

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL

MAY 2016

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PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Encourage Kirk Sessions to use the *Learn: Exploring Faith* publication as a tool for new communicants and those interested in learning more about the Christian faith (*Section 2.4.4.1*).
3. Instruct the Council, in consultation with Theological Forum, Panel of Review and Reform and other relevant Councils, to consider and respond to the findings and proposals made in the 'Developing the Eldership' report and bring to the General Assembly by 2018 detailed proposals for eldership training (*Section 2.4.5 and Appendix I*).
4. Encourage Kirk Sessions to promote and support the Learn: Pastoral Care conference by sending delegates (*Section 2.4.6.3*).
5. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to study the *Invisible Church* research and consider its implications for their future working (*Section 2.4.7 and Appendix II*).
6. Commend the book, *Invisible Church*, to the Councils and Committees of the Kirk for consideration in the development of strategy and policy (*Section 2.4.7 and Appendix II*).
7. Encourage Kirk Sessions to use the resource, *Learning Disabilities: A discussion starter*, and to provide the Council with names and e-mail addresses of those with an interest in this area who are willing to act as learning disabilities contacts (*Section 2.4.8.2*).

8. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to participate in the “Year of Young People” 2018 as an opportunity for the Kirk to engage with young people (*Section 2.4.9*).
9. Instruct the Council, in collaboration with the Theological Forum, to produce a paper on the theology of children and young people in the church and report to the General Assembly in 2017 in preparation for events held in 2018 (*Section 2.4.9*).
10. Encourage Kirk Sessions to use and promote the *Learn: How will our children have faith?* publication (*Section 2.4.10.2*).
11. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to send young people aged 17-25 to the National Youth Assembly and consider supporting them by meeting the cost of attendance and travel (*Section 2.4.11.3*).
12. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to make young people aware of the financial help that can be provided when applying online for the National Youth Assembly (*Section 2.4.11.4*).
13. Encourage all Presbyteries to fill their allocated place for a youth delegate to the General Assembly (*Section 2.4.12*).
14. Encourage Kirk Sessions to promote the use of *Pray Now: People of the Way* for individual and group use in their congregations (*Section 2.5.4*).
15. Encourage Ministers and others leading worship to make use of resources supplied by the Kirk in response to specific crisis situations at home and abroad (*Section 2.5.6.2*).
16. Urge Presbyteries to make use of Local Church Review resources and to assess training requirements for visitation teams and local congregations (*Section 2.6.3 and Appendix III*).
17. Encourage Kirk Sessions and congregations considering alterations to their buildings to contact the Committee on Church Art and Architecture at an early stage (*Section 2.6.3.2*).
18. Commend the Council’s Quick Guides for congregational use (*Sections 2.6.3.2.2 and 2.6.3.2.4*).
19. Encourage Ministers and Kirk Sessions to provide information to congregations on subscribing to *Life and Work* and to encourage the use of the website (www.lifeandwork.org) (*Section 2.6.3.3*).
20. Commend the Council for the creative partnerships developed with the Scottish Storytelling Centre (*Section 2.6.3.5*).
21. Instruct the Council, in consultation with other relevant Councils and Committees, to consider and respond to the findings and proposals made in the Rural Working Group report (*Section 2.7.3 and Appendix IV*).
22. Instruct the Council and the Ministries Council to review the Partnership Agreement with Fresh Expressions and report back to the General Assembly of 2017 (*Section 2.7.4 and Appendix V*).
23. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to promote the use of the *Learn: Tomorrow’s Calling* publication as a tool to help those considering ministry within the Kirk during the Decade of Ministry (*Section 2.7.4.2*).
24. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to send representatives to attend the “Going for Growth” Summer School event (*Section 2.7.5 and Appendix V*).
25. Commend the theological basis for Fresh Expressions as set out in Appendix VI to Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions for study and encouragement (*Section 2.7.5.6 and Appendix VI*).
26. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to promote the use of the *Mission and Older People* study guide (*Section 2.7.7.1*).
27. Urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to run a course using the *Sharing Faith* resource as a means of deepening discipleship (*Section 2.7.8.2*).
28. Urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to encourage those who wish to share their faith story to respond to the Why Believe? Group’s invitation and contact the Council (*Section 2.7.8.3*).

29. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to raise awareness of online mission resources by having (www.resourcingmission.org.uk) as a link on their Presbytery and congregational websites (*Section 2.7.10*).
30. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to promote the Mission and Discipleship Council's Facebook page and subscribe to Enews (*Section 2.7.10*).

REPORT

1. Introduction

1.1 In November 2013 the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), held in Busan, South Korea, produced their first statement on Mission and Evangelism since 1982. "Together Towards Life"¹ is a wide ranging statement offering insights on how others in the world church have discerned the way God's Spirit is moving in the world. One focus it develops is that mission should not only be *to* the margins, but *from* the margins. The Church worldwide has been alerted to the voice of those who for different reasons are marginalised. So mission has moved from the centre to the periphery, from the powerful to the powerless, from the rich to the poor. In our report we recognise that we are, in our churches, among those who are vulnerable and who struggle and we have sought to listen to some of these voices. But we also believe in a God who works transformation and gives people hope through Jesus Christ, whose ministry included everyone.

2. "People of the Way"

*Jesus said to him 'I am the way, and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.'*

John 14:6 NRSV

2.1 The General Assembly's theme, "People of the Way", serves as a clarion call for the Kirk to be in step with God's mission in the world. "The Way" is the first description of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles, before outsiders later labelled this movement as "Christian". The Council does not resource an institution but the people of God, providing resources for mission and discipleship to

develop people at a national level for work in the local community. This is a prophetic task, trying to keep in step with God's Spirit. Our vision is, "to sow seeds for a fruitful church, rooted in worship, growing in faith and serving God in the world."

2.2 This last year the Council has sought to focus afresh on the following challenges: resourcing the rural church; addressing the needs of those with additional learning needs so all of us can have a real sense of belonging; understanding the views of those in the 'invisible church'; nurturing those involved in creating new expressions of emerging church; shaping our buildings to give support for those with dementia; envisioning leadership at a congregational level; and using local events to make a national impact. It is our hope and prayer that our work will encourage the "People of the Way".

2.3 As "People of the Way", our prayer is to find God's way of working "within", "among" and "beyond". The appendices deal with the rural dimension, the "invisible church", support Presbyteries by resourcing Local Church Review, the development of the Eldership and the impact of the "fresh expressions" initiative, within our own tradition. The report illustrates how the description "mission from the margins" is already becoming a reality in Scotland.

2.4 The Way

*Divine Accountant,
I submit to You, the sums of my day:
Here is how I spent my time
Here is how I used my gifts*

¹ Full document is available at <https://goo.gl/IUP4A8>

Here is how I spent my money
Here is how I related to others
Receive my offerings, Lord.
Encourage and correct me.
Bless my discipleship.
Strengthen my discipline.
And lead me towards wholeness
for the sum of the whole
is so much greater than its parts. Amen.

Pray Now: People of the Way (Discipline)

2.4.1 “The Way” involves resourcing those who want to find out more about faith.

2.4.2 “The Way” calls for the people of God to use their gifts, including their service in leadership.

2.4.3 “The Way” requires the Kirk to be accessible and inclusive for everyone.

2.4.4 Equipping those exploring discipleship

2.4.4.1 A resource for new communicants, the *Learn: Exploring Faith* publication was launched in October 2015. This was in response to a request at the 2014 General Assembly to create a follow-up to the series *A Faith for 2000*, a reprint of a book from the 1970s. *Learn: Exploring Faith*, which was described by the Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison as “a fresh, exciting and celebratory welcome to the thrill of exploring the Christian faith”, considers such matters as why this is important for today’s Kirk and how the Church relates to the life of faith.

2.4.4.2 A further publication with the working title *Learn: Faith Seeking Understanding* is planned for 2017, the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses. This aims to encourage people of all ages and stages in our congregations to think about what it means to be a “reformed church” by demystifying reformed theology and making it accessible.

2.4.5 Developing the Eldership: Executive Summary

2.4.5.1 The 2014 General Assembly commended Elders for their participation in widespread and detailed national consultations about the office, which demonstrated a desire on the part of Elders to enhance their effectiveness in this role. It also highlighted the need for training that would enable prospective Elders to discern their gifts and calling and prepare them to serve, as well as ongoing development support for all Elders.

2.4.5.2 The Eldership Working Group reflected on the history and theology of the Eldership, noting that the role now needs to be contextualised for today’s Kirk by being rooted in mission that is sensitive to the needs and opportunities within each parish.

2.4.5.3 The Group now wishes to share its interim findings and invites others to respond to the following proposals:

- The Mission and Discipleship Council should collaborate with other relevant Councils and Committees to come to an agreed position on re-focusing the meaning, purpose and role of Eldership within a locally contextualised mission.
- The Council should define how such a re-focusing would shape the nature and content of Eldership training, recognising that different ways of learning need to be found that are appropriate to the task.
- The Council should develop detailed proposals for Eldership training provision in the areas of: “call”; “preparing to serve” and “ongoing support and development”.

2.4.5.4 The full report, as well as further details on the need for support identified from the Eldership consultation, can be found in Appendix I. Different ways of learning need to be found that are appropriate for equipping the Eldership. We are also working through how to respond to the relevant instructions from the Tenure Group report at the 2015 General Assembly.

2.4.6 Equipping those in leadership positions

2.4.6.1 *Learn: Eldership* continues to be very popular; with about 8,000 copies purchased since its launch in the autumn of 2014, making it a bestseller in church terms. This is a real testament to the thorough consultation which enabled us to shape the publication around the needs that Elders identified. Feedback from congregations suggests that, as intended, it is being used in a variety of ways and contexts by prospective and existing Elders: by individuals for personal study and reference; in small group study and in larger settings such as at the start of Kirk Session meetings or Presbytery training sessions. The Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood described it as “*a beautifully produced and exceptionally informative publication*”. We are delighted that it was nominated last year during 2015 in The Drum Scottish Creative Awards, and was also recognised in the 'Innovation' category of the Scottish Magazine Awards.

2.4.6.2 *Learn: Office Bearers* (working title) will build upon the success of *Learn: Eldership* by offering a hands-on resource for those holding particular positions of responsibility within the Kirk and those considering taking on such roles. It will provide insight, opportunity for reflection and access to expert advice; cover such practical areas as the Kirk and the law, property, finance and safeguarding; equip people with skills for service; allow space for deeper reflection on the nature of serving in the Kirk and be a helpful introduction for its office bearers. A conference for office bearers and Elders at the end of April focused on many of these themes and was a useful learning and development opportunity.

2.4.6.3 The Council will hold a Pastoral Care conference in the next year as preparation for its *Learn: Pastoral Care* publication, due to be published in 2018. Working alongside pastoral care providers and practical theologians, we shall develop a learning resource that offers practical insights and deepens theological understanding of pastoral care for all ages.

2.4.7 Publishing the findings from *Invisible Church*

2.4.7.1 The Highland and Islands research project into the *Invisible Church* conducted by Steve Aisthorpe, Mission Development Worker, was expanded in 2015 to cover the rest of Scotland, since this is a matter of national interest and concern rather than one specific to the Highlands and Islands. Its findings dispel a number of myths about why people do not attend church and what that means for their faith. An exploration of the research, published by Saint Andrew Press, will be launched at the 2016 General Assembly. Further information is available at Appendix II to this report. This will also be one of the main elements of the “Going for Growth” Summer School (see section 2.7.5.4) in June 2016.

2.4.8 Equipping congregations to be communities where those with learning disabilities feel that they can belong

2.4.8.1 The Learning Disabilities Working Group hosted a conference in June 2015 entitled “Creating Communities of Belonging”. The conference, which was delivered in partnership with a group of people with learning disabilities, was attended by more than 80 people drawn from a variety of denominations, many of whom commented on how inspiring the event was. From feedback, we have heard encouraging stories of some who followed through on the ideas they wrote down at the conference about what they would do when they returned to their congregations. For example, one delegate with learning disabilities helped her local church to run their own learning disabilities conference. The Group is keen to be put in touch with local congregational contacts with a passion for this area of work. If you have a preferred contact person, please send details to MandD@churchofscotland.org.uk.

2.4.8.2 The Group also developed a resource, *Learning Disabilities: A discussion starter* (available at <http://goo.gl/ytrQvw>) for use during “Learning Disabilities Awareness” week (16 to 20 May 2016) by congregations wishing to become communities of belonging for those with learning disabilities.

2.4.8.3 The Council, having consulted with the Group and the Committee on Church Art and Architecture, reaffirmed its view that the specific focus of its work should be on learning disabilities. Experience has shown that this is more likely to ensure that the often complex (and frequently overshadowed) needs of those with learning disabilities are properly addressed. The recent revival, however, of the Scottish Churches Disability Group, on which the Kirk is represented, gives the Council an opportunity to work collaboratively and ecumenically in the general area of disability.

2.4.9 “Year of Young People” 2018

2.4.9.1 Over the next three years we are shaping our work with children and young people around the ‘Year of Young People’, the theme for 2018 set by the Scottish Government. We have carried out a number of consultations with key stakeholders, including other Councils and Committees, children and young people and representatives from the Scottish Government, so as to develop a collaborative and cohesive approach. This will enable the Kirk to have significant focus on children and young people in 2018. A number of resources, events and online provision are being planned.

