

## **Recording of sacramental vessels**

The General Assembly of 2001 agreed to:

instruct the committee to appoint a review group, co-opting members with a wide representation of interests, to make proposals for the management of sacramental vessels held locally by congregations. It also agreed to:

instruct congregations to co-operate with the committee in gathering information about the sacramental vessels in their possession.

The review group, containing representation from the National Museum, the Scottish Museums Council, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, the General Trustees, the solicitor of the Church and members of the Artistic Matters Committee, has now met.

It was agreed that sacramental vessels, baptismal bowls and alms dishes held by congregations of the Church of Scotland represented a Scottish collection of major importance and that a smaller number of early silver vessels within this was not equalled by any other collection of similar artefacts. As part of the process of guiding congregations who wished to dispose of items of historical, aesthetic and liturgical value, a responsibility now vested by the General Assembly in the Committee on Artistic Matters, it was agreed by the review group that a record should be made of items of this nature in the Church's possession.

A pilot scheme was necessary in which the scope of such a project, the length of time it would take to complete, the expertise required to analyse and record the results gained, and the costs that would be incurred could be gauged with accuracy. Such a pilot scheme would focus on three presbyteries of different kinds - city, rural and small town. The presbyteries of Dundee, Ardrossan and Lochcarron-Skye were chosen. Subsequently the presbytery of Melrose and Peebles was added.

Vessels held by each congregation are being recorded by Mr Kirkpatrick Dobie, who was appointed to oversee the scheme. The findings are being recorded on a database and photographs of the rarer items will be kept in an archive.