasy to the covenant, can then be described as fornication (Jer 3:2-3, Ezek 23:43) or adultery (Jer 3:8, Ezek 23:45). In Jeremiah, Judah is portrayed as God's bride, who has deserted her husband and refused his call or discipline (2:1-2). Perhaps the simile is most directly applied in the book of Hosea, where the prophet takes an unfaithful wife, as a representation of God's love of his unfaithful people. Here the cuckolded Yahweh contemplates the divorce of his people as the proper response to the violated covenant –Hosea's son is named "Not my people". Yet, throughout the book, the pain of the estrangement and covenant violation (2:4-5) is predicated on the emotional investment that Yahweh as husband has in feckless people – a love that leaves him both hurt and angry. In spite of the breach of the covenant, his love remains constant (chapter 3), symbolised in the call to Hosea to go again and love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress.

3.3.15   For many readers, marriage as an image of God's love for his people helps them understand the nature of God as faithful and unconditional in his covenantal love for his people, never giving up on his commitment. Furthermore, such an image points up the contrast between such divine loyalty and our own human failings – manifestly not wholly steadfast, just and merciful. Other readers may be tempted to reject such passages as Hosea for being dependent on male fears of female sexuality and lack of respect for women. It is possible, however, to see the force of these passages not in the gender of the counterparts, but the nature of their relationship. We should be careful then not to infer that, since the scriptural image largely presents God as faithful husband, and Israel

as adulterous wife, it is women who are predominantly faithless in human relationships. Such a reading would skew the central thrust of the image: that all God's people, prone to disobedience, are called to love him faithfully.

Themes: creation, covenant, law

3.3.16   In summary, we find marriage in the Old Testament in creation accounts, in stories of God's people, in law, wisdom and in prophecy. There is no explicit overarching theology of marriage, and it is not straightforward to harmonise the disparate accounts and emphases. However, certain themes do carry weight within Old Testament perspective. The one-flesh procreative union of a man and woman is presented as basic to God's created order, its goodness reflected in celebrations of love and family. God's covenant is expressed in the promise of offspring, and his covenant blessing is known, and his purpose realised to a great extent in child-bearing and family life. Prophetic discourse, in exploring God's covenantal relationship with Israel, describes God as the faithful husband to an often wayward wife, and implies that human marriage should reflect God's faithfulness and exclusivity. Legal material was given, embedded within a variety of narratives, which among other things made provision for divorce. It will emerge that this was not the last word, when we see how marriage, alongside other themes, was taken up in the New Testament.

3.4   Marriage in New Testament Perspective

3.4.1   This discussion will focus on the New Testament passages which offer explicit teaching on to marriage. These texts address such questions as divorce, marriage between a believer and unbeliever, and how husbands and wives should love each other. Before exploring these issues, it should be recognised at the outset that the New Testament assumes a sense of great joy in marriage, particularly in the wedding. We have noted at the outset of the report the liturgy that makes mention of the wedding in Cana in Galilee. When the wine had given out at this wedding, Jesus changed water into wine to be served to the guests (John 2:1-11). The celebrations were surely enhanced. In teaching of the Kingdom, Jesus often

told parables of wedding feasts to which guests would refuse to come, or be unexpectedly invited (Matthew 22:2-10), or at which they would be wrongly dressed (Matthew 22:11-14). We are to be ready, like servants awaiting their master from the wedding banquet (Luke 12:25-38), or like the wise virgins awaiting the bridegroom with lamps lit and able to go into the wedding banquet (Matthew 25:1-13). We are to humble ourselves, just as we should not sit in too high a seat at a wedding banquet (Luke 14:7-11). Over and over again, Jesus uses the wedding-feast as an image of those people who follow him, gathered together, enjoying his presence. This fundamentally positive, joyful understanding of the marriage celebration finds its culmination in Revelation, where the vision of God's reign is expressed in terms of a marriage – of the Lamb, or with the new Jerusalem (Revelation 19:9; 21:2, 9-10). Whatever we may wish to say about the solemn decisions and commitments involved in marriage, we should not lose sight of the fact that when the New Testament wishes to speak of the joy and fulfilment of God's coming kingdom, it readily uses the image of the joy and expectation of marriage and the wedding celebration.

The Gospels

3.4.2   The gospels have little ethical teaching on the question of marriage. What is said may be seen as falling into two strands, though both follow from a fundamental emphasis on Christian discipleship. First, marriage is discussed in the light of discipleship and the Kingdom – and compared to discipleship it is of lesser significance. Secondly, the marriage bond is still seen as of particular seriousness for disciples – marriage may not be as fundamental in the New Testament as discipleship, but it is within its sphere.

3.4.3   In the ministry of Jesus, the demands and loyalties of discipleship appear to relegate those of marriage and family life. Jesus is assumed to be single, and his significant companions are his disciples and the various women who share in his ministry. Indeed, Jesus seems to stand somewhat dislocated from the life of his own family. Being "in his Father's house" means not being by his parents' side

(Luke 2:41-51). He operates from his own (or Peter's) house in Capernaum. Traditional familial loyalty is redefined, so that the question "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" solicits the unusual answer "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:46-50). Loyalty to God and the community of disciples appears to be subverting the conventional primacy of the family (cf. above, section **3.3.2-4**   ). The response to the question "is it expedient then to marry" is met by the commendation of the eunuch as a model of living "for the sake of the kingdom" (Matthew 19:11-12). Whatever this enigmatic saying means, it is a further departure from Jewish norms and from Genesis' procreative imperative. Whilst Jesus does not make celibacy a condition of discipleship (Peter at least is, and remains, married[26]), he certainly challenges the normal expectations of family life as a religious preference or sign of either virtue or divine blessing.

3.4.4   This should not necessarily be read as a call to abandon family life. Jesus explicitly demands that parents be honoured, ensuring from the cross the care of his own mother (John 19:26-27) and rejects the notion that such obligations may be laid aside for reasons of religious service (Mark 7:9-13). Nevertheless, it places the Kingdom above natural ties, insisting that devotion to the Kingdom is to override natural desires and social expectations. The Kingdom is of fundamental importance, while marriage is not. Eschatologically, this may be seen in Jesus' response that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are like angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

3.4.5   The second strand, which presents the marriage bond as an inviolable part of the Creator's will, is to be found in Jesus' remarks on divorce. In Mark 10:2-12 and Matthew 19:1-12 Jesus responds to the lawyers' question "is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" by citing Genesis 2:

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26   Matthew 8:14-15 (the healing of his Mother in Law) and 1 Corinthians 9:5, where Peter and the "brothers of the Lord" are said to have wives accompanying them on mission.

From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9)

The Creator's intention, found in the assertion that God himself creates them "one flesh" in marriage, is to take precedence over the provision for divorce in Deuteronomy. On this basis, divorce and re-marriage are to be rejected – re-marriage decreed to be adultery – with Matthew adding the one exception "except for sexual immorality."

3.4.6   The synoptic passages clearly agree in presenting Jesus' abhorrence of divorce, and his view of the Creator's intention that marriage be monogamous and for life. Subsequent reflection in the church has reiterated the lawyers' question "is it permissible for a man to divorce his wife and marry another?" as a prominent question at issue in church (see sections 4.2 and 4.14 below for examples of such reflection). Rather than interpreting these passages principally as offering legal definitions, their concern is still better seen as bringing questions of marriage into the realm of discipleship. These divorce prohibitions do not exist in isolation as ethical commands, but within the radical teaching on discipleship. Without denying the sense and force of Jesus' words, marriage is to be seen as just one aspect of the believer's life in which a counter-cultural call to extreme self-denial is to govern. Taken in this light, it is also easier to reconcile the divorce passages with the conviction that discipleship is more basic to the Christian life than marriage; disciples should not ask 'What is permitted?' in order to find escape clauses from law, including escape clauses from a union that honours the Creator's intention.

Pauline letters
3.4.7   1 Corinthians 5-7 represents the longest discourse on sexual behaviour anywhere in the New Testament. The chapters cover a number of topics beginning with the Church's attitude to the sexual offender (5), the demarcation between believers and offenders, including sexual offenders (6:9-11), Paul's reasoned objection to intercourse with a prostitute (6:12-20), and then proceeding to a long discussion on the propriety of marriage in Chapter 7, which also touches on divorce, re-marriage and marriages of believers with unbelievers.

3.4.8   What Paul is doing here is working through the implications of Christian discipleship in the area of sexual relationships for a new Christian community, composed largely of Gentile converts, in which the acceptance of Jewish norms cannot be taken for granted. What does it mean for a believer to say that the "body is for the Lord" and place sex in the sphere of discipleship? What does Christian belonging mean for a believer's attitude to marriage and divorce, given that marriage and divorce are not merely individual life choices, but part of the fabric, economy and expectations of the larger society? How do Christians, in light of Christ, relate to the world? Christians, like Jews, are assumed to eschew extra-marital sex. Why, and on what basis, and with what seriousness, is this so? If marriage between Jew and Gentile is usually an anathema to a devout Jew (as was discussed above in section **3.3.8-9**), does this, and how does this, work out among Gentile converts who may already be married to pagans, or are existing in a culture where religious difference is not regarded as a factor in marriage choices? These are questions not always asked in today's cultural setting, and how Paul approaches them deserves careful attention.

1 Corinthians 6:12–7:40
3.4.9   Despite the advocacy of singleness that we certainly find in chapter 7, Paul implicitly works with a very high view of marriage and its effects, duties and responsibilities. Marriage is the only legitimate context for sexual relationships, with the alternatives of both sexual immorality and prostitution seen as incompatible with Christian existence. Within marriage, husbands and wives are to enjoy full sexual relations, and are to be the exclusive physical possession of each other (7:4). With a remarkable degree of (counter-cultural) conjugal equality, Paul insists that each enjoys an exclusive authority and

ownership over the other's body, resulting in a loss of autonomy, and a responsibility to protect the other from sin. Divorce is prohibited, and spouses are bound until death (7:39). Even if Jesus' dictum against divorce could be read as being restricted to marriages within the faith (7:10-11), Paul without claiming the Lord's authority (7:12-13) extends it to all marriages (again equally balancing husbands and wives). Marriage is not trivialised – quite the reverse – for it necessarily implies mutual ownership and exclusivity, a binding. Indeed here, Paul is consistent with the gospels in radically affirming the seriousness of marriage, whilst simultaneously seeking to emphasise that commitment to Christ comes first.

3.4.10 The second facet of these chapters is that Paul presents the believer's relationship to Christ in physical terms, often analogous to a marital union. The body is "for the Lord, and Lord for the body" (6:13), precluding fornication. The body has an eschatological significance ensured by the [bodily] resurrection of the Lord (6:14). The body is a member of Christ (6:15 – "member" here taking a physical overtone by its juxtaposition with "member of a prostitute"). There is a parallelism between participation in Christ, and sexual participation, such that intercourse outside marriage is a blasphemous parody incompatible with union with Christ. The body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (6:19), meaning that the believer is not his own possession, having been bought by the Lord, so that the believer's body is the site of God's glory (6:20).

3.4.11 Sexual immorality is not presented as a mere ethical failure, but somehow as a sin "against the body" of the believer, which ought to be devoted to the Lord. Paul insists that illicit "one body/flesh" union with a prostitute is incompatible with being "one spirit" with the Lord, which is the outcome of the believer's union with the Lord. Union with a prostitute is a betrayal of participation in Christ. It is not that the body belonging to the spouse cannot be given to another, but that the "body for the Lord" cannot be for sexual immorality.