2.4.10 Equipping those involved in ministry with children and young people

2.4.10.1 At the beginning of 2016, three “Community of Faith” day events were run in Glasgow, Dumfries and Inverness for those involved in ministry with children and young people, particularly in churches with few or no children. Shaped by feedback from the previous year’s “Community of Faith” conference, these sought to equip delegates to respond positively to the opportunity of helping children and young people to be fully engaged in all aspects of church life.

2.4.10.2 *Learn: How will our children have faith?* (September 2015) has aroused a good deal of interest, with about 1,000 bought to-date. This short publication offers guidance to congregations who wish to reflect on their ministry with children and young people, challenging

them to consider the “why?” of what they are doing before considering the “how?”.

2.4.10.3 We shall provide a free resource in 2016 on *Employing Children and Youth Workers* (www.resourcingmision.org.uk) which adopts the same approach. This initiative also emerged from our consultations.

2.4.10.4 Work is also in progress on a *Learn: Children and Young People* (working title) resource for those who wish to engage with the theological basis of this ministry; involve children and young people in all aspects of church life; and lead this area of work effectively. Our aim is to publish this in autumn 2017 in advance of the “Year of Young People” in 2018.

2.4.11 Engaging with Young Adults

2.4.11.1 The Council has developed ways of involving young adults in decision making through the National Youth Assembly (NYA) (see separate NYA report on page 17/1) and the General Assembly Youth Representatives’ programme. We would encourage all congregations to make full use of a series of NYA promotional videos produced at the 2015 event, which are available at <http://goo.gl/uAwMJQ>.

2.4.11.2 Youth Representatives from the 2015 NYA have participated in the Kirk delegation to the Climate Change Summit in Paris; raised awareness of human trafficking and child exploitation through starting a charity appeal; and organised an event to promote NYA.

2.4.11.3 The NYA is an important opportunity for young adults aged 17-25 to take part in significant and inspiring church-wide activities. The 2016 Assembly will be held at Gartmore House, near Aberfoyle, from Friday evening on 12 August until Monday evening on 15 August; the broad topic areas are mental health, gender justice (in Scotland and beyond) and the future of ministry. We would encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to encourage their young people to attend and support them to do so.

2.4.11.4 We would encourage any young person who may be deterred by the cost of the event to approach their Kirk Session or Presbytery to find out if there is any financial support available; if not, they should contact the Council to discuss the possibility of partial support from central funds.

2.4.11.5 The first three-yearly NYA Review is currently under way and a report will be prepared for next year's General Assembly.

2.4.11.6 The Council also provides developmental opportunities for young adults. In addition to the NYA Moderator, Clerk and youth representatives, two young adults are elected to serve as members of the Scottish Youth Parliament. Young adults have represented the Kirk at international events organised by partner churches and organisations such as Bethlehem Bible College's conference entitled "Christ at the Checkpoint" (March 2016). Several grants have also been distributed from the Church of Scotland (COSY) Collective which is a fund specifically for young people to run projects for children and young people in their local communities.

2.4.12 Youth Representatives at the General Assembly

2.4.12.1 The General Assembly of 2015 instructed the Council *to work with the Assembly Arrangements Committee to investigate how the Assembly can accommodate those Presbyteries who have more than one willing Youth Representative to attend the General Assembly, and report back with a proposed solution to the General Assembly in 2016.*

2.4.12.2 The Council has been in consultation with representatives from the Assembly Arrangements Committee (AAC) and the Legal Questions Committee (LQC) on this and they have made full responses in their reports (section 11 on page 5/12). The ACC resists such a fundamental change as offering places to Youth Representatives from out-with their Presbytery bounds since the practice is no longer allowed for Commissioners to the Assembly. The LQC will bring forward an amendment to Standing Order 35 (i) to enable

Presbyteries to nominate as youth representatives young people living away from their home Presbytery temporarily. However, these discussions with the AAC and LQC brought to the fore that there is a greater issue lying behind the presenting one, and that is the role and participation of young people within the Church and all its courts. This is an issue that will, in part, be considered in the review of the NYA and the Council is committed to continuing discussions to seek solutions in this area.

2.4.13 Youth Ministry

2.4.13.1 In accordance with the 2015 General Assembly instruction for the Council *"to enter into discussion with the Ministries Council to consider the possibility of recognising Youth Ministry as a strand of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and in due course to consider whether the Ministries Council should take responsibility for the assessment, training and ongoing support of Youth Ministers; bringing a report to the General Assembly of 2016"*, we have consulted with Ministries Council representatives to identify how to address this. Further information is available in the report from the Ministries Council at section 2.16 on page 14/18.

2.5 The Way Within

*"It is one thing to understand it,
but an entirely different thing
to give or to experience.
Sometimes it's hard to imagine
a way of being, so deep rooted,
surpassing all that our mind, heart, soul
and strength can offer.
But this way, this grace,
is what we are given
and is what we are to give."*

Pray Now: People of the Way (Grace)

2.5.1 "The Way Within" nurtures the inner life of discipleship, often expressed in prayer and worship. To foster this, we provide materials for public worship, prayers for groups and for individual study and reflection. We also

offer experience of, and insight into, different approaches to worship through events. This is outlined below.

2.5.2 Developing a Worship Resource for Congregations

2.5.2.1 Over the year we have been developed a methodology to help congregations reflect on worship. It is hoped that this will encourage people to share their experiences of meeting God in worship and lead them to explore how worship can be experienced in all its heights and depths. This work has been stimulated and enhanced by the Council's involvement in the Joint Liturgical Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland which has brought an ecumenical dimension to the resource.

2.5.2.2 Our aim has been to offer a process which can be used across the entire Church. From our initial consultation with people, representing the rich diversity of worship practice, a clear consensus emerged that a fruitful place to start would be to help encourage people to share stories of ways in which they have encountered God in worship. A few questions were devised and piloted in a selection of congregations which are representative of the Kirk. The methodology will be published as a congregational resource in March 2017.

2.5.3 Taking the local expertise to the national stage: SPARK

2.5.3.1 Since we believed that Greyfriars Kirk's successful SPARK festival was worthy of a wider stage, we have supported a year-long programme of Worship and the Arts in Edinburgh. Input from our staff, together with promotion of events and some financial support, has enabled a locally run event to have a greater national reach. The outcome has been the production of online videos, interviews and blogs arising from the festival, available at <http://goo.gl/ljrdZD>.

2.5.3.2 This approach highlights how such a joint venture can be helped to have a wider impact. We hope to promote other such events in a similar fashion.

2.5.3.3 The Psalm Project offered a day's learning about the history of the Psalms in worship and exploring their future as part of congregational liturgy. Martin Tel (C F Seabrook Director of Music at Princeton Seminary), shared about a collation of arrangements and settings for the *Psalms for All Seasons* song book, while the Rev John Bell challenged participants to find music that fostered a dynamic engagement with lyrics and verse.

2.5.3.4 We also co-ordinated and funded a series of four worship events in Edinburgh, Arbroath, Glasgow and Perth featuring The Psalm Project (a Worship Collective from Holland) and Satellite (a Worship Collective from Scotland); images and videos from these can be viewed on our Resourcing Mission website.

2.5.3.5 "Worship, Liturgy and the Arts" was a day conference (held at Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, on 27 June 2015) that explored how the arts might be used to enrich worship and as opportunities for outreach. Seminars and workshops delivered by practitioners of creative liturgy and visual arts helped participants explore similar models in their own context.

2.5.4 *Pray Now* - profiling the General Assembly theme

2.5.4.1 The Council timed the launch of the 2015 *Pray Now* to coincide with last year's General Assembly and its mutually agreed theme of *Living Stones* was used at the Heart and Soul event, enabling the Kirk to pray with this theme throughout the year. One outcome has been an increase in sales, reflecting greater uptake of the book across the Kirk; by January 2016, almost 1,500 copies had been sold.

2.5.4.2 The Council is pleased to continue this pattern with the new edition of *Pray Now: People of the Way*, which is available at this year's General Assembly. We thank the *Pray Now* Writing Group who produced a book filled with rich and authentic prayers.

2.5.5 "Pray It Forward" Cards

2.5.5.1 Our "Pray It Forward" cards are now on their third reprint due to high demand. These versatile cards are ideal

for pastoral visiting, blessing services, baptisms, weddings, outreach, hospital visits or simply leaving on tables in cafes, waiting rooms or other places around the parish. A new set is being prepared, inspired by different scripture verses; these will be available via (www.resourcingmission.org.uk).

2.5.6 “Starters for Sunday” responding to needs of the world through worship

2.5.6.1 The Council continues to provide the Kirk with its online worship resources page “Starters for Sunday”. This is widely used by those leading worship throughout the Kirk and by other churches at home and abroad. They are able to draw from exegesis, sermons ideas, prepared prayers for each moment in worship, a children’s talk and suggestions for music. This is especially useful for those leading worship for the first time who do not have access to a wide theological library or have little or no exegetical or liturgical training.

2.5.6.2 A significant contribution this year has been the prompt creation of resources that allow worshippers to respond meaningfully to the ongoing refugee crisis. As the Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison said when it was issued,

“We have all been deeply moved by the harrowing images of the refugee crisis spreading across Europe. We might have been left speechless. However, some have responded in words which will help many of us to focus our worship during such a time of turmoil. The intent of this valuable material is to guide us in our prayers, enabling our minds to reflect and our hearts to reach out in compassion. I hope and pray this will stir us into loving action so we are filled with wisdom, longing for peace and upholding justice.”

2.5.6.3 We wish to alert the Kirk to the range of national and international themes highlighted in “Starters for Sunday” to which other Councils and Committees have contributed. Our prayer is that Kirk members may be informed in the context of worship and so thoughtfully respond to the global and national needs of God’s world.

2.5.7 Music Group

2.5.7.1 The Kirk’s Music Group is currently commissioning new music from various leading song writers around the theme of “People of the Way” for use throughout the year and at significant events such as Heart and Soul and the General Assembly. Further, the Group is engaging with music practitioners to explore faith and spirituality in children and produce worship material (specifically songs at this stage) for use throughout the national church, while giving a specific learning experience in a local setting.

2.5.8 Social Media

2.5.8.1 In the first half of 2015 we delivered the “Different Voices” online resource (which shares blogs and reflections on music for worship) and in the second half we focused on providing prayerful and reflective content for the Kirk’s daily tweets. The content draws from previous and current editions of our prayer publication *Pray Now* and, in the first three months of this, the Kirk’s Communications Team reported a significant increase in Twitter and Facebook page ‘likes’, ‘shares’ and ‘reaches’. This has proven to be a very simple, yet effective, way of enabling people to experience and share short moments of prayer. We have seen this grow from 20 ‘likes’ and ‘shares’ to peaking at 227 ‘likes’ with nearly 17,000 people reached by one tweet alone.

2.6 The Way Among

*May my choices be informed
by Your forgiving love;
may my prejudices be clear
and be overcome;
may my compassion be real
and not merely appear that way. Amen*

Pray Now: People of the Way (Inclusion)

2.6.1 “The Way Among” describes how we live as the “People of the Way” in our own context. We want to work to help strengthen a faith that believes God still gathers a people to serve and worship in their setting.

2.6.2 Our work includes Local Church Review templates and principles, CARTA, Life and Work and Saint Andrew Press, who all have their part to play.

2.6.3 Outlined here are the resources that root and support such an informed faith:

2.6.3.1 Local Church Review (LCR) pathway for our Council (in response to the 2015 General Assembly Tenure Report)

2.6.3.1.1 LCR is a tool to enable a Presbytery to work with a congregation to know how to plan for the future, by identifying the resources and direction needed for mission within their community. Those who need to use this tool require both the information and the confidence to do so, therefore, we are working on how best to provide a national training template.

2.6.3.1.2 We are grateful for the training session that Rev Dr George Whyte, Presbytery Clerk of Edinburgh, organised for the Presbytery Clerks' Forum. In addition, we gave financial support for three Presbytery-led events, providing pilot training for LCR. Our efforts, however, to devise an appropriate national training template (as instructed by the General Assembly) have thrown up several challenges. Evaluation of these pilot events has demonstrated that the current training needs of the Kirk in different geographical areas and local contexts are too diverse to be met by a single model. On our current data, a "one size fits all" national training template would result in an approach that, in some cases, would be unfit for purpose.

2.6.3.1.3 There were, however, a number of basic elements common to all three training events. Working with those who delivered the training, we plan to compile a set of resources addressing these common needs, which we hope will encourage and support both Congregations and Presbyteries. These include some short video resources, which are scheduled for completion by the end of this summer. The existing LCR templates are still available on (www.resourcingmission.org.uk), and will be

refreshed through the coming months in response to feedback from those who have used them.

2.6.3.1.4 Although there are challenges in finding the right LCR process for each context, those who have been through the exercise report that the challenges are outweighed by the potential benefits. To enable more churches to engage more fruitfully with the process, we are developing a LCR toolkit, which will be available for Presbyteries either in hard copy or as a downloadable version. We will also offer a variety of training events.

2.6.3.1.5 Further information is available at Appendix III.

2.6.3.2 Committee on Church Art and Architecture (CARTA)

2.6.3.2.1 CARTA's work is benefitting from the changes approved by last year's General Assembly. We have a clearer remit, which clarifies our areas of responsibility in relation to the General Trustees, with whom we now share a single point of contact for all matters relating to church buildings. We have increased our capacity to serve congregations seeking advice and approval by being able to retain the skills and experience of all our members who wish to continue for a second term. The co-option of a specialist organ consultant has improved the quality and consistency of our advice in this area; and the appointment of a Development Worker with specific responsibility for CARTA will enable us to be more proactive in stimulating, encouraging and supporting well-grounded ideas for change. Examples of some 'before' and 'after' images of sanctuaries can be seen at <https://goo.gl/77YoxM>.

