

WORLD MISSION COUNCIL

May 2015

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Give thanks for the life and witness of Mission Partners who have died, acknowledge with gratitude those who have completed their period of service overseas, and uphold in prayer all who continue to serve.
3. Encourage congregations to read and study the report, use the worship service and resources, and learn more about the life of the churches in other parts of the world, and the links with the Church of Scotland.
4. Encourage congregations and Presbyteries to develop links, particularly Twinings, with congregations and Presbyteries of other Churches.
5. Instruct the Council to seek appropriately trained mediators to work with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan in addressing the issues of post-conflict rebuilding and reconciliation.
6. Instruct the Council to engage with the Church & Society Council and Christian Aid in organising a partner consultation on Climate Change in 2016.
7. Instruct the Council to engage with, support, and promote the work of Christian Aid in its 70th anniversary year.
8. Encourage continued participation in working with the Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group, the Church and Society Council, and overseas partners to raise awareness in the Church of Scotland of the effects of human trafficking, and encourage action to combat it.
9. Continue to pray for and support minority communities, especially Christians, as they face extremism, and other challenges to personal, family and community wellbeing, on a daily basis.
10. Encourage any groups visiting the Middle East region, including Israel and occupied Palestine, to make contact with the World Mission Council for suggestions of partners and communities to visit.
11. Support the Korean churches in their commitment to healing, reconciliation and peaceful reunification; and instruct the Council to work with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), and other partners, in supporting the healing of the historical wound of the Korean people.
12. Instruct the Council to continue its work supporting the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka in promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation.
13. Congratulate the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan on its 150th anniversary.
14. Encourage the Council to develop new fundraising strategies for the Church of Scotland HIV Programme whilst continuing to promote Souper Sunday for congregational use.
15. Encourage the Council to be open to new areas of partnership in areas of the world where it presently does not have living links, but where there are strategic opportunities.

REPORT

The Living Stones

1. Walking together

*God of the pilgrim,
you call us to walk in the shoes of others,
to travel together in trust and faithfulness.
As Jesus journeyed to Emmaus,
so may we walk in your footsteps,
and be your faithful witnesses,
knowing the blessings of unity and equality,
dignity and healing, through sharing your love.*

The Church of Scotland may be a small church in a small country perched on the extremities of northern Europe, but it is part of the great worldwide church of Jesus Christ, working around the globe to share the good news. As a church, we believe that God is a God who reaches out to all peoples in the world; we believe that God is already at work throughout the world, sometimes through the church, sometimes beyond it.

The World Mission Council (WMC) understands its role as to be aware of and sensitive to where and how God is at work in other parts of the world and to find ways to enable everyone in the Church of Scotland to participate in what God is doing internationally. The world has become what is often called a global village, but the streets in this village are different from each other, and we want to take opportunities to explore more of them than just our own one.

PARTICIPATION by the whole Church of Scotland in God's mission to the whole world is central to the Council's calling. We listen for the beat of God in the world not only in the WMC, but in Presbyteries, congregations, and individual members, as well as the other councils and committees of the church, and we can then dance to that beat.

The World Council of Churches has encouraged all its member churches to participate in an ongoing pilgrimage of justice and peace, one which is grounded in God's own mission for the world, and the example of Jesus. Following Jesus means meeting him wherever people suffer injustice, violence and war. To recognise God's presence with the most vulnerable, the wounded, and the marginalised of society is a transformative experience; alive in the Spirit, Christians discover their deepest power and energy for the transformation of an unjust world, joining with other faith communities, and all people of good will, as companions on the way. This is the Emmaus journey. This is the heart and soul of the Church's calling, to walk alongside people from the world church – the living stones – and share our stories, our experiences, our faith together and offer encouragement, solidarity and support to each other on the way.

"We are particularly called to find new expressions of unity in solidarity with suffering Christians in many parts of the world," said World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. "The world with all its overwhelming crises these days needs people of faith who are willing to let their faith be much more than positions of the past or identities that separate us." Whether pursuing efforts to combat climate change; or pursuing peace in Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria or Palestine and Israel; or church-to-church relationships; or interfaith confidence-building; or responding to HIV; or providing emergency relief; or supporting human rights; or undertaking advocacy; in all these we are involved in the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

This year we can join with Christian Aid in either a physical or internet pilgrimage by journeying to the mountaintops with them, taking part in the 70 Munros challenge that may take us beyond our comfort zone and into "transcendent experiences that will 'fuel our struggle for true justice in the world'"¹ Christian Aid is the Churches agency for international development, and as we

celebrate its 70 years of prophetic engagement and commitment, starting in costly discipleship helping German refugees in the aftermath of the Second World War, we can share the hope that climbing the mountains will bring “new levels of awe and wonder...that might 'inspire new behaviour, nourish new dreams, and bolster a new kindness towards the earth.'”² And everyone can have some fun along the way.