1 Corinthians 7

3.4.12 Whatever stress this chapter puts on the relative merits of marriage and celibacy, it certainly affirms that marriage is permissible for the Christian. It is a "good" option, and indeed in certain circumstances the only correct option (7:2, 36). Both celibacy and marriage are good – neither is sin. Celibacy is certainly Paul's desire for those able to make that choice, and is urged on the unmarried and the widows, but Paul recognises that being single is not for all. The thrust of the argument seems to be Christological rather than circumstantial.

3.4.13 First, there are two arguments that stress that, in the light of Christ, marriage is not our fundamental commitment. 7:17-24 advises the believer to "remain" as he is. None should seek circumcision or uncircumcision as the question is "nothing" compared to "obeying the commandments of God" (7:19). Slaves should not be concerned if they remain slaves, and free should remain free. It is the calling of the Lord that is important. The married should not seek divorce, nor the single marriage – because such statuses are matters of indifference.

3.4.14 Second, Paul suggests that the "form of this world is passing away" (7:31). Whereas marriage and procreation were considered good both in Judaism as a covenant blessing, and in Graeco-Roman culture as a duty to society, here marriage appears to be tied to a passing world. Somehow, because of the believer's new relationship to Christ, it is now good to be alone – or indeed perhaps being "one spirit" with the Lord means that he or she is not alone. The "neediness" which could only be answered by marriage, no longer necessarily requires such a solution. This concern may involve an immediate eschatological expectation, but it may also reflect Paul's conviction about the nature of the world in the light of the Christ event. All concerns around marriage are essentially "worldly". Marriage may be good, but to seek marriage as a goal, which was also indeed a strong cultural assumption, is to invest in that which is not of ultimate significance.

3.4.15 However, the third argument, seen particularly

in 7:32-37, seems to suggest a tension between the legitimate demands of marriage and devotion to the Lord. Both involve a surrender of autonomy. The unmarried man is anxious only with "the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord," but the married man is necessarily anxious not only with the Lord but also with "the affairs of the world, how to please his wife," and so, "his interests are divided" (7:32-34). The duty to a wife is legitimate, indeed demanded by Paul (7:3-4), yet somehow it sets up a distraction, even a rivalry within Christian devotion, tying the believer to the "affairs of the world" rather than to Christ. Paul desires the believer to be free from such anxiety (7:32). Indeed, both spouse and Lord also make claims on the body (6:15; 7:4). It is almost as if the Lord and the spouse are destined to become rivals for the devotion, or indeed ownership, of the believer. He must surrender his autonomy to both. Yet, this ought not to be overplayed: despite the preference for singleness, marriage is still to be regarded as good, and not sin.

3.4.16 1 Corinthians 7 also deals in passing with the question of marriages between believers and unbelievers. In affirming that Christians contemplating marriage are free to marry, Paul issues the caveat "only in the Lord" (7:40). It is probable that this is also reflected in 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 with its call, "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers", and its strenuous instance that there can be no partnership between light and darkness, believer and unbeliever. Thus discipleship is to govern not only the decision as to whether, but also whom, the believer marries.

3.4.17 The logic of this may have been that Christian discipleship would undermine the marriages of believers already married to unbelievers, or indeed that believers would be required to separate from unbelieving spouses. However, Paul explicitly rejects this (1 Cor 7:12-16). While the unbelieving spouse may wish to separate (perhaps an acknowledging of the tensions caused within such a marriage), the believer is not to seek separation. Rather, the Christian partner is called to uphold the marriage, through which the eventual salvation of the unbelieving spouse remains a hope. Thus the believer honours their marriage

as an aspect of their discipleship and witness. (The same concern is found in 1 Peter 3:1-2 which demands that wives act with modesty and submission as a Christian witness "without a word" to their unbelieving husbands.)

Ephesians 5

3.4.18 After 1 Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5:22-33 represents the longest discourse on marriage in the New Testament, addressing already-married partners and reflecting on how Christian discipleship ought to shape their attitude to their spouse. The "to the Lord" motif (v. 22) places the discourse squarely within the realm of discipleship. Life in Christ is to govern all things – not least the household. All is now done "to the Lord". The mutual addresses of 5:22–6:9 also appear to assume that both parties are Christians, giving again the inference that just as believers are called to love, upbuild and submit to each other, so they are called particularly to do this within their most specific relationships. The selfless forgiving and forgoing (of 4:2 and 4:32–5:2) are to be intensified within that subsection of the body of Christ that is the household.

3.4.19 Key then is 5:21, directed to the whole congregation, with its commandment that all believers are to be subject to each other in reverence for Christ. The motive "reverence for Christ" certainly seems to prepare the ground for submission in light of Christ being the head of the church (5:23), and may be compared with Philippians 2:1-5 where believers are called to humble love for each other, considering others better than self, in light of Christ's example of self-humbling. In particular, believers are to work out this ethic of self-submission to the other as to Christ, in the concrete roles they have within the household – the household being here simply a particular manifestation or subdivision of the wider church. The grammar supports an insistence that 5:21 govern what follows. The best manuscripts of 5:22 indicate that the imperative to wives lacks any verb – relying on the participle from the previous verse: hence "Submit to one another in reverence to the Lord: wives to your husbands, as to the Lord..." so that the wife submits as a practical outworking of the general principle of discipleship. Notice

also that the "code" does not seek to govern, or model, the household. Rather, it addresses individuals working out their discipleship in their own roles. There is no call for any to take charge of the other, or to demand submission as a matter of due. Given that Colossians 3:19 starts more abruptly with the call for wives to submit, and assuming that Ephesians is working with the Colossian material, placing 5:21's call for the mutual submission as the introduction and control of what follows may be quite deliberate. Yet, at the same time, this letter is evidently not only working with the household code of Colossians, but is also reflecting on the relationship between Christ and his Church, which informs not only its cosmology and ecclesiology (as indeed is also found in Colossians), but additionally its understanding of marriage.

3.4.20   Taken then with 5:21 in this wider context of mutual submission, and recognising that the call to the husband, although not identical, demands sacrificial self-giving and a devotion and service of the wife as if of himself, the call for wives to submit is not necessarily as patriarchal as may be implied by quoting selectively.

3.4.21   The rationale for submission – "for the husband is the head of the wife" (5:23) – is the Christ-Church analogy. The wife is to be submissive to her husband as head "just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour" (5:23). The introduction of the Christ-Church analogy immediately links the command to the wife to the behaviour of the husband, who according to this model should provide for and care for his wife as Christ does for the Church. That explicit patriarchy is intended here is clear and unavoidable. However, it must be remembered that patriarchy has largely been an unquestioned assumption until recent times – indeed any move from it would have been viewed in antiquity as deeply disruptive, seditious, impious and anti-social. This was being written when patriarchy was a given and not something that required enforcement or theological underpinning.

3.4.22   That the patriarchy is to be interpreted in the light of the Church as Christ's patriarchy is transformative.

If Christ's headship is the model and rationale for the wife's submission to her husband-head, it sets up the question of what type of headship the husband should offer. Indeed, Ephesians itself leaves no room for any male assertion of authority or priority that would be antithetical to the Christ-like, self-denying, service demanded. This role will be addressed further in 5:25-33.

3.4.23   The striking thing in these verses is that the husband and wife relationship is interwoven with an unfolding picture of Christ's relationship with the Church as his bride – of love, self-giving, forgiveness and protection – so that what is said about this divine union may be a model for human marriage, until the two descriptions are finally brought together in vv. 31-32 with its reference to Genesis 2:24. The Christology is profound here and not incidental – it is not simply that the Christ and the Church provide a ready analogy for sacrificial love; it relates to the vision of the exalted Christ and his relationship to the Church as portrayed particularly in 1:20-23.

3.4.24   Following quotation of Gen. 2:24 comes the statement: "This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church" (5:32). Interpreting this verse has proved problematic, and, as we shall see in section 4 below, divisive within the church. Even if we need not translate mysterion as "sacrament", it does imply that human marriage bears witness to the mystery of Christ loving his responsive Church, the two becoming one. It surely suggests that Christ's love for the church is prophetically expressed in male-female union, and it may even imply that the Creator's intention, that a man and woman become one flesh, had the love of Christ for the Church in mind. According to Ephesians then, marriage is much more than a sphere in which discipleship is worked out: it is, and always has been, a proclamation of the eternal gospel of Christ. God never intended his people "to be alone"; however the not-good state, answered in the Creation by marriage, is fulfilled finally in the church's relationship with Christ, the ultimate reality to which marriage points.

3.4.25 So Christology reveals the reason for marriage – but also becomes the model: God's love for, covenant and union with, his people in Christ Jesus. There is an echo here of the theme of the marriage of Yahweh with his people, with unfaithfulness seen as adultery (as discussed above in section 3.3.14-15). As God loves his people, and Christ loves the church, so husbands are to love their wives.

Other epistles
3.4.26 1 Timothy, urging respect of state authority, "that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity" (2:2), wishes church leaders to be respectable and respected members of society, married and able to keep control over their well-ordered households (3:2-12). In particular, women are to be respectable, virtuous and reverent (2:9-10), serious, temperate and faithful (3:11), aware of their place in the hierarchy of household and church (2:11-12). Younger widows are to marry so that they "give the adversary no occasion to revile us" (5:14). 2 Timothy reflects the Greco-Roman concern of female religious gullibility, warning of those who "make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires, who are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth" (3:6-7). In particular, the pastor pours anathema on those who "forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods" (1 Tim 4:3). The concern is that Christianity does not gain a reputation as being socially disruptive of the household – but the potential must always have been there. 1 Peter 3:1-7 blends the concerns of the Pastorals that Christians reflect good order in their domestic conduct, with the charges of Ephesians 5.

3.4.27 In a culture where the husband habitually chose the religious affiliations of the household, wives becoming Christians always had the potential for social conflict. In Roman thought, the social and political order was tied to traditional patterns of religious and social adherence. This may well explain some of the concerns of the authors of the Petrine and Pastoral Epistles – aware that the reputation of the Church may suffer if it is seen as socially disruptive, and in particular disruptive of marriage.

Revelation
3.4.28 Eschatology in marital images is evident in the Book of Revelation. Godlessness is connected to both spiritual and physical fornication and adultery, in a manner familiar from Hosea and other Old Testament prophets. By contrast, there is a reward which comes: "the marriage of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7), for which the bride is now ready. She has been kept pure from all the adulterous inclinations that Babylon had to offer, and is now dressed in clothes that represent the righteous deeds of the saints.

3.4.29 The bridal metaphor is developed further in Revelation 21. In the new Jerusalem, God and his people will finally live together. Jerusalem is prepared as a bride for her husband, but what is less clear in the opening verses is the identity of the bride and the groom. In the verses that follow, it might appear that Jerusalem is rather to be the matrimonial dwelling of God and his people. The metaphor perhaps should not be exhaustively explained. In verses 9-10, it is then revealed that the bride Jerusalem – the Church – is in fact to be the wife of the lamb. What is clear is that these chapters envision God's reign – the perfect communion of God and his people, the absence of darkness, pain, death and mourning – as marriage. It is a deep and far-reaching way of understanding God's loving, redemptive purpose for the world.