2.6.3.2.2 Our increased capacity is enabling us to contribute more effectively to developments that require intra- or inter-Council working, such as helping to make church buildings and what goes on in them more accommodating to those with particular learning or physical needs. Together with the Ministries Council, CrossReach and Faith in Older People Scotland, we are exploring how to support Presbyteries to offer training events on caring for those with dementia. In addition to

our *Quick Guide* on Dementia Friendly Church Buildings, we have recently issued one on how to improve the worship experience of those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2.6.3.2.3 During 2015 CARTA dealt with over 200 requests for advice and approval; about a quarter of these were relatively minor or straightforward, such as the removal of a couple of pews to accommodate a wheelchair user; but some projects were very large indeed, involving major restructuring. The first kind of request could often be resolved fairly quickly using Convener's powers, particularly if it was accompanied by good illustrations of the area affected. The second, however, usually involved more than one visit by a couple of our members: on the first occasion to listen to the congregation's ideas with a view to granting approval in principle; on the second to consider the plans in detail, often with the architect in attendance. But whether their project is large or small, simple or complex, we would encourage congregations to contact us at an early stage.

2.6.3.2.4 Another area of our work where requests are likely to require ongoing consideration is the design of new stained glass windows, starting with the artist's brief and ending with final approval of the finished design. Since very few congregations have much experience of what is involved in successfully commissioning a new window, the Stained Glass Group has published a *Quick Guide* on the topic, to sit alongside its recent guides on conservation and maintenance.

2.6.3.3 The development of the *Life and Work* Review outcomes

2.6.3.3.1 *Life and Work*, the magazine of our Kirk, continues to face the challenging conditions experienced by many other publishers working in a digital age (see *Life and Work* Review in the 2015 General Assembly Blue Book). Despite this, the magazine is circulating around 19,000 copies every month. The editorial team continue to develop the website (www.lifeandwork.org) resulting in growing interest. At least one new item is uploaded to the

site on every working day and shared on social media via Facebook and Twitter. The editorial team is supported by the *Life and Work* Advisory Committee who met on two occasions in 2015. The Committee was utilised on several occasions between meetings and the Editor remains deeply grateful for the support of both its membership and the Convener.

2.6.3.3.2 *Life and Work* requires a robust business model and the General Assembly of 2015 approved the findings of a review of the business functions of *Life and Work*. The outcome was to meet the challenge of a new (and changing) communications environment. A number of measures have already been implemented, addressing the points raised by the Review Group. These are:

- The appointment of a Business Manager for *Life and Work*.
- The creation of a Committee devoted to the commercial aspects of *Life and Work*, including sales, marketing, advertising and distribution. The Committee benefits from volunteers with key professional expertise from the publishing and business world.
- The commissioning of a major piece of market research examining the market place both within and outside churches. This will shape the direction of travel for the magazine of the Kirk in the years to come.

2.6.3.3.3 The magazine is now in a period of transition as it looks forward to the challenges of the future, seeking to retain our existing readers whilst also seeking to reach out to new readers in our mission, both inside and outside the Kirk.

2.6.3.3.4 The prayers of the General Assembly and the wider Kirk would be very much appreciated during this important time in the life of the 137-year-old magazine.

2.6.3.4 Saint Andrew Press (SAP)

2.6.3.4.1 SAP is the Kirk's publishing imprint and is run by Hymns Ancient and Modern (HA&M) along with its

other well-known book imprints: SCM Press which specializes in academic theology; Canterbury Press, which focuses on liturgy, church resources and popular spirituality; HA&M, the hymn book publishing part of its activity and Church House Publishing, the official publishing imprint of the Church of England. Together, these imprints and its periodicals division, make HA&M the largest independent religious publisher in the country. It is a registered charity and from its trading profit distributes grants to churches and other Christian organisations.

2.6.3.4.2 In the last year, SAP publishing has benefitted from a change in its editorial focus, now working more closely with Mission and Discipleship and other Councils of the Kirk to identify and develop resources for local churches. SAP enjoyed significant growth in revenue in 2014-5, reversing a pattern of decline, and so increasing sales over the previous year by more than 40%. Outstanding in this period were the first three titles in the imaginative and attractive *Learn* series, in which more titles are planned for 2016. SAP also look forward to publishing a number of Scottish interest titles in the year ahead, particularly an anthology of Scottish religious poetry which is being compiled by Kenneth Steven and is scheduled for the early autumn.

2.6.3.5 The Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC): a cultural contribution to the arts

2.6.3.5.1 God has endowed us with a creative imagination which finds an outlet in the various arts. For many years the Council has supported this by subsidising the work of the SSC but declining resources and more focused priorities have led us to seek a way of securing the future of the Centre without this being a continuing charge on the Council.

2.6.3.5.2 It has been clear to the Council, since its review of priorities in 2009, that the SSC was not financially viable as a specifically Christian resource for the Arts. Each year the work of the SSC was being subsidised to a significant degree by the Kirk. Over the last few years work has been going on to find an alternative future for the SSC that

respects the purpose for which significant capital sums were invested in it by other partners as a storytelling centre, while ensuring that Kirk money meant for mission was used first on the priorities the Council had identified and repeatedly reaffirmed. We are now operating on a break even basis, continuing to use the SSC fully, and working cooperatively with our partners to realise a shared vision.

2.6.3.5.3 Working closely with our funding partners, Creative Scotland, TRACS and the City of Edinburgh Council, and with all our immediate neighbours in the area, we have embarked on a journey that we hope will secure that long term future under the new charity Edinburgh's Netherbow. In the course of 2015, the Council refurbished the upper level of John Knox House so that Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature can be situated close to the SSC and prepare an exciting new proposal to develop the area around the building as 'Edinburgh's Netherbow' – a focus for celebrating the literature of the country – in which the significance of John Knox's own literary contribution will be promoted. John Knox House remains an integral part, both literally and metaphorically, of the visitor experience at the SSC and this proposal offers the exciting prospect of significant development to improve the museum.

2.6.3.5.4 The work of the SSC continues to attract people from a broad range of ages, backgrounds and abilities to celebrate and to practise creativity through performance, exhibition, tuition, professional exchange and participatory activities. The SSC has established itself as a pivotal resource both in Edinburgh and nationally not only for storytelling but, increasingly, for the country's other traditional arts, especially music and dance.

2.6.3.5.5 This has given rise in recent years to the creation of TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland), an organisation which is now based in the building and whose income and activities have become an essential part of the programming and financing of the SSC. The successful bid to Creative Scotland by TRACS for three year

funding, and their decision to use that funding to base their activities largely in the SSC, has brought a welcome financial sustainability to the SSC's operations in the short/ mid-term (2015-2018).

2.6.3.5.6 The SSC has enjoyed a successful year in terms of visitors, audience numbers, and turnover. There was an extremely popular and successful Edinburgh Festivals programme, and one of the year's programming highlights was October's Scottish International Storytelling Festival, which has now established itself as one of the premier festivals of its type internationally. Similarly, the various winter festivals/events programme, such as the St Andrew's Day celebrations, is becoming a popular annual fixture.

2.6.3.5.7 The Council is confident that the SSC is now entering a new phase in which it can stabilise its operational and financial activities in a sustainable and appropriate manner.

2.7 The Way Beyond

*Guide me, so I may step boldly forward in faith
and find all that you want me to discover today.
Go beyond and behind, to my left and my right,
that whatever way I seek to go,
I will surely find You in everything and everyone I meet.*

Pray Now: People of the Way (Seeking)

2.7.1 "The Way Beyond" encourages us to pray for God's Kingdom to come in all its fullness.

2.7.2 We want the Kirk to join with God's mission in the world, whether that is understanding mission in the rural setting, developing missional aspects of the Decade for Ministry, mapping and shaping fresh expressions in Scotland, sharing faith stories or helping congregations focus on the future.

2.7.3 Equipping the rural church - Executive Summary
(full report found in Appendix IV)

2.7.3.1 A significant proportion (43%) of the parishes of the Kirk are classified by the Scottish Government as rural. It has been identified that within these communities there are opportunities and challenges which are specific to the rural context. It has long been recognised that there is a need to provide an evidence base about these opportunities and challenges in order to effectively resource and inspire our rural congregations. In response, the Rural Working Group (RWG), operating with the Mission and Discipleship Council (MDC) of the Church of Scotland (CoS), recently engaged in a nationwide consultation process.

2.7.3.2 The key findings from the consultation process are:

- There are many instances where rural congregations are still seen to play a positive and central role in their community, and this represents a significant missional opportunity in which they must be supported to nurture and develop.
- There are significant challenges being faced by rural congregations such as:
 - a poverty of resources (both financial and personnel to take on key office bearer roles)
 - large and/or remote geographical locations which are difficult to cover, can create issues of isolation and experience significant population shifts; and
 - detrimental policy, eg large multiple linkages which produce logistical issues.
- There are clearly identifiable responses which, if backed with appropriate money and personnel resources, could enable rural congregations to thrive, namely:
 - honing the training and support provision for rural congregations;
 - streamlining areas of governance that take into account the contextual difference experienced by rural congregations; encouraging congregations to collaborate freely within and

beyond existing parish and Presbytery boundaries; implementing a strategic approach, such as in vocation to rural ministry, utilising national resourcing and encouraging a general cross-church approach to the rural context;

- putting in place a Rural Areas Committee as part of Mission and Discipleship Council that can adequately support rural charges.

2.7.4 The Council's continued support for the Decade for Ministry

2.7.4.1 The Council works closely with the Ministries Council to support the Decade for Ministry. Each month "Starters for Sunday" has highlighted "Tomorrow's Calling" with a prayer resource. We pray that this will encourage some users to take the first step towards discerning God's calling into ministry. The Council has also supported the Vocation Conference programme alerting enquirers to resources that can help them to explore their calling.

2.7.4.2 Further support will be offered through our *Learn: Tomorrow's Calling* publication, which will be published in the coming year. This builds upon the section on "Call" in *Learn: Eldership* and provides continuity for the "Tomorrow's Calling" initiative.

2.7.4.3 Another feature of the Council's support for the Decade for Ministry has been our ongoing Mission Shaped Ministry (msm) courses, which were held in Glasgow and Edinburgh and attended by around 70 people. These are not put on by the Council or the Joint Emerging Church Group (JECG), but are locally owned and run, with some support from the Council, and are ecumenical by nature.

2.7.4.4 In 2016 we hope to see piloted in Scotland a new format, 'flexi-msm', that should make this resource accessible to a broader spectrum of participants.

2.7.4.5 The report from the JECG is available at Appendix V.

2.7.5 "Going for Growth"

2.7.5.1 Year One of "Going for Growth" culminated in a residential Summer School at West Park Conference Centre, Dundee. Approximately 60 people attended to hear the Rev Canon Phil Potter (Team Leader, Fresh Expressions), Rev Dr George Lings (Director of Research, Church Army) and the Rev Dr Doug Gay (Trinity College, Glasgow University). While there was excellent input from the various contributors, one of the most remarked upon aspects was the close sense of community and deep fellowship experienced. The Moderator led the final act of worship and celebrated communion.

2.7.5.2 The key aims of the Summer School are to:

- help delegates orient themselves in a rapidly changing cultural landscape
- help people discern and respond to opportunities for mission
- equip people for engaging with others where they are, well beyond the confines of most churches
- inspire a vision for what new communities of disciples might look like in this new territory
- identify what next steps are required

2.7.5.3 Year Two began with day events in Oban, Lerwick and Linlithgow. These will be followed up in 2016 with Fresh Expressions Vision Days in the same areas.

2.7.5.4 The second Summer School (6-9 June 2016) will once again at West Park. The main speakers are Rachel Jordan (National Adviser for Mission and Evangelism, Church of England), Michael Moynagh (Fresh Expressions, Director of Network Development and Consultant on theology and practice) and Steve Aisthorpe (Church of Scotland Mission Development Worker). The theme is "The Map is not the Territory" and the event will focus on trying to better understand the current context for church and mission in Scotland, aided by various recent research finding.

2.7.5.5 For information on any of these events and booking details please see <https://goo.gl/gy2T2X>.

2.7.5.6 The Theological Basis for Fresh Expressions is available at Appendix VI.

2.7.6 Mapping of Fresh Expressions

2.7.6.1 In 2015 the JECG began a mapping exercise to explore and understand what new fresh expressions of church are emerging in Scotland, what forms they take, and what stage of development they have reached (see Appendix VII). Aided by the Rev Dr Fiona Tweedie, the Kirk's Mission Statistics Coordinator, and by the Church Army, who have very kindly shared their own research with us, local practitioners were surveyed throughout November and December. Initial responses indicate:

- 57% led by women
- 48% led by the Minister; 14% by Elders
- 51% centrally paid; 12% locally paid; 37% voluntary
- 31.5% evangelical; 37% liberal; 31.5% other
- 31% informal ecumenical cooperation; 62% Church of Scotland only
- 31% offer sacraments

2.7.7 Areas of focus of the Mission Forum

2.7.7.1 Mission Forum, a cross Council and Committee Group, has recently been promoting the *Mission and Older People Study Guide* at various events and would encourage Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and congregations to use it to explore this area of work as part of their mission to the community. The Forum is now embarking on a new venture that will focus on mental health and the young person. The first step is for the Forum to listen to young people discuss this topic at the 2016 NYA so as to understand how this relates to the Kirk's current work. It is our hope to collaborate with others over the next two years so that in 2018, the "Year of Young People", the Forum can bring before the Kirk a resource that congregations can use to appropriately support young people affected by mental health issues.