The pilgrimage of justice and peace calls all of us to participate and, like the mountaintop experience, can be a transformative journey with deep spiritual resonance; it is a movement of love where, walking side by side with one another, we invite each other to grasp every opportunity for the healing and reconciliation of our suffering and conflict-riven world. This fits well with the WMC strategy because so much of what we do has at its centre building relationships. We call it ‘attentive accompaniment’, and we mean walking alongside others and truly listening (giving our full attention) to them, like the disciples and Jesus on the road to Emmaus. On our common pilgrimage we constantly journey with other living stones with whom we share the faith. This is not incidental to our work, it is our work.

The current strategy of the WMC recognises that the Spirit of God is at work around the world in many different ways, and many different places, and many different cultures, addressing many different issues and that we in this part of the world have much to learn from what is going on, so long as we have eyes to see and ears to hear. The people and bodies of the Church of Scotland have something useful and important to contribute to what is happening in today's world – even if in very different ways from yesterday. A small church like the Church of Scotland cannot have a ‘presence’ in every part of the globe, but it can have a much more rounded view of the world if we make our connections strategically rather than doing

“what we've always done”. Not every link needs to be of the same kind or of the same thickness. And many links today come from congregational or Presbytery activities, (eg Congregational and Presbytery Twinings.) There is much scope for mutually enriching relationships to be developed. Hearing stories from others can often be the catalyst to a new development in our own congregation, and such simple encounters can have profound effects.

“As we spent time with our visitors to Birse & Feughside, we found we were able to talk about all sorts of aspects of life in each other's countries and very often found that there is so much we have in common. We found that we could speak openly to Mary and Zipporah, and discussed all sorts of social issues including, for example, divorce and marriage, and we learned that many of the changes in society that we are seeing in Scotland are the same as those in Kenya. We realised that one of the biggest cultural differences was the different roles of men and women. Our group was shocked to learn that our visitors from Kenya had to have the permission of their husbands to travel out of the county and had to have it in writing! Our guests were delighted to see our husbands in the kitchen and sharing domestic tasks and were surprised to find that we didn't all have people working in our homes to help with cleaning and other domestic activities.”

Because we need the whole picture, we must see if there are areas, even continents of the world, where we have no real relationships, and ask if there are fruitful connections that could and should be made. It is important to get the right balance. The key to any new relationship is to ask to what extent it can be a partnership between churches and how each side of the relationship can participate in the life of the other so that there can be mutual and reciprocal benefit.

Every partnership should enable us to understand better a particular place or issue or give us an opportunity to respond in faith to particular situations. Where gospel values clash with the reality on the ground (for example, climate change and care for the environment, poverty, justice, HIV, land-rights, peace and reconciliation, interfaith

¹ Ched Myers. [www.chedmyers.org/system/files/Transfiguration and Disfiguration - Remembering Aug 6-9 & Ladon Sheats.pdf](http://www.chedmyers.org/system/files/Transfiguration%20and%20Disfiguration%20-%20Remembering%20Aug%206-9%20&%20Ladon%20Sheats.pdf)

² Leonardo Boff. www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/reflections/mountaintop-experiences/show-the-love.aspx

questions, gender issues, persecution of minorities) or where the values and priorities of Jesus are already making a difference, including church growth and community transformation, it is in these places the Church of Scotland must find itself engaged and working with the living stones in that place to seek long-term sustainable solutions which follow gospel values and serve to improve the lot of the poorest in our world.

When the possibility of some new partnership arises in an area of the world where WMC is not already engaged, it asks: how is this different from what we are already involved in anywhere else? What will this add to our church's understanding of God's mission in the world? What, if anything, can we contribute to it?

The WMC is not set aside to do this work alone; it is part of the structure of the church to assist and encourage and support and sustain members, congregations, Presbyteries, Councils and Committees in their involvement with the world church. World mission today is about sustaining relationships with other churches around the world. Relationship-building is not something that the WMC does *for* the church, but rather it is what the whole Church of Scotland does as part of God's church in the world. The Council encourages every part of our church to continue to build different kinds of relationships and partnerships all around the world, from Argentina to Zambia, from Accra to Zurich, as part of the worldwide pilgrimage of justice and peace.

