CHURCH AND SOCIETY COUNCIL
MAY 2011

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly
1. Receive the Report.

Strategic Review (See Section 4 of the Church and Society Council Report)
2. Note the progress of the Review of the work of the Church and Society Council.

Work with Churches
Local Involvement and Parish Action (See Section 5 of the Church and Society Council Report)
3. Note with thanks those congregations that have responded to the 2010 instruction to provide a Church and Society contact and encourage those congregations that have not yet responded to do so.

Responding to Climate Change (See Section 7 of the Church and Society Council Report)
4. Commend Creation Time and instruct the Church and Society Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council to encourage all congregations and presbyteries to take advantage of the season of Creation Time and to use the related resources that have been produced.
5. Instruct the Church and Society Council to explore with the General Trustees and others whether the brief to the Church's energy consultants can be revised to include not only an energy supply element but also energy management advice.
6. Instruct the Church and Society Council to explore with the Priority Areas Committee and the General Trustees the opportunities for installing renewable energy devices such as solar panels in church buildings to help congregations reduce their carbon footprints and energy bills, noting that this may generate an income from feed-in tariffs.
7. Instruct the Church and Society Council and the Central Services Committee to consider how the work of responding to climate change is taken forward and to report to the General Assembly with proposals in 2012.

Young People and Decision Making (See Section 8 of the Church and Society Council Report)
8. Commend this report to Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Councils, Committees and groups associated with the life of the Church of Scotland for study and action.
9. Urge every Presbytery and national Council and Committee to appoint a named person to champion young peoples' involvement in their decision-making, whose role will be to work with the established structures and to develop new and appropriate ways for young people to be involved.
10. Instruct the Church and Society Council, the Mission and Discipleship Council and the National Youth Assembly to prepare a report to the General Assembly in 2013 and every two years thereafter, evaluating progress and suggesting further ways in which the Church of Scotland can make a difference in this area.
11. Encourage all Presbyteries to take seriously their responsibility for nominating a Youth Representative to the General Assembly and encourage all congregations and Presbyteries to support their young people in attending the National Youth Assembly.

12. Affirm the work of Young Scot, the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children's Commissioner and urge every Presbytery and national Council and Committee of the Church of Scotland to consider the need to work with them to develop new ways of engaging with young people and supporting their participation in decision-making within the Church.
13. Commend the Presbytery of Europe for its initiative in convening the first ever Youth Presbytery for 18-25 year olds and encourage other Presbyteries to consider how they might adapt this model for their own context.
14. Invite the Nomination Committee of the Church of Scotland to include in its reports a record of the number of young people (aged 18-25) who have been nominated and the number appointed each year.
15. Encourage Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to reflect on the appointment of young Elders (aged 18-25) and young Commissioners to the General Assembly.
16. Invite every Presbytery and national Council and Committee to consider the timing and format of meetings to allow young people to participate in decision-making.

Ecumenical (See Section 9 of the Church and Society Council Report)
17. Note and affirm the developing ecumenical relationships and commitments undertaken by the Church and Society Council and welcome the fact that the Council has this year been able to work in partnership with others on several reports, including Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, Just War and Afghanistan, Homelessness in Scotland and the report on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Work in Society
Science and Ethics
The Internet (See Section 11 of the Church and Society Council Report)
18. Instruct the Church and Society Council to work in partnership with others to facilitate discussion of the issues raised in the report on the Internet.
19. Note in particular the capacity of the Internet to shape as well as reflect society.
20. Instruct the Church and Society Council to consider the conflicts inherent in the use of the Internet amongst freedom, liberty, regulation and control, the existence of competing mores, and issues of real and virtual identity; and to develop policies to reflect a Christian response to these conflicts.
21. Encourage the Church and Society Council to explore, with appropriate partners, the development of an ethical code for software developers, manufacturers and all Internet users to promote the use of Internet technologies for the good of society, not just for commercial gain.

Mental Health (See Section 12 of the Church and Society Council Report)
22. Commend the guidelines on Mental Health to congregations and presbyteries.
23. Instruct the Church and Society Council to encourage Presbyteries to utilise training in Mental Health First Aid.

Suicide among young men (See Section 13 of the Church and Society Council Report)
24. Commend the booklet on the issue of Suicide Among Young Men to Kirk Sessions for their prayerful consideration and actions.
25. Commend the work done to raise awareness of the issues around suicide among young men through creative means such as drama in schools.

26. Commend the work in suicide prevention already done by many local churches, church agencies and organisations.
27. Encourage Kirk Sessions to avail themselves of the free training on suicide prevention and bereavement counselling provided by the specialist organisations such as those listed in the report.
28. Encourage the Ministries Council to engage with Presbyteries to ensure that effective support can be made available to Ministers, should they wish it, on encountering suicide among young men in their congregations and parishes.

British Heart Foundation *(See Section 14 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
29. Congratulate the British Heart Foundation on occasion of its 50th anniversary.

Societal Issues
Domestic Abuse *(See Section 16 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
30. Instruct the Church and Society Council, the Ministries Council and the Guild to continue their work on the issue of domestic abuse and to report to the General Assembly in 2012.
31. Encourage congregations to mark the UN 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women (16 November to 1 December) and instruct the Church and Society Council to produce prayers and other resources to help congregations support this initiative.
32. Request the Church and Society Council to seek to establish a group of up to 12 men from Scotland's faith communities who will promote the Amnesty International White Ribbon Campaign in Scotland.

One Scotland, Many Cultures *(See Section 17 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
33. Encourage members, ministers, Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Councils and Committees of the Church of Scotland to consider the report *One Scotland, Many Cultures* and its call to radical hospitality and its implications.
34. Instruct the Church and Society Council, in partnership with others, to provide resources for congregations to engage with the issues raised in this report and to share stories of good practice.

Racist Organisations *(See Section 18 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
35. Reaffirm support for the World Council of Churches' statement on racism agreed at Uppsala in 1968.
36. Instruct the Church and Society Council to work with ecumenical partners and others to produce resources to help individuals and congregations engage with issues of racial justice in politics and society.
37. Commend the annual celebration of Racial Justice Sunday, and encourage congregations and presbyteries to observe it.

Travellers in Scotland *(See Section 19 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
38. Commend the ACTS report on the Churches' attitude to the Travelling Community in Scotland and instruct the Church and Society Council to work with the Scottish Churches' Racial Justice Group in taking forward the recommendations of the report.

Are we what we wear? The ethics of our clothing choices *(See Section 20 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
39. Commend church and charitable initiatives that reuse and recycle clothes, or that teach skills in how to repair clothes, and invite congregations and individuals to follow these examples.

40. Urge the Church and Society Council to join ongoing campaigns that address the issues raised in this report, including the Asia Floor Wage Alliance.

Homelessness in Scotland *(See Section 21 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
41. Instruct the Church and Society Council to support further work in partnership with Scottish Churches Housing Action to monitor the Scottish Government's progress towards its 2012 homelessness target, and to report to the 2012 Assembly.

Education
Stevenson Prize *(See Section 24 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
42. Commend the role of the Stevenson Prize in offering opportunities for the affirmation of best practice in Religious Observance in schools.

Protecting School Budgets *(See Section 25 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
43. Instruct the Church and Society Council to make representation to the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities urging them to consider the opportunities created for young people by adopting a preventative spending model when setting education budgets.
44. Instruct the Church and Society council to support Church Representatives on Local Authority Education Committees to press the case for the protection of Education budgets.

Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity
Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity *(See Section 26 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
45. Note the interim report of the Commission and instruct the Church and Society Council to encourage Presbyteries to engage with the work of the Commission.

Peacemaking and International Affairs
Just War and Afghanistan *(See Section 28 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
46. Commend chaplains to HM Forces and parish ministers for the pastoral care they give to Service personnel in the theatre of war and to their families at home.
47. Oppose the continuation of the war in Afghanistan and call for the early withdrawal of British troops.

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories *(See Section 29 of the Church and Society Council Report)*
48. Instruct the Church and Society Council to work with ecumenical and civil society partners to continue to lobby for the introduction of labelling of products in the UK which clearly identify whether they are from an illegal Israeli settlement.
49. Instruct the Church and Society Council to work with ecumenical and civil society partners to lobby for a UK ban of products from unlawful Israeli settlements.
50. Commend the World Council of Churches initiative *World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel* and encourage congregations and presbyteries to observe the week using resources produced by the WCC.
51. Instruct the Church and Society Council to report on the situation in Gaza to the 2012 Assembly.

Thanks and Distribution

52.   Thank all those who assisted the Council in the preparation of the Report and instruct the Council to send copies of the Report with the Deliverance and where appropriate additional background papers to appropriate Scottish and UK Government Ministers, Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of Parliament representing Scottish constituencies, Members of the European Parliament representing Scotland, and others involved in the issues addressed by the Report.

REPORT

1.   Introduction

1.1 The Church and Society Council has continued with its task to be the voice of the Church of Scotland in the public square on a wide range of issues. It is a voice that is rooted in serious thinking and discernment and gains its authenticity when it reflects the experience of the living Christian community in city, village, street and island. The true witness to God's love, care and justice is perhaps best demonstrated, and experienced, face to face with our neighbour. That is why we begin this report as we do every year with a report on our work increasing local involvement in national societal issues, in this case following up last years instruction from the Assembly to create a network of Church and Society representatives in every parish. It is the Council's aim to offer wider society a distinctive Christian perspective in the public square and to reflect on what is happening in Scotland's common life both with the church and with those outside it. That perspective is rooted in the life of congregations the length and breadth of the country and beyond.

1.2   The Council's remit remains broad. This year it brings eight new reports as well as updates on a much wider range of activity, yet there are many areas of public discourse not covered. The agenda runs from Afghanistan to Argyll, from assisted dying to climate change, from Religious Observance to domestic abuse, Gypsy/Travellers to digital communication, and much more. The breadth of its work constantly forces the Council to make choices about what to do and what to put to one side. To aid this judgment, the Council uses a specific set of criteria to decide how to allocate its scarce resources. Why *this* issue? Why this issue *now*? What real difference will be seen because *we* pursued this concern? What is the insight from the Gospel that the Church can bring to bear on study and *action* in this area? To aid this thinking, the Council, in reviewing its remit, is proposing both to have a primary theme of a bias to the poor and to work to a rolling programme of broad sub themes. This is not to restrict the voice of the Church but instead to help ensure that it is does not grow hoarse in its attempts to be heard.

2.   Executive Summary

2.1 The Church and Society Council presents eight lengthy policy reports to the Assembly this year. The Blue Book contains summaries of these reports rather than the full documents, since to have published the full reports would have taken the Church and Society Council's contribution to the Blue Book from around 29,000 words to nearer 68,000. It is the intention of the Council that the summary of the reports provide enough detail for Commissioners to be able to make an informed decision about the proposed Deliverances relating to that report. We encourage Commissioners and other interested parties to read the full reports, as considerable care and energy has been invested in their preparation. Full copies of each report are available on the Church of Scotland General Assembly website www.churchofscotland.org. uk/GA2011 and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk.

2.2 The use of summaries is an innovation for the Council and is in line with a general drive to reduce the size of the Blue Book. The Council would be pleased to receive feedback from Commissioners as to whether this is an appropriate approach.

2.3 The Deliverance Grid at Section 3 reports the action we have taken on last year's Deliverance and is a brief review of what happened following the 2010 Assembly. The Council had 48 Deliverances to act on. The table gives some indication of that range of responses with cross-referencing to those areas that are referred to in the main report. The Council hopes that this table will give Commissioners a flavour of its activity outside the Assembly and is one of our ways in which we seek to be pro-active in being accountable to the Assembly.

2.4   Strategic Review
Over the past few months the Council has been undergoing a strategic review. We hope to present further details of this in a Supplementary Report. Commissioners are invited to support a process which would allow the Council to choose broad themes to guide its work over a number of years in order to better manage the extremely diverse agenda of the Council.

WORK WITH CHURCHES
2.5   Local involvement and Parish Action
This section includes a short report on how the Council gives support to congregations in taking forward the Church's priorities on social and political issues. It also comments on the progress of last year's deliverance on the appointment of a Church and Society contact person in every congregation.

2.6   Communication
The Council continues to develop its digital communication tools and this is aiding interactive dialogue and the creation of online communities of interest.

2.7   Responding to Climate Change
We are pleased to note Eco Congregation Scotland's registration as an independent charity. This section also reports on the work of the Responding to Climate Change Project (RCCP), and in particular the 5% year-on-year carbon reduction commitment made by the 2009 Assembly. The RCCP has been instrumental in taking forward this challenge in 121 George Street in partnership with the Central Service Committee.

2.8   Young People and Decision Making – Summary Report
We present a report on how young people are involved in the decision making processes of the Church.

2.9   Ecumenical Issues
We note the Council's commitment to ecumenical working.

WORK IN SOCIETY
Science and Ethics
2.10   Society, Religion and Technology Project
A report on the work of the Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRTP), covering its campaigning work on end-of-life issues, policy development (suicide amongst young men, mental health friendly churches), support for the Economics Commission and events to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the project. The SRTP has also been involved in other work including in the debates on the ethics of brain imaging.

2.11   The Internet: in whose image? – Summary Report
This section is a summary of our major report *The Internet: in whose image? Responding to the ethical and moral challenges of the Internet*. This covers a wide range of ethical issues and a reflection that the impact the internet has had on our lives and on human relationships. The Internet report was the subject of the SRTP's annual lecture at the Edinburgh International Science Festival in April which was given by Dr David Pullinger, a former director of the STRP and now a UK Government adviser on digital issues.

2.12   Mental health

This report was initiated by a debate at the 2009 Assembly. It offers guidance, advice and the opportunity to access training to assist congregations to become better able to serve those will mental health problems.

2.13   Suicide among young men: the Church as a community of carers – Summary Report

We present reflections and guidance on coping with one of the most difficult pastoral circumstances that people in the church encounter.

2.14   British Heart Foundation

We celebrate the British Heart Foundation's 50th birthday.

Societal Issues
2.15   Domestic Abuse

We present a progress report on a review of the issues raised by a 2003 Church of Scotland report on domestic abuse and invite the Assembly to support the White Ribbon Campaign, a campaign of men who are against violence against women.

2.16   One Scotland Many Cultures – Summary Report

This report is a theological and practical reflection on the diversity of 21st-Century Scotland; what that means for the idea of Jesus' call to radical hospitality; the role of the 'host' culture; and, the place of the Christian community in this diversity.

2.17   Church Membership and Racist Organisations

We invite the General Assembly to consider the challenges of racism in society today and we suggest that the Church's response needs to be firm in declaring that racial or religious hatred is intolerable in the life of the Church.

2.18   Scottish Gypsy/Travellers – Summary Report

This report was produced by an ecumenical group facilitated by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). It tells the difficult story of the persecution faced by Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and reflects on the place and role of the Christian Churches.

2.19   Are we what we wear? Ethics of our clothing choices – Summary Report

What do clothes say about ourselves? How do we see other people? Are we aware of the human and environmental cost of what we wear? This report explores issues to do with clothing and textiles.

2.20   Homelessness in Scotland

In 2002 the then Scottish Executive set a target of ending homelessness by 2012, a target which the SNP Government also promised to achieve. It looks almost impossible that this target will be met but important progress has been made nonetheless. This report covers some of the issues involved and recommends that a more detailed report on action and future priorities be considered by the 2012 Assembly.

2.21   Inter Faith

This is a brief report on the involvement the Council has with inter faith work.

Politics and Government
2.22   Parliamentary Office and Update

We ask the Assembly to note the Church and Society Council's engagement with the UK and Scottish Parliaments and Governments, which is done mainly through the work of the Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Office (SCPO). By undertaking this core activity of the Council ecumenically, the Church is able to be better informed and have stronger influence on political debates.

2.23   Preparing for the Scottish Elections

This section is an outline of the work undertaken to support congregations in getting involved with election debates and other related activities. The SCPO, with support from the ACTS Church and Society Network, worked in partnership with the Evangelical Alliance, CARE, the Roman Catholic Church and Christians Count to develop a shared one-stop Christian election resources website called 'Churches Vote: Scottish Elections 2011'.

2.24   Other activities

Our report also gives details on parliamentary visits, the contribution made to debates on end-of-life assistance and palliative care, activity around issues of poverty and welfare, the debate on Scotland's constitutional future and an index of the formal responses to Government and Parliamentary consultations that the Council has made in the name of the Church of Scotland.

2.25   Education

This report covers the work of the Standing Committee on Education, its engagement on national and policy issues such as Curriculum for Excellence as well as its practical support for chaplaincy in schools and FE colleges, Church representatives on Local Authority Education committees and other work in schools. The Committee also represents the Church on several national education bodies.