2.7.8 Why Believe? Group

2.7.8.1 The Council reaffirms, through the Why Believe? Group, the witness and ministry of the people of God in

the Kirk. As well as signposting interested individuals and congregations to already-existing and trustworthy resources, the Why Believe? Group is responsible for producing materials where gaps exist. To that end, two new resources are being launched this year.

2.7.8.2 *Sharing Faith* is a four part course designed for small groups to explore the 'why?' and 'how?' of what it is to engage with others on matters of faith. The material comes as a digital download available on the Resourcing Mission website and is suitable for use in a range of settings. It is hoped that it will encourage more Christians to be ready to step out confidently, prepared to *'give the reason for the hope they have'* (NIV 1 Peter 3:15).

2.7.8.3 In the midst of challenging times for sharing our faith, there is still, at the same time, a wealth of stories of faith, of friendship, of love and encouragement in Scotland. *Encounters with Jesus* is intended to be a source of encouragement to church members, bringing together as it does stories of how men and women from across Scotland have found themselves aided and transformed by encounters with the living Christ. Again, these accounts will be posted online, accessible through social media platforms, and will, over time, build up into an exciting collection of pointers to the workings of the Holy Spirit in our Church today. The following is an extract from one of these encounters:

"My name is Ian and I come from a non-Christian background and was never brought up with anything to do with church, although I was baptised as a baby. I have spent my life from a teenager till a couple of years ago wondering - sitting on the fence, as they say - if there was a God or not. I was never been able to accept it or rule it out. What if it was true and I was wrong? But at the same time, I couldn't admit this to anyone around me for fear of ridicule. I couldn't risk being seen in that way!

As I grew older I found alcohol and stuff and turned out not to be nice to people. I was angry, intimidating; I liked to throw my weight around, but

when I was calm and quiet, I regretted the things I said or did to people. There had to be more to life. Something was missing. I couldn't find any contentment in myself and so continued down the same road, finding a very low place in my life but pulled myself out of it before it was too late - but only just.

My life started to turn around after I asked a friend if I could come to church with her but I remember coming up to the door of the church and wondering: 'Can I do this? Can I step inside there? Will I be welcomed? Am I dressed ok?' I could feel my nerves going. What was I so frightened of? I was reassured and in I stepped. I sat near the back left-hand side, hiding behind the pillar - hiding my face, hoping no one would notice me or, worse still, come and speak to me! But they did! A few people came to ask if I was a visitor, welcoming me here. I said why I was here, all the time asking myself, 'Why are strangers coming to speak to me? Why did they want to know about me?'

But during that first service, something happened. I can't say what it was. All I knew was that I would be back! The make up of the people inside, from young to old, from all walks of life, was eye-opening to me. I came back at my next opportunity and had the same warm welcome. I had the sense of starting to belong. A feeling of love was building in me. Every time I walked through the doors I felt like I was home, surrounded by people who loved and supported me. And each time I grew more hungry to learn about Jesus, about faith. I had so many questions running around in my head. But most importantly, I felt a peace growing inside of me. Things were happening to me. I was changing. The life I had known was fading. A new life was taking shape as I accepted a truth that I had been unsure about most my life.

My life is so much different. God has brought peace and happiness and light into my life and I can stand

today and testify to my faith and commitment to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

2.7.8.4 If you have a recent story of faith please get in touch with us at **MandD@churchofscotland.org.uk**.

2.7.9 The impact of "Future Focus"

2.7.9.1 There continues to be a steady demand for "Future Focus" from congregations, and we are grateful to the volunteers who have helped to deliver this to them, enabling more congregations to benefit. We expect use of this resource to increase with the appointment of a Project Worker for 2016 to help build a volunteer facilitator base. To find out more about "Future Focus", please see our short explanatory videos (<https://goo.gl/qGKnXK>).

2.7.10 Social Media

2.7.10.1 Since March 2013, the Council's Resourcing Mission Website (www.resourcingmission.org.uk) has had an online facility for delegates to book places for our events, view videos and purchase our resources or download them free of charge. In September 2015 we launched our Council Facebook page to increase our engagement with others, raise awareness of our activities, online resources and events, and enable subscribers to network with our staff. We would encourage you to "like" our Facebook page and subscribe to Enews so you can be kept up to date with the latest information.

3. Conclusion

3.1 It can be easy to think that now is not the time to engage in mission. The growing secularisation of our society and the marginalisation of the Church might tempt us to keep our heads down and hope that things change. But it is because we are no longer at the centre of Scottish life and no longer have the power and influence that the Kirk once had, that may make us more suited for mission than ever before.

3.2 For we are now at the margins and are vulnerable ourselves. We cannot be paternalistic towards others any longer. But if the good news works for us then it can work for others also. God chose the poor and the foolish and the

powerless (1 Corinthians 1:18-31) to shame the wise so we fit in well. Jesus Christ relates to and embraces those who are most marginalized in society, in order to confront and transform all that denies life.

3.3 The WCC “Together Towards Life” states, “Christian mission has at times been understood and practiced in ways which failed to recognize God’s alignment with those consistently pushed to the margins. Therefore, mission from the margins invites the church to re-imagine mission as a vocation from God’s Spirit who works for a world where the fullness of life is available for all.”

3.4 May God’s Spirit move through our churches and structures refreshing, disturbing, energizing and transforming till once again we see the world being turned upside down.

Blessing

*May you honour the Lord your God
and walk in His way.*

*May you serve the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your soul.*

*May you love the Lord your God
today, tomorrow, and for ever. Amen.*

Pray Now: People of the Way (Signposts)

In the name of the Council

COLIN SINCLAIR, *Convener*

NORMAN SMITH, *Vice-Convener: Church Without Walls*

DANIEL CARMICHAEL, *Vice-Convener: Resourcing Worship*

JAMIE MILLIKEN, *Vice-Convener: Congregational Learning*

ALISTER BULL, *Council Secretary*

LESLEY HAMILTON-MESSER, *Team Leader:*

Church Without Walls

RON CLARKE, *Team Leader: Congregational Learning*

GRAHAM FENDER-ALLISON, *Team Leader:*

Resourcing Worship

In the name of CARTA

GRAEME ROBERTS, *Convener*
DAVID LOGAN, *Vice-Convener*
GRAHAM FENDER-ALLISON, *Team Leader:*
Resourcing Worship

ADDENDUM

Rev Colin Sinclair

Rev Colin Sinclair’s indefatigable drive has been crucial in maintaining the resolve and momentum needed to take forward the vital work of mission and discipleship in the Church. He has ensured that its remit for the Church of Scotland has supported and stimulated the resourcing agenda to equip the people of God at the congregational level. He has instilled hope in commissioners at General Assemblies and has sought good and fair governance as a Trustee of the Council of Assembly.

The Council thank his congregation at Palmerston Place in Edinburgh - and Ruth, his wife! - for their forbearance as he has dedicated much time and energy to the wider church so that all can benefit from his experience. He has paid close attention to the immense detail of the Council’s broad portfolio. In addition, he has sensitively understood the needs of Council members and staff in challenging times. At each turn he has encouraged the department to serve the Church with confidence, recognising the importance of mission and discipleship to the whole people of God.

Colin’s leadership has been gracious and considerate, his light touch, witty humour, and disarming smile disguising the gravitas of a church man who cleverly balances charm and wisdom with an impressively comprehensive command of the Council’s remit. The magnitude of what has been achieved for the Church of Scotland cannot be fully captured here but his convenership has been a game changer. The Council has been enabled and empowered to play a valuable role in encouraging congregations to be fruitful. Colin’s service, here and elsewhere in the Church, is characterised by his deep commitment to serving Jesus Christ and by his passion for ensuring that the

transforming power of the Good News is heard by the people of Scotland.

He and Ruth now deserve time to relax and the whole Council wishes them well for the future.

Dr Graeme Roberts

Dr Graeme Roberts has made an enormous contribution to the work of CARTA, not least in leading the Committee through a two year review of its purpose and practice. This has resulted in the development of a new and effective working relationship with the General Trustees and a more proactive remit to stimulate congregations to think critically and imaginatively on how they might use their places of worship; in addition, he has overseen the creation of a new CARTA Development Worker post. We are very grateful to Graeme for the work he has done and know that it stands us in very good stead as we develop the support we can offer to congregations.

As Convener of CARTA Graeme has also contributed to the wider work of the Mission and Discipleship Council's Executive and Finance Group and latterly the Resourcing Worship Group, where his keen eye for detail and insightful problem solving have proven to be invaluable time and again. There have been other key contributions in working with the Council of Assembly on the business plan for the Scottish Storytelling Centre or editing and preparing for the General Assembly Council report. The energy, skills and experience he has brought to every meeting are driven by a passion for the Church he faithfully serves whether in the Council, Presbytery or congregation. We are deeply grateful for all Graeme has done for the Church in recent years and wish him God's rich blessing.

APPENDIX I

DEVELOPING THE ELDSHIP – INTERIM REPORT

A. Executive Summary

Elders were commended by the General Assembly of 2014 for their participation in widespread and detailed

consultations nationally about their role, noting their desire to enhance the effectiveness of the office of Elder. Elders identified the need for training in the areas of: enabling prospective Elders to discern associated gifts, talents and calling; preparing to serve; and ongoing support and development.

Reflection by the Eldership Working Group (EWG), operating within the Mission and Discipleship Council (MDC), on the history and theology of the Eldership identified that a new direction may be called for which re-focuses the meaning and purpose of Eldership around local contextual mission, ie mission which is sensitive to the needs and opportunities within each parish.

Bringing these two areas of need together, the EWG believe that its work on considering the development of the Eldership has reached an interim stage where it is necessary to share its findings and engage with others in responding to them. Hence, it makes the following proposals:

- MDC to collaborate with other Councils and Groups to come to a mutually agreed position on re-focusing the meaning, purpose and role of Eldership around local contextual mission.
- Define how such a re-focusing would shape the nature and content of Eldership training provision.
- Based on the above bullet points, develop detailed proposals for Eldership training provision in the areas of: 'call'; 'preparing to serve'; and 'ongoing support and development'.

B. Background

The Report of the Mission and Discipleship Council (MDC) to the General Assembly of 2014 notes the creation of the EWG following the 2011 Assembly, whose purpose is 'to look at patterns and models of Eldership currently in use across the Church today and to bring to the attention of the General Assembly ways in which these could be shared, reflected upon and in some cases adapted to encourage appropriate practice in our changing contexts'.²

In April 2013 the EWG carried out a consultation with Elders. The first phase involved a series of facilitated discussions with Elders and Ministers throughout the country which informed the second phase in which a discussion document and questionnaire template was sent out to all Kirk Sessions. Completed questionnaires representing the views of 518 Kirk Sessions (38% of the total number) were received from this second phase of consultation. The EWG conducted an initial interrogation of the findings in preparing its report to the 2014 Assembly. The Assembly supported the various proposals that were made in the report and the associated deliverance section 21 which asked the Assembly to commend the Kirk Sessions for their participation in widespread and detailed consultations nationally, and ‘their desire to enhance the effectiveness of the office of Elder’.

An initial response from the Mission and Discipleship Council to the needs identified was to produce the *Learn: Eldership* publication for use by Elders as a learning and development resource. This was launched in October 2014 and has been very well received, as evidenced by the significant numbers being purchased (nearly 8,000 as of 3 November 2015) and the significant, albeit informal, feedback about its positive value to Elders.

MDC recognised that there was a need to follow up on this initial response in two ways:

- To identify needs and make proposals for more in-depth training and support provision for Elders.
- To provide proposals about how current patterns and models of Eldership could be adapted to encourage enhanced effectiveness and appropriate practice in the changing context within Scotland.

To this end two pieces of work were commissioned:

- In August 2015 an independent research analyst carried out a thorough detailed analysis of the 518

responses to the Eldership questionnaire, noted above.³

- In September 2015 a researcher from one of the academic institutions developed a paper with reflections upon the history and theology of the Eldership within the Presbyterian tradition in Scotland.⁴

This interim report on developing the Eldership summarises the key findings from these two pieces of work and the EWG makes proposals arising from them.

C. Key findings from the detailed analysis of the Eldership questionnaire responses

(a) The Call

- Most respondents agreed that a clear sense of both call and commitment to the role of Elder is essential.
- More than nine out of ten agreed that clear guidance should be provided to help Kirk Sessions in seeking new Elders and in supporting prospective Elders to prayerfully discern associated gifts, talents and calling.

(b) Preparing to serve

- Just over half of respondents agreed that Elders should be expected to undertake a period of training before being ordained.
- The training would need to be flexible in its delivery to allow for the varying congregational contexts.
- The content of the training should include an introduction to: specific details about what the role is understood to be; fundamentals, such as the creeds that shape our Church;

³ Full report by Dennis McCoy Consulting can be found at <http://goo.gl/ytrQvv>

⁴ Full report by Rev Dr Alexander Forsyth can be found at <http://goo.gl/ytrQvv>

² Appendix VII, 5/37

understanding of Kirk history, governance and procedures; an introduction to the different areas of church life in which Elders will serve, eg involvement in worship, pastoral care, developing a missional focus.