Themes: creation, covenant and discipleship
3.4.30 The question of the essential nature of marriage, as found in New Testament perspective, can be addressed in the triple, yet overlapping, terms of creation, covenant and discipleship. Marriage is certainly presented as part of the created order (witness Jesus' quotation of Genesis 2:24 when he speaks about divorce) yet, like all else, cannot be seen other than in Christ for "all things have been created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:16). As for covenant, it also cannot be separated from Christology, but the Christological language of the New Testament is built upon the Old Testament's use of human marriage as a sign of God's covenant relationship with Israel. It is not only that both marriage and the divine covenant are analogous in creating a relationship of choice, which

demands faithfulness; if our reading of Ephesians is correct, marriage is to be seen as a sign of God's covenant love for his people – revealed fully in Christ's love for his Church.

3.4.31   Both marriage and God's covenant are exclusive, faithful, and marked by grace, self-giving and submission – both are bound in a oneness that must go beyond any contract, and cannot be easily dissolved.[27] A jealous demand for faithfulness and sole possession is inherent in marriage (see 1 Cor 7:2-4) – just as God the Jealous God will stand no rivals. Yet, the Covenant with Abraham is not simply the indulgence of two besotted partners – it is intended to be a blessing to all nations – a demonstration of a wider divine love. So marriage too is necessarily broader than a private relationship – it is intended to bring blessing to children, church, community and world.

3.4.32   Developing this analogy is not straightforward. Although mutual self-giving is central to Ephesians 5 the idea of the husband as head of the wife is often taken to imply an inequality between husband and wife. It is presented as analogous to Christ's relationship to the church, which, no matter the sacrificial love involved, is not a relationship of equals. It is a union of difference, in which there must necessarily be a body and a head. Indeed, the traditional interpretation of the Christ-Church analogy and headship within marriage stresses the leadership role of the husband. Furthermore, while the Christ-Church typology places high demands on both partners to the marriage, the analogy suggests that the stronger serve the weaker through sacrificial self-giving. At the same time, while the social reality reflected in Ephesians 5 was that of the husband as the stronger partner, and the wife the weaker vessel, it is not clear if the passage idealises and perpetuates this difference in power.

3.4.33   While some do not find the implications of this analogy to be uncomfortable, others think it possible to draw on such themes without giving particular

significance to male-female difference, or indeed to relative strength and weakness between marriage partners. Indeed some would argue that the mutual self-giving inherent in a covenantal understanding of love as found in Ephesians 5 critiques the concept and practice of hierarchy within marriage. We further explore below in section 5.13-16 questions of equality and differentiation of roles in male-female relations in marriage.

3.4.34   If we see human marriage as a type of God's covenant with Israel, and Christ's marriage to his Church, then the faithfulness and exclusivity of divine love will be seen as essential to the good human marriage, including its sexual bond. As a consequence, all sexual unions outside marriage become a sign of something else. Extra-marital unions miss the mark; they are signs of unfaithfulness, a substitute for the "oneness" God intended, or worse (as in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20) a parody both of marriage, "one flesh", and the oneness with Christ, "one spirit". This also means that the Church cannot in the end escape sexual morality – she must reflect the nature of God's faithful and exclusive love in Christ Jesus, reflecting such in the marriages of her people. Discipleship implies the related practice of discipline.

3.4.35   For at the same time, the New Testament places marriage squarely within the field of discipleship. The key is always that relationships of all kinds are to be governed by identity in Christ. The believer is called to live a life of submission to other believers, serving, forgiving, enduring, sharing, building up each brother and sister in the Lord. All the believers are one body in Christ, suffering and rejoicing together. Christ's love for his Church calls them into mutual love – "love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12) – which is then to be a witness to the world. The intensity of this new community subordinates all other loyalties and identities – here there is no longer male and female, slave and free, Jew and Gentile (Gal 3:28); and he who does not (in comparison) "hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Commitment to Christ is fundamental, and it is expressed in the commitment of Christians to each

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[27]   It must be acknowledged however that in practice, many marriages in history have not been freely chosen by one or both parties, a situation which continues to some extent today.

other. Compared to this the need to marry in order to end aloneness is called into question: an understanding of oneself as fully satisfied in, or even married to, Christ, may lead to a positive regard for the sufficiency of being single. For those who do marry, however, this submission to Christ must equally determine how that marriage is lived out.

3.4.36 Commitment to Christ is fundamental, and expressed in the commitment of the Christians to each other – against this the *need* to marry in order to end aloneness is seen as not the be-all and end-all. An understanding of oneself as fully satisfied in, or even married to, Christ, may lead to a positive regard for being single, and in marriage, to putting Christ first.

3.4.37 This makes marriage between a Christian disciple and an unbeliever a particular problem. Yet, if all marriage testifies to Christ's love for the Church, then the Christian spouse in such a marriage ought so to live as a disciple that his or her marriage bears that witness – not least to the unbelieving partner (1 Cor 7:12-16). Thus love, submission, and service are to be their marks. For the rest, it is permissible to marry "in the Lord" (1 Cor 7:39). It is permissible for a Christian brother, even an apostle to "take about a sister as a wife" (1 Cor 9:5). In such cases, discipleship must govern the choice of partner and the relationship: the understanding of the love of Christ the bridegroom for his Church reveals the nature of the marriage, and calls the Christian brother and sister to embody, live and reflect it in public witness. In a sense, however, all that is commended in marriage is an intensification of that which is demanded within the Church – each submits, loves and sacrifices for the other.

3.5 Old and New Testaments: Summary and Comparison
3.5.1 There are clearly both continuities and discontinuities between Old and New Testament perspectives on marriage. There is clear continuity when the gospels explicitly interpret Genesis 2:24 as an indication of the Creator's intent that marriage be monogamous and for life; and although the New Testament primarily addresses Christian disciples, it understands the call to

marital faithfulness to be universal, and adultery to be a mark of general rebellion against the Creator.

3.5.2 However, whereas the Old Testament uniformly sees marriage and procreation as signs of God's blessing and human virtue, both in the order of Creation and amongst the covenant people, the New Testament moves in a different direction. First, there is a departure from the assumption that marriage is for all – living in the light of Christ may have different implications for disciples. Second, there is almost silence on the issue of procreation – no longer is this a significant means of God fulfilling his promises to his people. Disciples are called into relationship with God in Christ, and with each other, and that relationship stands apart from, and perhaps even in tension with, the 'normal' social order of family life. This differing attitude can in part be explained by how the people of God are to be constituted in the light of the gospel. No longer is belonging seen as genealogical. It is not birth but belief that defines who belongs. It is primarily mission and not procreation that ensures the growth of God's people, although this is not to deny that the divine covenant has always included the children of believers. Further, whereas the Mosaic Law assumes an intention to regulate the social order of Israel as a whole, the New Testament assumes that God's people will exist as a minority differentiated from the wider social order, a differentiation existing even within the same family structure.

3.5.3 The theological motifs governing marriage also change. The New Testament views both Creation, and God's covenant relationship to his people, in the light of Christ. As the Old Testament compares marriage to God's covenant with Israel, the New Testament compares marriage to Christ's relationship with his Church. Furthermore, the theme of an expected marriage between Yahweh and his people is drawn into the New Testament and presented as part of the self-understanding of Jesus. The kingdom of God is compared to a marriage-feast thrown in honour of the coming bridegroom (Matthew 9:14-15, 22:1-2; 25:1, Mark 2:18-20, Luke 5:33-35). Jesus himself is portrayed explicitly as this expected bridegroom, whose return is delayed.

4. Marriage in the Reformed Tradition: definitions and issues

4.1 Just within the Christian world it would be a major study in itself to chart the history of marriage over the last two millennia. There has been both a wide range of views amongst Christian thinkers in East and West and much change and variety in practices. Ian Hazlett's essay in the 1993 Panel on Doctrine Report to the General Assembly gave a flavour of what could be involved and those interested to know more might like to begin there.[28] In this current report we seek simply to draw out in brief how some particular historical definitions and issues have a bearing on the matter in hand – believing in marriage.

Earlier church history

4.2 In the early centuries of the church, it was by no means self-evident that everyone unreservedly believed in marriage. There were Christians who vaunted very highly the ideals of celibacy, and there were heated debates over this. There was explicit engagement with the question of whether sexual intercourse was in itself sinful (and whether it occurred in the Garden of Eden at all). As far as marriage was concerned, these were centuries during which support was given to Biblical themes of fidelity, the bearing of children and tight limitations on divorce but with the church taking almost nothing to do with the conduct of weddings. Teaching on whom one may marry was clearly more problematic when someone had been married before; both theory and practice were tested.

4.3 The sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformers to whom we shall give some more attention inevitably had to take all of this on board. Moreover, through the medieval period, although with roots further back, a number of developments took hold in the Western church, which was increasingly (though never entirely) uniform in its teaching and practice. The celibate calling was still highly honoured and became obligatory for the priesthood. Yet marriage also became highly valued as one of the seven sacraments

of the church.[29] Thus it was brought almost entirely within the jurisdiction of the church. Although it was very much affirmed that marriage was entered into by a husband and wife consenting and consummating their union in the sight of God, a valid marriage required those who had been baptized also to be blessed and recognised by the church at their wedding. Furthermore the church took on itself the authority to determine whether a marriage could in any circumstance be annulled.

John Calvin

4.4 A reconsideration of elements of the theology and practice of marriage took place in the Reformation period. Within the Scottish context, the teaching of John Calvin was undoubtedly significant. He began with marriage being an act of God, a creation ordinance. In many respects, Calvin and the other Reformers maintained the core understanding of marriage as it had been passed down to them from Augustine. In particular, they maintained the teaching of Genesis 2, endorsed by Jesus, that when husband and wife come together, God makes the two into one. For the Reformers, that act of God is what makes marriage something more than just a convenient social custom: instead, marriage is a creation ordinance. In Calvin's view, marriage has been ordained by God and is part of the very fabric of the world as God made it. It is not to be denigrated, in contrast to much traditional Christian thought that celibacy was a higher state. It is God's designated way for men and women to come together and to form families. Having a very strong view of the sinfulness of humanity post-Fall, the Reformers also emphasised the importance of marriage for the structure of civil society and for the stability of human relationships. Drawing on Ephesians 5, the Reformers continued to see the husband as head of the wife.

4.5 The principal change which took place in the theological understanding of marriage at the Reformation

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[28] 1993 General Assembly, 196-215.

[29] The Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible rendered the Greek word "mysterion" in Ephesians 5.32 as "sacramentum" and Augustine in the fifth century picked up on this in his significant theology of marriage.

was the Reformers' departure from teaching that marriage had sacramental status. Though 'instituted by God' and 'a good and holy ordinance of God', marriage is not a sacrament, wrote Calvin.[30] There is no clear institution by Christ. It is not an outward ceremony appointed by God to confirm a promise.[31] Alongside Calvin's theological argument was a clear concern, as he saw it, that all sorts of errors and customs had intruded into the church's understanding and practice.[32]

4.6 This had significant practical implications. In the first instance only the consent of the parties was required, and neither priest, nor church, were necessary for the constitution of a legal marriage. As the Reformed churches developed, these views were somewhat constrained by the need for good order and by the influence of the state in legislating for marriage. Thus, in practice, the vast majority of marriages were performed by Protestant clergy. Nevertheless, in countries which had Reformed churches, much of the jurisdiction in regard of marriage was passed to the state. In terms of what was believed about marriage, Christian teaching would continue for some time to be influential in the public arena, but the debated questions known to the Early Church had been re-opened, around sex, celibacy and divorce. Not surprisingly (again in light of Early Church history), the fault lines between church and state would re-appear in the area of divorce and re-marriage.