2.26   Protecting School Budgets – Summary Report

This report is set in the context of the significant cuts facing local authority budgets. It argues that even in times of shortage of resources, a long term view of investing in young people must not be lost, both for the benefit of the young people themselves and society as a whole.

2.27   Economics Commission

This section is a brief interim report reviewing the progress of the Commission on the Purposes of Economic Committee which was set up by the Assembly in 2010. The review notes many of those who have already given evidence and again requests that Presbyteries assist in the hosting of local meetings for more evidence gathering.

Peacemaking and International Affairs
2.28   Just War Criteria and the War in Afghanistan – Summary Report

The report was developed by an ACTS working group and the Council presents it to the Assembly for consideration. It explains the background to the conflict and outlines the principles of the Just War tradition, including the principles of right cause, right authority, last resort, chance of success, preventing greater harm, proportionate use of force and not targeting civilians. It reflects on whether, by those standards, the war in Afghanistan is just. The Council agrees with the conclusions of the report and asks the General Assembly to call for timeous withdrawal of UK Armed Forces from Afghanistan.

2.29   Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories

This report explores why there is a need to ensure the clear labelling of products which come from the illegal settlements in the West Bank, so that consumers can make an informed decision on whether or not to purchase them.

3. Summary of action on previous deliverances

3.1 Table of action on the 2010 General Assembly Deliverance.

2010 Deliverance	Activity and Outcome
2. Instruct the Church and Society Council to work with other partners to develop worship and discussion resources, where appropriate using real life experiences and reflections of the issues, to support congregations to engage in and act on the questions and challenges explored in its reports.	Regular references to worship materials have appeared in the monthly E-news and resources such as Care for Creation and Paying our Dues / Trace the Tax have been promoted.
3. Instruct the Council and the Mission and Discipleship Council, together with all Presbyteries and other Councils of the Church, to bring to the General Assembly of 2011 a report on the ways in which each is enabling the voices of children and young people to be heard in appropriate and effective ways in their decision-making processes.	Research was undertaken and a report has been included in the 2011 Blue Book.
4. Instruct Presbyteries to ensure that each congregation has a Church and Society contact person and to provide an email address to which information can be sent and from which information can be received.	Presbyteries have been informed of this Deliverance and we have consulted and drawn up a role expectation for contact persons. By March 2011 259 congregations have already submitted their contact person's name and e-mail address.
5. Commend and congratulate the Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRTP) for its huge contribution to public debate on issues around science, religion and ethics over the last 40 years.	The SRT Project marked its 40th anniversary with a day conference in November 2010 which helped celebrate what has been achieved and provide an opportunity to look forward with hope that this work can continue to be developed over the coming years. The SRT Project has a new website: www.srtp.org.uk.
6. Welcome the preparatory work with respect to the proposed Economics Commission.	The Commission was duly established and a report of its work during the first year is included in the 2011 Blue Book.
7. Instruct the Church and Society Council and the National Youth Assembly to continue to work together to develop a better understanding of the issues of mental health in young people and to provide, in their 2011 report, guidelines for churches on how to be mental-health-friendly.	The report on issues around mental health and how to be mental health friendly churches is included in the 2011 Blue Book.

8. Instruct the Church and Society Council to consult with young people in developing the work begun on suicide amongst young men and to report to the 2011 Assembly.	The report on suicide among young men is included in the 2011 Blue Book.
9. Instruct the Church and Society Council to continue in its discussions on the issue of microcredits and to report to the 2011 Assembly.	Conversations have taken place but there is nothing new to report to the General Assembly. The Council will remain vigilant with regards to developments on this issue.
10. Instruct the Church and Society Council to create opportunities for congregations to engage with the issues raised by the report on Synthetic Biology.	The Council has produced a leaflet introducing the subject and has made this freely available from the office and the website. Speakers have been made available to congregations and presbyteries interested in holding an event on the subject.
11. Instruct the Church and Society Council to encourage further debate within civil society on the issues raised by the report on Synthetic Biology.	The Council's work has enabled the Church of Scotland to lead the Christian Churches in responding to this issue. This has included speaking to the media.
12. Encourage HM Government and European Union to develop a regulatory framework for Synthetic Biology that includes a code of ethics.	The Council has written to HM Government (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Universities) and Work and Pensions (Health and Safety) and the European Group on Ethics (a department of the European Commission).
13. Endorse the leading role that the Church plays in responding to climate change and instruct the Church and Society Council to work with UK and Scottish Government and others to meet the national targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act.	The Council has played an important role in implementing the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 through its involvement in development of the Public Engagement Strategy; and in supporting the Moderator when he met the Prime Minister to discuss climate change in December 2010.
14. Note the success of those presbyteries that have put into effect the instruction of the General Assembly 2009 to prepare a plan to enable congregations to measure their carbon footprint and ask the Church and Society Council to work with General Trustees and others to ensure all presbyteries share successfully in this work.	The Council is developing new proposals with the General Trustees to help congregations measure and manage their energy use both to reduce costs at a time of rising fuel prices and to reduce their carbon footprint.

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15. Welcome the incorporation of Eco-Congregation Scotland as a charitable company and encourage all eco congregations to consider how they might fundraise to allow them to make a financial donation each year to enable the charity to grow and flourish.	The Council has been successful in attracting a grant from the Scottish Government that has allowed Eco-Congregation Scotland to appoint a manager on a full time fixed term contract. The manager has been given the task of raising funds from a variety of sources to ensure the future viability of the charity. The number of Church of Scotland congregations registered as eco-congregations has now risen to over 200 out of a total number of eco-congregations of 260.
16. Commend all congregations involved in practical projects with people who are experiencing poverty, and especially those featured in the report.	This Deliverance was addressed to congregations.
17. Encourage all congregations to conduct a community audit to identify how debt and unemployment affect their parish; and take positive action in response to their findings.	The Council publicised opportunities for Church audits through its website, E-news and other media.
18. Commend to all members and congregations, the importance of welcome and hospitality and encourage Kirk Sessions to reflect on their practice in this area.	This Deliverance was addressed to church members and congregations. The report on *One Scotland, Many Cultures*, prepared by the Council for the 2011 Assembly, emphasises the importance of welcome and hospitality.
19. Urge the Council of Assembly and also the Panel on Review and Reform to keep the Gospel priority for the poorest and most marginalised at the forefront of its considerations.	The Council raised this issue at the Council of Assembly, which had a detailed discussion at its October 2010 meeting. (Minute 60)
20. Call on Scottish and UK Governments to recognise the destructive impact of inequality on the wellbeing of all, the disproportionate impact of cuts in services on the poorest, and therefore to poverty proof all budget decisions.	The Council has worked with Faith in Community Scotland and the Parish Development Fund to submit evidence to the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee inquiry on preventative spending. The Council has responded to a Department for Work and Pensions consultation on welfare reform and worked ecumenically to call for the poorest in our society to be protected during spending cuts.
21. Encourage the Church and Society Council in partnership with the Priority Areas Committee and others to continue to engage with the issues involved in benefits and routes out of poverty.	The Council has continued its ongoing support through the Priority Areas Forum and is engaged in work around Welfare Reform proposals from the UK Government.

22. Instruct the Council to pursue concerns for the most vulnerable people raised by possible changes to the Lloyd's TSB Foundation.	The Council is aware of ongoing negotiations and will remain vigilant to developments on this issue.
23. Urge the UK Government to protect the rights of asylum seekers who are children, and express concern over the process in determining the age of asylum seekers who claim to be under the age of 18.	A letter was sent to the Minister of State for Immigration and a reply was received. Both are available to read on the Church of Scotland website.
24. Approve the Priority Areas Action Plan (Ministries Council) and commit the Council, in partnership with others, to its effective delivery over the next seven years.	This Deliverance was agreed by all the Councils and Committees at last year's Assembly. The Council continues to work closely with the Priority Areas Forum and Faith in Community Scotland on a range of issues.
25. Note that the Church and Society Council is working with the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group to bring forward a report on the attitudes of the Churches in Scotland to Travellers.	The report on the Travelling Community in Scotland is included in the 2011 Blue Book.
26. Welcome the continued ecumenical work of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and the capacity it gives for the Churches in Scotland to influence the framing of legislation and public debate.	The work of the SCPO has continued to be an important part of the Council's work, particularly on legislative proposals for alcohol pricing and assisted suicide (in Holyrood) and welfare reform and constitutional change (in Westminster). Further details are included in the main report in the 2011 Blue Book.
27. Instruct the Church and Society Council in partnership with other denominations to provide materials for discussion and reflection on the issues raised by the debate on Scotland's constitutional future and to report to the 2011 Assembly.	Discussion materials are available on the Church of Scotland website, further details are included in the main report.
28. Welcome the announcement on the level of a Scottish Living Wage, and instruct the Church and Society Council to work with presbyteries to help congregations become Living Wage employers.	Information for congregations on this issue is to be found on the Church of Scotland website.
29. Instruct the Church and Society Council to seek to establish an ecumenical working group to reflect theologically on human rights law, the practical applications of rights based policy and their implications for society.	The working group has been established and is expected to report to the General Assembly in 2012.

30. Instruct the Council to work together with the Ministries Council and the Guild in a review of the recommendations of the Church and Nation Report to the General Assembly 2003 on domestic abuse with a view to strengthening the implementation of its recommendations.	A small group has been appointed to undertake this task and their report is included in the 2011 Blue Book.
31. Welcome the discussions between Church and Society staff and military chaplains on common work and encourage further dialogue.	Conversations and dialouge is ongoing.
32. Affirm that there are times when non violent direct action, involving potential or actual civil disobedience in the form of deliberate lawbreaking, may be regarded as a legitimate approach to expressing the Gospel.	The Justice Minister in the Scottish Government and the Home Secretary in the UK Government were informed of this policy.
33. Commend the development of a Master's Module in Religious Observance and encourage school chaplains and other appropriate persons to attend the course with school staff where possible.	Over 70 school staff and chaplains have now completed the course and demand is growing for other forms of similar training. The Course now can be counted for General Teaching Council Scotland professional accreditation and toward charter teacher status
34. Welcome the proposed developments of Religious and Moral Education resources in partnership with the Religious Education Movement Scotland.	This is an ongoing project. Progress is ongoing, with further details to be developed.
35. Express good wishes to the Guide Association on this, its centenary year.	A letter to the Chief Guide, Liz Burnley CBE, was sent by the Convener.
36. Instruct the Church and Society Council to progress work on this issue including meeting with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence to express the concerns of the Church about the long term consequences on global stability from this conflict.	Correspondence was entered into with the FCO and MOD regarding Afghanistan. A report is included in the 2011 Blue Book.
37. Recognise the importance of taxation in poor countries for ensuring sustainable development finance and building accountability between state and citizen.	Working closely with Christian Aid, we have sought to raise awareness of this issue with congregations and Presbyteries through a variety of media.
38. Instruct the Church and Society Council to raise with HM Government the concern regarding the negative impacts of tax evasion and avoidance which are estimated to cost poor countries $160bn each year.	We have written to responsible ministers in HM Government. We have supported Christian Aid's Trace the Tax campaign which focuses on this issue.

39. Welcome the commitment from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, supported by the UK Government, to include a country by country reporting standard in their Guidelines for Multinational Corporations by the end of 2010 and seek to see this extended to an international binding standard for all multinational companies.	A letter was sent to the Secretary-General of the OCED, Mr Angel Gurría. As part of our support for Christian Aid's Trace the Tax campaign, a report *Paying Our Dues* was published jointly, with a foreword from the Moderator. The report highlighted the importance of country by country reporting and the campaign called for its implementation.
40. Thank all those who assisted the Council in the preparation of the Report and instruct the Council to send copies of the Report with the Deliverance to appropriate Scottish and UK Government Ministers, Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of Parliament representing Scottish constituencies, Members of the European Parliament representing Scotland, and others involved in the issues addressed by the Report.	Letters sent to MSPs and Scottish MEPs and MPs as well as appropriate Scottish Government and Westminster Ministers.
41. Appoint a Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity as described in the report and supplementary report.	The Commission was duly established and a report of its work during the first year is included in the 2011 Blue Book.
42. Instruct all Councils and agencies of the church to cooperate fully with the working of the Commission.	
43. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to involve themselves fully in the work of the Commission.	
44. Instruct the Commission to report to the General Assembly of 2012.	
45. Instruct the Selection Committee to bring names for appointment to the Commission to a future session of the General Assembly.	
46. Reaffirm the opposition of the Church to any legislation which allows assisted dying.	The Church and Society Council has continued to campaign against legislation designed to introduce assisted suicide. The Convener gave oral evidence to the Parliamentary Bill Committee. Resources and action points were made available to church members through our website and E-Newsletter.
47. Instruct the Council to continue campaigning against any such legislation.	
48. Urge members of the Church to act to make clear their opposition to this legislation.	

3

3.2 Deliverances from previous years which have been significant in the work of the Council in 2010-2011

3.2.1 2009: Engaging with Education and the needs of Young People

Deliverance 10: 'Urge the Scottish and UK Governments to strengthen their commitment to end child poverty by 2020 and ensure that policies and adequate resources are in place to achieve that aim.'	The Council is a member of the Campaign to End Child Poverty in Scotland and has worked with partners to engage with the Scottish Government during the development of the Child Poverty Strategy which will accompany the Child Poverty Act.
Deliverance 11: 'Urge the Scottish Government to ensure that resources, including partnerships with Churches and others, are in place to deliver the ambitions of the Early Years Framework.'	Consultation responses are available from the Church of Scotland website.

3.2.2 2007: Alternative to Custody

Deliverance 36: 'Call on the Scottish Executive to ensure that across Scotland there is a range of effective alternatives to custody, with adequate funding, evidence gathering and analysis to maximise that effectiveness.'	The Council has actively engaged with the Scottish Parliament around the Criminal Justice and Licensing Bill which introduced a presumption against short periods of imprisonment and introduced new types of community sentence.

4. Strategic Review

4.1 The Church and Society Council was formed in 2005 as part of a major reorganisation of the Church's national structure. In April 2010 the Council agreed that after five years a review of the Council's work and its place in overall structure of the Church of Scotland was timely, especially given the reviews of the work of other Councils that had taken place around that time.

4.2 This review is ongoing and further details will be presented in a Supplementary Report.

4.3 The Council is basing its thinking on two principles:
– That there is a Gospel bias to the poor, and that this should be reflected in all that the Council says and does.
– That the Church and Society Council exists to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and to walk in service with the people of Scotland.

4.4 Council Remit

4.4.1 Work is being done to develop a mission statement and a new remit for the Council Remit. We hope to present our proposals in a Supplementary Report.

4.5 Strategic Planning

4.5.1 Underneath any remit lies a series of tasks undertaken to ground the words in a reality. The work makes the words authentic; the words guide the direction and priorities of the work.

4.5.2 The work of the Council is a gathering together of some very different styles and models of work:

Work with Churches
• Local involvement. Offering resources and support to congregations and feeding congregational experiences into policy development
• Communications; providing support for all these areas of work using traditional and new media

- Responding to Climate Change Project
- Ecumenical working – the Council represents the Church in a very wide variety of contexts and in membership of a significant number of organisations. In particular, the Council plays a significant role in the ecumenical life of the Church

Work in Society
- Society, Religion and Technology Project
- Societal Issues and policy development through the writing of reports
- Politics and Government – through the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office
- Education Committee
- Economics issues, as part of the Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity
- International Affairs and Peacemaking

4.5.3 There is a strong view in the review process that for each area to continue to be part of the work of the Church and Society Council, they need to be able to do three things:
- Offer something unique for the Church to bring to public debate
- Be the best way for the Church to fulfil that part of the remit
- Maximise the ways in which that work is achieved in partnership with other Councils and other partners

4.5.4 These will form the benchmarks against which further steps are formulated. Those steps will be reported to the Assembly in 2012.

4.5.5 The challenge for the Council is the breadth of its agenda. No matter what is chosen as priorities, it is often under pressure to cover others areas and to respond to other agendas. The review process has identified a model of working that will help the Council live in that tension.

4.5.6 It is suggested that from 2012 the Council identifies thematic work areas on a topic and run a programme of work that is linked to the theme for three years. The choice of themes should then be reflected in the work undertaken by the Council, for instance in the reports it prepares, the policy it develops, the relationships it fosters, the projects it funds, the campaigns it supports. Projects in those themes, once chosen, should be assigned clear objectives and appropriate oversight should be put in place.

4.5.7 The Council would still have to maintain flexibility and capacity to undertake work on other issues that may arise. The Council would only agree to undertake new work if it believes that it is the only place that the work can be done, and that its work will be of the highest quality. It is hoped that be having greater focus the work undertaken by the Council will be more effective.