(c) **Ongoing support and development**

- Eight out of ten respondents agreed that Elders should be expected to engage in recognised post ordination training opportunities, as necessary, for the purpose of ongoing development and equipping for whatever responsibilities they are called to exercise within the local congregation.
- Training should be flexible in its delivery, for example, online, locally available or performed in-house, recognizing that Elders are in a voluntary role and often have limited time to attend training.
- Specific areas suggested for post-ordination training largely mirrored those identified for 'preparing to serve' training. However, the difference would be that the 'ongoing support and development' provision would need to move beyond the primer nature of the 'preparing to serve' provision so as to engage Elders in deeper learning and development on the various themes, where necessary and appropriate.

D. Key findings from the reflection upon the history and theology of the Eldership within the Presbyterian tradition in Scotland

(a) **Scriptural Basis**

- The Eldership is a pragmatic institution at least in its present form, whose averred direct Scriptural warrant in 1 Timothy 5:17, for 'ruling Elder' in distinction to 'teaching Elder' as one of two forms of 'presbyter', is generally held to be weak in strength.

- The Eldership nevertheless plays a key role in the Presbyterian system of governance, with its existence justifiable otherwise:
 - its presence reflects the concentration and importance within Presbyterianism upon enabling the laity to be ordained to a specific role responsible for church governance, spiritual oversight and discipline, both in relation to the congregation and the parish; and
 - its spiritual justification lies in the assertion that the Presbyterian system is consistent with the will of God, and of Christ's headship of the Church.
- Eldership is a malleable office which could potentially be subject to innovative adaptations in direction and purpose.

(b) **Ordination**

- From the terms of the *Second Book of Discipline* (1578), and in the light of the Eldership's principal role until the nineteenth century in congregational and community discipline, the Eldership became 'semi-clerical' and 'spiritual' in nature, recognising a 'divine calling'; that appreciation persists to a significant extent, for example being reflected in continuing support within the Eldership for ordination and a life-term.
- The traditional starting point is that the post of Elder, whilst associated with the corporate ministry in the administration and governance of worship and the sacraments, and retaining a restricted spiritual role in the oversight of congregation and parish, is not ordained in like manner to a 'minister', nor to perform the same tasks.
- Whilst Elder ordination cannot be equated with ministerial ordination, and leading worship is the concern of the minister with Elder participation only permitted at an ancillary level,

the practical blurring in present practice of those divides calls into question whether the original definitions of Eldership are still relevant. It may be, in any event, that a 'hybrid' office which engages in some traditional 'ministerial' roles is necessary to meet need, irrespective of past theological boundaries.

(c) **Roles and responsibilities**

- The potential for establishing a set definition of the nature of the role depends largely on the conclusion preferred between 'presbyter' and 'lay' theory:
 - (i) If the choice is 'lay theory' and thus the Elder is a 'representative' of the congregation, as stated by Charles Warr, 'The function of the lay Elder is administrative, but is in no sense ministerial'.⁵ Commissioning to a fixed term thus becomes appropriate.
 - (ii) If, on the other hand, the choice is 'presbyter theory' and a 'spiritual' nature retaining ordination and life term, the principal functions begin to depart from close association with the congregation at the same level and instead become more focused on oversight of the spiritual development of the congregation and dispersion of the Word in mission. It cannot be a 'spiritual' role to carry out administrative tasks alone.
- The delineation of Elders' duties changed significantly in the nineteenth century, accelerated within the present 'post-Christendom' era: we are now, for the most part, reliant upon a 'one size fits all' district system. The well-known writer on the Eldership in the late 20th Century, Stewart Matthew, contended

that the functions of the Elder by the 1950s and 1960s, although onerous, had become emasculated to 'The Doorman' (at Sunday worship), 'The Spiritual Postman' (delivering communion cards), and 'The Royal Cup-Bearer' (at communion).⁶ Successive reports to the General Assembly have called for the recognition of a diversity of spiritual gifts within the Eldership, and the re-structuring of the office to encourage their expression.

- If 'oversight' now encompasses forms of decision-making including worship, pastoral care and mission, a prime focus in present times has to be beyond such limitations: guiding the community, both internal and external, in their response to faith, the challenge being to work out the nature of the contextual mission that Elders will lead.

E. Bringing the findings together

Identifying the appropriate direction for the Eldership and therefore the training provision to be developed is partly bound up in two areas:

- Theological: the implications of presbyter/lay theory, depending on which side is favoured.
- Practical: whether concerns to fill gaps in ministry and in the servicing of the district system dictate that the future of Eldership should be directed to trying to maintain the present structure, rather than re-considering its purpose and broader goals.

The problem of concentrating only upon those concerns is that there may be no definitive conclusion to the debate on 'presbyter/lay' theory which has now been rumbling on for over four centuries, or indeed much potential for lasting compromise. Furthermore, propping up the existing structure could be seen to be a short term reaction to current problems rather than a long term

⁵ Charles Warr, *The Presbyterian Tradition: A Scottish Layman's Handbook*, (London: Alexander Maclehose and Co, 1933), 374.

⁶ Stewart Matthew, *Session Matters: A Book on Eldership*, (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1990), iv-v.

strategy for renewal in the church. Instead of narrowing the debate to those issues, an alternative may be to identify an over-arching focus for the Eldership and in doing so find a more creative way out of the impasse.

The Third Article Declaratory entails an acceptance by the Church of Scotland of 'its distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry'.⁷ That commitment was re-affirmed in stark terms by the General Assembly in the Declaratory Act passed by the General Assembly in 2010:

The Church of Scotland...declares anew its commitment to be a national church with a distinctive evangelical and pastoral concern for the people and nation of Scotland; recognising (4) ...its continuing responsibility to engage the people of Scotland wherever they might be with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Are those simply words? If not, surely that responsibility does not fall only on the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament?⁸

The tone of recent Reports to the General Assembly seeks to recover a broad definition of Eldership duties in this context, such as within the Assembly Council Report on Eldership of 2003, describing an Elder's position as 'The call and commitment to undertake, along with the minister, responsibility for the life of the congregation in all aspects, including worship, mission, and service to the wider community'.⁹

The Church thus declares itself nationally to be responsible to engage all people of the nation with the Gospel. That

duty locally requires all members of the Church to be engaged in so doing, but particularly its office-bearers.

The question then arises, 'engaged in what'? What might local, contextual mission look like to reflect the expression of that responsibility by the Eldership?

Since World War II, the Christian Church globally in all denominations has undergone a seismic shift in thinking about mission, based on the recognition that 'it is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a Church in the world'.¹⁰ This is described as *missio Dei* ('Mission of God') theology.

The following two global definitions of 'mission', amongst many others, are drafted in the light of that realisation. The first definition is offered by the World Council of Churches:

- "Mission" carries a holistic understanding of the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and worship (*leiturgia*), and the everyday witness of the Christian life (*martyria*); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and...reconciliation into *koinonia* - communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole.
- "Evangelism", while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional voicing of the gospel, including the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ, and to discipleship.¹¹

Therefore, under this broad definition, 'evangelism' by the explicit voicing of the gospel for conversion is potentially an element in the exercise of all other constituent parts

⁷ Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual, 1921, Article III.

⁸ V 2010, Declaratory Act Anent the Third Article Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual.

⁹ As quoted in the Mission and Discipleship Council Report to the General Assembly 2014, 5/38.

¹⁰ Tim Dearborn, 'Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, a Heart for Mission', (MARC, 1998), quoted in Church of England, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*, (London, Church House Publishing, 2004), 5.

¹¹ *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* (2000), para 7, within *You are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005).

of 'mission', but does not subsume or denigrate the other expressions such as diaconal service, prayer and worship, the Christian life, the building up of community and reconciliation.

The Anglican Communion express a similar breadth to 'mission' in shorter compass. The Five Marks of Mission are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth¹²

When considering a potential 'missional agenda' for the Eldership, the *missio Dei* demands a more fundamental ethos and mind set to be evident beyond the definitions. Rather than being an occasional function which belongs to the Church and us, mission is 'God's activity, which embraces both the Church and world'.¹³ That realisation has very important consequences for the Church and particularly those who are commonly called the 'laity' rather than the 'clergy'.¹⁴

The church learns of its place in the world, as 'it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church'.¹⁵ Therefore, the underlying realisation is that, in Bosch's words, 'there is Church because there is mission, not vice versa'.¹⁶

¹² Anglican Consultative Council, *Bonds of Affection* (1984), ACC-6, 49; *Mission in a Broken World*, (1990) ACC-8, 101.

¹³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (New York: Harbour Row, 1977), 64

¹⁴ 'Laity' is a clumsy term, as strictly speaking it means every Christian, but for convenience it is used here to mean all people who are 'non-clergy'.

¹⁵ Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 65.

¹⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390.

Mission is, therefore, to be carried out by us in a spirit of "bold humility";¹⁷ through what has been described as "prophetic dialogue".¹⁸ Mission is exercised in 'dialogue' with others: listening not lecturing, being as much as the learner as the teacher, our interaction forcing us also to rethink our own understanding of the Gospel.

Mission on these terms becomes a founding core of the church, and so also of its lay people. The Church exists by the community of those that have been transformed by God's mission, which has created the Church. It will only survive by mission. It should not be an occasional function imagined by a small group for a series of events, but what defines it: 'mission is not an agenda item - it is the agenda'.¹⁹

In that light, a re-focus would thus recognise that:

- the church is essentially missional in nature
- the local, contextual mission of God, in which the local Church community participates, defines its existence
- the Church has a vital role to play in God's mission to the world as its only self-conscious agent
- the Church of Scotland has declared itself as recently as 2010 to be a national church with a responsibility to engage all people with the Gospel
- the Elder holds a unique position as an ordained office bearer with responsibility, along with the minister, for the spiritual health of those in the congregation and, more importantly, in the parish
- therefore, the Eldership in the exercise of a 'spiritual office' needs to be at the forefront of mission.

It would follow from the above that the Elder is not simply an ordained administrative assistant dependant on the

¹⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 489.

¹⁸ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011).

¹⁹ Stuart Murray, *Church after Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004), 137.

needs of the minister but, instead, by re-asserting the 'spiritual' nature of the office, has a dynamic role to play in shaping and flourishing the very future existence of the Church of Scotland through playing a key role in mission in all of the above terms. All duties of the Elder would then be re-assessed through a missional lens to test their 'fitness for purpose'.

Eldership as a 'spiritual' office would reclaim its main purpose as spiritual 'oversight' of both the congregation and all in the parish as it was in the immediate post-Reformation period²⁰, but by which would now be meant the encouragement of the growth of faith rather than its assessment, judgment and censure. In other words, Eldership might be a closer reflection of what T F Torrance describes as the Elder's 'diaconal/complementary' form of ministry, whose basis and distinction from the pastor is recovered from the Second Book of Discipline: 'As the Pastors...should be diligent in teaching and sowing the seed of the word, so the Elders should be careful in seeking the fruit of the same in the people'.²¹

Therefore, as T F Torrance wrote:

...their distinctive ministry is not the service of the Word but the service of response to the Word...Whilst ministers are ordained to dispense the Word and Sacraments to the people, Elders are set apart to help the people in their reception of the Word and in their participation in the Sacraments, and to seek the fruit of the Gospel in the faith and life of the community... Thus their specific calling is to help the faithful from within their midst...²²

A new direction may be called for which re-focuses the meaning and purpose of Eldership beyond narrower foci viewed from the 'inside-out'; which begins the debate with the method of engagement in the office and the

precise duties of the post, and then turns outwards. Instead, we might re-orientate so as to look towards wider horizons in the first instance, and adopt that focus as normative in every decision regarding the Eldership from an 'outside-in' approach. The 'outside-in' approach encourages congregations to explore the missional opportunities of their local setting and thereafter shape the office of Eldership in this context.

We might then discern which potential roles and tasks in the eldership should be kept and which discarded within the Presbyterian tradition from the many previously employed and now proposed. We would thus place mission above the internal functioning of the Church, and retain only those duties that are key to the flourishing of the mission of God in the world, whether by streamlining the internal governance of the Church primarily for that purpose, or by enabling and empowering elders to be at the vanguard of initiating and leading mission in the world.

F. Proposals arising

The EWG believe that its work on considering the development of the Eldership has reached an interim stage where it is necessary to share its findings and engage with others in responding to them. Hence, it makes the following proposals:

- MDC to collaborate with other Councils and Groups to come to a mutually agreed position on re-focusing the meaning, purpose and role of Eldership around local contextual mission.
- Define how such a re-focusing would shape the nature and content of Eldership training provision.
- Based on the above, develop detailed proposals for Eldership training provision in the areas of: 'call'; 'preparing to serve'; and 'ongoing support and development'.

²⁰ Second Book of Discipline, VI.5 – 'The eldership is a spiritual function, as is the ministry'.

²¹ Ibid, VI 12

²² T F Torrance, 'The Eldership in the Reformed Church', 510.

APPENDIX II

THE INVISIBLE CHURCH: LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF CHURCHLESS CHRISTIANS

Open your eyes

Over the past three years the Mission and Discipleship Council has responded to Jesus' instruction to 'open your eyes and take a good look at what's right in front of you' (John 4:35, *The Message*). We felt challenged to investigate the fact that many thousands of people have left our congregations. In other kinds of organisations it is considered good practice to conduct 'exit interviews' when people leave. Businesses and charities alike listen carefully to departing clients, members or supporters. Great value is attached to the perspective of these people; it represents an invaluable resource for learning and continuous improvement.