In recent years WMC reports³ have highlighted different areas of work around the world, on the Middle East, particularly Israel and occupied Palestine ('Invest in Peace'), on Asia, particularly China ('Love never Ends') on Africa and the Caribbean ('Life in Fullness') and on Europe ('Together we walk'). These reports remain useful tools for the church and available on the Church website.

³ These are available at: http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/World_Mission/reports_and_resources

This year, our focus is on how the Church of Scotland can and does engage with the church beyond Scotland and how all of us can seek to nourish and develop our faith through mutually enriching relationships with Christian communities – the living stones -around the world. This report tells the stories of people meeting with each other and each being transformed by the encounter. Each one could be you, or your congregation or Presbytery or Committee or Council.

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, ...has anointed me to bring good news to the poor...has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Luke 4: 18-19, NRSV) These words are the foundation of the WMC's strategy, and we use them to guide us as we share stories and insights, from those who are already engaged with the world church, to highlight how more of us can be inspired to be involved and participate as fully as possible, in as many different ways as we can think up, with the church worldwide.

2. Lord you have come to bring good news to the poor

*God who lived life with the poor,
poverty comes in so many shapes and hues
– money, food, property, homes, love.
Inspire us to seek deeper understanding
of all that impoverishes the lives of your people,
and to find energy and determination
to strive for a better sharing of the world's wealth,
material, emotional and spiritual.*

The scandal of poverty is a key concern for the whole church. The WMC sees this both at home and abroad, and while working with partners internationally, also works with the Ministries Council in its work in Priority Areas to give opportunities for all to make connections worldwide. It is a key focus for the Council and important for our partners to understand that poverty is not 'their' issue, but an issue for us all.

Rev. Jonathan Kangwa, visiting his twinned congregation of South Leith from Mindolo Congregation in the United Church of Zambia, reflected: "I participated in running the church café on a Sunday morning, giving food to people who are homeless or economically disadvantaged. I was particularly shocked to see extremely poor people in Edinburgh, right in the midst of wealth. When you are in Africa, you assume that everyone in Scotland has wealth in excess."

"If you have eaten today then you have nothing else to worry about". Liam Booth who represented the Boys' Brigade World Mission Fund on a visit to Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Blantyre, Malawi, found these words have had a real impact on him. In a commercialised world, where so much focus is placed on appearance, and material possessions, he felt that, "perhaps we have lost sight of what is actually important. I think this way of taking each day as it comes helps rid us of unimportant stresses that make us sad, things that don't matter in the grand scheme of things."

Some visits can also lead to unexpected developments. Kay Keith, National Convener of the Guild welcomed WMC Faithshare Programme visitors to the Guild Annual meeting in 2014, on the theme 'A world to serve'. Soon afterwards, one visitor, Katerina Vojkuvkova from the Czech Republic, wrote to say: "After returning to Czech Republic, my church decided to build something like your Guild Projects, we give it the name: 'Open Eyes'. I hope that it will be a blessing for us to look around, to search out the people who need our help, or for interesting projects which we can support. We realise that we know a lot of them. Thank you for your positive influence, thank you for your time and kindness."

The Reformed Church of Hungary's (RCH) Church Aid Agency continues to support the church in Sub-Carpathian Ukraine where the Reformed Church there is an active agent of social and diaconal assistance. After a December visit, the RCH reported "This holiday will not be the same as the previous ones. Everyone is bitter because on Christmas Eve chairs will be left empty around the table

as many men have been enlisted and many have fled abroad from the draft and cannot come home because they fear being taken to the war. However, the positive side of the situation is that people living in Sub-Carpathia count much more on each other, human relationships and togetherness have become more important. Money, however, is constantly decreasing: the hryvnia is not worth half of what it used to while salaries do not increase. Thus people will have a fifty per cent Christmas. Something will be put on the tables and under the Christmas trees, but it is questionable what will happen next year."

3. Lord you have come to give freedom to the prisoner

*God of the imprisoned,
whether of body or mind,
whether psychological or social,
set your people free.*

*Free to live in community;
free to follow the faith of our choosing;
free to live in health and wellbeing;
living Christ's inclusive love.*

Walking the Emmaus road is all about sharing the journey. As we walk and talk and eat and drink, we find the risen Christ amongst us. Relationships take time, but they are important. Accompanying those imprisoned by bars or by life circumstances is one part of the pilgrimage.