WORK WITH CHURCHES
5. Local involvement and Parish Action
5.1 Hundreds and Thousands
5.1.1 Jesus started with 12 followers who went out with a message of hope and good news. We have 46 Church and Society representatives, one in each Presbytery, who pass on news of our campaigns, promote local action on issues within their communities and encourage churches to make a difference in their towns and villages. Hundreds of people read the Council's monthly e-news and act on information about events and campaigns. We see evidence of changing attitudes, changing lives and changing communities. Together the collective power of the membership of the church as active citizens witnessing to Christ in today's world can influence Parliamentary Bills, help keep homeless people warm and safe over the winter and give support to families through difficult times. So imagine the difference that could be accomplished when thousands hear and act on the message of the church. Last year the General Assembly instructed every congregation to appoint a 'Church and Society contact person' in order that a network of committed people can help spread news and ideas about the work of the Church on social, political and economics issues.

5.1.2 Every September the Council holds a conference in September for supporters and activists. In 2010 we had the best attended conference we have ever had, with a record number of Presbyteries represented. The theme of the conference focused on improving two-way communication between the Council and congregations. The database of congregation contacts is growing quickly. If your congregation still has to appoint someone please send their details to icrosthwaite@cofscotland.org.uk.

5.1.3 This year's conference will take place on Saturday 17 September and the main theme will be 'Education'. However, you don't need to wait till then – the Council is happy to support local events by providing resources and speakers on current issues.

5.1.4 Discussion material, worship resources and video clips to support discussion and action locally, continue to be produced on a variety of topics and can be downloaded from the website or ordered from the Church Offices at 121 George Street.

6.   Communication
6.1 The Council's work in informing, campaigning, influencing and contributing to public debate on social and political issues on behalf of the Church is dependent on good communication for its success. This short section details communication activities undertaken by the Church and Society Council during the past year.

6.2 Communications Framework for the Church of Scotland
6.2.1 The Council has worked closely with the Communication Department and the Communication Group of the Council of Assembly in the development of a strategic Communication Framework for the whole Church.

6.3 Developing and improving communication to and from a wide range of audiences
6.3.1 Good progress is being made in this area. The Council uses a variety of online communication media channels, including blogs, Facebook, the E-newsletter, and a YouTube channel.

6.4 Blogs
6.4.1 The Council continues to develop its online communication presence through blogs – web logs or online journals presenting ideas and comment about current issues. The Council runs three blogs, the Convener's blog, which includes reflections from the Council Convener about political and social issues (www.churchsociety.blogspot.com), as well as blogs for Eco Congregation Scotland and End of Life Issues.

6.5 YouTube Channel
6.5.1 The Council also posts videos to a YouTube channel. There are now around 20 short clips that illustrate some of our work. Some are suitable for replaying during church meetings or services. (www.youtube.com/user/ChurchandSociety)

6.6 One and two way communication: Blogs and Facebook
6.6.1 The Council appreciates feedback and is seeking to use the opportunity for comments that new technology makes available. For example, the blogs allow readers to comment and provide feedback. This facility is not often used, but The Convener's blog is beginning to attract comments, 17 so far since the 2010 General Assembly. None had been experienced prior to that.

6.6.2 The Council has a presence on popular networking site Facebook, where we have seen a noticeable increase in response to our postings, the Convener's blog, and about our events.

6.7 Profile of the Convener
6.7.1 The visibility of the Convener has increased dramatically though the use of the blog. Since the opening of the blog in April 2009, there have been hundreds of direct mentions of Ian Galloway in the printed press.

7.   Responding to Climate Change

7.1 Preparing for the future: Climate change and care for creation

7.1.1   In November 2010 delegates from 32 European countries met with participants from countries around the world at a conference in Budapest entitled Poverty, Wealth and Ecology, part of a broad ecumenical process initiated by the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The conference recognised the divisive effect of the international economy, creating wealth for some but poverty for others and the damage that uncontrolled economic activity is inflicting on the natural world. The conference concluded with an agreement to publish the Budapest Call for Climate Justice:

- criticising the primacy of economy over people and creation as a whole;
- recognising the God given responsibility of human beings in the community of creation;
- identifying that social and climate justice are now inextricably linked.[1]

7.1.2   The Budapest Call represents a new development in our understanding of the relationship between the economy, poverty, wealth and environment. It challenges churches to extend their mission to act in harmony with creation and it places the struggle for climate justice at the heart of this challenge.

7.1.3   Similarly in Jamaica in May 2011 the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation included 'peace with the earth' as theme along side peace in the community and peace between nations. Climate change was identified as a form of violence against the earth.

7.1.4   These and other developments in Churches around the world challenge the Church of Scotland to develop its response to climate change and to consider how it forms part of our duty to care for the earth, how it relates to all the Church's work on poverty and the economy and how it forms part of a global ecumenical movement.

7.2   A challenge for the Church as a whole

7.2.2   While responsibility for leading the Church's response to climate change rests with the Church and Society Council, it is clear that the response must come from the Church as a whole, from its councils, committees, presbyteries and congregations. The following proposals demonstrate the breadth of this commitment and the need for cross council support and involvement.

7.3   Creation Time

7.3.1   Creation Time is an annual celebration of the beauty and importance of creation and an opportunity to reflect on our care of the earth. It runs every year from the beginning of September to the first Sunday of October. It is supported by a range of organisations, including Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), and the European Christian Environment Network (ECEN). It is now a major annual event in many countries across Europe for churches of many denominations. In the UK a range of resources are available online, particularly on the CTBI website. Creation Time provides an opportunity for congregations to consider climate change and its implications in a broader context. It also offers the opportunity to reflect on these issues in prayer and in worship. The General Assembly is asked to support this initiative by instructing the Church and Society Council in partnership with Mission and Discipleship Council to publicise this opportunity to all congregations and presbyteries.

7.4   Practical action

7.4.1   In 2009 the General Assembly asked all presbyteries to prepare a plan to help congregations '*measure energy consumption in their church buildings, ascertain their carbon footprint and achieve a year-on-year reduction of 5% of their carbon footprint*' . As was noted in the report to the General Assembly 2010 many but not all presbyteries responded positively to the instruction.

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1   http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/browse/3/article/1634/churches-want-europe-to-t.html

Among the criticism received from presbyteries is that the instruction is too crude and fails to take account of the widely differing circumstances of church buildings. Presbyteries also identified a pressing need for support and guidance for congregations to help them take on the difficult challenges of energy management.

7.4.2   In response it is proposed to work with:

- the General Trustees and others to explore whether the brief to the churches energy consultants can be revised to include not only an energy supply element but also energy management advice;
- the Priority Areas Team to explore the opportunities for installing renewable energy devices such as solar panels in church buildings to help congregations reduce their carbon footprints, their energy bills and possibly generate an income from feed-in tariffs;
- Eco-Congregation Scotland to explore the development of a website where examples of good practice and other resources on energy management can be shared by congregations.

7.4.3   The General Assembly is asked to support this interdepartmental and partnership approach to encourage the development of energy management in church buildings to take advantage of new technology and the increased financial support that is becoming available.

7.5   Energy Management Group

7.5.1   As a result of the General Assembly 2009 deliverance, an energy management group has been constituted; charged with putting into effect the 5% reduction in carbon footprint in 121 and other centrally managed properties. The group is chaired by the Secretary to the Council of Assembly and brings together departments with responsibility for property management, including CrossReach. The group reports to Central Services Committee, whose report includes more details of the work undertaken in 121 to meet, and exceed, the 5% target.

7.6   Work with the external partners

7.6.1   The Scottish Government is putting into effect a Public Engagement Strategy to help implement the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Church, in partnership with other organisations in membership of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, is committed to help meet the targets set out in the Act. This will require structural and behavioural change across Scotland over many years; changes that will not be easy and may challenge our material way of life.

7.6.2   The Church has also responded positively to a request for partnership from the Magyarországi Református Egyház – the Reformed Church of Hungary (RCH). The RCH wishes to develop an eco-management system for congregations in Hungary and has asked the Church of Scotland to advise on how this might be done. The Convener and Secretary of the Council signed an agreement with Bishop Dr Gusztáv Bölcskei, Presiding Bishop, and Dr Huszár Pál, Lay President, for the RCH in October 2010. The programme of work will last until 2012 and is funded through the European Christian Environmental Network.

7.6.3   Eco-Congregation Scotland is now a separate charity and is developing its own resources and funding. However, as 200 of the 270 eco-congregations across Scotland are Church of Scotland congregations, we will continue to work in close partnership to help and support its growth and development.

7.7   Development in the long term

7.7.1   Climate change is a challenge that cannot be quickly resolved. Rather it is a slowly unfolding set of changes that will require us to consider how we can care for creation as a whole and how our economy and way of life should properly reflect care for creation. This will continue to involve both spiritual and practical action across the Church and it is important that the Church considers how this response should develop, particularly in the context of other changes in the organisation and resources of the Church.

7.7.2   To do this the General Assembly is asked to instruct the Church and Society Council and the Central Services Committee to consider how the work of responding to climate change is taken forward and to report to the General Assembly with proposals in 2012.

8.   Young People and Decision-Making

The following report *Young People and Decision-Making* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk.

8.1 'Do you renew your commitment, with God's help, to live before all God's children in a kindly and Christian way, and to share with them the knowledge and love of Christ?

> **We do.**
>
> **We will nurture one another in faith, uphold one another in prayer, encourage one another in service.'**
>
> *From the Order for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland.*

8.2 This report has been written at the request of the 2010 General Assembly. Our task was to report on the ways in which Councils and Presbyteries are enabling the voices of children and young people to be heard in appropriate and effective ways in their decision-making processes.

8.3 The report is based on a survey of young people, Presbyteries, Councils, Committees and other organisations outwith the Church of Scotland about how young people are involved in decision-making. The report begins with a short section titled 'learning from scripture' which underpins the thinking behind the approach that we believe the Church should adopt.

8.4 We have found that there are some exciting projects, both longstanding and new. The National Youth Assembly has been widely recognised in our survey as a great example for the Church. We also learned about the Presbytery of Europe's plan to hold a Youth Presbytery meeting in February 2011, which we understand is one of the first of its kind. We have also found that in some areas the voices of children and young people are not being heard. We hope that the report will provide groups in and associated with the Church of Scotland an opportunity to reflect on how they will respond to the issues raised.

8.5 There are also national charitable organisations, such as Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament, that offer valuable examples and experience of how to improve how the Church involves young people in decision-making. One way is for all bodies in the Church to take seriously their responsibilities to appoint young people, whether as elders, as representatives to the General Assembly, or in other appropriate ways. We would also like the report of the Nominations Committee to the General Assembly to include statistics on the number of young people nominated and appointed by the Assembly each year.

8.6 In order to overcome barriers to participation in decision-making, the report urges Presbyteries and national Councils and Committees of the Church to appoint a named person to champion young people's involvement and to consider how the timing and format of meetings to allow a more inclusive way for people to be involved in decision making.

8.7 In order to monitor progress and developments on this issue we will endeavour to continue working with the National Youth Assembly and the Mission and Discipleship Council. We hope to produce a report for the 2013 Assembly and every two years thereafter.

9.   Ecumenical Issues

9.1   The Council is committed to working ecumenically wherever possible. As part of its strategic review it is also considering how to build on its relationships with Scottish and British church partners in sharing ideas and undertaking joint work.

9.2   The Council is represented on a range of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Networks and Groups. This helps the Council to develop good working relationships, helping the Church of Scotland to be more effective at influencing decision-makers and sharing ideas with church members and the public. We are currently represented on the following ACTS bodies: Church and Society Network, Scottish Churches' Education Group, Scottish Churches' Racial Justice Group and the Scottish Churches' Rural Group. We work through CTBI particularly through the Church and Public Issues Network, the Environmental Issues Network (EIN) and the Racial Justice Network. At a European level, the Council Secretary is a member of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), and we are also members of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN).

9.3   The Council also participates in more informal and bilateral conversations, for instance through Radar, (the group of UK church officers who work on Westminster legislation), meeting representatives of the Scottish Catholic Education Services, with Christian Aid Scotland, with Eco Congregation Scotland and working ad hoc with other churches on particular projects and issues where our aims coincide.

WORK IN SOCIETY

10. Science and Ethics

10.1 The Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRT)

10.1.1   The SRT continues to work hard to help the Church engage with ethical issues in science. This is has involved the project interacting with people within churches, in the scientific community and wider society. In addition to speaking at Presbytery events, Kirk Sessions and other groups, a number of pieces have been published in newspapers, Life and Work and scientific journals. The SRT has also been involved in a number of specific pieces of work, some of which are detailed below. In addition, a 'watching brief' of current and future issues of interest to the Church is maintained.

10.2   *Economics Commission*: the SRT has been involved in co-ordinating this important piece of work. Under the chairmanship of Prof Charles Munn, this group has been examining the ethics underpinning our economic activity. A number of expert witnesses have given evidence to the Commission. A more detailed report of this work is presented elsewhere.

10.3   *End of life issues*: The SRT was heavily involved with the opposition to the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill, which was proposed by Independent MSP Margo Macdonald. Although this proposed legislation, which sought to legalise assisted dying in Scotland, was rejected by the Scottish Parliament, the debate around end of life issues continues. It is important that the Church continues to be involved in the debate on issues such as allocation of scarce health resources and the expansion of palliative care.

10.4   *Suicide among young men and mental health friendly churches*: detailed reports of this work are provided elsewhere. Input to these pieces of work from Ministries Council staff, Crossreach, Parish Development Fund and Mission and Discipleship Council staff, as well as from the National Youth Assembly has been invaluable in developing these pieces of work.

10.5   *Brain imaging*: The SRT was invited to be involved in a series of debates on the use of brain imaging, particularly in a legal context. These events were organised by the SINAPSE network, and culminated in an event in the Scottish Parliament. As a result of the SRTs involvement,

a 1000 word piece from the SRT has been submitted to the academic journal *Cortex*. This work also ties in with the piece of work on neuroethics which is currently being developed, which looks at issues such as 'who should be able to see what you're thinking?', and 'are we more than simply machines?'

10.6   *Edinburgh International Science Festival (EISF)*: Each year, the SRT sponsors an event at the EISF. Dr David Pullinger, a former director of the SRT project, spoke at an event during the EISF in April. This helped to highlight the Church and Society Council report on the Internet. In addition, the SRT supported the Menagerie Theatre Company in performing a play on the life of Isaac Newton. 'Let Newton be' was performed in Glasgow in March.

10.7.1   *Military covenant:* The Ethics of Defence report to the General Assembly 2009 (available at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/3773/ethics_of_defence_09.pdf) highlighted the issue of the military covenant, stating that the covenant:
"describes the unwritten psychological contract between (armed services personnel) and the nation and implies that all parties have mutual obligations and responsibilities."
The Report to the General Assembly also: 'Commend[ed] the re-examination of the Military Covenant in the recent Government initiative and urge[d] HM Government to ensure that it is both fully implemented and appropriately resourced.'

10.7.2   The Church and Society Council welcomes the fact that an independent task force is examining this issue. The Task Force was led by Professor Hew Strachan from Oxford University, has now published its report: www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3C6A501D-5A85-47C9-9D89-B99C5E428061/0/militarycovenanttaskforcerpt.pdf

10.7.3   The Council would urge that all concerned take seriously their responsibility in upholding the spirit of the covenant.

10.8   *SRT@40:* A brief history of the first 40 years of the SRT project was written by Dr John Francis, the first director of the SRT. This is available to download from the SRTs new website, www.srtp.org.uk.

10.9   A number of events to mark this anniversary also took place in 2010. A very successful conference celebrating the SRT's 40th birthday was attended by over 80 people on November 20th 2010 in Edinburgh City Chambers. The SRT would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement which we continue to receive from the Church of Scotland, particularly through the Church and Society Council, and looks forward to many more fruitful years of engagement in vigorous debate.

11. The Internet: in whose image?
Responding to the ethical and moral challenges of the Internet

> The following report *The Internet: in whose image?* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk

11.1   The context
11.1.1   During the past ten years the Internet has become an unremarkable part of the lives of most people in the UK. It has entered our working spaces, our schools and our living rooms, subtly modifying the way we do business, find information, learn, shop and entertain ourselves. However, the Internet did not spring miraculously into our offices and homes. It has been created, shaped and developed by scientists, software engineers, hardware and software manufacturers, international standards organisations, professional bodies, governments, telecommunications multinationals, the

military, hackers, universities, industries, entrepreneurs and investors. Each of these has goals and objectives sometimes complementary but often conflicting, for design and use of digital technology.