Digging deeper

During 2013 we listened to Christians who were not involved in a church congregation. 160,000 words of interview transcripts were collected as part of a university-supervised study. Key themes were identified and these then formed the foundation for two surveys of large, random samples.

In a 2014 survey, 2,700 people in Northern Scotland took part in a telephone interview and 430 people who were Christians but not church-goers completed a detailed survey. In a Scotland-wide follow-up in 2015, 815 Christians who do not attend church were interviewed by telephone.

Burst artery or iceberg?

Previous research has described the decline of mainstream church congregations as 'a haemorrhage akin to a burst artery'²³. The media often presents a picture of churches in crisis due to the mass exodus from congregations of

hundreds of thousands of people. However, what data shows is that the reality is both more complex and more hopeful than is often assumed. Most 'church-leavers' do not abandon their faith. Many people express and nurture faith beyond the traditional congregational context through small groups and informal networks.

The metaphor of a haemorrhaging artery is applicable only if one's sole concern is the church as an institution. However, a more helpful analogy is an iceberg. Those counted in church censuses can be likened to the protruding tip of an iceberg: easily visible, but the smaller part of a larger whole; those who have ceased attending a church (*ie* a local congregation), but remain part of the Church (*ie* the global Christian community), may be compared to the largely invisible bulk of ice that forms the majority of the mass of icebergs.

An invaluable resource for the Church

Several reports documenting this research have already been made public through the website (www.resourcingmission.org.uk). Now reflections on the findings of this pioneering research have been made available through a new book. Launched by Saint Andrew Press at this General Assembly, *The Invisible Church*, offers an engaging, accessible and trustworthy guide to the world behind the statistics. It is rooted in empirical evidence, but also practical, with suggestions for further reflection and application in the reader's own context. In the stories of people who have shared their experiences of faith and church, a wealth of encouragement, wisdom and inspiration is unearthed.

APPENDIX III

LOCAL CHURCH REVIEW

The vision behind Local Church Review (LCR) was articulated in the Report of the Panel on Review and Reform to the 2009 General Assembly and focussed on the need for forward planning, rather than an emphasis solely on retrospective review (the General Principles can

²³ Brierley, P., 2000, *The tide is running out*, London: Christian Research, p. 236.

be found, with other LCR resources, at <https://goo.gl/9sKGOC>.

Planning means many things to many people, although the process of LCR involves form filling, administration, statistics, etc, these processes are not at the heart of LCR, merely some of the tools which it utilises. The critical benefits of planning are not in the charts, tables or timelines that may result from the process but (according to Rendle and Man):²⁴

- It gets people talking and thinking about their identity and purpose. Even when no change is required, it enables people to identify and claim who they are and what they are to do as a community of God's people.
- It allows a congregation to place its own story within the larger biblical story. It is not just about connecting with the community, but how they connect with and reflect the story of the Christian faith. This can be a very powerful process for congregations.
- It offers the benefits of fresh perspective. In a changing society, new paths may need to be created to achieve even our existing vision.
- It offers a diverse group of people a way to negotiate their differences, whether it is cultural, generational, ethnic or gender differences.

Joint Presbytery LCR Training - October and November 2015

Background:

At the General Assembly in May this year there was a deliverance through the Special Commission Anent Ministerial Tenure that instructed the Council of Assembly, Ministries Council, Mission and Discipleship Council, Legal Questions and the Panel of Review and Reform to bring a joint final report to the General Assembly in 2016 – *'To deliver a national template for LCR training and*

implementation, modelling good practice and consistency of approach'.

With regard to LCR and the development of training to support its delivery, the Presbyteries of Ayr, Edinburgh and Glasgow had already been working together to look at the possibility of developing joint LCR training. It therefore made sense to work in partnership with Mission and Discipleship Council to address this training need on both a local and national level and assist in the delivery of the requirements outlined in the General Assembly deliverance.

The Staff whose remit it is to carry out LCR within Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayr Presbyteries recognised similar issues and skills gaps and although the three Presbyteries have different LCR models, there are elements that are similar to all three in regards to what is required of those on the LCR visiting teams. Learning from LCRs that have already been carried out across the Presbyteries, it became apparent that there are common soft skills required for all LCR team members, as follows:

- Facilitation of groups
- Leading small groups
- How to enable goal setting
- Recognising congregational assets – gifts and talents
- Signposting to resources
- Making the best use of Statistics for Mission.
- Preparation for the LCR visits

The LCR training:

After developing a draft programme of training requirements, trainers from within Glasgow and Edinburgh Presbytery were identified. The training was delivered by Alison Fenton and Ishbel Massie who both have expertise in facilitation training for groups with support from the LCR staff from the three Presbyteries.

²⁴ Rendle, G, Mann, A., Holy Conversations : Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations (2003, Alban Institute).

Recommendations:

- That the LCR resources that are on the 'Resourcing Mission' section of the Church of Scotland website are up to date and accessible.
- Look at providing a national general training on LCR annually.
 - This would require to be on two levels - a training for beginners and a training for those more familiar with the process.
 - The training would incorporate the general aspects of LCR - background to LCR, group dynamics, facilitation skills, conflict management, action planning, problem solving.
- Feedback from the pilot suggests that face to face training is more beneficial than accessing modules online, as this allows the training to be more adaptive and responsive to the needs of those involved.
- To consider the possibility of an Equip for LCR that would take the form of various workshops covering all aspects of LCR which would be on tour
- To have a slot at the office bearers conference and other appropriate conferences highlighting LCR and group dynamics, facilitation and action planning.
- Note that the paperwork and processes specific to each Presbytery needs to be dealt with at a local level. Each Presbytery is different and uses different methods to deliver on LCR and therefore it is impossible to be prescriptive as each Presbytery requires to adapt the paper work to suits its local need.
- To highlight that personal engagement with congregations on the LCR process is of upmost importance to ensure positive engagement.
- Remind Kirk Sessions that LCR is a congregational review and not just in relation to the office bearers.
- For those further down the LCR process the staff working on the LCR within three Presbyteries are willing to give support to other Presbyteries through

some form of LCR forum for team leaders and staff leading on the process

One of the key points to note from the pilot training is that there cannot be a 'one size fits all' template for training. What we have discovered through the pilot was that each Presbytery has engaged with LCR in their own way and has adopted templates to suit their need and congregational spread. Equally some Presbyteries have not started the process at all and therefore it is not possible to be prescriptive and neither should be. However we do feel that it is possible to have consistency of approach, in terms of the way LCR is conducted, delivered and reported upon.

Report compiled by:

- Dr Hazel Hastie, Strategic Congregational Facilitator, Edinburgh Presbytery
- Mrs Fiona Crawford, Strategy Officer, Glasgow Presbytery
- Rev Mandy Hickman, Mission Development Officer, Ayr Presbytery

APPENDIX IV

REFLECTIONS ON THE RURAL CHURCH FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION GROUPS (2015)

A. Executive Summary

A significant proportion, 43% of the parishes of the Church of Scotland, are classified as rural. It has been identified that within these communities there are opportunities and challenges which are specific to the rural context. It has long been recognised that there was a need to provide an evidence base about these opportunities and challenges in order to effectively resource and inspire our rural congregations. In response, the Rural Working Group (RWG), operating within the Mission and Discipleship Council (MDC) of the Church of Scotland (CoS), recently engaged in a nationwide consultation process.

The key findings from the consultation process were that:

- There are many instances where rural congregations are still seen to play a positive and central role in their community, and this represents a significant missional opportunity in which they must be supported to nurture and develop.
- There are significant challenges being faced by rural congregations such as: a poverty of resources (both financial and personnel to take on key office bearer roles); large and/or remote geographical locations which are difficult to cover, can create issues of isolation and experience significant population shifts; and detrimental policy, *eg* large multiple linkages which produce logistical issues.
- There are clearly identifiable responses which, if backed with appropriate money and personnel resources, could enable rural congregations to thrive, namely: honing the training and support provision for rural congregations; streamlining areas of governance that take into account the contextual difference experienced by rural congregations; encouraging congregations to collaborate freely within and beyond existing parish and Presbytery boundaries; implementing a strategic approach, such as in vocation to rural ministry, utilising national resourcing and encouraging a general cross church approach to the rural context; and putting in place a Rural Areas Committee as part of MDC that can adequately support rural charges.

B. Background

The RWG has the following remit from the MDC:

- Identify and raise the profile of the needs of rural congregations and Presbyteries
- Identify and enable engagement with the ministry and missional opportunities found in rural areas
- Identify and signpost specific rural resources
- Facilitate involvement with and arrangement of regional and or national events with a rural focus

- Provide advice on specific queries directed to the MDC on rural issues
- Liaise with the Scottish Churches Rural Group ACTS to ensure appropriate ecumenical co-operation

The RWG has representatives from Mission and Discipleship Council, co-opted members from rural congregations, CARTA and Social Care Council.

A recent analysis revealed that there are presently 1342 parishes within the Church of Scotland of which 581 are identified as rural²⁵. Of these 309 are classified as accessible rural²⁶ and 272 as remote rural²⁷. Hence, 43% of the parishes of the Church of Scotland are classified as rural.

As part of the deliverance of MDC from the 2015 General Assembly the following instruction was approved:

Instruct the Council to develop its engagement with the rural church and bring to the General Assembly of 2016 a report detailing how it will help to resource the rural church to thrive, including the consideration of a rural development worker.

The Group realised that to fulfil the instruction of the General Assembly and meet its remit it needed to undergo an in-depth consultation process with the rural church to better understand the context and to allow evidence-based recommendations to be made. This report describes

²⁵ As detailed in the document: 'Scottish Government Urban/Rural Classification 2013-2014' published in November 2014 by the Scottish Government Geographic Information Science and Analysis Team (GISAT), Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division. Rural is defined as settlements with a population of less than 3,000 people.

²⁶ 'Accessible Rural' is defined as a parish with settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a less than 30 minute drive to a settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

²⁷ 'Remote Rural' is defined as a parish with settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

the consultation process, the key findings and the proposals arising from that work.

C. Consultation Process

Aim of the consultation:

To provide an evidence base from which the RWG could report to the 2016 General Assembly on the opportunities and needs of the rural church, which will in turn inform the work of RWG as it continues to support the rural church within the Church of Scotland to thrive.

Consultation methodology:

The RWG devised a list of questions that it decided would be used during a number of facilitated focus group discussions around the country. Guidance was given as to how to set up the focus groups, including the need for a variety in the demographics of those participating and the requirement to use the prepared questions. As such a consistent approach was sought for the information gathering whilst understanding that there is a wide range of issues within the rural church, depending on the geographical location of the congregation²⁸. The questions were:

- As followers of Jesus Christ and members of the Church of Scotland in this rural area what are the key opportunities for you to be what you believe God wants you to be?
- As followers of Jesus Christ and members of the Church of Scotland in this rural area what are the key barriers that hinder you from being who you believe God wants you to be?
- Can the barriers be grouped in different ways, eg
 - issues requiring, in general terms, local solutions;
 - issues requiring consideration and solutions beyond the local.

- What ideas do you have about possible solutions to these barriers and how might you collaboratively work to bring about those solutions?

Focus groups consulted:

Focus groups were used as the sole source of gathering evidence to support the preparation of this report and they met within the following Presbyteries:

- Jedburgh
- Ayr
- Lochaber
- Argyll
- Abernethy
- Wigtown and Stranraer
- Perth
- Stirling
- Inverness

The majority of respondents were aged between 45 and 70 years, with there being an approximate 50/50 split between male and female involvement in the groups.

D. Key findings:

Question 1: Key Opportunities

- In rural and particularly in remote areas the church is commonly seen as the focal point within communities, with an acknowledgement that it is there for everyone, whether they attend worship or not. There is still a sense, even amongst non-church-goers, of everybody belonging to the parish. In this regard at least it was suggested that 'the parish system still works' in rural communities.
- Church folk, including the minister, tend to be more fully engaged with the local community than may be the case in an urban setting, and are generally seen as a positive attribute.
- There is a natural, parish wide, pastoral involvement – folk living 'on the margins' are less likely to go unnoticed and can be offered immediate practical support.

²⁸ Rural church is faced with different types of farming and rural industry from agricultural, forestry, fish farming. There are also differences between island and mainland locations

- The location of church buildings can be an asset – often at the centre of the community and sometimes the only communal facility still available.
- Churches are still generally the default place for rites of passage (weddings, baptisms and funerals).
- Personal connections, with schools and other groups not attached to the church, are healthy.
- Farming activities help to create natural rhythms for church and community life.
- In tourist areas there are great opportunities to showcase not just historical buildings but a living church.
- There is often a poverty of resources: lack of access to Christian bookshops, conferences, etc; poor internet connection; and few people.
- It is difficult to keep church buildings open beyond the regular times of use.
- People can experience a strong sense of isolation.
- Current parish and Presbytery boundaries can work against natural collaboration.
- Charges are often linked in ways that don't always make sense to those seeking to meet the needs locally.

Question 2: Key Barriers

- In rural churches one person often takes on several roles within the church which can be just too much.
- There is a reducing number of people available and willing to take office bearers roles.
- A significant proportion of present office bearers are quite elderly.
- An urban model of church is applied across the CoS which does not fit in many rural situations.
- The time taken for Ministers to cover large geographical areas and multiple congregations means that it is difficult to find time to do other than the basic ministerial tasks. Often the more creative missional work is lost.
- With the majority of the workforce employed in farming there are seasons when people just aren't able to engage in church life.
- Population shifts have a marked impact: younger people move to more urban areas, leaving an elderly population and, whilst still living there, the youth shift their focus from the local to High School contacts.
- There can be a lack of local connection in some families. They work or study in nearby towns/cities spending little time and energy on engaging with their rural community.