4.7 Calvin's teaching on clerical celibacy was that it was against scripture. It was not so much that celibacy or continence was a bad thing for Calvin – far from it in view of the biblical testimony; rather it was not to be imposed on someone when it may not represent their divine calling.[33] With Paul, Calvin affirms that it is better to marry than to allow lust to course untamed.[34] Again the implications were considerable, for the encouragement to clergy to marry – not merely to teach, but to model marriage – was a dramatic shift in itself. Marriage may no longer have been a sacrament, but it could become now "the almost exclusive norm of Christian social existence and Christian covenanted society".[35]

The Scottish Reformed tradition

4.8 Marriage not being fundamental to the faith, it received no mention in the Scots Confession of 1560, but it was certainly present in the First Book of Discipline (also of 1560), designed to shape church, state and discipleship. There was a high view of marriage, in common with what was to be found in Calvin. Divorce was permissible, though only on grounds of adultery, and re-marriage possible only under certain conditions.[36]

4.9 In terms of the subsequent shaping of Christian life and belief, texts from the middle of the seventeenth century have held profound significance for the Church of Scotland. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) devoted Chapter XXIV to Marriage and Divorce.[37] It first stipulated that marriage was between one man and one

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[30]   Calvin, *Institutes* (1559), 4.19.34. The proof texts cited here in respect of the divine institution of marriage are Genesis 2.21-24 and Matthew 19.4-12.

[31]   Calvin, *Institutes* (1559), 4.19.34.

[32]   Calvin, *Institutes* (1559), 4.19.37.

[33]   Calvin, *Institutes* (1559), 2.8.42.

[34]   Calvin, *Institutes* (1559), 2.8.43.

[35]   Ian Hazlett in 1993 General Assembly, 208. The point says only that Christians, including those in ordained ministry, may be married – not that they must be.

[36]   For reference, the *Second Book of Discipline* (1578) only refers to marriage in connection (positively) with pastors or ministers – 'It belongs to him likewise, after lawful proceeding in the matter by the eldership, to solemnize marriage betwixt them that are to be joined therein; and to pronounce the blessing of the Lord upon them that enter in that holy bond in the fear of God,' Chapter 4, paragraph 11 – and (negatively) with doctors of the church – 'But to preach to the people, to minister the sacraments, and to celebrate marriages, pertains not to the doctor, unless he is otherwise orderly called,' Chapter 5, paragraph 6. The text of this Book can be found at http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLs/bod_ch04.htm. For some interesting detail of practice as opposed to theory, see Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in early modern Scotland* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 2002), 267-97.

[37]   The text can be found at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith.

woman, outlawing polygamy and polyandry (XXIV.1). It then set forth the purpose of marriage as being 'for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness' (XXIV.2). The Confession desires that Christians should only marry 'in the Lord' (XXIV.3) but proscribed consanguinity in marriage (XXIV.4). Adultery could give occasion to the dissolution of a marriage contract or a marriage, with the offended party permitted to remarry (XXIV.5), but in such cases there was need for 'a public and orderly course of proceeding' (XXIV.6).

4.10   The Directory for Public Worship (1645), which accompanied the Westminster Confession, included a section on 'The Solemnization of Marriage'.[38] Along with offering the (concise) basis of a liturgy for marriage, this section offered a preamble which included some theological reflection on marriage. The first paragraph is worth quoting in full:

> *Although marriage be no sacrament, nor peculiar to the church of God, but common to mankind, and of public interest in every commonwealth; yet, because such as marry are to marry in the Lord, and have special need of instruction, direction, and exhortation, from the word of God, at their entering into such a new condition, and of the blessing of God upon them therein, we judge it expedient that marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister of the word, that he may accordingly counsel them, and pray for a blessing upon them.*

A number of relevant theological points are compressed in this text. First, it affirms not only that marriage is not a sacrament, but that it is part of the structure of society outwith the church. Second, as a result, it has to assert what might differentiate a Christian marriage – again of those 'in the Lord' – from a 'common' marriage. The answer given embraces two aspects: on entering this new state, they

have special need of 'instruction, direction, and exhortation, from the word of God'; and on living in this new state, they have special need of 'the blessing of God upon them'. Accordingly, the minister is (perhaps respectively) to counsel them and pray for a blessing upon them.

4.11   The Directory continues with more mundane matters concerning marriage: it must be between one man and one woman who are not consanguineous and who have reached a majority, and the need for banns and for consent (where appropriate). Forced marriages are condemned, and 'after marriages' (re-marriages) are recognised. Though marriages are to be public affairs in a church building, it is no longer recommended that they take place as part of the Sunday service – which had been pressed from the mid-sixteenth century.

4.12   Within another century, the stipulation of using a church building had been relaxed. Amongst those who did go to a minister to be married, weddings for all but the upper classes were conducted in the bride's parents' house, or the manse. The practice of weddings in church only returned in the early years of the twentieth century. It was not only that there had been a great deal of church building and, indeed interest, in church interiors; throughout the nineteenth century various others besides Church of Scotland ministers had been authorised to conduct weddings. Perhaps it was partly in competitive response that the number of marriages conducted by Church of Scotland ministers and taking place in churches increased through the twentieth century until the overall number of Christian marriages began to decline in the 1960s.[39]

4.13   As for the disciplinary aspect of Reformed teaching on marriage, Kirk Sessions from their inception took on board a role of supervising sexual behaviour as well as many other matters in church members and parishioners.

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38   The text can be found at http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_standards/index.html?mainframe=/documents/wcf_standards/p369-direct_pub_worship.html.

39   See Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 166-7. For the long history of irregular marriages, i.e. not publicly registered, see Kenneth M. Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage and the Family*, 1850-1914 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980), 46-69.

People were routinely compared before the Session on charges of fornication and adultery. Although we cannot deny the possibility of prurience and hypocrisy through such a practice, it does at least make clear the link (and not only at the level of the origin of terms) between discipleship and discipline. While few ordinary members are brought nowadays before the courts of the church, the sexual behaviour of elders and ministers is still an area of discipline, not only theoretically but in practice. Furthermore, as we shall explore below, elders and ministers offer pastoral care to people around their sexual relationships.

Divorce and re-marriage

4.14   Allowing for the plain truth that a good or a bad marriage is about much more than merely sexual fidelity, nevertheless it is the act of adultery as grounds for divorce which has been consistently to the fore within Christian teaching, based on Jesus' own words. It was when the state began to take a lead in extending permissible grounds, and as social attitudes moved to encourage open discussion of difficulties which in past generations had undoubtedly been to an extent suppressed, that the church had to consider whether to shift its ground. Within living memory there were many years of debate around the question of whether the re-marriage of divorced people could be celebrated in a church and in the context of Christian worship. The General Assembly of 1957 heard a report from a Special Commission on Re-Marriage of Divorced Persons. This found that "there are cases where it is better that the parties should seek separation or divorce."[40] Furthermore, it advocated that ministers be permitted, though not obliged, to re-marry divorced persons, on the grounds of Matthew 19:12 and 1 Corinthians 7:15, "together with the New Testament emphasis on repentance and forgiveness."[41] All such re-marriages, however, should only be undertaken by ministers taking careful cognizance of the parties' life and

character, the circumstances of the divorce, the care of any children, and ecclesiastical questions regarding parties belonging to different denominations, and ensuring there has been sincere repentance on the part of guilty parties. This is essentially the position which holds today. As throughout this overview of church teaching, the degree to which practice has matched theory needs study in itself.

Summary

4.15   A summary of where we have reached through Christian tradition and practice should take stock of the whole ecumenical picture in Scotland today, but undoubtedly most work has been done in recent decades through the Joint Commission on Doctrine connecting the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. There is a broad common understanding that marriage is part of God's created order, given for all times and places; that marriage is for the mutual love of husband and wife, and for the bearing and rearing of children; and that marriage makes public the consent of both parties. Both traditions also recognise that there is a sense in which some marriages are Christian marriages, reflecting the faith and discipleship of husband and wife; and that it is particularly appropriate for Christians to marry in a service of Christian prayer.

4.16   However, the traditions do divide over whether marriage is a sacrament. For the Roman Catholic Church, sacramental teaching is prominent and within a comprehensive theological framework argues that marriage is essentially indissoluble. Those who divorce without ecclesiastical permission face consequences which have an effect on their belonging within the full communion of the church. In the Church of Scotland, a nuanced reassessment of divorce and re-marriage under certain circumstances has been accommodated.[42]

4.17   Not only between the churches but within our own church, there are various other issues of long historical

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[40]   Reports of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1957, p 836.
[41]   Reports of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1957, p. 837.

[42]   See 1993 General Assembly, 223-30 for a fuller account both of what is shared and where the differences lie between our two traditions. See also 1991 General Assembly, 233-54.

pedigree apart from those governed by church law. Therefore, in more recent years the Joint Commission on Doctrine has rightly given attention also to the processes of preparing people for marriage, to liturgy fitting the occasion when a man and a woman may come from different ecclesial traditions and to issues of pastoral care and family support. While Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland understandings on the connection of celibacy and ordained ministry may seriously differ, there has been a shared interest, for example, in the General Assembly's 2009 report on Singleness – for it is not the case that all Christians are or should be married.

4.18   And so it is time for this report also, having dwelt on Scripture and something of the church history of marriage, to offer some reflection on the central questions with which we began, on the Christian understanding of marriage, marriage and its alternatives, and the lasting nature of marriage.

5.   Marriage: a Christian Understanding

5.1   The witness of Scripture, and development in the church's understanding, has led to the broadly-held theological conviction, which we support, that marriage is an aspect of God's good creation for all humanity. It transcends human fallenness, to which its violations bear witness, including wide-scale and persisting experience of domination, cruelty and violence, particularly towards women. Marriage witnesses that all humanity was created for relationship – and is intended for faithful self-giving love. Marriage exists more broadly than in Christian contexts. People have married in highly diverse cultures before the time of Christ, during the Christian centuries, and in what has been termed the post-Christian era. In Scotland, people of different faiths marry, as do many people of no faith. Marriage is not unique to the church, and does not require the blessing or even the witness of the church to be a reality. The Christian understanding of marriage is that it is a universal human institution originating as part of God's created order. There is thus no reason to distinguish fundamentally between different types of marriage.

Christian marriage

5.2   This may give rise to the question: what is meant then by *Christian marriage?* For it cannot at any deep level simply mean a marriage which begins with a church ceremony, or one conducted by a minister. Instead, there seems some sense in understanding Christian marriage as the marriage of Christians, in that Christians, followers of Christ, endeavour by grace through faith to live generous, loving and self-sacrificing lives in marriage as in the other arenas of life, work, family, society and church. Just as our humanity is fully revealed and completed in Christ, so too are our marriages – they are intended to be understood and lived out within Christ's love for his Church. Thus we may say that Christian marriages are the marriages shared by Christian people.

5.3   Discipleship governs all questions of marriage for the Christian – that is, how to live out our marriage, but also whether to marry and whom to marry. Sections 3.3.8-9 and 3.4.16-17 above explored inter-marriage in Old and New Testaments; certainly the New Testament precept that believers marry only those who share their faith is clear. Such teaching has implications for the church's nurture of younger Christians, and reminds us of the need to encourage them to see their discipleship as relevant to all their life choices, not least in whether and whom to marry.