11.2   A Vision of the Unexpected

11.2.1   Throughout human development, tools have been used by society and have often shaped society. The Internet is such a tool: indeed, it is arguably the latest in a series of technological revolutions, starting with the invention of writing, which have profoundly influenced the development of the world. The Internet is not just the World Wide Web, although that is an important element of it. It is, rather, a universe of connectedness, where systems speak to systems, people speak to people and small actions can have enormous and global consequences in a way which was not formerly possible.

11.2.2   The Internet may be used for good or ill. Tension is inevitable, since information 'wants' to be free and to be used to democratise and liberate; yet it is also immensely valuable and can be commoditised and monetised. To achieve the full potential of the Internet as a place of the free exchange of information and ideas, yet where the weak have protection, and also a place where economic activity may be carried on in confidence that contracts will be kept and people will not be cheated requires some level of regulation. In the early days, when the Internet was the preserve of a small number of academics, there was a brotherhood of shared values but those days are long gone, and there is increasing pressure for external constraints. However given the tensions mentioned above and the global nature of the Internet, how effective can those constraints be, who should impose them and to what extent should they be there at all?

11.3   Inherent Tensions

11.3.1   Given the international nature of the Internet, it is inherently difficult to regulate it a national level. Frequently the force of circumstance can cede control to economically powerful jurisdictions. For example, a business situated in the European Union, but doing a significant part of its business with the United States may find itself defaulting to a position where, to be safe, it conducts itself according to the US regulatory requirements. This may be significant where the regulatory regime which asserts *de facto* control is notably more, or less stringent than other regimes.

11.3.2   However, the 'critical mass' of Internet users can mean that sometimes the values of the would-be regulators are brought into conflict with those whom they would seek to regulate. Thus, how effective can draconian regulations be for the control of, for example, illegal filesharing, when most of the hundreds of millions of monthly visitors to illegal filesharing sites see nothing morally wrong in filesharing? The would-be regulators can end up seeming like Canute trying to hold back the waves – serving only to bring not only the regulatory regime into question, but even the law in general into disrepute. The mores of the regulated can often trounce the regulators and draconian enforcement often brings an equal and opposite reaction. An example of this process may be found in the rise of Swedish Pirate party which stands on a platform opposed to copyright, patents and other forms of intellectual property and in favour of legislation to allow free file sharing of music and video. It has three MEPs. Thus, the Internet can lead to a power shift in society from corporations and legislators to the wider public.

11.4   Ethical standards:

11.4.1   This power shift to the public gives huge importance to the question of what standards of morality may exist or may be asserted.

11.4.2   Google's founders articulate the simplistic principle: 'don't be evil', but this can often more easily be said than done, and, in any event it begs the question of by which standards or moral or religious code 'good' and 'evil' are to be determined, especially in a world that extends beyond the political West and the economic North.

11.4.3 There is little by way of international standard setting: UNESCO has a very limited, facilitative role, though, where the standards are an integral part of the engineering of the Internet, (for example, in the allocation of domain names) self-regulation by bodies such as ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) and Nominet (the Internet registry for .uk domain names) can be effective.

11.4.4 For the most part, what is happening is the emergence of shared values from within cyberspace itself, for example the Open Source movement (where dozens or even hundreds of Internet users can collaborate on a joint project) and the collective endeavour of sites such as Wikipedia.

11.5 Social Networking

11.5.1 Social networking sites highlight many of the problems discussed above. They can be engines of mass mobilisation and social change – as in President Obama's campaign, the rise of the Tea Party and the spread of the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions. Yet they also profoundly affect the way in which we communicate and interact – and can change the very nature of whom we consider to be our 'friends'. Such sites can be used for exploitation or cyberbullying, and can often mutually reinforce the values of small, marginal and often prejudiced or socially unacceptable groups.

11.5.2 They can influence and inculcate values in their users, both by persuasive technologies such as targeted advertising, and at a more subtle level can unconsciously modify the mores of their users. For example, Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook (a popular social networking website) is on record as having said that the world would be a better place without privacy, and Facebook is constantly changing its privacy settings so as to default sell minimum levels of privacy.

11.5.3 These effects can become even more pronounced in virtual worlds such as Second Life (a virtual environment where people interact with each other as 'avatars' and which has developed into an extensive alternative version of reality).

11.6 The Contested Self
11.6.1 The Virtual Self
11.6.1.1 The Internet has a persistent memory and individuals can create multiple virtual personalities. We may construct virtual selves by creating avatars (an online character we control) or Facebook profiles, but, everywhere we go, we leave digital traces. In a real sense, we are where we have been. The Internet can be unforgiving and unforgetting.

11.6.2 The Excluded Self
11.6.2.1 With the rise of e-Government (state activities being conducted through the internet) we are constructing a digital identity to interact with the state, and that may bring with it the concept of a digital underclass to whom government services (increasingly digitally delivered) are no longer available.

11.6.3 The Relational Self
11.6.3.1 This displacement and fracturing raises profound moral and theological issues. It may provoke alienation, for self or for society, or it may provoke moral and spiritual reflection about those who are marginalised because they do not have access to the Internet.

11.6.3.2 Christianity uses the language of the physical: the word became flesh. A virtual world which may lack the physical interaction to be found in, for example, Holy Communion raises questions which go to the root of the Christian understanding of humanity.

11.6.3.3 A critique of virtualisation asks whether the reality of an engaged and active community living by the faith which grace demands can exist in a space which is purely virtual. Can faithfulness and love empower and transform a virtual world to make it part of the reign or kingdom of God? In other words, what would the Church look like in this virtual world?

11.6.3.4 At the heart of the gospel is our relationship with other people and righteousness, which is ultimately about the relationship between humanity and God. Our understanding of Christianity has been incarnational. For some, virtualisation reduces or negates the criticality of Incarnation, while, for others, it provides a redemptive possibility – a new space pregnant with new possibilities. Through the use of our reason, the resources of our heritage and history, and with theological insight we have the opportunity to encourage this virtual world into a place of hope, value and purpose knowing that it, too, belongs under the reign of a gracious and loving God.

11.7 E-Commerce: The Globalised, Personalised World

11.7.1 Governments in most developed countries have heavily invested in the development of virtual superhighways and related infrastructure in order to obtain the efficiencies and competitive advantages available both to ordinary people and to companies operating in an e-commerce friendly environment. The Internet facilitates business to consumer and business to business transactions. The ability to transact online has not only globalised the shopping experience, it has also enabled online retailers to provide a highly personalised shopping environment.

11.7.2 Persuasive technologies may be defined as computer systems, devices, or applications intentionally designed to change a person's attitudes or behaviour in a predetermined way. Advertisements in traditional media are often targeted at particular audiences, but digital technologies allow the sharper targeting of online advertisements, seductively presenting products in such a way to appeal to a person having a particular profile, and even changing and adapting as that profile changes. The offer is dynamically modified based on the changing demands of the user and the richness of the profile. Data-mining coupled to dynamic interactivity has produced ever-more persuasive technologies.

11.8 Ethics of Personalisation

11.8.1 Personalisation by itself might not seem to be a particularly contentious concept. Many argue that it provides obvious benefits to users and consumers and to online retailers and providers. Problems however might arise when users experience price discrimination based on their profile or when users might unknowingly disclose information about themselves to others. Despite these consumer reservations, data mining is now a standard technique in most off-the-shelf software for online retailers, enabling them to increase the number of hits to their websites and tailor their offers and prices based on users' profiles.

11.8.2 Personalisation raises the important issue of ownership of search-history and other online personal data, and indeed ownership of a constructed virtual personality based on amalgamated information from different online sources. This brings about genuine concerns as to civil liberties.

11.8.3 Persuasion is also subtly used through social networking sites where friends can recommend products online. This may tend to expose vulnerable users (especially young people) to undue peer group pressure.

11.8.4 The personalisation of software is now carried out not just in retail, but also in gaming and the online sex industry. The software remembers who a user is and what the user has seen. It uses that knowledge to influence the user and may thus encourage vulnerable people into addiction.

11.8.5 The nature of persuasive technologies is to be persuasive, and people can find themselves victims of addictions, whether to shopping, to gambling or to sex websites. Furthermore, the victims of sex websites include not only the addicts but also those who are exploited in providing the material placed upon the sites.

11.9   Rising to the Challenge

11.9.1   The Internet like any other tool is morally neutral, but the uses we make of it and our choices in connection with it are not. Our uses of the Internet not only reflect, but may have the capacity to change society. Many and diverse are the currents which flow in the Internet, which is, in a real sense a conflicted space: conflicts between the impulse for freedom and the need to regulate, the human search for liberty and the urge of those wielding power to control, the struggle amongst competing mores, the intractable issues of real and virtual identity, the conflicted self, exclusion and, indeed our very understanding of the incarnational nature of our faith.

11.9.2   All of these present challenges, but also provide opportunities. So it is that the Church of Scotland should continue to engage with these issues and seek to develop policies which may help meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities. For example, the Church may wish to explore, with appropriate partners, the development of an ethical code for software developers, manufacturers and all Internet users to promote the creation of innovative technologies, not just for commercial gain but also for the good of society.

11.9.3   Like any other technology, digital technology has the potential to affect our lives for the good or for the bad. As Christians we are called to live our lives responsibly, following the teachings of Jesus. Although most of us are not directly responsible for the design of digital technologies, we all use these technologies and therefore we should be aware of the role which they have in shaping our culture, in order that we might engage creatively with the digital world represented by the Internet, seeking always to fulfil our calling to be leaven in the dough.

12. Mental Health

12.1   *What makes a church a good one to belong to if you are struggling with your mental health? Is it the fact they have a Counsellor on staff or have an annual Depression*

Awareness Day? Or is it that they are aware enough to care, small enough to notice and moving slowly enough to actually deliver? How can we assist those who wish to take that first perilous step of crossing the threshold one Sunday morning to see if the Peace really is shared![2]

12.2   This report grew out of issues raised at the General Assembly in May 2009, and will touch on a number of topics – in particular, questions around how congregations can be more welcoming to those who struggle with mental health problems. In addition, the views and assistance of young people have specifically been sought.

12.3   In exploring issues around developing 'mental health friendly churches', we have been working with 'Mind and Soul' [www.mindandsoul.info], a national organisation looking at Christianity and Mental Health. One of their Directors is Dr Rob Waller, Consultant Psychiatrist in St Johns Hospital, Livingston, who has been very helpful. Along with his colleagues, Dr Waller has been helping to develop strategies to help churches become more mental health friendly. A draft statement, described as being 'aspirational' is commended to the General Assembly:

Churches are friendly to issues of mental health and disability as measured by the extent to which:
- *People with difficulties feel they 'belong' whether or not they are able to take part in or attend meetings (although it is of course a good sign if they do feel able to attend and be part of meetings).*
- *A contact/team is available to consult with who 'champion' issues around disability and health and are able to signpost local services.*
- *Information is available in alternative formats appropriate for different needs [e.g. large print, audio, electronic].*

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2   Mental Health and the Friendly Church. Waller, R, Seedall, S and T Wood. Accord (Magazine of the Association of Christian Counsellors) January 2011

- *Physical adjustments are willingly made to help those with different needs and the style of individual services is relatively predictable.*
- *Church activities welcome, accept and are positive environments that are flexible to people's needs.*
- *People give their time sacrificially to listen and respond to pastoral issues, ideally described by a Pastoral Care Policy/ Strategy.*
- *The culture/ethos of the church is one of an on-going journey of valuing all, addressing their needs and enabling them to use their gifts and contribute.*[3]

12.4 One of the problems in seeking to address this topic is the very diversity of what would be covered by the term 'mental health issues'. The term, 'mental health problem', covers a wide range of problems which affect a person's ability to get on with their daily life. Mental health problems can affect anyone, of any age and background, and have an impact on the people around them such as their family, friends and carers. They take many different forms and affect people in different ways. There is no single cause of mental health problems and the reasons they develop are complex.[4]

12.5 Some forms of mental illness present as an exaggeration of the normal emotions and moods which we all experience. However, it is when this interferes with a person's ability to cope with every-day life that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or illness. Some people experience debilitating anxiety and panic attacks, while others may have disorders of mood, either serious depression or inappropriate elation and euphoria that is often accompanied by frenzied hyperactivity. There is no universally agreed demarcation between normal behaviour and behaviour associated with mental illness.

12.6 Schizophrenia and personality disorders are also types of mental health problem. Diseases such as dementia generally develop in old age, whereas eating disorders are more common in young people. Mental health problems can develop as a result of difficult life events, such as moving house, losing a job or the death of someone close. Drinking too much alcohol over a long period of time and using illegal drugs can contribute to mental health problems, particularly in people who are already vulnerable.[5]

12.7 It is generally accepted that, on average, 1 in 4 people experience some kind of mental health problem. Of these, however, only a relatively small number experience a serious and enduring mental health problem. The label 'mental health illness' is highly stigmatising, encouraging people to think of 'the mentally ill' as different. There can therefore be few congregations which do not include parishioners and members who daily face issues such as depression, addictions, and dementia, as well as many less debilitating situations. Many of these issues are of such complexity and depth that to address them specifically would be beyond the scope of this report. Nor should we imagine that people of faith are somehow immune from these issues: however, the church should be a place where care, support and understanding are always at the forefront of our thoughts. After all, Jesus reminded his disciples that the characteristic by which they will be recognised is their love for one another.[6]

12.8 In addition to the fact that many mental health problems can be hidden from view is the fact that they carry a degree of social stigma. Many who have not experienced depression, for example, may believe that 'we've all felt down at some stage' and that the affected person need only 'pull themselves together and stop feeling sorry for themselves'. There is also a lot of 'spiritual

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3   www.mindandsoul.info
4   Mental Health Foundation. http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/information/mental-health-overview/mental-health-problems/accessed 18/01/2011

5   National Health Service http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Mental-health/Pages/Introduction.aspx accessed 18/01/2011
6   John 13: 35

stigma' attached to mental health: churches in general are not seen as being good at addressing mental health issues. There is a perception of Christianity among some which perpetuates a pressure to appear 'fine': a sense that if you reveal your mental health issue, your faith is judged, because as Christians we should be relying on God.

12.9 Among the issues which must be addressed are those of practicalities, pastoral care and prognosis. While many problems which affect our physical health can be successfully treated by medical or surgical means, many mental health problems are not amenable to 'permanent fixes'. Thus the burden which must be carried by those affected by these issues (and those who care for them) is not only heavy, but can be life-long. How do we support people through dark times when we can't offer prospect of effective change?

12.10 Pastoral ministry is filled with challenges, but preparation for pastoral crises can be enhanced by having good policies and pastoral care teams. There are many resources available – see, for example, Dr Marion Carson's book on the pastoral care of people with mental health problems[7], and the talk by Rev Will Van Der Hart on pastoral care.[8] This practical talk emphasises the role of prayer, personal preparedness, good local knowledge and strong policies in difficult times. In addition, the presence of the church, a recognition of our role as a community of carers and people simply 'being there' in times of need can be very important. Many organisations also provide training and assistance in dealing with difficult pastoral situations. Some of these are listed in the report on Suicide among Young Men, which has been produced by the Church and Society Council for the 2011 General Assembly[9], for example:

- See Me… (www.seemescotland.org), a national organisation working to challenge the stigma of mental ill-health
- Breathing Space (www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk), a free and confidential helpline targeted at people experiencing low mood, depression or extreme worry
- Samaritans (www.samaritans.org), a confidential emotional support service available 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

12.13 In the view of many, unless it takes place at 11 o'clock on a Sunday morning in a building with pews and a minister holding forth from a pulpit, it's 'not really church'. While this may represent a slight stereotype, much of what goes on in a 'normal' church service can present huge practical problems for those who struggle to cope with mental health problems – for example, being able to sit for 10 – 15 minutes, or to participate effectively in congregational responses. Low self esteem and lack of confidence might also be barriers to a person fully engaging in worship and fellowship.

12.14 Many congregations are already responding innovatively to such needs: for example, a church in Larbert regularly welcomes 30 – 40 people to their half-hour service on a Thursday morning. For a variety of reasons, including mental health issues, many of these worshipers feel unable to attend a full Sunday morning service. Other specialised resources, such as the 'Being with God' series of Bible and prayer guides for people with dementia and those struggling with memory loss, are also becoming available.[10] Other websites and resources, such as training in mental health first aid are also available.[11]

[7]   Carson, M.L.S. (2008): The Pastoral Care of People with Mental Health Problems. SPCK Publishing

[8]   http://www.mindandsoul.info/Group/Group.aspx?ID=132243

[9]   A summary is reported below, and the full paper on Suicide Among Young Men is available at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/general_assembly

[10]   See http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Shop/BeingWithGod/114458.id

[11]   http://www.smhfa.com/

12.15 Many agencies of the Church of Scotland, such as CrossReach, are directly involved in working with issues around mental health. For example, the achievement by Allarton in Partick (Glasgow) in helping people of different ages and severities of mental health problem cope on their own in the community deserves recognition.