"We had Souper Sunday last Sunday in Kingussie Parish Church and I asked one of the elders to do the all-age talk. What I didn't know when I asked Gilly to take part was that one of her best friends, after whom her daughter is named, is a Zimbabwean lady called Emmy. She had lost 4 brothers and 4 sisters-in-law to AIDS and now looks after their six children as well as her own two. I'm glad she told us as the service then became more meaningful to those who were there. No matter what money was raised, the service made a difference to lives here because of what Gilly shared."

Sureshini Sanders, an elder at Cramond Kirk in Edinburgh, reminds us of the wealth of experience within our own

congregations that perhaps we do not often realise or share. "My great-great grandmother's family name was Manikam in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). In the 1850's she was converted by the Christian missionaries and the gospel that preached that all were equal, whatever caste or creed. Her wealthy Hindu husband did not share her zeal and insisted that she cease from attending these meetings but she refused and left him, taking their son. She worked and taught in the mission house and her son became Rev. Joseph Sanders, adopting a Christian name. From thence many in our family became ministers, teachers or doctors. When the riots broke out in Sri Lanka in 1983, the electoral register was used to identify and execute Tamils. Our name caused confusion and our Sinhalese neighbours insisted that we were not Tamil. Our family migrated to Australia and the UK and fitted in easily as we were Christian. Rejected in our homeland, the church has offered sanctuary, support and love."

The congregation of Logie & St John's (Cross) Church in Dundee was saddened to hear the story of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian who was sentenced to death because she drank water from the same source as her Muslim fellow workers. After hearing of the injustice of the misuse of the blasphemy law, which in particular affects minority faiths, including Christians, they were quick to raise their hands in solidarity. As a symbol they made a hand print around a large copy of a letter sent by the Rt Rev John Chalmers, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to the High Commissioner for Pakistan to the UK. In the letter the Moderator says, "A law that was designed to protect people of all faiths and to promote respect for all religions is being used to intimidate and terrorise minority faith communities." The poster is a visible reminder to the congregation as they continue to uphold the Christian community in Pakistan in their prayers.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a worldwide injustice that affects us all. The Church of Scotland showed its commitment to gender justice by taking part in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The WMC added its voice to the church-wide social media campaign, saying: "We can achieve gender peace by working

together globally to empower girls and women to have the courage to make their voices heard."

The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) also took up the theme in its campaign: *From peace in a home to peace in a nation: Stop violence, empower women and men.* GBV takes place within a particular context, and for the women of Zambia who are at risk of serious injury or even death if they report incidents to authorities, the campaign gave them an opportunity to speak out. Mable Sichali, Community Development and Social Justice Secretary of the UCZ, said: "I do not just wish to hear inspiring messages on GBV but my strong desire is to hear transformative messages; messages which cause us to change and act in order to build a peaceful Zambia where women, men and children will be able to participate equally without being harassed." Committed to raising awareness of GBV among women and men and to rehabilitation of victims of violence, the UCZ works to put an end to GBV in Zambia and slowly is effecting change. The WMC continues to work with partners in striving for a safer world for children, women and men.

4. Lord you have come to give recovery of sight to the blind

*God of insight,
meeting those we have heard about
brings new and deeper understanding.
Open our eyes to help us to share more,
to delight in the love and beauty we find;
to stand in solidarity with all who suffer;
to advocate for justice and peace;
and act and pray for equality and acceptance.*

Blindness can be a physical inability or a mental unpreparedness to see what is before us. Recovery of sight can lead to sight restored or to insight achieved.

Polwarth Church in Edinburgh along with their Mission Partners, Glen and Wendy Lund in Zambia, support a group of vulnerable youngsters who all have albinism. Glen says it's exciting to see how the development of the

Albino Foundation has empowered them. Their voices have been heard at Kitwe Central Hospital by nurses and doctors, who now provide health education to advise on eyes and skin. They have also been invited to represent the Foundation at many public functions and invited to schools to help all the students and teachers better understand and be sensitive of albinism.

Fraser Ewart and Ross Smart represented the Boys' Brigade World Mission Fund (BBWMF) at an International Camp run by the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren. They reported: "This was an experience that we shall never forget. We got to meet so many people and make some great new friends. In a world that is separated by borders on a map, bodies of water, and political or religious ideologies, it is a beautiful thing to see such unity. While being thrust into a foreign land, and being encouraged to relate to strangers on very vast issues, could be daunting, the camp is a brilliant canvas for us to make our own headway in bringing about a sense of togetherness in an otherwise divided world. It is good to see how the BBWMF can help in a small way to allow camps like this to continue for future generations."