5.4   Nevertheless, we do not assume that Christians are married only to fellow Christians. Marriages where husband and wife do not share the Christian faith (acknowledging that faith may be understood as a spectrum of commitment, and that such a situation is not fixed through time) face a particular set of pressures, since the context of discipleship is not shared by both parties. We affirm that these unions are marriages in every sense, being invited to love, joy, fidelity, and permanence as are all marriages, and that they are the relationship within which some Christian people are called to live out their discipleship and witness to Christ no less than those who are married to Christians. By this witness, loving marriage can be a way to the discovery of the Christian faith (as discussed above on 1 Corinthians 7:12-16; see also 1 Peter 3:1).

5.5 So, despite the blurred edges to the concept, we recognize that Christian marriage is meaningful. Where both husband and wife are Christian, the profound mutual, covenantal dimension for their discipleship in marriage is clear, and for Christians married to non-Christians, there is a straightforward sense that it is as followers of Christ that they live out their marriages. While marriage makes moral demands on all husbands and wives, the Christian spouse is called to behave in marriage not only as a spouse, but as a disciple of Christ.

Love in marriage

5.6 What is the character of love within marriage? Here we do well to recall the connection Scripture makes between covenantal divine love for Israel, and for the church, and human love for each other in marriage. Love in marriage should be faithful, being trustworthy to each other and trusting each other in turn, not merely in terms of sexual fidelity, but in the many other areas of life requiring trust: matters of honesty and integrity, respect and loyalty. Love in marriage should be exclusive, one flesh, "forsaking all others". Love in marriage should be generous, directed to another, seeking the good of the other, submitting one's own desires to those of the other.

5.7 There is an exclusivity to the love which wives and husbands share, which marks an obvious difference with the love shown to parents, children, siblings or friends. Yet married love still bears a close resemblance to Christian love in general. Thus the famous chapter in 1 Corinthians 13, so often used in weddings, does not emerge from a particular concern on Paul's part about *married* love, yet the character of love as he describes between Christians in the church seems apt for husbands and wives also. In other words, loving in marriage is akin to and indeed a form of loving our neighbour as Christ's disciples. Given the significance of marriage for the lives of those who marry, in terms of where we live, whom we call our family, the career we may have and the way we spend our time, marriage and parenthood cannot but be the contexts in which many people live out their Christian calling. Marriage is not the means of salvation from God, but it is as married (or not)

that we encounter the God who saves, and the lived reality of that marital status may have a profound effect on how we encounter and respond to God.

5.8 So, as we saw above through New Testament teaching, marriage for Christians is part of the all-encompassing life of discipleship. Indeed, discipleship is in some ways more fundamental to the Christian life than marriage. As people commit themselves to Christ, there are many aspects of their discipleship which grow and deepen over time. Their experience of worship and prayer develops. They share their faith in their character, actions and words, witnessing to the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ. They serve God in the world, loving neighbour and enemy, caring self-sacrificially for the vulnerable. These are fundamental characteristics, indeed the vocation of Christians, married or not. For those who are married, it is not that their commitment to a spouse precludes or dilutes their commitment to Christ; rather, their discipleship informs and guides their married life. Husbands and wives are called to witness to the love of God with each other, serve Christ in each other, and may find their life of worship and prayer deepened through doing so together. If parents, they are further called to the loving Christian nurture of their children as part of God's covenant people.

5.9 The characteristics of love in marriage, then, are found to a greater or lesser extent in the frailties of all human living and loving. Marriages, perhaps more than any other relationships, do not exist in idealised form: perhaps their very intimacy involves the coming together of our better and worse impulses, intentions and behaviour. Tragically, throughout history until the present time, marriage has been experienced by many people, and overwhelmingly by women – and including seemingly Christian households – as a place of domination, hardship, cruelty (physical, mental and sexual) and violence. Again marriage reflects the divine-human relationship in this respect: as we fail in our discipleship, and love our neighbour but imperfectly, God offers forgiveness, the chance for a remaking of our relationship with him, the restoring of our friendship. So too with marriage:

every good marriage requires husbands and wives to forgive each other, to be reconciled and find a deeper commitment, sometimes after appalling breaches of trust, faithfulness and commitment, sexually and in other ways. Nevertheless, we recognise below in section 7 that there may be marriages where the breach of trust is so overwhelming that separation and divorce is the path that can best give safety and healing, including for children. Yet even in marriages without obvious infidelity, the inevitable hurts of life in partnership require forgiveness and reconciliation, not seven times but seventy times seven, that is, without cease. The beauty of marriage is to offer a lifelong pilgrimage to those to whom it is given. The depths of the other, and the depths of the self, bear lifelong exploration, for better, for worse. Indeed, in this pilgrimage which married people undertake, their relationship does not only reveal to them the nature of human love, but can point to the love of God, patient, long-suffering, forgiving, faithful: "No one has seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12).

5.10 As with an earthly pilgrimage, marriage changes people. Living with another, sharing a home, a bathroom, a bed, children and loss, hope and life, inevitably affects the single people who enter the estate. Such change can be good: marriage, with its close moral examination, has been described as an ascetic practice: it is a training for the soul. There is no hiding-place in a marriage, and so there is every opportunity to grow in selflessness, kindness and a forgiving spirit. Sometimes, as our survey reports, couples choose to celebrate a stage in their marriage with services of thanksgiving with re-affirmation of vows, occasionally after difficulties. Nevertheless, not all grow healthy and strong in marriage's soil. For some it can be a confining, energy-sapping relationship, in which character becomes narrower, sad or bitter. Their marriage can lessen some people, shrink them.

5.11 Yet many people would testify to the goodness of marriage and the benefits it gives. They speak of companionship over years, decades, of sharing a life with one supreme friend, of enjoying what is said and done together, of facing difficulties, losses and death together, drawing on shared experience and memory. They speak of the pleasure of intimacy, of passion, of sex. They speak of the joy of bearing and rearing children together, sending them into life and maturity, and enjoying the fruits of their children's lives. They speak of teamwork in assigning, often by accident, different roles in running a household and managing a family together. When widowed, or separated in other ways, they speak of a deep loneliness without the one who has shared their life in countless ways, large and small.

5.12 The good of marriage is even more widely dispersed than contentment of the couple. A good marriage may bring benefits to any children born to and reared by the couple, and to grandchildren. Within the wider family, a happy marriage can offer support to siblings and others. Certainly, difficulties, separation and divorce can be destabilising not merely to offspring, but within the wider family as a whole, perhaps especially for grandparents who can lose partial or even complete contact with their grandchildren. Indeed, good marriages serve society more generally, in providing emotional stability to the partners, and family, and in being a source of friendship to others. A strong marriage can allow each party to focus not only inwardly but on the outside world, in friendship, love and peace.[43] Building on our discussion of New Testament insights, it can be said that a good marriage itself serves the Kingdom of God, by being a home from which Christians can, in freedom and security, live as Christian disciples in loving God, neighbour and enemy.

Husbands and wives
5.13 As both the 1994 report of the Panel on Doctrine, and the 2009 report on Being Single pointed out, marriage has been a central focus for discussion on relationships between the sexes. Couples who marry in Scotland today

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43 Note the particular contribution single people can bring to other individuals, their families and society as a whole – see "Being Single: in Church and Society," 2009 General Assembly, 6.4-5.

do so with a formal equality enshrined in law, developed gradually through a long process of change in society and legislation. We are thankfully more honest nowadays both about playing out gender differences and the dangers when one asserts domination over another. There can be no justification for any approach which sees women as inferior to men, or their property, or to be used by and for men for their own interests. It is not part of Christian understanding that women are principally defined in terms of their relationship to men.

5.14 That equality of male and female is a created reality has clear support from Scripture, for example in Genesis 1:27 in which the creation of humanity, male and female, is in the image of God. Equality is further deepened in terms of redemption in Galatians 3:28-29, in which there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female, "for all of you are one in Christ." The interpretation of Ephesians 5 in sections 3.4.18-22, 1.4.31-32 above makes clear the equal value husband and wife have, and the mutual love which each should expect from the other. Such a belief in gender equality is enshrined also within the law and teaching of the Church of Scotland.

5.15 Related to this discussion of equality are the roles and responsibilities of the sexes in marriage. Given the equality of male and female, husbands and wives are called to live and act with mutual respect, ensuring that each partner's voice be heard, that no partner is 'the boss' by virtue of gender, and that work be shared with a sense of fairness. The various burdens and responsibilities in the family household, including salaried work, housework and the care of children will of course be distributed differently in every home: couples find their own balance and share of household and family tasks. Nevertheless, it may be noted that household burdens still tend to fall disproportionately on women. Having children remains a factor in increasing women's workload within the home and hampering the progress of their career. And although men do more than their fathers' generation and before, a variety of surveys since 2000 have found that men do roughly half as much housework (including cleaning, cooking, childcare, pet

care, household maintenance and gardening) as their female partners who are themselves in paid employment.[44]

5.16 A Christian understanding of marriage today must be able to embrace a critique of oppressive patriarchal approaches as dependent on cultural norms which are not relevant to 21st century Scotland and which have rightly been set aside in Church of Scotland law and practice, while recognising that there are different approaches to the interpretation of scriptural passages on the roles of men and women, and husbands and wives. Nevertheless, it is a clear outcome of Christian reflection that there is a created equality of male and female, and that relationship of husbands and wives should be characterised by love, loyalty and trust, self-giving, faithful and exclusive, by mutuality in decision-making, with a fair division of work when seen both within and beyond the home.

Ministry around marriage

5.17 A Christian understanding of marriage also informs a further set of questions as to the church's role in marriage, in preparation, the wedding ceremony and pastoral support. When a couple marry in a church, or in a ceremony conducted by a minister elsewhere, their marriage begins in the context of the Christian understanding of marriage, of faith, prayer and pastoral support. This opens up more than the church being a venue and backdrop for the drama of the couple's love, commitment and gathering of family and friends to witness their marriage. In preparing couples for marriage, the church through its ministers and others involved in marriage preparation has the opportunity of accompanying couples in their deepening and declaration of commitment. This involves listening to the couple's story, helping them frame the liturgy in an appropriate way, and sharing with them something of the Christian understanding of marriage portrayed in this report: reflective of God's love, self-giving, unconditional, ready to forgive; part of a broader life of faith and discipleship.[45]

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[44] See www.sociology.org.uk/as4fm2.doc
[45] In our survey, respondents reported what they considered

5.18   What happens then in the wedding service? It has already been mentioned that Scripture is largely silent on marriage liturgy and ceremony, and that the church in the early centuries took nothing to do with inaugurating marriage. Good liturgy therefore follows on the church's belief in marriage. Part of the wedding process is constrained by legal requirements, other parts are merely social conventions, though these can be significant for the couple and, as such, become part of a living liturgy. Nonetheless, the church's role in a marriage is to acknowledge both the individuals and the entity of the couple, and to support their endeavour to live faithfully by praying for grace at the heart of their covenant. This context is found in prayer, hymns and music, the reading and preaching of Scripture.

5.19   The marriage ceremony itself consists in a Christian explanation of marriage and the formal taking of vows. This section is both practical and personal. Vows must be legal, making a public declaration of the wish of both parties to contract the marriage. They should be heard and formally witnessed. It is also important that within the church we have made clear what we expect as the standard of marriage, i.e. that which goes beyond a sense of romantic love, but finds expression in physical love, faithful conduct, in kindness and in comfort. Using vows designed to cover changes of condition and circumstances, in a way that only death can end, is intentional. These promises convey an unconditional love, reflecting the unconditional love of God for his people. The marriage, promised by God to be a source of blessing, cannot be broken because of changes

in circumstances. The declaration of marriage makes clear this new social reality.