In addition, for a number of years, issues around mental health have been raised in the Church of Scotland National Youth Assembly (NYA). For example, one of deliverances arising out of the debate at NYA 2008 proposed that the NYA:

> 'Urges the Church of Scotland to ensure that everyone, and in particular key figures in congregations, are aware of the issues surrounding and resources available to people with mental health difficulties, and encourage these to be used.'[12]

12.16 As part of the process of preparing this report, in collaboration with the NYA 2010, a small survey into mental well-being of young people was undertaken. This was done using the validated WEMWBS scale, a 14-point self-administered questionnaire. Developed by the Universities of Warwick and Edinburgh on behalf of NHS Scotland, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was funded by the Scottish Government's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.

12.17 Conclusions

12.17.1 Many issues around ensuring churches are welcoming to those with different needs will not be resolved quickly or easily. Indeed, while congregations may have been working for many years on the sort of things that make it easy for a physically disabled person to come to church, just because a church has a ramp, lift, hearing aid loop or accessible website doesn't mean

that if a physically disabled person turns up they will receive a loving welcome. Issues around making churches accessible for those with mental health problems are often more complex, and progress has often lagged behind provision for those with a physical disability.

12.17.2 Mental health impacts on all aspects of life, including our social status, our employment status, our relationships with those round about us and on our status within the church. One of the best ways of dealing with mental health issues is through healthy relationships: our churches should surely be a place where everybody can be sure of having someone to listen, somebody who cares.

12.17.3 As Paul reminds us in his letter to the church in Galatia:

> "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ."[13]

13. Suicide among young men: the Church as a community of carers

> The following report *Suicide among young men: the Church as a community of carers* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk.

13.1 Introduction: Suicide in young men

13.1.1 Suicide is a leading cause of death among young men in Scotland. A young death is always one of the most devastating events for a family, and when that death results from suicide the tragedy is all the harder to bear. In Scotland, men make up the largest proportion of young

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[12] NYA 2008, Debate 1, Del 2. Deliverances 1, 3, 4 and 5 are also particularly relevant to mental health issues

[13] Galatians 6:2

people taking their own lives. (The peak rate among both men and women is in the 35 – 44 age group; among men the 25 – 34 age group has the second highest rate. The overall male to female ratio is about 3:1.) Many churches struggle to know how to deal with issues around suicide.

13.1.2   Life is a gift from God; it is not ours to give away. We are persons-in-relation, and have a responsibility for the lives of those around us. Suicide is a tragedy, but it is a tragedy which belongs to the whole community. The Christian community never accepts the argument that 'others would be better off without me.' Rather, it insists that "the community cannot be complete without you", because we are creatures loved beyond all measure by a God who *is* love. While we recognise that people of faith may struggle with suicide ideation, attempt or completion, we can be assured that that love which brought us into existence will not abandon us when the storms of life make our pains unbearable.

Such a theological position enables us to see the necessary types of theological understanding and pastoral responses we will require to minister faithfully to people who are threatened by suicide or who find themselves having to deal with its aftermath.

13.2   Suicide Prevention
13.2.1   Doing all that is possible to prevent the tragedy of death by suicide is an important aspect of the work of the church, concerned as we are to share new life and new hope on our journey through life. For us, as Christians, it is our faith as well as our care and compassion which calls us to 'be there' for, and to help and support those who are contemplating taking their own life.

13.2.2   For the person thinking of taking their own life, someone *being there* with them can, literally, mean the difference between life and death. A caring presence can bring strength and hope through even the darkest of times, for example:
•   The presence of the church;

•   The presence of God;
•   The presence of others.

13.2.3   By being there, with and for a person who is struggling with painful feelings, who no longer feels able to cope with circumstances and who has lost any sense of hope, we may be able to prevent him or her from acting on suicidal thoughts or feelings.

13.2.4   It is possible to undertake training to become more able at supporting others who feel desperate or suicidal. Becoming aware of the range of organisations – national as well as local – that exist to support people through times of pain and distress, is a very useful tool in suicide prevention. In the full report there is a list of useful websites giving details of some of the organisations out there who can help, many of which offer free training in issues related to suicide.

13.3   Bereavement: Dealing with Life after a Suicide
13.3.1   A death from suicide arouses a range of responses in families and friends of the loved one who has died. Professionals involved can experience many of the same emotions, particularly if they have been involved with mental health issues prior to the event. Ministers and other pastoral workers are in the highly stressful and demanding situation of having to provide love and bereavement care while they are coping with these emotions within themselves.

13.3.2   The church often becomes involved after a suicide and it is just as important to look at how the church, in its parishes and communities, deals with suicide and with those bereaved by suicide. Bereavement by suicide does not necessarily take longer to heal than any other bereavement. However, there can be some questions in the aftermath of a suicide which make coping with that particular bereavement difficult:
•   Why did this happen?
•   Why could we/I not stop it?
•   Why did we/I not know this tragedy was going to happen?

13.3.3 Grief may be mingled with feelings such as:

- Anger
- Helplessness
- Guilt
- Confusion
- Puzzlement
- Shame

13.3.4 Added to these emotional stressors are the involvement of police, the need for a post mortem and the involvement of the Procurator Fiscals Office, and, for those in the care of the Mental Health Services there may be a medical Critical Incident Review.

13.3.5 Survivors of traumatic events often report that positive outcomes can follow negative experiences. For those bereaved by suicide these can be as varied as the campaigning for better health services or an improvement to existing services after a suicide; the donation of body parts to transplant services or the chance to speak at a funeral or memorial service.

13.4 Conclusion

13.4.1 There are undoubtedly many factors which contribute to this tragic situation: drug or alcohol abuse, a sense of alienation, a perceived lack of self-worth or purpose in life, or adverse socio-economic circumstances. Added to these is the lack of opportunity or encouragement for young men to express their emotions.

13.4.2 Any suicide, but particularly that of a young person, has a profound effect on the community to which the church seeks to minister. To our shame, the church in Scotland, at both a local and institutional level, has not always dealt with suicide with sufficient compassion. Many clergy report that dealing with a suicide is among the most stressful pastoral situations which they face.

13.4.3 While much of the pastoral care carried out by the church or the work that a local church does among young people may not be seen as being explicitly aimed at 'suicide prevention', it is undoubtedly true that providing a safe and secure space for young people to interact and to express themselves can be invaluable in this regard. In addition, the church family facilitates inter-generational contact in a way that few other institutions do.

13.4.4 In his Gospel, John records the words of the Good Shepherd:

> *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.[14]*

13.4.5 As shepherds of the local population in which we serve as a community of carers, suicide prevention and appropriate bereavement care must be our concern. To this end, a brief booklet aimed at Kirk Sessions has been prepared in conjunction with this report. This also contains a list of useful websites and other resources.

14. British Heart Foundation 50th Anniversary

14.1 2011 is the 50th birthday of the British Heart Foundation. BHF Scotland is the nation's heart charity, and is involved in a wide range of activities including education and awareness raising, caring for people living with cardiovascular disease, and researching the causes of and treatment for the disease.

14.2 Cardiovascular disease, sometimes called heart and circulatory disease, is an umbrella term for all diseases of the heart and circulation, including heart disease, stroke, heart failure and congenital heart disease.

14.3 Collectively, heart and circulatory diseases cause more than one in three of all deaths in Scotland, accounting for almost 18,000 deaths each year.

14.4 Heart disease is Scotland's biggest killer and the most common cause of premature death (death before the age of 75).

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[14] John 10 v. 10

14.5 The most recent figures show that:

- rates of heart disease in Scotland are higher than in other parts of the UK.
- coronary heart disease causes almost 9,000 Scottish deaths every year; that's more than 24 people every day.
- more than 8,000 men and 3,000 women in Scotland have a heart attack every year.
- stroke causes over 5,000 deaths in Scotland each year.

14.6 Across the UK, someone dies of a heart attack every six minutes. One in three people who have a heart attack die before reaching hospital.

14.7 There have been many advances in the treatment and care of people with heart disease in the last 50 years, many of them made by BHF researchers, including pacemakers, the use of statins to control cholesterol, and life-saving surgery for congenital heart conditions.

14.8 To find out more contact BHF Scotland on 0131 555 5891 or email scotland@bhf.org.uk. You can also visit the website www.bhf.org.uk/mbh

14.9 We commend and congratulate the British Heart Foundation for their 50 years of commitment to helping those affected by heart disease. We hope to hold a special service of commemoration during the anniversary year as a way of sharing our appreciation and thanks for the work that BHF Scotland does.

15. Societal Issues

15.1 The 2010 General Election saw a coalition government formed between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. One of the driving principles behind this alliance is a desire to reduce the budget deficit, which had reached historically high levels. A consequence of this fiscal and political reality has been the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, which implements considerable spending cuts across many areas of government expenditure. The knock-on effect for spending in Scotland will be felt as the Scottish Government and local councils adjust to this time of austerity.

15.2 On the one hand we are committed to working for economic justice and living and being alongside the poorest people in our communities. The consequences of the cuts on their lives will be dramatic, and, by some analyses, disproportionate compared to those on middle incomes. Many in the church will share the anger that we feel from our neighbours. On the other hand, however, the Church as an institution must often work with the secular authorities in order to advance our mission of service and witness.

15.3 This section of the report covers a wide range of societal issues, from domestic abuse to homelessness. There is also a consideration of Scotland's cultural landscape, a suggestion as to what the response of the church should be to extreme racist organisations, and a reflection of the past and present attitudes of the Churches in Scotland to the Travelling Community. We also offer a report on the ethics of clothes for consideration and reflection, as well as a summary of the Council's inter faith relationships that have been important in the past 12 months.

16. Domestic Abuse

16.1 The 2010 Assembly instructed the Church and Society Council to work together with the Ministries Council and the Guild to conduct a review of the recommendations of the Church and Nation Report to the 2003 General Assembly on domestic abuse with a view to strengthening the implementation of its recommendations.

16.2 This work is being taken forward by a small group who are developing relationships across the Church and with external agencies and are planning ways in which the 2003 recommendations can be properly addressed and taken forward. A fuller report on progress will be presented to the General Assembly in 2012.

16.3 The small group hopes to produce resources for use by congregations during the United Nations *16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women* (16 November – 1 December), including as part of the Starters for Sunday resources. The Church and Society Council will aim to encourage congregations to host an event or mark in some appropriate way this international initiative to raise awareness and call for action. We would also like to draw attention to our report on clothing and ethics, in particular the section referring to the *Thursdays in Black* movement (see paragraph 20.7 below).

16.4 The Church and Society Council, with partners, will seek to host a multi-agency conference with the aim of forging better partnership working at Scottish and UK levels on the issue of domestic abuse.

16.5 The Council will also request that Amnesty International's *White Ribbon* campaign is more widely promoted in the Church and in faith communities in Scotland more generally. This is a campaign of men who are against violence against women. To do this we will ask our ecumenical and inter faith partners to help to establish a group of up to 12 men from across Scotland's faith communities who can promote and solicit support for the campaign, and to raise awareness within their own community as well as in society at large.

17. One Scotland, Many Cultures

The following report *One Scotland, Many Cultures* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk

17.1 Part of the remit of the Church and Society Council has been to engage with social and political issues on behalf of the Church, often through the development of theological, ethical and spiritual perspectives on relevant issues.

17.2 It is in this context that the Council offers its full report on *One Scotland, Many Cultures* to the wider Church of Scotland. The full text of the report is available on the Church of Scotland website and from the office. An accompanying study guide to aid individual and small group reflection has also been produced.

17.3 The report *One Scotland, Many Cultures* takes its name from a Scottish Government project aimed at tackling racism and discrimination in Scottish society. We wish to emphasise our continued support for the eradication of racist views, prejudice and discrimination in Scotland, with our prayers and action for racial justice and equality.

17.4 The report's opening section provides a theological underpinning to the understanding from which the rest of the report proceeds. We are reminded how scripture tells us to protect the alien living in our land; of Jesus' own teaching about radical hospitality, inviting to our meals the 'outsiders' who may not be able to invite us back; and the Pentecost celebration embracing cultural differences and diversity.

17.5 *One Scotland, Many Cultures* is based on the conviction that we, as a national Kirk, still have a central role in Scottish culture. We realise that our position has changed from that of a generation ago, where people may have seen our culture as *the* culture for Scotland. Instead, we celebrate the richness that a plural and multi faith society brings to all aspects of our lives.

17.6 Scotland's face is changing as a result of net in-migration, following hundreds of years of net out-migration.

17.7 The report examines how the culture of the Church itself is not homogenous, and asks how this culture now fits in with a new and dynamic Scotland. Of central importance is how as a Church with a real focus

on mission, our culture can speak to those outwith the Church, either as a counter-cultural witnesses, or as a way to reach those to whom the Church's traditional way of being is outside their comfort zone. The report concludes that offering Jesus' radical hospitality must remain one of our core principles.

18. Racist Organisations

18.1　At the 2010 General Assembly the Convener of the Church and Society Council was asked about whether the Church of Scotland should have a policy with regard to racist organisations, following decisions made by other denominations. The Convener replied by saying that he had some sympathy with the point of view being expressed but that he was not prepared to make up policy on the floor of the Assembly. This issue was brought to the attention of the Council, who now submit this considered report.

18.2　Context

18.2.1　There is evidence that extreme racism remains present in society and that over the past decade racist movements have become better organised and gained following, on the streets as well as at the ballot box.

18.2.2　Two British Churches – the Methodist Church and the Church of England – have responded by publicly and clearly articulating an emphatic rejection of racist politics and social movements, and have gone so far as to make statements along the lines of which it is incompatible to be a member of their Church and a member or active supporter of a racist organisation or movement.

18.2.3　The Church and Society Council recommends that the Church of Scotland adopts a similar policy.

18.3　Church Teaching on Racism

18.3.1　In 1968 the World Council of Churches meeting in Uppsala stated that:

'Racism is a blatant denial of the Christian faith
1. It denies the effectiveness of the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, through whose love all human diversities lose their divisive significance
2. It denies our common humanity in creation and our belief that all people[15] are made in God's image
3. It falsely asserts that we find our significance in terms of racial identity rather than in Jesus Christ'

18.3.2　We commend this statement, and invite the whole Church to reaffirm its wholehearted support for it.

18.4　Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism

18.4.1　We believe that some racist organisations and movements are using religion as a proxy for race in their rhetoric and action. In particular we are concerned at the violent targeting of Muslim and Jewish property and communities.

18.4.2　The Church of Scotland is committed to inter-faith dialogue and relationships. We deplore the words and actions of those individuals and groups who seek to stir up religious hatred and division in our society.

18.5　The Church of Scotland

18.5.1　We hope that this report will be a clear indication that the Church of Scotland acknowledges that racism and religious hatred is fundamentally incompatible with what it teaches and believes.

18.5.2　The Church and Society Council invites all people involved in the life of the Church of Scotland to reflect on what the Bible says and Jesus taught about racism and what this means for politics and social issues in Scotland today. The Council is asked to work with others to prepare resources to help individuals and congregations reflect on these issues.

18.5.6　We urge people who are involved in the life of the Church and who are a member of or express,

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[15]　We have substituted the world 'people' for the word 'men' which was included in the 1968 report.

promote or solicit support for a political party or other organisation whose constitution, objectives, activities, policies or public statements incite racism or religious hatred to consider with the utmost seriousness whether or not their religious beliefs in the truth of the Christian faith and their political beliefs are compatible.

18.5.7   The Church and Society Council, working with the Scottish Churches' Racial Justice Group, will remain vigilant on the issue of racism in politics and wider society and will seek to continue to develop how Churches respond to this challenge. We continue to commend the annual commemoration of Racial Justice Sunday and invite congregations to re-commit to this ecumenical initiative.

19. The Scottish Travelling Community

The following report on *The Churches' attitude to the Travelling Community in Scotland* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk.

19.1   The Church and Society Council has worked with an ACTS-facilitated ecumenical working group to produce *A Report on the Churches' attitude to the Travelling Community in Scotland*, available from the Church of Scotland website, ACTS website and through the office. What follows is an abridged summary of the full report.

19.2   What is the Scottish Travelling Community?

19.2.1   There have been Travelling people in Scotland for many centuries and there has been considerable movement and interchange with Travellers from the rest of the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe. The historical origins of Travelling people are uncertain and there is

considerable debate about this issue both within the Travelling community itself and those who study it.