Jenny Park from Stobswell Church, Dundee had her eyes opened during a visit to northern Italy to explore a possible twinning. "We had gone to Gorizia not knowing what kind of reception we would receive, or whether the visit would go well. In fact, we had new experiences, (mainly involving octopus and other varied seafood) and lots of fun and laughter. We left with a better understanding of the Waldensian Church and knowing that we had met a group of warm, generous people of deep Christian faith and commitment who made us feel very welcome".

January 2015 marked the centenary year of the death of Scottish missionary Mary Slessor (1848-1915) whose pioneering work in Calabar, Nigeria, remains an inspiration to this day. Celebrated for her commitment in promoting education, healthcare, justice, the end to the killing of twins, and stopping the practice of widows and slaves being put to death to accompany a dead chief into the

afterlife, she opened the eyes of many to the love of Christ in action. Today, the Church of Scotland, nationally and locally, continues her legacy in its commitment to work with partners around the world in addressing justice, health issues, and opportunities for all people to live full and productive lives, whether male or female, whether young or old.

Changes to our climate are affecting our partners all across the world. In September 2013, the Adentan Christ Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana travelled to Belgium for a twinning visit with St Andrew's Church of Scotland Brussels which included an opportunity to take part in an Eco-justice conference. Since 2007, the two congregations are united in their commitment to care for the earth. The Adentan minister, Rev Nii Armah Ashithey, says that his congregation still wants to do more because ecological issues are so important "to the very survival of the human race ... and it is a brilliant opportunity for the church to lead the ever-growing worldwide campaign for the protection of the environment and the fulfilment of its God-given responsibility."

Closer to home, the Scottish Churches Fossil Free group, which includes the youth group from Dalgety Bay Church, is seeking to raise awareness among church members: "We believe it is important to divest from fossil fuels as climate change is affecting the stability of the food production of the world, and is causing many droughts and famines. People are losing their homes. As Christians we find this immoral as it is harming God's creation that we have a responsibility to care for and look after." The group wants to get out the key message to all ages in the church that the future lies in renewable energy.

5. Lord you have come to proclaim release for the oppressed

*God of freedom,
when we see oppression and persecution,
help us stand firm for a better way.
Where people are unable to speak freely,*

*give us courage to use our voices.
Where people cannot worship as they wish,
may we raise a cry for tolerance.
Everywhere, may we bring your light of love.*

Freedom is a central aspect of life in faith: freedom to live full and productive lives with as many opportunities as possible for education and development.

Maureen Jack from St Andrews speaks of the insights brought from experiencing a different culture: "For over a decade now I've spent part of most years doing accompaniment work in the occupied Palestinian territory, with both Christian Peacemaker Teams and EAPPI, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (the Church of Scotland is a partner of EAPPI). We don't do anything remarkable. We reduce the likelihood of violence and human rights abuses by being there. And when, despite our presence, we see violence and abuses, we document them in photos, videos and reports, and pass these on to groups like the UN and the Red Cross. But, importantly, we are with people, in their joys and in their sorrows: maybe listening as a young conscripted Israeli soldier says how much he wishes he was home for the holiday; or holding a young Palestinian woman as she sobs with grief because her home has been demolished; or cheering on Palestinian kids having a kick about. I have learned such a lot about nonviolence and forgiveness from Israelis and Palestinians working for justice. My life has been tremendously enriched by the relationships I have built up in a culture very different from my own."

Many congregations have responded to 'A place at the table,' making such a difference to how our partners can respond to the crisis of refugees from Syria who are internally displaced or who flee to Lebanon. Rev. Salam Hanna, director of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) relief programme, says: "Unfortunately the situation is deteriorating rapidly in different ways and on many levels. However, NESSL continues to provide for the increased number of people in need. Many pastors and church elders have been working hard to provide physical, spiritual, and

psychological support to as many as possible. Indeed with the tragedy enlarging day by day, people are struggling with increasing challenges, such as lack or scarcity of fuel, electricity, water, and the rocketing prices for cooking gas and other daily needs." Mary Mikhael, former president of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, adds on behalf of NESSL: "we appeal to all partners to continue their prayers and support. Without your being part of our ministry we will not be able to continue responding to the cry of the thousands in need. Together, in obedience to the mission of God, we can become instruments of healing, and we can bring hope to hopeless hearts."

The Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS) finds itself once more in the midst of political and ethnic conflict, resulting in displacement, fear, and hardship. 22-year-old Reath tells of life in a UN camp and how being there means safety for him, literally a life-saver. He tells of seeing the killing of his brothers and running for his life. His wish to complete his education and get a job to support his family at present seems distant. The churches are split on tribal lines, and there is a great need for healing and reconciliation. The WMC is committed to standing alongside the PCOSS to identify ways we might be able to support post-conflict rebuilding of people's lives, material, psychological and spiritual. Congregations can support this through the 'Needing a Neighbour' project.

Hazel Watson, Convener of the Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group says, "human trafficking is crime against humanity and an appalling form of violence in which people – women, men and children – are bought and sold, transported across the world or within countries, and are forced to work, often in illegal activities, for long hours in very poor conditions and for very little pay. We have all been created in the image of God and are loved equally by God. Therefore we cannot stand by and watch as people are bought and sold as possessions." Christians can build effective networks to combat human trafficking and provide support and care for victims of this crime.

The experience of our partner, the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB), reveals how victims of human

trafficking can appear anywhere and how identification of victims can help free them from their oppressors. Alena Fendrychová, Coordinator for Work with Migrants, Diakonie ČCE, ECCB, tells us Peter's story: "Peter grew up in an orphanage, but once he turned 18 he ended up living on the streets of Prague having no place to call home and no prospects. An unknown man approached Peter and his friend offering them good jobs in the UK, but once they arrived he took their papers and forced them to work in his house and in the fields with no pay. After some time Peter escaped and sought help. He was taken to a British charity, identified as a victim of trafficking and provided with social services. The ECCB's Diakonie Centre was contacted, and Peter was admitted to their asylum house. They created an individual plan for him to help him reintegrate into society." Peter's is not an isolated case. It is clear that by raising awareness among people and working together internationally, we can help prevent people being trafficked and provide effective support for victims. As part of the Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group, the WMC works to do this. In 2015 we will hold a joint conference with Action Churches Together Scotland (ACTS) on human trafficking and will be involved in awareness raising at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh.

In 1984 the World Council of Churches facilitated a meeting of church leaders from North and South Korea that inspired a generation of Christian leaders in Korea and in the northeast Asian region to engage actively in public witness and advocacy for peace, justice and the reunification of Korea. Reuniting separated families in South and North Korea is one step towards peace between the two nations. In a letter to the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the UK and to politicians in Westminster and Holyrood, The Rt Rev John Chalmers said: "The Church of Scotland agrees with our partners - that reconciliation is impossible without healing the pain and suffering of families who have been separated since the division of the Korean peninsula." Congregations across the country are joining in prayer with the world church on 9 August this year.

In 2002, during the Harvest Festival, their probationer minister challenged the congregation of Queensferry Parish Church by highlighting the plight of farmers in the developing world, the iniquity of child labour and the imposition of unfair trade rules by richer countries. The congregation formed the Queensferry Fair Trade Group, and soon members of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic congregations in the town joined. This imaginative group has promoted Fairtrade through 'Ready Steady Fairtrade Cook' evenings, fashion shows, 'Bananarama' coffee mornings and 'Take a Step for Fairtrade' ceilidhs, with all money raised going to support fair trade producer development. They are also active in the community, reaching out to schools and using their annual stall in the local Scotmid store to raise the profile of Fairtrade products. In 2014 they joined with thousands supporting banana farmers during Fairtrade Fortnight by using this stall to highlight the difficulties faced by the people who produce the United Kingdom's favourite fruit. Gwenneth Williamson of the Queensferry Fair Trade Group says, "As a Christian my faith compels me to support the fair trade movement. I am personally called by God to live justly and honestly. By supporting fair practices, the payment of fair prices and wages and safe working conditions, I hope and pray that those who have formerly been exploited will regain dignity in their lives."

6. Lord you have come to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour

*God of love,
as we grow in faith
through answering your call to serve,
may we never tire of learning new things
about other countries, peoples, cultures.
May we be constantly amazed
as you reveal more of yourself to us,
deepening our own discipleship and commitment to you.*

Love is central to the Christian life and is the key motivator and enabler of all our Christian engagement. Love for each other, love for friend and enemy, love for the world and all

creation. Love inspired by the one who first loved each of us.

Ministry student Janet Easton-Berry was placed through the WMC in the Diocese of Amritsar of the Church of North India. She said "My experience has reinforced my calling very much for the poor and marginalised. I am passionate about social justice. I loved the opportunity of being in a cross-cultural placement, with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. We can learn so much from each other; it is important to be aware of needs, to pray for each other and lift each other up. It is a two-way relationship."

