

"What does the Lord require of you; to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" Micah 6.8

A Place for Hope



The Aviemore Conference - Christianity, Conflict and the Soul of the Nation

This Conference was the launch pad for **"A Place for Hope"** and it would not have been possible without the support of the Guild.

Almost 250 delegates focussed on the work of Peacemaking and Reconciliation and people from all over Scotland and from many denominations caught the vision for finding new ways to deal with our conflicts and differences.

The aims of this project are now within our grasp. One conference goer said,

"This was an excellent, ground breaking event" and another said "I left this conference satisfied, uplifted and hopeful that this experience shall lead to more."

These comments were typical of the positive feedback.

It has left the Ministries Council feeling more positive than ever about this vital project and at a time when the peace and unity of the Church is at stake this project sends out a real message of hope.

John Sturrock opened the Aviemore programme setting the scene by clearly presenting the work of Conflict Resolution as a gospel imperative.



"The Gospel of reconciliation" he said, "requires us to cross boundaries, exert unconditional love and forgiveness".

His opening address was followed by superb presentations from Ken Cloke, David Brubaker and Cecelia Clegg – each in turn emphasising further aspects of peacemaking, peace building and conflict management.

Members of the Guild can hear these talks by logging on to the new Place for Hope website, where these talks are stored as mp3 files. The website is at placeforhope.org.uk

The project is now well and truly under way, with the next phase of training for a cohort of mediators being arranged for March 2010, and there is news of how this is developing overleaf.

Training Mediators

A primary aim of this project is to have enough Mediators available to help congregations deal with difficulties before they escalate into deep disputes.

Try to imagine a difficult Union of two churches and the need to decide which building to use for worship. Or think about a fallout in your congregation that led to some long-standing member leaving. These and many other difficult situations can be helped by the intervention of a trained mediator.

£50,000 needed

Professional training of mediators is hugely expensive. But because the church is organising its own training with the use of Scotland's leading professional teachers we are able to keep the cost within reach. That said, we still have to find almost £50,000 to complete the first phase. This will give us **20 mediators** who would be able to begin work across the churches in Scotland.

However, if this saves one ministry or one congregation from going into freefall, it will be worth it! The fact is it will save many, many more than that.

Training begins in March 2010 and accredited Mediators will be available to start work by the Autumn of this year. One Presbytery which recently asked for a mediation process has reported that, "a congregation which was facing an unsatisfactory state has broken through to a new place of trust, it's like new life being breathed into this congregation's life."

A Place for Hope



Please pray for this project as we seek to:

- Establish a live network of people throughout Scotland committed to the work of peacemaking and reconciliation;
- Found a place recognised as a Centre where resources in mediation and reconciliation can be accessed; and
- Initiate a church-wide realisation of the importance of building communities of peace and reconciliation.



A Place for Hope

We will be happy to arrange for a speaker to come to your Guild.
Contact our Project Co-ordinator:

Mrs Dorothy Davidson, Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, EH2 4YN
0131 225 5722 ddavidson@cofscotland.org.uk