19.2.2   New-Age and Occupational travellers, such as show people, who, although being people who have a nomadic lifestyle, would not be recognised by the traditional Traveller Community as sharing a common ethnic root or being part of the culture of the historic Traveller Community. Travellers self-identify as Travellers whether or not their lifestyle is nomadic. There is a strong sense within the Traveller Community that it forms a distinct ethnic group and, while being diverse, its members have a strong sense of being interrelated. This is strengthened through use of a common language. The Traveller Community itself is not homogeneous and it is difficult even to find a single term which adequately defines it. Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Roma are all included under the general term 'Travellers.' However, there are strong elements of shared culture which reinforce a sense of common identity. These include, among other things: myths of origin; language, commonly known as Cant; and rules concerning food and hygiene.

19.2.3   Although the Scottish Government carries out a Twice Yearly Count of Gypsies/Travellers, it is impossible to gain an agreed figure for the number of Travellers in Scotland. The Scottish Government's two official counts in 2008 ranged from 897 to 1,547. However, it is known that a sizeable proportion of the Travelling Community does not take part in these counts, which are limited to sites provided by local authorities. Travellers themselves estimate their community to be as large as 20,000.

19.3   Issues

19.3.1   The report details areas where Travellers may face levels of discrimination based on their ethnic group. Such discrimination is utterly contrary to the Churches' work for racial justice.

19.3.2   These areas of discrimination include housing and access to land, employment, education, welfare and

harassment. Many of the prejudices against the Travelling Community are centuries old, but still exist in Scotland today.

19.3.3   There have been recent moves supported by the Scottish Government which have lead in a recent case to the recognition of Scottish Gypsies/Travellers as an ethnic group. This brings with it a range of legal protections and rights.

19.4   Attitudes of the Churches
19.4.1   Most Travellers would consider themselves to be Christians. While there is an element of distrust of institutional Churches among the Travelling Community, many have engaged with one or other denomination over the years and there is also a growing Traveller evangelical movement.

19.4.2   The Churches' attitudes to Travellers have often reflected the attitudes of society at large. However, although in the research for this report strenuous efforts were made to uncover specific instances of acts of institutional discrimination by Churches against Travellers, no evidence has been found. This is not to say that individual church members have not acted in discriminatory ways and that the Churches have failed to challenge them when they have done so.

19.4.3   Illustrations of the Churches' reflection of societal attitudes have been found. In 1838 the Church of Scotland set up a committee for the "Reformation of Gypsies." The assumption was that Travellers to be shown how to live a 'normal' way of life.

19.4.4   Attitudes had changed quite considerably by 1970. In the report of the then Home Board to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, attention was given to the work of Rev Dennis Sutherland among Travelling people across a wide area of Scotland. It was also noted that the Home Board had was working with others to advance access to education for Traveller children.

19.4.5   With hindsight, we can regard with regret some of the attitudes which the Churches have displayed towards the Travelling Community and, when it occurred, deplore their historic failure to stand alongside a minority group facing discrimination and even persecution. However, it should be acknowledged that proposals such as those outlined above were made in the belief, at the time, that they would bring benefit both to the Travelling Community and to wider society.

19.4.6   Church of Scotland archives indicate that its constructive involvement with the Travelling Community has primarily occurred at local level and this is also true for other Churches in Scotland. Difficulties in maintaining meaningful engagement with Travellers arise because most Churches dedicate most of their energies to serving non-Travelling communities and have always had difficulty with making use of the gifts of those whose time in a particular place is short. Several initiatives have however been set up at different times by the Church of Scotland's Home/National Mission department to provide ministry to Travellers in a way more suited to their culture and lifestyle than is possible through the parish structure.

19.5   Conclusion
19.5.1   The report concludes that society has responsibilities to all its members but for too long it has failed in its responsibilities to the Travelling Community. At the root of much of the difficulty faced by Travellers in Scotland through the centuries has been the idea that a settled lifestyle is the only acceptable model and that all people should conform to it. Travellers have long been a part of Scottish society, making a distinctive contribution to the culture and economy of Scotland. This is a contribution which is rightly being celebrated and recognised, not least in the case of the Church through the Mission and Discipleship Council's work at the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

19.5.2   Every voice in Scotland is worth hearing. As Churches are taking steps, particularly to hear the voices

of children and young people, they should also be asking if any other voices are being ignored. Churches need to become safe places for Travellers' voices to be heard and Churches should work for the right of the Traveller Community to be heard in all areas of society.

20. Are we what we wear? The ethics of our clothing choices

The following report *Are we what we wear? The ethics of our clothing choices* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk

20.1   What do our clothes say about ourselves? How do our decisions about what to buy and wear impact on ourselves, on others and the environment?

20.2   The Church and Society Council offers the report *Are we what we wear? The ethics of our clothing choices* to aid reflection on the ethics of clothes. Copies of the report are available on the Church of Scotland website and through the Church and Society Council office.

20.3   *Are we what we wear* points out that in Scotland, textile making is still an important industry, employing some 22,000 people and textiles account for around 3% of all Scottish manufactured exports.

20.4   The story of Adam and Eve and the letter from James remind us that clothes are merely a covering, beneath which we are all equal in the eyes of God.

20.5   For many people, the buying, wearing and showing off of clothes is important. The Church should affirm and celebrate the joy that people can take from clothing.

20.6   Many people make instant judgements about individuals and institutions by the types of clothes that are worn such as uniforms or work clothes. In the Church many members still wear their Sunday Best, an idea which came from a time when dressing smartly for Church was to 'offer your best for God'. Are people who don't wear 'Sunday Best' always made to feel welcome in churches? Or, if you are someone who doesn't dress up for Church, do you judge those who do?

20.7   People wear particular clothes for lots of reasons – to fit in, or to stand out. Our clothing choices are much more than about being warm and comfortable. Clothing choice can also be a political statement – which might have included wearing white bands during 2005 for **MAKE**POVERTY**HISTORY**, or blue t-shirts in December 2009 for the Wave, a rally to support action against climate change. Women and men all over the world wear all-black clothes on Thursdays – 'Thursdays in Black' is an international awareness raising and advocacy campaign against gender-based violence.

20.8   The fashion business has developed alongside the sophistication of clothes and the creativity of human beings. This can cause significant tension for Christians: it is good to recognise and celebrate creativity, but that same creativity can become an obsession with design perfection, and which tends to be blind to injustices and abuse. John Calvin and Calvin Klein are cut from very different cloth. Poverty is a reality for many people and even simple clothes, let alone fashionable ones, are an unattainable luxury. It should also be remembered that there are many who are exploited in the manufacture of clothing.

20.9   The environmental costs of clothing production are considerable. It is estimated that 2.6% of the world's water supply is used in the manufacture of cotton. In 2006 the UK's clothes carbon footprint was 3.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. The average UK citizen throws away 30kg of clothes every year.

20.10 We believe that much more should be done to encourage people to give their old clothes to charity, and to mend rather than replace torn garments. We would like to encourage Church members with skills in darning and sewing to help pass on their skills to others in their congregation. We also ask that people think about giving their clothes to charity, perhaps to the Salvation Army who have a large network of clothes recycling facilities.

20.11 Another important factor in the ethics of clothes is the conditions under which they are produced. Sweat shops are one part of the story, which is now generally well-known. However, the conditions for most garment workers, particularly in South and South East Asia, are poor. There are routine reports of workers being harassed, working long hours and receiving little pay. We recommend supporting campaigns which are working to improve the lives of garment workers, for instance the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, supported by Labour Behind the Label, which is seeking improved pay for garment workers. We would also like to encourage church members to consider contacting the clothes retailers they shop in to ask them how they intend to produce their clothes more responsibly, considering the social and environmental issues raised in the report.

21. Homelessness in Scotland
21.1 Background
21.1.1 Next year is the year which the Scottish Government has set as the target date for providing an entitlement to settled accommodation to all unintentionally homeless people in Scotland.

21.1.2 In 2002, Iain Gray MSP, then Minister for Social Justice in the Scottish Executive, presented to the Scottish Parliament the report of the Homelessness Task Force, which recommended a 10-year action plan for tackling homelessness. This was endorsed by Parliament, and subsequent administrations have maintained the commitment, which is stated by the current Scottish

Government as: 'By 2012 every unintentionally homeless person will be entitled to permanent accommodation.'[16]

21.1.3 Last year, some 56,600 households (i.e. families and single-person households – representing about 90,000 individuals) approached their local authority for help because of homelessness. This represents about 2.5% of households in Scotland. The current figure is down from a peak of 60,700 in 2005, but slightly higher than the 52,100 who applied in 2002. Approximately one-third of those affected by homelessness are children and young people under the age of 18.

21.1.4 The impact of homelessness is dramatic: while for some, it is a short-term crisis, for many, it becomes a long-standing difficulty, leading to sleeping rough, ill-health, inability to secure employment, and social isolation. Even for those whose homelessness problems are relatively short-lived, there can be significant problems of loss of work, dislocation of children's schooling and education prospects, damage to physical and mental health, and loss of morale and motivation. The interaction between homelessness and a range of other social issues – including unemployment; low or uncertain earnings; access to training and education; domestic violence; racism; misuse of drugs and alcohol; imprisonment and rehabilitation – is complex and deep-seated. In some cases, homelessness arises from these issues; in others, it causes or compounds them.

21.2 Present Position
21.2.1 The Task Force report represented a sea-change in public policy towards homelessness in Scotland. It led to the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003, and to strategies in all 32 local authorities for tackling homelessness in their areas, supported by implementation funds from government. Since 2002, more people, particularly single people, have been given temporary housing, and there

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[16] See Scottish Government website: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/08/31104052

has been a shift towards a wider range of housing to provide solutions – not just council tenancies, but housing associations and the private rented sector. At the same time, there has been a growth, particularly in the voluntary sector, of initiatives to provide the support that is so frequently needed, alongside housing, to offer routes out of homelessness and sustain success.

21.2.2   However, the financial crisis since 2008 has put recent progress under threat, and this is exacerbated by the present round of public spending cuts. The recent announcement of changes to Housing Benefit alone is expected to lead to significant increases in homelessness. Moreover, reductions in local authority budgets, restrictions in capital spending on new affordable homes and the threat to the financial viability of some voluntary organisations will all diminish the capacity of society to prevent or alleviate homelessness.

21.3   Role of the Churches
21.3.1   The Christian churches have a long and honourable history of offering hospitality to the stranger and to homeless people, and many of the key organisations on which public services depend are operated by church-based organisations, including CrossReach, Bethany Christian Trust, The Salvation Army, and so on. Many of Scotland's housing associations, though now operated on a secular basis, have their roots in church initiatives – Trust Housing (formerly Kirk Care), Castle Rock, Glasgow West and others.

21.3.2   Scottish Churches Housing Action was established in 1994 to bring together the major Christian denominations, with an emphasis on ecumenical action, and on developing new responses that prevent homelessness or provide routes out of homelessness. It operates under the slogan, *No room for homelessness!*, with a vision that there can be a Scotland free of homelessness. Its purpose is to mobilise and support the churches of all denominations in making their contribution to this objective, alongside and complementary to the work of public and other agencies.

21.4   What is needed now?
21.4.1   The 2012 homelessness target was always ambitious: from the outset, Scottish Churches Housing Action and others pointed out that for it to succeed, there needed to be a healthier supply of affordable housing, particularly for rent, and successive governments failed to deliver this.

21.4.2   As the date draws near, it is increasingly clear that local authorities will be unable to meet the target, particularly in view of the challenges listed at 3 above. Scottish Churches Housing Action has written to the Minister for Housing & Communities, asking him to recognise this and, without abandoning a worthwhile objective, to outline how the Scottish Government will respond in the light of current circumstances. Postponement until a later date would not represent a betrayal of homeless people, but rather a recognition that the commitment continues beyond the term originally envisaged.

21.4.3   The services needed to prevent homelessness, and to respond to the needs of people becoming homeless, must be protected in the face of the current public cuts. It is not enough to say 'We're all in this together, and the pain must be shared.' People often become homeless because they lack the resources and resilience to adapt to financial, emotional and other challenge. They cannot be expected to keep calm and carry on in the face of loss of benefits or services, because these are the lifeline that helps them to do their best for themselves and their children. Unlike those with savings or multiple income sources, they have nothing to fall back on when public or voluntary support is withdrawn.

21.4.4   The General Assembly is invited to instruct the Council to support further work on the issue of homelessness in Scotland, including:
- To consult with Scottish Ministers on plans for the 2012 homelessness target.
- To enquire of all 32 local authorities as to local progress towards reaching it.

- To assess the contribution of the churches and related agencies towards meeting the target, and the potential for contributing to meeting outstanding need.
- To receive a more detailed report at General Assembly 2012 to consider the result of these consultations.

22. Inter Faith

22.1   The Council contributed to the Festival of Spirituality and Peace though two events; a discussion on finance and ethics between the Convener and Azeem Ibrahim, Scottish Muslim of the Year, and *War in God's Name*, a conversation between the Council Secretary and Dr Oliver McTernan. At the heart for each discussion was the Festival theme "The Golden Rule" that is found in all the major faiths; "treat others as you would like to be treated".

22.2   The Convener spoke at several events relating to the campaigns to challenge racism where there were a number of faiths represented. The Council continues to be part of a number of other organisations that operate in an interfaith context including the Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education. Council representatives meet with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities on a regular basis.

22.3   Joint Faiths Advisory Board on Criminal Justice

22.3.1   Through the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office the Council continues to support the work of the Joint Faiths Advisory Board in Criminal Justice (JFABCJ). The Board has been working with the Scottish Prison Service to support the development of relationships between faith groups working with offenders' families and local prison officers. In April 2010 The Scottish Prison Service and JFABCJ hosted a joint seminar at the SPS College, Polmont entitled: 'Outside In – Building Better Relationships'. The Board has met with Brigadier Hugh Monro, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland.

23. Politics and Government
23.1   Parliamentary Office and Update

23.1.1   The Church and Society Council continues to engage actively with the UK and Scottish Parliament and Government through the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO). By undertaking this core activity of the Council ecumenically the Church is able to be better informed and have stronger influence on political debate. The SCPO continues to provide monthly Parliamentary Updates and briefings on areas of particular concern to Churches. Briefings produced in 2010-11 included: Manifesto Analysis for the 2010 General Election, the Queen's Speech and the Programme for Government, the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill and the UK Government Comprehensive Spending Review. In 2010-11 financial support was received from the Scottish Government for the work of the SCPO. Anyone can read the Parliamentary Update and briefing papers on the SCPO website at www.actsparl.org or subscribe to the free email distribution list by emailing info@actsparl.org.

23.1.2   The SCPO facilitated a discussion at the National Youth Assembly of the Church of Scotland about participation in politics.

23.1.3   The Scottish Government continues to work with the Faith Liaison Advisory Group as a regular channel of communication with churches and other faith groups. The SCPO is represented on that group.

23.1.4   The SCPO is the Scottish contact for Church Action on Poverty's (CAP) 'MP accountability network'; the SCPO supported CAP to provide a briefing event for members of Scottish congregations. More information can be obtained from: www.church-poverty.org.uk

26.1.5   An event hosted within the Festival of Spirituality and Peace and sponsored by the SCPO presented a cross-party panel of Parliamentarians discussing the role of legislation in restricting or permitting our behaviour towards each other. The event, entitled 'Do, Don't, or Leave

Well Alone: How the law delivers our ethical decisions' was Chaired by Father Robert J Warren with panel members Brian Adam MSP, SNP Chief Whip; Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Labour; and Hugh O'Donnell MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on Education & Equal Opportunities.

23.1.6   The SCPO supports the Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network (SCSIN). The SCSIN has continued to discuss issues of social inclusion with politicians by meeting Johann Lamont MSP. The SCSIN has undertaken an internal review of its working practices and will be adopting a new thematic approach to its work in 2011.

23.2   Preparing for the Scottish Elections
23.2.1   The Scottish Elections take place in May 2011. The SCPO and the ACTS Church and Society Network have developed ecumenical materials to assist members of congregations to plan a Hustings meeting as well as a briefing on topical issues. Both are available from the SCPO website: www.actsparl.org

23.2.2   The SCPO, with support from the ACTS Church and Society Network, has also worked in partnership with the Evangelical Alliance, CARE, the Roman Catholic Church and Christians-Count to develop a shared one-stop Christian election resources website called 'Churches Vote: Scottish Elections 2011'. The website can be viewed at www.churchesvote.org

23.3   Parliamentary Visits
23.3.1   Over the winter of 2010-11 representatives from the Education Committee held a series of meetings with the party spokespeople for Education and Early Years from Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats as well as meeting senior officials from the Scottish Government. Issues raised include the changing nature of Religious Observance in Schools, the place of Religious and Moral Education in the Curriculum of Excellence and the position taken by the Education Committee on preventative spending, endorsed by the

Council and presented to the General Assembly as part of this report (see Section 24 below).