"This is now the fourth visit made between the two churches of Chalmers Ardler, Dundee and Kayole congregation of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya, and we can see the growth of understanding, fellowship and friendship. Of significance during our visit we saw the necessary reliance on team ministry and whilst there are some elements of team ministry functioning in Chalmers Ardler, the church in Kayole embraces such a concept more fully. The size of the congregation and the extent of outreach into the community is such that without team ministry the church would just not function. We can learn and be encouraged in our own faith and serving, and perhaps take the opportunity to develop our own discipleship through better use and development of our own structures and people. The partnership undoubtedly offers a focused opportunity to consider our responsibility with regard to 'world mission' but perhaps more importantly it encourages us to recognise that our own personal faith and witness can be enhanced as we learn from each other."

'Embrace Taiwan with Love' was the theme of the youth camp in Taiwan where Chloe Binnie represented the Church of Scotland Youth. She says, "I will always remember one little girl who was too shy to let go of her sister's hand on the first day. She was in my group for English class and when I would speak to her she would look away or hide her face. However, slowly she started to open up and began to take part. I was so delighted by the end of the summer camp she was running up to me and

speaking full sentences of English. I felt blessed to be able to be part of such an incredible experience and God's love was present throughout the whole trip." The Council gives thanks for the 150 years of witness by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

"All the way from Mid Argyll and arriving at Kasamba Church in Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi, it was uplifting and emotional to see the congregation emerge from the church singing and dancing to welcome us. There were many highlights during the trip but it would be hard to beat the overwhelming kindness and fellowship shown to us by everyone in what was a young, vibrant, growing church. It was a place for all ages...young children joined mothers on stage in dancing and were not turned away...young adults were actively given responsibility in the youth guild and were coached by elders. Our culture is different, our histories are different, our priorities in life are different, our politics are different – but we share the same faith. We may not have achieved anything measurable or material, but we achieved a love and friendship between the churches and the people which otherwise we would not know – and we have set a small foundation which can be built on to grow our twinning – we should not be prescriptive as to how this will grow, let's see how the Holy Spirit guides us and encourages us."

Why visit partner churches? The Convener of the Europe Committee, Susan Brown, reflects: "Before a recent World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) solidarity visit to the Reformed Church in Sub-Carpathian Ukraine, those visiting were told how keenly their arrival was anticipated. Once there, we saw for ourselves how important the knowledge of being in the thoughts and prayers of the wider Christian family is to our sisters and brothers in Christ in Ukraine. The visitors were repeatedly thanked simply for coming and for listening to their stories: stories of faith, hope and love in action that are truly inspiring. At the end of the two-day visit, small gifts were exchanged, and crosses sewn by members of a Highland congregation, along with the 'cross in my pocket' poem, saw the Bishop of Sub-Carpathia moved to tears. We are

family – there to help, support, encourage and inspire one another. Praise be to God.”

7. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me

*Spirit of Pentecost,
sweeping through your church and your creation,
inspire us that in wisdom, and with a quest for justice,
we can be your living stones,
speaking out for those whose voices are weak,
and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ.
As we continue our pilgrimage with the world church,
enthuse us on the journey of faith. Amen*

Accompanying the living stones, walking the Emmaus Road, following the pilgrimage of justice and peace, these are different names for the same calling. However we engage, we are joining together in seeking God’s purposes for us as this particular part of the body of Christ, the Church of Scotland, today.

The WMC seeks to support congregations and Presbyteries, Councils and Committees to be in the vanguard of involvement with the living stones of the world church. There are so many positive and exciting developments already happening, and there are more opportunities for all parts of the Church of Scotland to make connections and develop links of love, friendship and support with the churches internationally. There is learning to be offered and received on each side of the relationship.

In the coming church year, please consider how your congregation, Presbytery, Council or Committee can share in God’s worldwide work of building relationships with people in other countries. Below is a portfolio of options which will give some ideas about how to be active, and to be effective. Further information on work with partners in specific countries is available on the Church of Scotland website (www.churchofscotland.org.uk) or by contacting the World Mission Department in the Church Offices.

Wherever we find ourselves; whatever language we speak; whatever accent we have; whatever our ethnicity or

wealth or physical or mental aptitude; we are God’s people, called to love and serve God, which we do when we walk together; when we open our eyes to the world around us; when our arms are as wide as Christ’s on the cross; when our hearts are as large as Christ’s in concern for others; when our voices speak Christ’s words and our hands do Christ’s deeds in partnership with other living stones across our world.