5.20   Some issues may be ill-reflected in traditional liturgies.[46] Fewer and fewer couples marry as virgins, and all but a few are sexually experienced with each other: should a marriage service state that only now do they cleave together and become one? When a couple lives together, the choice of liturgy could recognise that this is a couple whose relationship has already come so far, though of course in marriage there is a long pilgrimage still ahead. If a couple already has children, their own and/or from previous relationships, might the liturgy take recognition of this reality? If one or both of the couple has been divorced, there can be an air of unreality about a service which makes no reference to this, and by such silence, implies that the couple spring into marriage without any history. Some argue that the service could and should reflect the unfulfilled hopes of previous marriages and relationships. It is obvious that such words require sensitivity, so as not to overwhelm the new hopes expressed in the wedding. Patterns of relationship are increasingly complex, and the church's involvement with couples as they marry is correspondingly less straightforward than before. Nevertheless, whatever flexibilities there may be within the liturgical freedom we enjoy in the Church of Scotland, it still matters that every wedding affirms the same basic commitment of love, loyalty and trust, exclusive and faithful, for as long as the couple shall both live.

5.21   Often the church's involvement with the couple ends as the confetti blows away. The newlyweds rarely or never worship in the church; the church rarely or never makes pastoral contact with the couple. According to our survey, only a small minority of respondents maintain pastoral care with couples following the wedding.[47] It

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essential in discussing with couples when preparing them for marriage. Nearly half the respondents consider discussing why the couple want to be married as absolutely essential, and 35% said that discussion of the Christian faith and the couple's relationship to it to be absolutely essential. Other subjects which more respondents than not thought to be essential are: the history of the couple's relationship, the problems they tend to face, and dealing with conflict. By contrast a majority of respondents did not think it essential to discuss the following areas with couples: money, sex and having children. It was noted that a number of ministers did not take this opportunity to explore serious issues in marriage with couples who have approached the church for their wedding.

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46   Our survey revealed a huge variety in liturgical practice: respondents use different editions of Common Order, different orders and combinations of orders, different sources entirely, and no particular source.

47   Although nearly a third of respondents would sometimes visit couples, 49% would never or seldom visit them, and 64% would

need not be so: if a marriage is in the context of prayer, in a service which emphasises our common identity as Christ's disciples, then it is to be hoped that it is open to ongoing church life and pastoral care. The survey reveals some intriguing initiatives: an annual service for recently married couples (sometimes on St Valentine's Day), a cheese and wine event, telephone calls, email, facebook contact, and invitation to enquirers' groups.

Summary

5.22 To conclude this section: while marriage is a near universal phenomenon in human society, there is a distinctive approach to marriage which belongs to the Christian faith. This is both in response to and reflects upon God in his creative and covenantal love, and is the heart of the reason why and how Christians believe in marriage, informing how and when we understand marriage as Christian marriage, the nature of love in marriage, the relationship between husband and wife, and the place of the church with regard to marriage. Yet such a distinctive approach is articulated in the context of a number of alternatives to marriage, and public debate as to the partial re-definition of marriage. To this context we now turn in the second broad strand of issues facing marriage today.

6.   Marriage and its alternatives

6.1 Why do people get married? A comprehensive answer to this question has changed over time. Concerns which were uppermost in the past, such as the preservation and passing of wealth, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children, and the status of women as the responsibility (and even the possession) of men, play less of a role today. Marriage in contemporary Scotland for most people is not so much a necessity as a choice, a way of relating as a couple and family amongst other options, such as living together as partners, or being single (not always chosen), or less clearly defined patterns of relationship.[48] Couples cite a number of reasons to get

married: to manifest their commitment to each other, and declare it to the world; to take 'the next step' in their ongoing relationship; to provide a secure and stable environment in which to bring up children. For others, there is the conviction that only marriage is the proper form of committed life-partnership, and the only proper context for sexual intercourse.

Marriage and partnership

6.2 Many people do not get married, but live in partnerships which although they bear similar hallmarks – life-long, committed, imperfect, forgiving, and which end only with death – never become marriages. Yet many cohabiting relationships do become marriages: for many couples, living together for a year or a few years is something of a staging-post, or even testing ground for the ultimate aim – marriage. To marry before living together would seem rash or impulsive to many. Furthermore, weddings are expensive (though they need not be), and couples often feel they need to save money for months or even years in order to afford it.

6.3 Long-term, faithful relationships which are not legal marriages are nowadays a common feature of the relationships landscape. Many couples live together without being formally married. Sometimes there is an impediment to their getting married, such as that one partner is still legally married to someone else. Yet very often, the couple choose not to get married. They may see no need to be married in order to be committed to each other or convinced of their commitment; they may actively reject marriage on grounds of political or anti-religious conviction; they may fear that marriage will alter the strength of their relationship, jinx what they have; or they may recognise that their commitment has a provisionality which will not bear the weight of a publicly witnessed and legal marriage.

6.4 Historically the church both before and after the Reformation sought to regularise marriage within

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never or seldom make written contact.
48   See "Being Single: in Church and Society", General Assembly 2009, 4/48-102, for a sustained exploration of being single as an

alternative to marriage.

its own terms of discipline, and moreover readily saw those living together outside marriage as in disordered relationships and guilty of fornication (or living in sin – a term some couples now sometimes use, almost defiantly, of themselves). At the same time, however, there was a long pedigree of so-called "irregular" marriages – outwith regular church proceedings – which were a social reality commanding acceptance even into modern times in which legal registration processes have become increasingly formalised.[49]

6.5   Although there is now no such thing as informal or "common law" marriage in Scots Law, the existence of so many stable and committed couples raises the question of what precisely is the significance of a wedding ceremony or the legal description of a relationship as a "marriage". Some long-term partnerships share the characteristics of a good marriage; aside from law and/or a form of prayer, they may involve a couple covenanting to live together in a faithful, life-long, exclusive union, open to the bearing and rearing of children together, and with partners fully recognised by friends and family. Therefore ministers may wonder whether a couple approaching the church for marriage are not already married in every significant sense save public ceremony. Is the correct pastoral response to a committed couple, who have perhaps been together for twenty years, to encourage them to marry, or to regard them as already married – and encourage them to recognise and publicly celebrate it?

6.6   That said, such relationships do lack the formal institution, name and witnessing of a marriage ceremony. They are, in a society where marriage is still (just) the norm, outside that norm. Even though the law increasingly treats committed partners as husband and wife, they are not legally so. Marriage may be dismissed as a piece of paper, which is signed as part of the ceremony, but it is much more: it is the ongoing witness of and to the promises made before others, and in a Christian ceremony, before God and

congregation. Moreover, for many stable couples, despite their commitment, there is still a provisionality about their partnership which is different from the commitment of marriage, which is seen as more permanent and secure. These couples may themselves witness that there comes a time when they feel a need to make something permanent which has been provisional, to realise the end (as the telos – the goal) of their relationship in marriage. A marriage ceremony enacts and declares explicitly the nature of a couple's commitment: to unconditional love, to faithfulness, to permanence – to one other. The alternatives to formal marriage may share these commitments, often to a great extent, but only implicitly.

Same-sex marriage

6.7   So far, our discussion has proceeded on the basis of the definition of marriage as a legally attested union of one man and one woman. There are the beginnings of debate, however, both in the church and society more widely, as to whether there can be same-sex marriage. The question was being consulted on in Scotland as this report was being prepared. Furthermore, the Church of Scotland appointed a Theological Commission in 2011 part of whose remit is "issues around same-sex relationships, civil partnerships and marriage." In the consultation carried out in 2010 by the Special Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry, 19.4% of elders and 17.5% of Presbytery members who participated felt their own view was summarised fairly and accurately by the statement: "The Christian practice of marriage should be extended to include exclusive, committed same-sex relationships which are intended to be life-long".[50] In discussing this statement in preparation for this report, members of the Working Group expressed a number of different positions, and, as with the church as a whole, could not come to a final agreement. We acknowledge

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[49]   Kenneth M. Boyd, Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage and Family, 1850-1914, 46-63.

[50]   Report of the Special Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry, 2011 General Assembly, 23/7-8. Note that while the focus of the Special Commission's work was ministers in same-sex relationships, issues such as attitudes to homosexuality more generally were also addressed.

that the church is in a process of discernment on this question, whose outcome is far from clear. The theological parameters for this process can be outlined briefly.

6.8 Is it possible to extend – or radically alter – the definition of marriage? Clearly the many people in the church who do not think same-sex sexual activity is ever an appropriate form of behaviour will think it wrong for marriage to be extended to same-sex couples. There are also many in the church who, while open to same-sex couples living in sexual partnership, do not feel that marriage is the right context for or description of their relationship. To open the question of same-sex marriage is nothing but novel. Christian marriage has always been between one man and one woman and that definition, grounded in the creation narrative of Genesis and reiterated by Jesus, and resonating in the Biblical language of covenant, is explicitly upheld in church confessions and widespread ecumenical practice; in the Church of Scotland it has been supported, as we have shown above in section 4, within texts from the Reformation up to the present day.

6.9 Whether the Scottish Parliament will move to legislate in favour of same-sex marriages, or even to give encouragement to there being potentially a religious element within what in 2004 was strictly speaking to be a "civil" partnership, is yet to be seen. In its response to the Consultation exercise on these matters in late 2011, the Church of Scotland both stated its current traditional position and defended the principles of religious freedom enshrined not least in the 1921 Church of Scotland Act. Even if same-sex marriage were to be allowed under law, the church would see itself to be under no obligation to solemnise such marriages, worship and its conduct being a matter solely of spiritual jurisdiction.

6.10 Insofar as the Working Group has taken up the question, therefore, there is agreement on how extensive the ramifications would be of a shift in the direction of same-sex marriage. Certainly there are those who advance arguments in favour of its consideration, bringing into the discussion of exclusive, lifelong same-sex relationships

thoughts that a revised covenantal theology would support a redefinition of marriage, but at the very least this asks for sustained reflection and time for reception within the life of the church. Given the contours of Biblical and church theology presented within this report on "Believing in marriage", it is self-evident that further substantial work would be required to examine the underpinning and implications of turning in this new direction.

6.11 Summarising the discussion in this section, marriage in Christian understanding remains something which differs from other forms of heterosexual partnership, although in the immense range of levels of commitment found in such partnerships there are strong arguments to see some as marriage-like relationships, albeit without explicit declaration. Furthermore, Scripture, church practice and theological reflection has defined marriage as being between men and women – and any move to regarding same-sex marriage as a legitimate Christian understanding would be a fundamental shift. We now turn to a final set of questions about the permanence of marriage, in the light of contemporary patterns of separation, divorce and series of relationships.

7.   The Lasting Nature of Marriage

7.1 For all that Scripture allows for the possibility of divorce, it does so as a provision which reflects its distance from the nature and essence of marriage – joined by God, indissoluble, marked by unconditional commitment. Church tradition worked fitfully towards articulating and regulating for such indissolubility, before the Reformation again opened up the limited possibility of divorce and re-marriage.