Question 3 and 4: Solutions

It was decided that the responses to question 3 and 4 were best presented together.

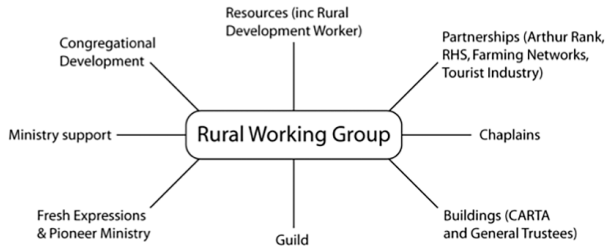
- Café Church, Messy Church and other fresh expressions are producing good responses in rural communities. Such good news stories should be shared.
- The ministry of hospitality should be developed. This will encourage congregations to remember to be Christ focused as they seek to meet the needs of those in their communities.
- Share stories of how we can change the way things are presently run, eg different models for running Guilds.
- Share good news stories of where linking charges has been effective.
- Develop the laity so that there is not an over dependence on the minister.
- Enable congregations to make greater use of technology and social media: using the church to broadcast broadband to its community, church websites, emails and social media.
- Develop a cohesive strategy for rural work in the National Church.
- Develop a more formal partnership with the Arthur Rank Organisation, possibly similar to the Fresh

Expressions partnership, so as to tap into this significant rural resource base.

- Enable the sharing of resources within the CoS and ecumenically.
- Acknowledge the need to resource rural parishes.
- Approach Fresh Expressions to look at approaches in the rural context.
- Regional gatherings for resourcing are seen to be more effective than more central national ones.

E. Proposals arising:

The RWG believe that the consultation findings enable it to form the beginnings of a strategic way forward for rural congregations within the CoS that will enable them to thrive and not just survive. Within that is the need to create a new model of rural church which could be developed alongside a rural strategy designed to adequately support rural ministries and mission. The RWG proposes that the following areas be addressed to see growth and development within the rural church:



1. Rural Working Group remit:

The clear message from the consultation groups is that rural mission, which is peculiarly relational in style and content, is normally done best by locally based and locally trained practitioners, and it is therefore proposed that the remit for the RWG be revised to the following in order that it might continue to play a strategic role in supporting and enabling rural congregations to thrive:

- Raise the profile of the needs of rural congregations and Presbyteries.

- Enable engagement with the ministry and missional opportunities found in rural areas.
- Resource rural congregations as they seek to develop.
- Assist in the development and support of regional and or national events/ conferences /forums with a rural focus.

2. Encourage the rural churches to flourish:

- Enable engagement with rural resources.
- Encourage cross parish and cross Presbytery initiatives.
- Develop guidance to enable congregations and Presbyteries to deliver regional conferences or forums.
- Enable remote access to support and development provision, being mindful that rural areas often have limited broadband coverage.
- Develop a rural section/forum hosted on the main CoS website which is easily accessible and enables the sharing of resources.
- Consider increased use of video conferencing which will require support to install both nationally and locally.
- Enable congregations to consider other ways of doing church, *eg* via Fresh Expressions, and give congregations the freedom to explore what that means for their church and community. This could allow a move away from maintaining what has been to allow growth and vision thereby developing rural church fit for the 21st century.

3. Training and support for congregational involvement:

- Enable people to be rural disciples
- Equip congregations to move to a team based ministry, if appropriate to the context
- Provide effective training based on rural needs
- Deliver more local, rather than national, based training provision

- Enable the use of the Statistics for Mission parish profiles to assist in informing work
- Share good practice stories from other rural areas in relation to work with children and young people.

4. **Streamline the governance:**

- Identify where requirements from the central administration can be reduced, eg the completion of building surveys questionnaires which becomes an overly onerous task when office bearers are few.
- Provide help centrally for some for the legal aspects.
- Provide additional support for local governance on finance and administration.
- Encourage different models of local church governance and guilds.
- Provide support centrally and/or regionally from CARTA, General Trustees, professionals to rural charges for the building surveys and support to those who take on the role of property convener or indeed where no convener can be found.

5. **Flexible and invisible borders:**

- Encourage an ethos whereby Presbytery borders are considered to be invisible and collaboration a positive approach to be adopted rather than the being held back by concerns that working together is the precursor to being joined together.
- Encourage congregations to get to know their neighbouring congregations, extending invites to share work, events and initiatives.
- Provide signposting for young people that linking them with other churches as they move away to college and university.
- Encourage the forming of links with other churches for young people travelling to Secondary School out with parish boundaries.
- Develop the approach where like-for-like association is the driver for linkages etc. rather than geographical association.

6. **Strategic development:**

- The scope of the RWG should be re-visited in relation to the rural agenda and consideration given to putting in place a resourced Rural Areas Committee as part of Mission and Discipleship Council that can adequately support rural charges.
- Develop more formal links with the Arthur Rank Organisation and other rural organisations so as to share resources etc.
- Engage in proactive collaborative working with the various Councils and departments of the CoS on the rural agenda.
- Provide provision for a National Rural Development Worker post to raise the profile, support and resource congregations and ministries in conjunction with Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Council.
- Work with the Vocations initiative to raise the profile of rural ministry.
- Proactively seek ministers to serve and be trained to serve in rural contexts.
- Carry out an analysis of how many rural charges are vacant and the number of long term vacancies in these charges to assess whether this is an issue that is predominantly specific to the rural context.
- Encourage rural parishes to engage in mission opportunities that are relevant to that context.

F. Conclusion

Having taken stock of the observations and suggestions of a whole range of committed Rural Mission practitioners from all across the length and breadth of Scotland, the RWG proposes that a loosely structured rural network should be established, through which training and encouragement would be offered to individuals and parishes, at a regional level. A centralised RWG would continue to provide some assistance in this regard (help setting up new regional groupings; signposting resources; sharing stories; providing publicity for regional events/programmes), but it is clear that in the initial stages especially, this initiative would benefit greatly from the

support and insight of a dedicated Rural Mission Development Worker.

The Rural Working Group:

Kenneth MacKenzie (Convener), Jim Alexander, Richard Begg, Andy Campbell, Ronnie Gall, Mandy Hickman, Moira Land, Bob Milne, Stephen Ogston, Ron Clarke (Secretary)

APPENDIX V

JOINT EMERGING CHURCH REPORT

The Joint Emerging Church Group (JECG) seeks to inspire a vision for innovation, challenging Presbyteries to explore new ways of being Church, creating possibilities for new ecclesial communities, and offering encouragement and practical support. It is the JECG because it is a joint initiative between the Mission and Discipleship Council and the Ministries Council.

In the Group's report to the General Assembly of 2015, three priorities were highlighted as shaping the work for the year ahead:

- developing structures and enabling legislation;
- developing a network and making links with those interested in developing new ecclesial communities; and
- engaging in the development of pioneer ministry.

The development of Pioneer Ministry is reported on in the Ministries Council's report to this year's General Assembly (section 2.3 on pages 14/20-21), both with regard to the pilot posts, and also with regard to the other tasks instructed as part of the Decade for Ministry such as education and training, as well as assessment of suitability for, Pioneer Ministry.

Beginning with network development, the JECG continued its programme of "Going for Growth", aiming to cover all of Scotland over a four year period, working in day conferences in different parts of the country. A typical "Going for Growth" event involves an afternoon meeting with a small number of key people from Presbyteries

involved in Mission or Presbytery Planning, followed by an evening engaging with people invited from congregations, to explore new ways of being Church, including establishing new ecclesial communities and fresh expressions of church. Over 100 people, from 11 Presbyteries, attended "Going for Growth" events in 2015/16. A highlight was the visit to Lerwick; the original visit to Lerwick was scheduled for 2017/18 but the Group was delighted to bring this date forward in response to local interest and demand. A day of engagement with 33 participants who had come from all over Shetland was very positive as the following comments affirm:

- *"It couldn't have been any better"*
- *"very effective day"*

At the time of going to press for last year's Report to the General Assembly, a number of Fresh Expressions Vision Days had still to take place. More information on Fresh Expressions UK, and on Vision Days, can be found on the Fresh Expressions website at (www.freshexpressions.org.uk).

Vision Days for the 2015 programme attracted 119 check number people; feedback from these events, in Kilmarnock, Dornoch, and Bankfoot were all consistently positive. This is encouraging, and is a good foundation for 2016. Vision Days in 2016 are scheduled for Kilmelford, in Argyll; Newton Stewart; Linlithgow; and Lerwick. More information on the 2017 programme can be found on the Resourcing Mission website at (www.resourcingmission.org.uk/events) and also on the Fresh Expressions website at (www.freshexpressions.org.uk/calendar).

The programme culminated with a highly successful summer school on mission, held at the Westpark Conference Centre in Dundee, with key speakers including Doug Gay from Trinity College, Glasgow; George Lings from the Church Army Research Unit in Sheffield; and Phil Potter, UK Team Leader for Fresh Expressions. 60 participants journeyed together in worship and learning, enjoying a sense and depth of community. The Group was

also pleased to see that a number of individuals had been offered financial support from Kirk Sessions or Presbyteries to attend and would like to commend those Courts of the Church that enabled participation in this way.

Norman Smith, Vice-Convener of the Mission and Discipleship Council, and Convener of the JECG, said:

"We have seen these events really encourage and inspire people in their faith across Scotland. The Summer School was a significant moment for the attendees with many encountering fresh expressions for the first time whilst others moved further along their journey. As a Council, we are very happy with how it went and are looking forward to our 2016 school."

The JECG is committed to working with people across Scotland to explore new ways of being Church, wherever they are on the journey, and welcomes approaches from all within the Kirk.

Research continues into mapping new forms of church attached to all denominations or no denomination at all, across the country. These embryonic new ways of being church – whether known as missional communities, church plants, Messy Church or fresh expressions – are making an increasing impact in a variety of areas. This research sets a benchmark for an ongoing attempt to understand the size and impact of new ways of being church in parishes the length and breadth of Scotland. The research will inform future work and priorities. In comparing the findings of this piece of research, which involved contact with 51 initiatives in Scotland, including those 'Go For It' funded projects which had identified new ecclesial community as a criterion, the JECG confirmed what it already knew; that this area of work, establishing fresh expressions of church, is less developed than in other parts of the United Kingdom. The JECG would like to thank those who responded, particularly those groups involved with Go For It, and the staff of Go For It for their support in this exercise. Groups and initiatives within the Kirk which consider themselves to be new ecclesial communities, or

fresh expressions of church, outwith the inherited model of church, are encouraged to be in touch with the JECG that we might better understand the picture of church life across Scotland and offer appropriate support and encouragement, as well as learning from them. Please contact MandD@churchofscotland.org.uk.

The General Assembly of 2015 passed Act V on Presbytery Mission Initiatives, and at the time of going to press, the five Presbyteries who were selected to be part of the Pioneer Ministry Pilot are all exploring how this piece of legislation will apply in their context. There are other instances where Presbyteries are using this Act to enable exciting developments to happen, and these will be reported on by the Ministries Council to future General Assemblies.

The Group is also represented on the Scottish Fresh Expressions Training Board, which is an ecumenical group, with representation from the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, the Salvation Army, the United Free Church and the Baptist Union of Scotland. This is the Scottish arm of Fresh Expressions UK which enables Mission Shaped Ministry (msm) and Mission Shaped Intro courses to happen; more details can be found on the Fresh Expressions UK website. The JECG would wish to encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to consider the possibility of hosting either msm or Mission Shaped Intro courses; these are best coordinated at a local level, as are Vision Days. These events are intended to be self-funding, although the Councils involved with JECG have supported them in the past by helping to fund printing and providing Study Leave for Ministers, or bursaries for others. Some Presbyteries have offered to pay for a number of places in msm courses for recently ordained Ministers and others.

As we look forward to the years 2016/17 and 2017/18, we will continue with local groupings exploring what Fresh Expressions are about, and would target the following areas and Presbyteries:

Year	Venue	Presbyteries
2016/ 17	Aberdeen	Buchan, Moray, Gordon, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Angus
	Glasgow	Glasgow, Hamilton, Lanark, Paisley, Dumbartonshire and the southern part of Argyll
2017/ 18	Inverness	Moray, Abernethy, Lewis, Uist, Lochcarron-Skye, Orkney

Having been engaged in the “Going for Growth” programme for some two years now, it is also hoped to establish four Pioneer Centres, two in 2016, and two in 2017, focusing on four very different geographical contexts. These would build on an ecclesial community, which has attained a critical mass. They would be key in offering a context for training and for the wider Church to learn from, as well as providing inspiration, hospitality and advice. These will also link into the UK wide development of such Pioneer Centres within the Fresh Expressions UK movement.

The Partnership Agreement with Fresh Expressions UK is now almost half way through. The original agreement provided the Kirk with the opportunity to nominate a director to serve on the Board of Fresh Expressions UK, and the two Councils feel that now is the time to explore this afresh. As well as exploring this possibility, the General Assembly is asked to instruct both Councils to review the Partnership Agreement and report back to the General Assembly of 2017.

In conclusion, the Group gives thanks for the opportunities over the last year, and looks forward to the possibilities and avenues opening up before the Kirk.

APPENDIX VI

THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR FRESH EXPRESSIONS

‘It is your garden now, little children.’ said the Giant, and he took an axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market they found

the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.’