23.3.2   In January 2011 the SCPO supported the visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly to the Scottish Parliament. The visit included:
• The Moderator delivering Time for Reflection in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament.
• Meetings with the First Minister and other party leaders.

23.3.3   In February 2011 representatives of the Church and Society Council visited Westminster to meet with representatives of MPs from all parties as well as their ecumenical counterparts in UK denominations to discuss issues of mutual concern.

23.3.4   Reports from these visits are available on the Church of Scotland website.

23.4   End of Life
23.4.1   The Church and Society Council have actively campaigned against the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill, both independently and in partnership with other churches (specifically, the Methodist Church in Scotland and The Salvation Army) and the wider Care Not Killing Alliance. The Convener responded to a Scottish Parliament open call for evidence on the Bill; presented oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament Committee considering the Bill and wrote to all MSPs ahead to the Stage 1 debate about the Bill. On the 1 December 2010 the Parliament voted not to continue with the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill.

23.4.2   Palliative care, including care for the spiritual and religious well-being of the person approaching the end of their life, as well as physical care, must be an important element in any discussion on end of life issues. The Church and Society Council supported aspects of the Palliative Care Bill rejected by the Scottish Parliament, and believes a higher priority needs to be given to palliative care, particularly for non-cancerous conditions.

23.5   Poverty and Welfare

23.5.1   The overarching political issue of the day is the state of the economy and the debate about how to reduce public spending. A strong strand of work with the SCPO and the Church and Society Council has been reflecting on and responding to the UK Government Comprehensive Spending Review and the proposals for Welfare Reform. The Church and Society Council continues to be a member of the Poverty Alliance, the Scottish Coalition on Welfare Reform and the Campaign to End Child Poverty in Scotland; all of these organisations share a commitment to ensure that spending cuts do not further marginalise the poorest members of our society. The following specific actions have been taken:

- Response to the UK Government consultation on 21st Century Welfare.
- Ecumenical letter to George Osborne expressing concern about the rhetoric used by the Government in relation to Welfare Reform.
- Joint work with the Campaign to End Child Poverty in Scotland to engage with the Scottish Government around the development of the Child Poverty Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy is to implement the target of ending child poverty by 2020 that was incorporated into the Child Poverty Act.
- Work with Faith in Community (Scotland) and Parish Development Fund to provide evidence on the benefits of preventative spending to the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee.

23.6   Debate on Scotland's Constitutional Future

23.6.1   Following the report of the Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution in June 2009 the Coalition Government has taken forward recommendations from the Calman Commission in the Scotland Bill. This piece of UK legislation proposes to increase the financial accountability of the Scottish Parliament by providing new tax raising powers; changing some areas which are reserved or devolved and making some technical changes to how the Scottish Parliament operates. The Scottish Government established a Committee to consider the Scotland Bill and report ahead of a Legislative Consent Motion. A series of discussion cards which guide the reader through the proposals in the Scotland Bill, and note what is not included, are available from http://www.actsparl.org/resources/scotland-bill-discussion-cards.aspx

23.7   Index of consultation responses

- January 2011: response to call for evidence from Scottish Parliament Scotland Bill Committee on Scotland Bill (UK legislation).
- January 2011: Scottish Affairs Committee Inquiry on the Scotland Bill (UK Parliament).
- January 2011: Scottish Child Poverty Strategy. Joint response with Faith in Community Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission, Scottish Churches Housing Action, the Church in Society Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church in Scotland.
- October 2010: 21st Century Welfare (UK Govt consultation).
- October 2010: response to draft Scottish Government guidelines for the provision of Religious and Moral Education in non-denominational schools.
- September 2010: response to call for evidence on Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill (stage 1). Joint response with Ministries Council and the Guild.
- September 2010: response to call for evidence on Palliative Care (Scotland) Bill (stage 1). Joint response with the Salvation Army.
- August 2010: response to Scottish Parliament Finance Committee inquiry into Preventative Spending. Joint response with Faith in Community (Scotland) and Parish Development Fund.
- July 2010: response to Scottish Government guidance on Religious and Moral Education and Religious Observance in the Curriculum for Excellence.
- June 2010: response to Scottish Government regulations on reducing class sizes for Primary 1 classes to 25.
- June 2010: response to a Department for Culture, Media and Sport (UK Government) consultation on the

Regulatory Future of Remote Gambling in Great Britain.

- May 2010: response to call for evidence on End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill (stage 1). Joint response with the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army.
- April 2010: response to Scottish Government consultation on Death Certification, Burial and Cremation. Joint response from the Church and Society Council and Mission and Discipleship Council.
- April 2010: response to the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee Inquiry on Migration and Trafficking.

23.8   Other Parliamentary engagement:

- Letter to all MSPs about Hunterston (March and August 2010).
- member's debate, 450th Anniversary of the Reformation (15 April 10).
- Alcohol Stage 1 letter to all MSPs (June 10).
- Moderator lobbying on short periods of detention ahead of Stage 3 debate on Criminal Justice & Licensing Bill. (June 10).
- email to all MSPs re brain imaging motion (December 10).
- email to Scottish MPs re EDM on Asia Bibi, Pakistani Christian woman – with World Mission Council (December 10).
- meeting Minister for Community Safety re Road to Recovery drugs strategy – with Ministries, M & D and Social Care Councils (January 11).

24. Education

24.1   The Education Committee has continued to play its dual role of representing the Church in a variety of national education contexts and providing resources, support and training for practitioners.

24.2   Curriculum for Excellence

24.2.1   The Committee continues to be very involved with the development of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The nature of Curriculum for Excellence is about encouraging creativity and cross-disciplinary work. Curriculum for Excellence has huge potential but the reality of managing that change at a time of severe cuts in public spending has made a difficult task even more challenging. Change of this nature takes time and resources, both of which are in short supply in schools across the country and the Committee has been concerned that a great opportunity for Scottish Education may be lost because of factors outside the control of those whose task is to make the theory a reality.

24.2.3   The Committee was represented by Rev Ewan Aitken on the Curriculum for Excellence Religious and Moral Education, (RME), Ministerial Excellence group and the Curriculum for Excellence Ministerial Stakeholders' group. In both contexts the Church was able to influence the development of Curriculum for Excellence and remind those involved of the connections between what is now proposed and the vision for education of the early reformers. In particular the understanding that education is not simply a process of imparting knowledge and skills from one generation to the next but for the nurture of the whole person including their beliefs and inner wellbeing. The point has often been made that RME in particular is the ultimate Curriculum for Excellence subject given its capacity for interdisciplinary work, creative thinking and opportunity for the encouragement of the inner life and wellbeing. Further information about these groups can be found on the Church and Society web pages at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/speak_out/education

24.2.4   The Committee, again through Rev Ewan Aitken, had several meetings with Scottish Government on new letters of guidelines for RME and Religious Observance. The Committee's view, that there needed to be separate guidance for each rather than one letter as was first proposed, was heeded by officials, for which the Committee was very grateful.

24.2.5   The Committee expressed deep concern at the removal of RME secondary teacher training from Moray

House School of Education at Edinburgh University, a situation that has not yet been rectified.

24.3 Meetings with Educational Bodies

24.3.1 The Committee met with the following people and/or institutions in the course of carrying out its remit of National engagement:

- Graham Donaldson former head of HMIe who was conducting a review of initial teacher education on behalf of the Scottish Government.
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) on the matter of assessment and examination for Curriculum for Excellence. The Committee was concerned that in the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, and particularly in RME, there was a lack of clarity over what would be assesses, how it would be assessed and what qualifications were to be offered as part of the assessment. The Committee was reassured that work was being done to rectify this but will continue to monitor this process.
- The Committee was particularly keen to encourage the use of journaling and other similar reflective tools in the assessment process as a way of monitoring and encouraging the development of the personal search element of RME. The Committee welcomed the SQA's positive response to these suggestions.
- The Education Spokespeople of the main political parties of the Scottish Parliament. For further information see the section above on Politics and Government, paragraph 23.3.1.
- The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS), in particular to discuss the proposals for reform of the GTCS. The Committee was grateful for the support of the GTCS in maintaining the Church's place on the GTCS, especially in the context of the petition to the Scottish Parliament to remove it.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIe) and Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) on the issues around the place of RME and RO in Curriculum for Excellence and other matters.
- The Catholic School Education Service to discuss matters of mutual concern.
- The Committee also participated in a number of national events and conferences on the issue of education in general and RME in particular.

24.4 Stevenson Prize

24.4.1 This year's winners of the Stevenson Prize will be announced at the Roll Away the Stone event on Sunday 22 May as part of the General Assembly celebrations. The Committee was once again delighted with the standard of entries and the window the prize gives onto the quality of Religious Observance in Scottish Schools.

24.5 Religious and Moral Education

24.5.1 The Committee is developing a partnership with the Religious Education Movement to provide an online resource of web-based resources for teaching all levels of Religious and Moral Education (RME) Christianity in Curriculum for Excellence. The Committee is grateful for the support of the Ministries Council in providing a seconded staff member to assist in this work.

24.5.2 The Committee is also developing a partnership with Edinburgh, Grayfriars Parish Church to develop web-based resources around the story of the Covenanters. This will provide a much needed resources for the RME Curriculum for Excellence section on Christianity on Scotland.

24.5.3 Members of staff have delivered a number of sessions in schools on RME issues.

24.6 Church Representatives on Local Authority Education Committees

24.6.1 The Committee continues to appoint and support Church Representatives on Local Authority Education Committees. Two conferences have taken place and speakers have included Mike Russell MSP, Minister for Education, Karen Whitefield MSP, Convener of the Scottish Parliament Education Committee, and Rachel Sutherland of the Scottish Government who spoke about

assisted learning. A handbook for new Local Authority Representatives is being developed.

24.7   Religious Observance

24.7.1   The Masters module in Religious Observance developed by the Committee in partnership with Glasgow University and Scripture Union Scotland has proven to be very successful. Over 60 students (clergy and school staff) have now completed the course and external examiners have praised the standards of work presented. The Course is accepted for General Teaching Council for Scotland accredited continued professional development and work is continuing to ensure that the course will count towards Chartered Teacher accreditation. The Committee appreciates the support of GTCS, HMIe and LTS in the development of this course. Details of the course and how to register can be found at www.gla.ac.uk/departments/religiouseducation/coursesanddegreeprogrammes/religiousobservancedesignandpractice/

24.7.2   Further flexible training opportunities for training in RO for both school staff and those involved in school chaplaincy outside the work of the module are being developed. Enquiries should be made to Mrs Agnes Mullen at amullen@cofscotland.org.uk or on 0131 240 2275.

24.8   School Chaplains training

24.8.1   Two training Conferences have been held, one in Aberdeen and one in Edinburgh with over 100 in attendance in total. Further work is being developed to add to this agenda in a wider range of venues across the country.

24.9   School Chaplains

24.9.1   The Committee has also offered support for chaplains in some specific situations where there as been some conflict or challenging circumstance. This work has helped shape the chaplains remit referred to above. It has also helped develop local authority policy. For example, following the death of a pupil in one school, the local authority developed new guidance for crisis management in schools which now includes how chaplains should be involved in supporting those involved in difficult incidents.

24.10   Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education (SJCRME)

24.10.1   The Council Secretary, Rev Ewan Aitken, is the joint Secretary of the SJCRME. The Committee supported the SJCRME conference held in October. Over 50 RME teachers attended and the theme was RME and Curriculum for Excellence.

24.11   GTCS

24.11.1   The Church of Scotland continues to be well represented on the GTCS by Mr David McTaggart, an elder from Stonelaw Church and teacher of RME and Geography.

24.12   Scottish Churches Education Group

24.12.1   The committee reached agreement with the ACTS education committee that work to support Further Education Chaplaincy would be best achieved ecumenically. To that end a conference was held in October at Reid Kerr College in Glasgow from which a new support network for FE Chaplains has been formed. Mrs Agnes Mullen, a member of Church and Society staff, played a key role in ensuring the success of that conference and is to be congratulated for her work in this area.

24.13   Religious Education Movement (REM)

24.13.1   The Committee continues to collaborate with the REM on the development of resources for RME using the REM website as a host digital space for that work.

25. Protecting School Budgets

The following report *Protecting School Budgets* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk

25.1   The issue of how the nation spends its wealth wisely and with the greatest effect will be in sharp focus

as the Scottish block grant decreases in size year on year for the next five years at least.

25.2 The tendency in such times is to think short-term and not risk investment now, even if it would change lives (and save money) in the future. This investment is known as 'preventative spending' (in that spending some money now will prevent more having to be spent in the future).

25.3 There is often a mismatch between an approach to preventative spending which addresses the cause of problems over a period of time and the political imperative to prove the results of a policy within a Parliamentary timescale. Politicians, both those in government and in opposition, should acknowledge that the results of preventative spending will take time to become apparent; instant results may indicate poor sustainability because it takes time to turn things around. Equally, the results of cuts to preventative spending will take time to become apparent. It is easy to pull the funding from a project but it may be impossible to go back years later and pick up where you left off.

25.4 Education, through protection of its budget, would be a form of preventative spending that might avoid the 'lost generation' that was the consequence of the last assault on public spending.[17]

25.5 This is it not simply a debate about education, but about what we as a society want from the investing of our shared wealth through the tax system. The passages in Acts 2 about how the faithful brought what they had and shared it so others would have what they needed would be a good model of making choices about how to use the money we have as a nation.

25.6 The Churches in Scotland have a long and honourable involvement in education, from the foundation of three of the four ancient universities; to the reformed Church's aim of a school in every parish; the establishment of teacher training colleges and Sunday Schools in the nineteenth century; and more recently in the work of the Church of Scotland Education Committee and in the production of 'A Christian Vision for Education' by the ACTS Education Group.

25.7 This is a time of difficult choices. Whilst the Church of Scotland has long recognised the profound effect a quality education system has on society, noting in 1999 that 'poor schools + an ill-educated workforce = no investment + economic decline' it has not made comment on education investment over others in the form of preventative spending. That being said the Church is committed to maintaining work in every parish in Scotland, with a specific commitment to continue to prioritise resources towards Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods.

25.8 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) document, 'The High Cost of Low Educational Performance'[18] concluded that relatively small improvements in the skills of a nation's labour force can have very large impacts on future well-being:

> 'Moreover, the gains, put in terms of current GDP, far outstrip the value of the short-run business-cycle management. This is not to say that efforts should not be directed at issues of economic recession, but it is to say that long-run issues should not be neglected.'

25.9 That this report was commissioned in the first place, suggests that there is international concern about the impact of short-term cuts in education on long-term prosperity, not to mention national well-being.

25.10 The experience of one group among the most vulnerable, that of looked after and accommodated

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[17] http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jun/27/editorial-budget-hawkish-thatcherism

[18] http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/28/44417824.pdf

children (formerly referred to as those in care), provides a clear example of why this is not a debate just about education spending but of human nurturing. It is also a group where the need for community responsibility has been made explicit and one which the church has already commented.[19] The underperformance of looked after and accommodated children was first identified in 1976 in a longitudinal study and the same pattern continued to be displayed in ensuing years.[20] It is to the credit of the Scottish Executive that in 1999 it set the criterion measure of all care leavers having Level 3 qualifications in both English and maths as part of a broader set of social justice targets to be met by 2012. In 2006 – 2007 only 34% of looked after and accommodated young people attained the target level.[21] While using such a challenging example it is important that we do not fall into the trap of reinforcing stereotypes. Positive interventions can be made, but they must be based on mutual respect.

25.11 The long term effects of inadequate education are widely known and accepted. In our society educational achievement is lowest among the poorest young people. In turn, those with poor educational achievement are those most likely to experience poor health, low economic achievement and involvement with the criminal justice system. Indeed those with responsibility in the police and prison services agree that intervention has to be as early as possible in order to prevent later involvement with these services. Most experienced teachers can identify very young children who have started to see themselves as failures.

25.12 A strong case can be made and evidence presented for the benefits accruing from supporting

preventative spending and the acceptance of its application to the protection of education budgets. It is part of our Christian responsibility for the most vulnerable in our society and is consonant with the Church of Scotland report on poverty[22] and the Church's responses to the Scottish Parliament consultations on Preventative Spending and on Child Poverty[23]. As the first disciples did in the book of Acts, sharing their collective wealth to meet the needs of those with least, the church at all levels can draw attention to these arguments and influence the debate and the outcomes amongst decision-makers locally and nationally.