7.2 Today, we are more aware than ever that marriage is a risk. We sense that in marriage comes some of the deepest joy life affords, but we are also aware of its uncertainty. The future is unknown; the events of life remain unlived; our characters continue to be formed; our love comes mixed with hurt; while there can be intense happiness it can be fleeting; children bring change to our relationships; and the shape of our relationships as well as our bodies changes

over years. Whether or not a society offers the possibility of divorce, marriage is uncertain: whether and whom to marry, and questions around child-bearing are probably the most important decisions we make in life on the human plane. Marriage involves making and living the promise of unwavering commitment and submission and self-sacrifice, with the risk of heartbreak and disappointment, yet with the constant hope of blessing and happiness.

Marriage and divorce

7.3   We saw above in section 1.4 the current figures for divorce in Scotland: roughly a third as many as marriages entered in 2010. How many current marriages will end in divorce is difficult to establish with any certainty: after exponential growth of divorce in the 1970s in Scotland, figures for marriages and divorces have been fairly stable over the past 20-30 years. If this trend continues, it would appear that approximately one-third of marriages entered since the 1980s will end in divorce. This report does not have the space to analyse in detail the reasons for this rise in divorce from negligible numbers before the First World War, but the following causes can perhaps be adduced: easier divorce laws; economic independence of women; the rise of secularism; the lack of stigma. It may also be suggested that while the rates for divorce have risen, so also have people's expectations of marriage. Life for many couples is somewhat more atomised than before: they live further from their own parents and wider family; their friends are scattered across the country or the globe; their lives revolve around work with long hours and long commutes; their children bring their own demands. Sexual dissatisfaction and financial disharmony are more commonly expressed. Contemporary couples often find that their husband or wife has to fulfil a number of roles which traditionally they did not need to: that of whole family in one person, best friend, salaried worker (a relatively new role for wives). Given this plethora of roles, some couples find their partner wanting in one or more: over time, one or both feel they no longer need to be in this marriage: they "drift apart" as is often said. This rise in divorce affects the church too, as part of society: separation and divorce are a reality for a great many people within the church. Church members, elders and ministers are separated and divorced, and barely a family throughout society, and within the church, remains untouched by marital breakdown.

7.4   There is no theological reason why marriage should be easy. Although it is given by God for the good of individuals, families and society as a whole, marriage, as with all of creation, is affected by sin. Individuals, prone to self-centredness, hurt those close to them, and damage their spouses. Children of all ages, and the wider family, through their actions and characters, their claims on our love, place stress on the marital bond. Society more widely provides a context which can collude with our selfish impulses, and undermine the marital union, in its promotion of self-fulfilment for all individuals, extending consumerism beyond material products and services into our sexual and marital lives. Marriage may participate in the redemptive act of Christ but it is as imperfect, more or less broken people that the married participate.

7.5   Given the fragility of all human relationships, it is unsurprising that many marriages are undermined by temptations of many kinds. Since the first couple, temptations have existed. Marriages are subject to these in countless ways, and breakdown of love, loyalty and trust can easily follow from yielding to temptation. Sex is the obvious case, but it is not the only example of infidelity. People can become intimate with another not their spouse in a way which brings a third into the marriage: a family member, a friend, work, a hobby. The mid-life crisis may be a cliché without evidential foundation, but advancing years and fear of encroaching old age can cause a reassessment of one's marriage, partner and self. For some, it is a fast car; for others a desire to become young in the presence of a flatteringly young lover.

7.6   As for sexual infidelity, adultery is named in the seventh commandment, and its importance is underscored by Jesus when allowing divorce and re-marriage following adultery (according to Matthew), and in admonishing the woman caught in adultery – "Go your way, and from now on do not

sin again" (John 8:11). We saw that for Paul, sexual immorality for the Christian is essentially unfaithfulness to Christ. Clearly adultery is for many the ultimate act of unfaithfulness, and reconciliation, if it happens at all, can only be a slow and difficult journey. While society as a whole fastens on there being a guilty party, as does the Church of Scotland in considering applications from divorced people to re-marry in the church, it is not always so clear-cut in reality. Sexual unfaithfulness can be a symptom of marital malaise rather than the single cause. Such malaise may be manifested in unhappiness, in conflict, in lack of sexual expression long before an actual act of adultery. "In cases of desertion in marriage, it is always difficult to say who is the deserter" suggests Muriel Spark in *The Only Problem*.[51] Although the principles of Christian marriage may be clear, that we should reflect the faithfulness and constancy of God to humanity in our human relations one with another, the reality can be muddy. While certainly not condoning adulterous liaisons, a sensitive pastoral response should be commended. Rather than rush to judgment, a Christian response to marital breakdown, whether caused in part by sexual unfaithfulness or not, is to explore the reality of the couple's situation, to find a space for honesty and truth-telling, and to discover room for the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation. None of this is to deny the deep hurts that can be occasioned within marriage, or to declare that a cheap forgiveness will make all things right. Reconciliation within marriage is rarely the work of a moment.

7.7 The church has long recognised that there is a case for divorce. In a situation of infidelity, of adultery, the church has considered it acceptable for the 'wronged' party to seek a divorce, reckoning that the adulterer has broken the marriage rendering it finished by his or her act of unfaithfulness. Cases of abuse, violence and other grave breaches of trust have also been cited by the church as legitimate grounds for divorce,[52] which may even be seen as the only appropriate way into safety, wholeness and healing.

7.8 Is here perhaps, however, also a case for divorce even when there is no actual adultery, no desertion, no history of violent or abusive behaviour, but simply in the case when love comes to an end, when a couple, as pastors often hear, grow apart? Is it not possible to see that when a couple feel no love for each other, and increasingly find the practice of love, of care to be an empty and arid performance, the marriage has in reality come to an end? Does commitment, intended in all seriousness in marital vows, and of crucial importance when children are young, need in every case to be held to through the long years of the different stages of our lives? When love breaks down, perhaps it is desirable to loose the parties to the marriage. When all that is left is a faint watermark of love, it may be better to allow the possibility of fresh love to be painted, in new relationships. Indeed, unhappy marriages can be awful places, damaging for one or both parties and traumatic for children. To many separated and divorced people, it feels like they have escaped from a place of torture.

7.9 Making such a case would go beyond New Testament warrant: as we saw above Jesus' teaching allows divorce only in certain prescribed cases. Furthermore, it would display a church depending on a contract-model for marriage rather than the richer understanding of creation and covenant explored above. As is clear from Scripture, and in theological reflection and church practice, love in marriage is not a conditional love. It is not a promise to be loving, loyal and trusting for as long as the other party is. It is not a commitment for as long as I feel like it, or as long as you deserve it. It is an unconditional commitment, for better, for worse.

7.10 As we saw above in discussion of Ephesians 5, all human relationships amongst those who live to the Lord are to be cast in the mould of mutual submission. Those who follow Christ are called to bring all their relationships under the authority of Christ. Indeed, Christ's love, shown in his giving himself for those he loved, is the model of our own love, in marriage. In this understanding, marriage is not to be left because difficulties arise. Rather, it is in the stresses and problems of marriage that the discipleship

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[51] Muriel Spark, *The Only Problem* (London: Grafton, 1985), p. 166.

[52] See, *eg*, Report of the Special Committee on the Re-Marriage of Divorced Persons, Reports of the General Assembly, 1957, pp. 835-6.

of Christians is often brought most clearly to light. Can the Christian husband and wife continue to love when the one to whom they made promises seems a different person, impossible to love? Marriage is a commitment of and to security and permanence: it is not a temporary commitment which can be replaced by separation and divorce as simply the next stage in the relationship's journey. Divorce is the breaking of that commitment, a severing of the bond. It is always a matter of profound regret, and nothing can be the same again. It is a sign of broken promises, of the contingency of all life, of the effects of sin within creation and our human relationships. There are profound consequences for the couple, any children in the marriage, their wider family and society as a whole. Christian pastors will be aware of the enormous consequences for people's lives when contact between parents and children is lessened or lost entirely. However, as with all in life, damaged and distorted by sin, we trust that God will not withhold his forgiving grace from those who seek it, in humility and faith.

7.11   In the marriage service, Christian commitment to the permanence of the union is expressed in the words of Jesus, "Those whom God has joined together, no one must separate" (Mark 10:9), said as the final element in the declaration of marriage. The use of this sentence may be as a warning to guests not to divide the couple from each other. Yet it may also give rise to uncomfortable thoughts among any guests whose own marriages have been followed by separation. Undoubtedly the sense of failure that many feel at the end of their marriage is compounded by the sense that they have failed God (who joined them together), and some may well feel that they have put themselves beyond the love of God or community of the church.

7.12   Indeed, the church may often be seen by those who are breaking up, separated or divorced as disapproving of them and their situation; of church-going couples, one or both may avoid the church during and beyond the time of separation. It is the experience of many elders and ministers that it is only when the couple has separated and

the marriage appears to be over that anyone knows – and the survey confirms this. Perhaps the church is seen as helpful only when embarking on marriage, in conferring blessing, and not in saving the marriage, in the midst of real difficulties. Yet there is clearly a role for pastors in caring for couples (and their families) whose marriages are struggling: in listening, guiding conversation, and referring to experienced counsellors. An imaginative church could draw on or develop further resources for helping couples: sermons, seminars and discussion groups on marriage; members specifically trained in pastoral care of couples; mentors for the married; a public recognition that problems in marriage do not make one a bad person or a failed Christian. In the wake of separation or divorce, many people are affected by a range of feelings – rejection by their spouse and/or other people, anger, guilt, relief, regret. It is good if the church through sensitive pastoral care can help them feel included in the love of God as they piece together their lives, and work through issues of guilt, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

7.13   The possibility of a Church of Scotland liturgy for separation and divorce is occasionally mentioned. When the National Youth Assembly discussed marriage in 2011, it included as part of its deliverance the following item: "The National Youth Assembly encourages the Marriage Report Working Group to seriously consider the drafting of liturgy to mark the end of relationships." We hesitate to support the drafting of such a liturgy. First, the Church cannot be assumed to concur with every divorce legally granted. Second, conducting such a service of separation goes too near conferring blessing on the human ending of a marriage, which runs counter to the conviction that the commitment to marry is unconditional, and that the marriage vows are as permanent as they possibly can be. This said, certainly Christians, ministers included, should be prayerful and supportive of anyone going through the traumas of a family unit breaking up.

Divorce and re-marriage
7.14   The Church of Scotland has allowed re-marriage of divorcees by its ministers for over 50 years, as we saw

above in section 4.14. While recognising that marriage involves promises to love unconditionally, faithfully and permanently, the church does not adhere to the ecclesiastical indissolubility of marriage bound up with a sacramental understanding of the union. Nevertheless, for the church, the re-marriage of divorcees has to be seen as pastorally different from the marriage of a couple who make their vows for the first time. This is a commitment which follows a prior promise of unconditional love, loyalty and trust. While such provision for re-marriage of divorced people was hedged around with qualifications and processes to be undertaken in the relevant Presbytery, it has over the years become more liberally applied. Some ministers exercise their right not to conduct such marriages, but many more are prepared to do so. It is hoped that in such cases, marriage preparation involves a sincere and substantial engagement with the past, including the reasons why the former marriage (or marriages, and indeed, other long-term committed partnerships, if appropriate) came to an end. The 1957 Report of the Special Committee on the Re-marriage of Divorced Persons made much of the need for repentance on the part of divorced persons, where guilt has existed.53 Indeed, if the church is to solemnise the re-marriage of divorcees (as it does), it can only be in the light of our understanding of the grace of God at work in forgiveness, and renewed commitment to better living. While marriage may in essence be permanent and secure, in reality it is for many insecure and broken off – and the church cannot but respond with love, patience, integrity and compassion.