Pray/Worship

- Allocate one Sunday this year to focus on your congregation’s links with the World Church and world church issues
- Explore the background of, and sing, hymns from other countries
- Use the new hymn resource to help you focus on the WCC pilgrimage of justice and peace
- Hold a café style worship using the WMC resource
- Pray for peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula on the Sunday before 15 August each year using the prayer produced by the Korea Christian Fellowship and the National Council of Churches in Korea

Do

- Use the WMC materials on Starters for Sunday
- Use the WMC holiday club materials
- Use WMC materials for ministers for school visits
- Use the youth resource on climate change
- Attend the Autumn WM Conference (September 12)
- Climb a Munro with Christian Aid (70th birthday)

Give

- Prayerfully and actively support the Church of Scotland HIV Programme; hold a Souper Sunday service followed by a congregational lunch; support World Aids Day (Dec 1)
- Fund a scholarship for a key member of one of our partner churches to enhance their education and take

the opportunity to build a supportive relationship during their study period

- Support the Needing a Neighbour Project for South Sudan

Read

- The Mission of God's People by Christopher Wright
- Still Counting the Dead by Frances Harrison (Sri Lanka)
- The Lemon Tree by Sandy Tolan (Palestine & Israel)
- Aids: Don't die of Prejudice by Norman Fowler (HIV & AIDS)
- Redeeming the Past by Michael Lapsley (Sri Lanka)
- Nothing to Envy by Barbara Demick (North Korea)
- Emma's War by Deborah Scroggins (South Sudan)
- Faith in the Face of Empire by Mitri Raheb (Palestine)
- Roots and Fruits – retrieving Scotland's Missionary story – Ken Ross (ed)
- Faith Rewarded – Walter Dunlop (St Andrew's, Jerusalem)

Support

- Christian Aid's campaigns on tax justice and climate change (www.christianaidscotland.org.uk)
- The work of the Trade Justice Movement (www.tradejusticemovement.org.uk)
- Buy and promote Fairtrade goods wherever possible and seek to be registered as a Fairtrade church (www.fairtrade.org.uk).
- Actively support the work of Jubilee Scotland & sign the Debt Justice Pledge (www.jubileescotland.org.uk)
- Collect used stamps for the Church of Scotland Stamp Project (see website for more information)

Write

- Send a Christmas card to a partner project. (See website for information)

- Write to your MSP, MP, MEP to advocate on the behalf on partners (check website for latest action)

Meet

- Invite WMC members or staff or visitors from partner churches to visit your congregation to share their experiences
- Spend your ministerial student summer placement with a Partner Church
- Spend your study leave with one of our partner churches
- Become a Professional Volunteer (www.challengesworldwide.org)
- Get involved in the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women's 'Pop-up Monastery' in August 2015 (<http://popupmonastery.com>)

Learn

- Pick a country and learn about it, exploring culture, religion, history etc.
- Explore the possibility of developing a twinning relationship with a congregation / community
- Hold a WM night with food and activities (see website for information)
- Hold a Games night at your church which helps participants learn about unjust trade world (www.makepovertyhistory.org)
- Host a forum to engage in debate and discussion about issues which affect all, and invite people from other countries to participate; some may live in your community and this would be a good way to meet and become better known to each other. (Invite a member of WMC to come or to help plan)
- Learn the Lord's Prayer in another language

Watch

- Open Bethlehem
- Historic footage on Mary Slessor (available from WMC)

- Dallas Buyers Club (excellent film related to HIV)
- The Stones Cry Out (Palestinian Christians speak)
- Pray the Devil back to Hell (Women's peace movement in Liberia)

In the name of the Council

IAIN D CUNNINGHAM, *Convener*
CHRISTINE SIME, *Vice-Convener*
VALERIE BROWN, *Vice-Convener*
IAN W ALEXANDER, *Council Secretary*

Appendices (on the web)

- Appendix I Deaths
- Appendix II Mission Partners
- Appendix III Faithshare Visits
- Appendix IV Twinings

ADDENDUM

Rev Christine Sime, Vice-Convener

The Council records its gratitude and appreciation to the Rev Christine Sime for the time, energy and insight which she has generously shared with the Council in the three years in which she has served as Vice-Convener and also in her service as a member and Convener of the Local Development Committee. Ms Sime has helped the Council to be innovative about its task of encouraging the whole Church of Scotland to be involved in building relationships with churches and Christian people around the world, and for this it expresses its gratitude.

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