26. Economics Commission

26.1 Since its establishment last year the Commission has met monthly and will continue to do so although, given the amount of work ahead, it is proposed to divide the members into two groups – one to deal with the social issues and the other to deal with the more economic matters. To avoid the possibility of producing two separate reports, the membership of each group will comprise people with different specialisms i.e. it will not be a matter of putting all those with social concerns as their main priority in one group and those with economic interests in the other. Moreover it will be open to all members to attend any meeting in which they have an interest. Plenary meetings will also be held.

26.2 Early meetings have addressed the future work of the Commission and wide ranging discussions were held on such matters as thrift, well-being, entrepreneurship and the nature and purpose of taxation.

26.3 The next phase of work, which began with the January meeting, is in the taking of evidence from those with a particular interest in our Commission. At the January

[19] These are our bairns: A guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2008

[20] Essen,J.,Lambert,L and Head,J. (1976) School attainment of children who have been in care. Child Health and Development, 2 (6) 329-335

[21] Connelly,G., Forrest,J., Furnivall,J., Siebelt,L., Smith,l. And Seagraves,L., (2008) The educational attainment of looked after children – local authority pilot projects: Final research report. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

[22] Report of the Church and Society Council to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, May 2010 http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/generalassembly/gareports.htm

[23] http://www.actsparl.org then click on Church of Scotland

meeting the Commission heard from Dr Carol Craig, Centre for Confidence and Well-being. Several members of the Commission attended that Centre's conference in October 2010 'Creating Good Lives'. The Commission also heard from the Church of Scotland's Dr Martin Johnstone. A growing list of speakers is being arranged for future meetings and includes Andrew Muirhead of Inspiring Scotland, Marlene Shiels from Capital Credit Union, Professor Philip Goodchild, University of Nottingham and Jim Mather MSP. The Commission will also make use of the expertise of its members and Dr Linda de Caestecker will make a presentation on health issues together with Professor Phil Hanlon of the University of Glasgow.

26.4   An important element of the Commission's work will be to engage the Church and, to this end, we have written to all Presbyteries but, at the time of writing (January 2011), have received no replies.

26.5   In researching the direction that future work might take the Commission has become aware of the very large number of organisations that occupy this space. It will not be possible to address all of them in writing the report. If the Commission did there would be a real danger that our report comprised a list of these organisations and little more. There will therefore be a focus on perceived problems and suggest solutions that will solve or ameliorate difficulties.

26.6   The Commission has also given some thought to the publicity that might be achieved for our report always assuming that the General Assembly accepts it in 2012. Members of the Commission are keen that efforts should be made to seek wider publicity than might be achieved by its appearance in the Blue Book alone. In the interim the BBC are aware of the work. The Chair of the Commission, Charles Munn, has already been interviewed for the Sally Magnusson programme and for another BBC radio programme to be called 'Dirty, Filthy Money'.

27. Peacemaking & International Affairs

27.1   Comment and reflection on international issues of peace and justice has been a longstanding and important tradition of the Council. This year we offer two issues for consideration by the Assembly.

27.2   The first is a fulfilment of an undertaking made at the 2010 Assembly, to consider anew the conflict in Afghanistan and the continued presence of British Armed Forces in the country. We were happy to work with an ACTS-facilitated group which was established last summer with the intention of looking at the 'Just War' tradition. We therefore offer the ACTS report on Just War and Afghanistan to the Assembly, a summary of which is included below. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland website, the office, and from ACTS.

27.3   The second issue is a new report on politics in the Holy Land. This situation has been raised at seven of the last ten General Assemblies. We remain committed to working in partnership with others on this issue and we value highly the opinions of the World Mission Council.

28. Just War Criteria and the War in Afghanistan

The following report *Just War Criteria and the War in Afghanistan* is a summary. The full report is available from the Church of Scotland General Assembly web pages – www.churchofscotland.org.uk/GA2011 – and can obtained in electronic format or paper copies, free of charge, by contacting the Church and Society offices on 0131 240 2275 or by e-mailing churchandsociety@ cofscotland.org.uk

28.1   The full report explains the background to the conflict and outlines the principles of the Just War tradition. It then asks is the war in Afghanistan just, using the following criteria:
- Is it legitimate?

- Is there a reasonable chance of success?
- Is the harm being prevented greater than the harm that would be caused if there was no use of force?
- Are non-combatants' rights being respected?

28.2   The report explains that the twin operations in Afghanistan, the UN-sanctioned International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the anti-Taliban intervention and action under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) should be distinguished. The report finds that OEF activities are outwith legitimate authority and cannot be construed as self-defence.

28.3   The report finds that there is no real chance of success with the present strategy in Afghanistan and that, in some ways, UK security is more at risk as a result of continuing military involvement by British forces in Afghanistan.

28.4   The report does not find evidence to suggest that the harm prevented is greater than the harm being caused. It points out issues such as new Afghan legislation to legalise rape within marriage, or the destabilising influence of US-supported warlords acting in brutal and thuggish ways. Philip Alston, recently retired UN rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, called for a UN Human Rights Council enquiry into the conduct of the war in Afghanistan along the lines of the enquiry into Gaza. The report says that the majority of the Afghan population see foreign troops, the aid programme, the Afghan police and the Afghan army as tools of a corrupt and incompetent Kabul government.

28.5   The report also finds that the treatment of non-combatants and the considerable loss of life of civilians, regardless of whether they were directly or indirectly targeted, undermines any justification for the war.

28.6.1   Last year the General Assembly instructed the Church and Society Council to report on the conflict in Afghanistan, using four questions posed following a reassessment of the Council's report on the country in 2002:

1.   What are the benchmarks now being used to define success given that the war in Afghanistan is now 8 years old?
2.   What are the indications that the present elected structures have brought any sense of stability to Afghanistan?
3.   Is this yet another sign that any commitment by nations to the UN does not include relinquishing the right to attack another country without reference to the collective international view?
4.   What role has the Church in encouraging and even facilitating alternative approaches like the traditional Afghan method of bringing as many leaders as possible from the ranks of opposing forces into a general assembly or Loya Jirga in order to actively take part in conflict resolution and the negotiation of a cease-fire?

28.6.2   What are the benchmarks now being used to define success given that the war in Afghanistan is now 8 years old?

28.6.3   The report comes unequivocally to the conclusion that the war in Afghanistan, given the course of events and the scale of suffering involved, can no longer (if it ever could) be justified by the traditional (or any reduced list of) 'just war' criteria. Continuing with military engagement in Afghanistan is questionable even if the transfer of power to a democratically elected government (and the containment or defeat accordingly of the Taliban) is regarded as the benchmark that the war has been successful. There is still no UN mandate to support the legitimacy of the OEF offensive action against the Taliban, the ISAF force is having very limited success in stabilising Afghanistan and unacceptable levels of civilian casualties are continuing. Overall, as long as foreign troops remain, it seems that the situation is being inflamed.

28.6.4   What are the indications that the present elected structures have brought any sense of stability to Afghanistan?

28.6.5 There is little indication at present of any prospect of lasting stability. Claims of defeat for the Taliban have been numerous but seldom sustainable. Both the UK and US governments have now set time-limits on their military involvement. Despite the recent elections and the efforts, through the UN mission and a range of supporting aid organisations, to strengthen the civic infrastructure within Afghanistan, recent reports refer consistently to 'continued instability' and hardening of support for the Taliban.

28.6.6 Is this yet another sign that any commitment by nations to the UN does not include relinquishing the right to attack another country without reference to the collective international view?

28.6.7 The role of the United Nations in Afghanistan is a highly complex issue; but what has happened here (as in some other cases also) does not induce much confidence in the level of regard and respect within the international community for the authority of the UN. There seems little prospect of overall success while the UN ISAF work to peacekeeping, stabilising and restructuring in Afghanistan is being undermined by the continued offensive nature and lack of UN mandate for OEF actions.

28.6.8 What role has the Church in encouraging and even facilitating alternative approaches like the traditional Afghan method of bringing as many leaders as possible from the ranks of opposing forces into a general assembly or Loya Jirga in order to actively take part in conflict resolution and the negotiation of a cease-fire?

28.6.9 In the light of the conclusions reached in this paper, there is no doubt that the Churches have a responsibility to make clear, to HM Government and in the public arena, that they are resolutely opposed to the continuation of the war and to press for the early withdrawal of British troops, especially those focussed on the OEF operations and that 'alternative approaches' of negotiation, peace-making and conflict resolution

should be urgently pursued (as have proved worthwhile in Northern Ireland, South Africa and elsewhere).

28.6.10 The present situation clearly challenges in particular those Churches who adopt a just war approach to conflicts. If the war in Afghanistan is no longer regarded as 'just', as this paper contends (or if some of the British troops are under orders to participate in unjust operations), then those Churches should publicly distance themselves from the war.

28.7 The Continuing Challenge for Christians

28.7.1 Christians, especially those who are members in the armed forces and their families, have a particular problem and witness in this situation, especially if a specific conflict is no longer considered to be a 'just war'. The issues explored above are some of those with which Christians have to grapple in terms of forming their consciences on this matter. In this context questions are frequently raised concerning the Churches' support for, and pastoral responsibility towards, serving soldiers. The view of the Church is that the provision of pastoral care is neutral on the discussion of 'just war' but very necessary in a theatre of war.

28.7.2 Even if a conflict is deemed as being no longer a 'just war', that does not mean the sacrifices made by soldiers in that war are diminished. John Baron MP made a comment in a Commons debate in September 2010 which is helpful and instructive on this matter: 'As an ex-soldier, I do not buy the line that by withdrawing in an orderly fashion we are somehow letting down our troops and wasting their sacrifice. Our troops have done everything we have asked of them and we can all be proud of their achievements. It is incumbent on the leadership to assess realistically a situation. We cannot win the war as it is currently constituted and a leadership that acknowledges that will save lives.'

28.7.3 Finally, while there may have been morally supportable reasons for earlier military intervention in

Afghanistan most of these do not apply now. This is a classic case of 'mission creep', or more colloquially, of 'shifting the goal-posts'. What is going on now in Afghanistan amounts to forced regime change and support to one side of a civil war, in the kind of counter insurgency conflict in which civilians and non-combatants will inevitably continue to be harmed, and which cannot be morally justified by reference to just war criteria. The UK Government's argument for continuing engagement ultimately rests on removing, or at least reducing, the threat of terrorism and thus increasing security on the streets of Britain. But the Christian perspective tells us that, despite all the best human, technological and military efforts, we can never be completely secure in a physical sense while we perpetuate injustice as we claim to strive for peace: security lies with God alone, and in our closer relationship with God and one another.

29. Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories

29.1 In 2006, the Council reported on the issue of investment in Palestine and Israel. One of its deliverances then related to the sale of produce from illegal settlements in the West Bank:

Call on the European Institutions to ensure the clear labelling of products which come from the illegal settlements in the West Bank, so that consumers can make an informed decision on whether or not to purchase them.

29.2 Brief background on settlements

29.2.1 Presently there are more than 100 Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) alone and dozens of additional 'illegal outposts' – settlements not yet officially recognized by the Israeli government. These house approximately 530,000 Jewish Israeli residents: 280,000 in the West Bank (excluding Jerusalem), 260,000 in settlements built in East Jerusalem which was unilaterally annexed by Israel and 20,000 in the Golan Heights. Israel 'disengaged' or relocated from settlements in Gaza in 2005. The UN still considers this as occupied territory.

29.2.2 On-going settlement expansion includes housing as well as infrastructure such as road and water systems for the exclusive use of Israeli settlers on lands confiscated from Palestinians or from declared 'state lands'.

29.2.3 The route of the separation barrier being constructed by Israel, much of which is inside the OPT and was thus considered illegal by the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, incorporates many of these settlements within its route. The roads and settlements have thus become a separate Israeli system imposed on top of Palestinian communities, whose movement and access to land are restricted and controlled by a system of fences, walls, gates, roadblocks, checkpoints and permits.

29.2.4 The Council's view is that the longer the settlements remain in place and the bigger they get, the harder it will appear for them to be removed as part of a negotiated settlement and therefore the harder it will be to reach a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. Without peace there can be no security for either Israelis or Palestinians.

29.2.5 In 2008 the World Bank agreed that addressing the inherent problems within the Palestinian economy 'will entail increasing the economic space available for Palestinian urban and rural development in the West Bank, including addressing the increasingly entrenched and expanding impact of Israeli settlement activity…'

29.2.6 The settlements are illegal under international law, as is Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem. The Fourth Geneva Convention stipulates that an occupying power cannot move citizens into an occupied area. In addition, any permanent changes made in occupied land for such settlers are in violation of The Hague Regulations. All governments, except Israel, agree with this view.

29.2.7 The current round of high profile US sponsored peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis are fragile and vulnerable to many outside interventions. The Council

supports any peace negotiations that strive to achieve a viable solution for both Israelis and Palestinians. As part of this solution, the international community has rightly identified the need for the occupation of Palestinian territories to end. Legislating against settlement produce is, therefore, an important signal of intent that the law will be upheld and impunity will not be tolerated.

29.2.8   In December 2009 DEFRA produced an advisory to labelling that, in the interest of consumer choice, retailers should label West Bank products distinctly as either from an Israeli settlement or from a Palestinian farmer. However, despite this move being a welcome first step, it does not remove the growing belief that any economic links with settlements simply perpetuates the illegal situation created by them.

29.2.9   More importantly, labelling on its own does not address the root of the problem. Even if all settlement goods are labelled correctly and consumers in the UK can make an informed choice, it will not ensure Palestinian farmers access to their land. The settlements will continue to be subsidised by the Israeli government and exploit occupied land at the expense of the Palestinian population as long as the goods are accepted on external markets.

29.3   Other church developments

29.3.1   In 2009, the World Council of Churches Central Committee called on the Israeli government to freeze and begin to dismantle settlements in occupied Palestinian territories. It also encouraged a commitment to non-violence and peace negotiations, and reiterated the need for an international boycott of products and services from settlements.

29.3.2   The Methodist Conference (2010) noted this call and the support given for such a boycott by Palestinian Christian leaders in the Kairos Palestine document, Palestinian civil society and a growing number of Jewish organisations both inside Israel and worldwide. It called on Methodists to support and engage with the boycott of Israeli goods from illegal settlements.

29.3.3   The Society of Friends believes that since the UK government maintains the position that settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace, then it should not allow trade with them at all. A ban on trade with Israeli settlements is not a ban on trade with Israel. This position and subsequent suggested actions became public in 2009.

29.3.4   Christian Aid together with Aprodev partners in Brussels lobbies on third state responsibility, which questions EU complicity with Israeli human rights violations as a result of accepting settlement produce into European markets. The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) is engaged with retailers to encourage them to source products from elsewhere.

29.3.5   Israel's policy of constructing illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory since 1967 is a major cause of poverty and a significant obstacle to peace. The Council believes that settlements will continue to expand and develop unless actions are taken to back the rhetoric of the international community that routinely condemns them as illegal. It therefore supports a ban on settlement produce in UK markets.

29.4   The Gaza Strip

29.4.1   Since the 2006 Report, the situation in the Gaza Strip has deteriorated markedly. In November 2010, a report by a coalition of international NGOs including Christian Aid and many other church agencies, entitled *Dashed Hopes: Continuation of the Gaza Blockade,* drew attention to the critical humanitarian situation there. It describes an economy paralysed, homes and schools denied and a population locked in, 80% dependent on international aid. The Council intends to report on Gaza at greater length in 2012, but commends the situation there for prayer and humanitarian action.

29.5   World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel

29.5.1   The council commends the World Council of Churches initiative *World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel* and encourages congregations and presbyteries to observe the week using resources produced by the WCC.

30. Staffing

30.1   There has been some turnover of staff in the past year; we said farewell to Shona Fisher from the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and Sheena Cowan from the Society, Religion and Technology Project. We welcomed Hilary Lagha to the Parliamentary Office and Karen Hunter to the SRT Project. We have also been joined by Fiona Brown who is supporting the work of the Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity.

31. Thanks

31.1   The Council would like to express its thanks and appreciation to each and every person who has helped in the writing of this report, especially those from outwith the Council who have offered their time and advice:

- Norman Shanks who served as a Church of Scotland member of an ecumenical group that produced the report on Just War and Afghanistan.
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- Basil Cousins, Isobel Owen, the Internet.
- Barbara Osborne and Marjory Wood of the British Heart Foundation.
- Andrew Davey of Mission and Public Affairs, the Church of England, racism and church membership.

In the name and by the authority of the Council,

IAN GALLOWAY, *Convener*
DOROTHY FERGUSON, *Vice Convener*
EWAN AITKEN, *Secretary*