7.15 In short: in Christian understanding there is a presumption that marriage is permanent, that its love is unconditional, that its commitment is secure. Separation and divorce are to be regretted; and those involved require the healing and forgiving love of God regardless of their particular circumstances. The church can be a source of help as people journey through such times; our denomination's approach to the re-marriage of divorcees

reflects our commitment both to the presupposition that marriage is permanent and to our trust in the forgiving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

8. Conclusion: Believing in marriage

8.1 Drawing together the strands explored above, there are clearly a number of ways in which marriage is good. It is a form of partnership between men and women which exists immensely widely in time and space in human societies, and has been found to be a fruitful way of supporting intimacy, love and companionship, and of ordering sexual relationships, the bearing and rearing of children, the organisation of families, and relationships within the community. It is present throughout Scripture, and in the Old Testament is commended in foundational texts, exemplified in a wide variety of couples, revealing the blessings and imperfections of married life, and related to the covenant between God and Israel. It is further explored in the New Testament as a context, important for many people, in which their lives as disciples of Christ are played out. Indeed, in some significant passages, marriage is seen as an image of the covenantal relationship between Christ and the church, and is a central, joyful image for the reign of God. We have seen that despite the rise of secularism, availability of divorce and change in moral norms, marriage remains a popular choice for people in Scotland, very often after a period of living together. Couples still seek the public declaration and status of marriage, even though sexual intimacy, companionship, childrearing and family life do not depend on being married.

8.2 Our own deliberations have focused on the central possibilities and challenges in marriage today. Despite the impermanence of many marriages, we assert that marriage is given in creation as a life-long union in which husband and wife become one flesh. Marital love, seen covenantally, displays the hallmarks of faithfulness, exclusivity, self-giving and forgiveness, and belongs for Christians to their life of discipleship, depending on the help of the Spirit. Separation and divorce, though on occasion necessary pastoral provisions, remain matters

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53 Report of the Special Committee on the Re-Marriage of Divorced Persons, Reports of the General Assembly, 1957, pp. 834, 837

of great regret, with need for the healing, forgiving grace of God. Other forms of partnership may well display the characteristics of married love, and be marriage-like in every way but for the public expression and witnessing of the commitment to permanence. Marriage offers the additional possibility of church solemnisation, which allows for the making of promises within the context of Christian prayer and acknowledgment of our calling to discipleship. While extending marriage to same-sex couples is beginning to be debated in society and the church, this would constitute a major break with Scripture and church practice through the ages.

8.3 Yet for all the disputed questions regarding marriage – definition, nature, alternatives and permanence – we conclude by reiterating our belief in marriage, provided in the wisdom of God for uniting his beloved children, for mutual love, joy, companionship and the bearing and rearing of children; as an echo in human hearts of the divine outpouring of love; as a sign of God's generosity, faithfulness, commitment and forgiveness; as an aspect of human reality in which our discipleship of Christ is lived out; and as a foretaste of the new creation.

APPENDIX II
JOINT REPORT OF THE MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRIES COUNCILS ON THE EMERGING CHURCH

Report

Following the publication of the Reformed, Reforming, Emerging and Experimenting report in 2011, the General Assembly charged the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils with considering the recommendations in section 4 of the report, and bringing recommendations to the General Assembly of 2012. (Copies of the report are available from the Ministries Council and can be found at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/general_assembly/reports_and_information).

During 2011 both Councils considered the best way of working together more effectively to consider the issues in the report and support the work of emerging church. The result was a restructuring of the way the Councils

have communicated and collaborated on this and the formation of a new Joint Emerging Church Group. Staffing constraints, and the development of the new JECG, which constituted in January 2012, means that the Councils are not yet in a position to bring firm recommendations to the General Assembly, and would intend to do so in 2013.

This report therefore seeks to inform the General Assembly of the progress made in the past year.

Joint Emerging Church Group
Both Councils sought to establish a basis for more effective, intentional collaboration in their engagement with emerging church. Previously there had been two main groups concerned with this area of work; the Emerging Ministries Task Group (EMTG), which resided in the Ministries Council and managed the Emerging Ministries Fund, and the Joint Working Party, whose membership was drawn from both Councils and included others with particular insights. These two groups have now been replaced by the Joint Emerging Church Group (JECG) and the Councils have agreed the purpose of the group:

- To develop vision beyond 2020, identify trends in culture and consider the development of new approaches to ministry, congregational life and church planting.
- To assess applications for funding, review projects, evaluate experience gained; and negotiate its transition to being one of the Ministries Council's Strategic Funds.
- In the light of the Reformed, Reforming, Emerging and Experimenting Report, make proposals for changes (including legislative changes) needed in order to facilitate a mixed economy within the Church of Scotland
- To identify where appropriate resources and training for leadership development, mission and worship are required for new and emerging models of church, and advise both Councils on membership of Fresh Expressions
- To nurture, support, protect and inspire emerging work
- To enable exchange of experience among those involved in all emerging church work (including

Emerging Ministries Fund projects and New Charge Development) and the wider church, evaluating what works and what does not.

- Support and nurture an Emerging Church Network, including Fresh Expressions training (Mission Shaped Intro, Mission Shaped Vision and Mission Shaped Ministry), Invest, vision and conference days, etc.
- Encourage emerging work towards a transforming future and self-sustainability.
- Engage with the Ministries Council Training Review and with developments of Pioneer Ministry.
- Set budgets and track and report on expenditure clearly and regularly.

To oversee all systems for NCD charges, from initial discussions through the establishment of the charge to raising it to full status, a New Charge Development Sub-Group has been created.

The Group comprises full members of the two Councils, able to speak directly on emerging church issues at full Council meetings. It also includes members who are emerging church practitioners, those able to provide theological reflection on the issues, and members who are well versed in the structures and governance of the church. At present, the members of the group are (with one member still to be appointed):

Rev David Cameron	(Convener)
Rev Colin Brough	(Vice-Convener)
Mr Ron Clarke	(Secretary)
Mrs Lesley Hamilton-Messer	(Secretary)
Rev Ian Aitken	
Rev Gary Caldwell	
Rev Elizabeth Crumlish	
Mr Alan Dodds	
Rev Dr Doug Gay	
Rev Tommy MacNeill	
Ms Shona Stirling	
Ms Alison Urie	

It is important to note that this is a dynamic area of work, and as issues and trends emerge and are identified it may be necessary to review the scope and purpose of the group to respond appropriately to needs and opportunities as they become apparent.

Funding
The major funding is the Emerging Ministries Fund (EMF), which comes to an end in 2013. At the time of writing the funding structure and management is undergoing review and the Strategic Funding Group is considering the way forward for the EMF. The substantive detail of this is contained in the report of the Ministries Council. As the JECG has inherited the EMTG's policy role it will have a close link between policy and funding, the progress of EMF projects and the experiences to disseminate.

Fresh Expressions
The Church of Scotland has benefited from an informal relationship with Fresh Expressions, most notably in the delivery of training through the Mission Shaped Vision, Mission Shaped intro, and Mission Shaped Ministry course (further information is available from http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/training).

Both Councils agree that it is time to place the relationship on a more formal basis and are exploring this option with Fresh Expressions. They gratefully acknowledge the insights and assistance of Bishop Graham Cray in their discussions.

APPENDIX III
RECOMMENDED SALARY SCALES FOR ORGANISTS
forwarded from the Scottish Federation of Organists

The following salary scales have been compiled by the Salaries Committee of the Scottish Federation of Organists and have been endorsed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. These scales came into effect on 1 January 2009 and will remain effective until at least 2013, when a review and revision will have taken place. The revised form of contract for the employment of an Organist, now available from the Church of Scotland Law Department at 121 George Street, Edinburgh, leaves the figures for the salary scale blank.

It is recognised that it is not possible to lay down a figure that will be right for every church which employs an organist. It is also recognised that many posts will not fit exactly into any one of the under-noted categories, but it is hoped that those whose responsibility it is to determine a church musician's remuneration will be guided by these figures. Further information can be found on the Scottish Federation of Organists' website (www.scotsorgan.org.uk).

Section A – Organists, Organists and Choirmasters, Directors of Music

Type	Salary Scale	Deputy Fee
Churches without choirs	£1,450 – £2,240	£50
Churches with choirs making an occasional individual contribution to worship	£2,240 – £3,570	£50 – £65
Churches with choirs making a substantial individual contribution to worship	£3,570 - £4,780	£65 – £90
Churches with complete and competent choirs singing full choral services	£4,780 – £7,140	£90 – £100
Churches employing a full/part-time professional director of music with extensive responsibilities are recommended to consider salary scales higher than scale	£7,140+	£100+

Section B – Additional Services
It is recommended that additional services such as weddings and funerals should have a fee in the range £50-£100, commensurate with the appropriate Deputy Fee. In cases where such a service is being recorded, the fee should be increased by 50% in respect of a sound recording, and 100% in respect of a video recording.

Section C – Deputies
The minimum rate for a deputy should be £50 per service. Where the incumbent organist receives remuneration above the minimum recommended level, the deputy's fee will normally be increased proportionately.

APPENDIX IV
COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ART AND ARCHITECTURE MEETING DATES FOR 2012/2013

2012:   28 June, 27 September, 29 November
2013:   10 January, 25 April

APPENDIX V
CO-OPTED MEMBERS ON GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

Learning Disabilities Working Group
Rev Elizabeth Fisk
Mr John Spence
Mr David Clark
Mrs Ivy Blair
Rev Gayle Taylor
Rev Jane Denniston

Scottish Storytelling Centre Executive
Jean Findlater
Nansie Blackie
Rev Dorothy Purnell
Margaret Grant
D Colin Mackay
Rachel Smillie
Rev Linda Bandelier
David Campbell
Senga Munro
Rev Russell McLarty

Statistics for Mission
Mr Andy Whittet
Mr David Stewart
Mr Douglas Vallance
Mr Norman Jamieson
Dr Fiona Tweedie

Scots Language Group
Rev Dr Robert K MacKenzie
Mr Jamie Stewart
Rev James Campbell
Rev James Merilees

Pray Now Group
Rev Carol Ford
Rev Peggy Roberts
Rev Tina Kemp
Rev Mark Foster
Rev Adam Dillon
Rev Mary Ann Rennie

'Why Believe?' Group

Church of Scotland:	Alison Carter, Prof Joe Houston, Rev Jock Stein
Salvation Army:	John Coutts
Scottish Episcopal:	Prof Wilson Poon, Dr Donald Bruce
Free Church:	Rev David Robertson
Baptist:	Rev Andy Scarcliffe
Methodist:	Dr Gerald Bostock
Roman Catholic:	Dr Victoria Harrison

Human Sexuality Working Group
Rev Alastair Hunter
Dr Paul Nimmo
Rev Lynn McChlery
Rev Karen Campbell
Rev Prof Andrew T B McGowan
Rev Dr Peter Donald
Mrs Ann Allen
Rev Dr Alistair May
Rev Dr Moyna McGlynne
Rev Scott Rennie
Rev Isabel Whyte
Dr Heather Walton (until June 2010)

Youth Strategy Group
Miss Suzi Farrant
Mr Chris Hoskins

CARTA
Rev David Logan