‘The Selfish Giant’ by Oscar Wilde

Moved from the winter of selfishness the Giant in Oscar Wilde’s children’s tale opens up to others not only his garden, but also his life. He changes dramatically as boundaries are broken down and ownership is shared. Yet, heart-warming as this story is, the Giant continues to remain within the security and comfort of an invitation, one which he makes. But what if something else had happened: what if he had left his garden to others and had travelled to places, fair or foul, where gardens were unknown, or at best only a plaintive imagining? What if he had shared with others by growing new gardens in different places? This is the journey of fresh expressions of church.

In Wilde’s story there is a great giving and receiving of life; this echoes the joy when church in its traditional or inherited expressions breaks down the walls, whatever they may be, and shares Jesus with others. Through the power of the Holy Spirit it engages, invites and reconfigures. There is nothing deficient or second class about this approach; there is only a lack of monopoly. This is an important way in which we can engage in mission, but it is not the only one. Inherited and fresh expressions of church are complementary streams of the Spirit’s work and they should celebrate, support, comfort and challenge one another. We must never lose sight of this complementarity; we must not fall into a mire of fear, insecurity, jealousy or arrogance, which would hinder us from understanding who God is and blind us from seeing what He is doing.

What is church?

Church, in both its inherited and fresh expressions, is a gift from God. It is enlivened by the Holy Spirit and given to us by the Father through Jesus who leads it. It is deeply and fundamentally relational: it is ‘One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.’ These relationships through Jesus form a matrix

as we relate to one another in unity and fellowship, to God in dependence upon His grace, to the Church universal through time and space and to our communities and wider world in mission.

‘... we need to have a clear and robust understanding of what the church really is. It is not in the New Testament a carefully constructed human society, organising itself in local branches, with members signing up to a constitution. Instead, it is what happens when the news and presence of Jesus, raised from the dead, impact upon the human scene, drawing people together in a relationship that changes everyone involved, a relationship that each person involved with Jesus is now involved in ways that can be painful and demanding, but also life-giving and transforming beyond imagination.’

Rowan Williams, ‘Mixed Economy’, Issue 1, 2008, page 13

What is a fresh expression of church?

If church is this relational matrix, in what particular way(s) is this nuanced in a fresh expression of church: an expression of church that is intentionally missional, contextual and focused on making disciples?

- First, fresh expressions of church are self-consciously focused on these relationships. Appropriate practices are seen to develop from their outworking: the community of the church is therefore not essentially defined by specific practices, though practices consonant with these core relationships will develop and may be shared across time, space and cultures.
- Second, the experience and reflection of many pioneers has identified the following process as critical in the development of robust fresh expressions of church (they have a strong resonance with our best practice in cross-cultural mission).
 - Go, commit to stay and intend to develop church in this new context. If the intention is to engage people, draw them back and welcome them into the sending church (even a ‘reconfigured’ one)

this, while being an entirely valid form of mission engagement, is not a fresh expression of church.

- Listen to God and to the new context; we must not assume that we understand this new culture. Genuine open hearted, minded and spirited listening is essential; this will change us, our understanding and our actions.
- Develop loving service. As we listen, in this new context, we begin to integrate into a community and we begin to understand how this community can best be loved and served. We begin to do this more as ‘insiders’ rather than ‘outsiders’ who have been parachuted in.
- Encourage and participate in the community which will develop from the catalyst of this loving service.
- Begin to make disciples. As relationships develop within the community that is forming we expect, not only for Jesus to be seen in us, but also for natural conversations to develop and people begin to be transformed as they meet Jesus (even before they have come to a clear understanding of faith).
- Help shape an appropriate, full expression of church community. This community will be true to both what church is and to the cultural context in which it is being expressed.
- In time repeat the process: go from this new expression of church into a fresh context.
- The whole process is undergirded with prayer. The community in mission is not only aware of its vulnerability and limitations, but also that this mission is God’s mission and that they are given the gift of sharing in this: it is not their possession.

Fresh or froth expressions of church?

Are fresh expressions of church merely a pragmatic quick fix or are they a profound expression of God’s grace and love? Are they deeply and fundamentally grounded in our

understanding of God; God who loves, sacrifices and reigns? Four realities, which are central to our Christian faith are foundational to the development of a fresh expression of church and should be reflected within its life: Trinity, Incarnation, Kingdom of God and the 'Wildness' of God. If these realities are present, then there is substance not froth.

- **Trinity:** The mystery of the Trinity speaks, among many other things, of
 - diversity in utter unity of being,
 - love mutually and equally given and received,
 - communion-in-mission
 - the reality of communication;

It declares that a relationship of uncompromised love is at the core of reality. If a church, whether traditional or fresh in its expression is to have integrity it must not just reflect, but radiate these qualities. A fresh expression of church intentionally aims to integrate this quality of life into its DNA:

- As stated earlier a fresh expression of church explicitly understands church in relational terms. These relationships are comprehensive and are focused in and through Jesus. There is an intentional attempt to model communion-in-mission: where love is mutually given and received and where it is uncompromisingly expressed to others.
- There is a deep exploration of diversity and unity. This is reflected not just in all being encouraged to use the experience and gifts which God has given them, but to radically live out the 'priesthood of all believers', and, among other things, to shape our understanding of the 'ordained'/'lay' dynamic in the light of this. John 14-17 speaks of the Trinity in action and how all are where the one is. How do we understand delegation and representation in the light of this? What does this say about service, discipling, the delegation of the administration of the sacraments? Fresh expressions of church explore

how the dynamic of this interdependent relationship should shape our practice, rather than letting inherited practices become principles by which we interpret our relationships.

- Communication is understood, not just in intellectual terms, but in and through the reality of relationship; it is expected that God will make himself known, in new contexts, through the integration of our presence, words and actions.
- **Incarnation:** George Lings at the Church of Scotland Emerging Ministries Conference (2012) posed the question, 'Was the incarnation a fresh expression of the Second Person of the Trinity?' If it were, this would have significant implications for how we understand our identity and how our engagement with context should shape the expression of church.
 - Philippians 2:1- 11 speaks of the humility and love of Jesus and calls us to follow his example. It speaks of Jesus truly becoming one of us, not just pretending. This means that the context had a significant role in the expression of the incarnation. A fresh expression of church takes both this radical humility and the significance of context as central to mission. In the incarnation neither divinity nor humanity were compromised, so in a fresh expression of church neither the integrity of being church nor the cultural context will be compromised, The context must be allowed to be an active agent in shaping the expression of church if we are to follow the model of the incarnation.
 - As with the incarnation there will be a giving up of power and a willingness to accept sacrifice in our active loving of others. This underscores that our motivation for developing church is not one of seeking power, maintaining prestige or guarding comfort, it is one of love, love for the other; especially love for the one who is not

already included. Our identity is neither self-centred nor self-denying.

- The incarnation is not static: in the sense that we now relate to the post-resurrection Jesus, time and place are important. Fresh expressions of church, also, must develop and change so that they may reproduce and share the life of Jesus. They are also, as George Lings pointed out in the conference mentioned earlier, part of the body of the risen, ascended Jesus and this affects how we apply the model of the incarnation to our contexts.
- **Kingdom of God:** Central to the Kingdom of God is the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, which heralds the New Heaven and the New Earth and underscores its reality.
 - The full expression of this Kingdom is in our future, but it must radically inform how we live and be church today. The death, mourning, suffering and injustice of the 'old order of things' (Revelation 21:4) needs to be challenged at a practical level, not merely a theoretical one; this can only be done as we engage with the reality of people's worlds in the contexts in which they live. Loving service, which is aimed at transformation, not just relief, is central to this and is intentionally expressed within fresh expressions of church.
 - By developing a fresh expression of church in new contexts we consciously work for the Kingdom of God to be expressed and experienced in these contexts, rather than calling people to experience it elsewhere. This deeply reflects the reality that Jesus is King in every context.
- **'Wildness' of God**

'Aslan a man!' said Mr Beaver sternly. 'Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the Sea. Don't you know who

is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great Lion.'

'Ooh!' said Susan, 'I'd thought he was a man. Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.'

'That you will, dearie, and no mistake,' said Mrs Beaver; 'if there is one who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, either they're braver than most or just plain silly.'

'Then he isn't safe?' said Lucy.

'Safe?' said Mr Beaver, 'don't you hear what Mrs Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe. But he is good. He is the King, I tell you.'

'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C S Lewis

'He (Aslan) is not the slave of the stars, but their Maker. Is it not said in all the old stories that He is not a tame lion?'

'The Last Battle' by C S Lewis

For a variety of reasons we are tempted to try and domesticate God. We, like Susan and Lucy in Lewis' story, misunderstand safety. We too readily exchange the anchor of God's goodness for the flotsam of our wisdom. The adventure of mission calls us to both risk and to an openness to sacrifice, but it does so in the context of love; love which is equally for us and for others. Fresh expressions of church celebrate this wildness and call; they intentionally cultivate a seeking of the presence and action of God in the wild, open seas of our world, not just in the inland waters of the well-mapped.

'The price of encountering reality, we might say, is precisely the recognition that there isn't an alternative to it. And the challenge is whether we can believe that, often in spite of appearances, it is the well-spring of joy. Hardest of all is when the very vehicles of faith or trust seem to become empty ... and how it is necessary to hold on to what may feel like – at best – a deeply uncertain vision, haunted by

all the ingenious ways in which it can be distorted and turned into falsehood.'

'The Lion's World' by Rowan Williams

Our record of the 'Council at Jerusalem' and its immediate consequences (Acts 15:1-35) reminds us that, from almost the outset, the church has struggled to understand what it means to follow God who is untameable and who delights in giving birth to fresh expressions of church.

Heartfelt opinions, which deeply reflected believers' sense of identity and theological perspective, were presented as the expression of church from within the Jewish culture debated and legislated on how and on what grounds they should relate to the fresh expression of church from within the Gentile community. What practices should they demand of this new community if they were to be considered part of the true church? Three key conclusions were affirmed:

- That God, who will not conform to our expectations or comfort, is Lord of the Church (v7-18).
- That being part of the Church is, through grace, the result of a given relationship; it is not through adherence to traditional and/or cultural religious practices (even if these practices had been given by God and, at one time, had been significantly helpful for those in a particular culture developing and deepening their relationship with Him) (v8-11).
- The priority of mutual respect, encouragement and fellowship between the different expressions of church (v24-34).

A Benediction for the whole Church

Ephesians 3:20-21 is both a benediction and a challenging declaration of and for the whole church, whatever its expression: inherited or fresh. Across time, place and culture it calls us to celebrate and live out the radical gift of being church; it is a good place to finish and also to begin ...

'Now to him who is able to do more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (NIV)

APPENDIX VII

FRESH EXPRESSIONS IN SCOTLAND

Data Collection

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was almost identical to that used in the Church Army Research Unit (CARU) report,²⁹ modified as appropriate for the Scottish context. It was no longer a single-denomination study, and various Church of England-specific terms were excluded.

In conversation with Canon Dr Lings, it emerged that their furtherwork is examining the number of people within the fresh expression who attend another "traditional" church. I offered to pilot this question in this research and permission was given for it to be included.

Sampling

Without a database of Fresh Expressions in Scotland, participants were invited to take part in the study though invitations being emailed to the following groups:

- Applicants to the *Go For It!* Fund who had marked their applications as "Ecclesial"
- Ministers of the Church of Scotland

In addition, people were invited to participate through Facebook groups and blog postings.

Questionnaire completion

Canon Dr Lings had stated that it was very important to retain the relational nature of Fresh Expressions by having

²⁹ *An analysis of fresh expressions of Church and church plants begun in the period 1992-2012: Report on Strand 3b of the Church Growth Research Project.* Church Army Research Unit, October 2013. Available at http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/churchgrowthresearch_freshexpressions.pdf

conversations with people, and by finding people relationally. Additionally, some of the questions made use of Fresh Expressions jargon that it was felt participants might need support in answering. Initially therefore, people were asked to self-refer to a basic “please contact me” website. They could ask to be contacted by phone or email in the first instance.

Those who had asked to be contacted by phone were subsequently interviewed. Many people expressed the preference to complete the material by email and due to the short duration of time available for this, the decision was taken to make the questionnaire publicly available.

This questionnaire was modified to give more explanation to someone filling it in, and some ordering was changed to keep themed questions together. In addition, specific questions about the type of Fresh Expression were replaced with a narrative response from which it was hoped answers could be derived.

Respondents

55 responses were made to the questionnaire. 12 of these (22%) were by telephone interview. 1 was a self-completion of the telephone-interview questionnaire. 43 responses were made to the public questionnaire. One of these responses concerned a church in Australia, one referred to a national charity, and another was a clear duplicate entry. Two listed only the names of the groups with little further information given, so they were removed. 51 responses were finally considered.

Criteria for a Fresh Expression of Church

For this research to be comparable with that carried out by CARU, the same criteria as to what defines a “Fresh Expression of Church” should be used, relaxing the denominational requirements. Those criteria are listed in the CARU report and reproduced here:³⁰

1. Was something Christian and communal brought to ‘birth’ that was new and further, rather than an existing group modified?
2. Has the starting group tried to engage with non-churchgoers? There was intention to create a fresh expression of Church, not begin an outreach project from an existing church. The aim was for the Christians to change, to fit a culture and context, not make the local/indigenous people change, to fit into an existing church context.
3. Does the resultant community meet at least once a month? In cases of monthly meetings further questions about how to deepen community, build commitment and increase discipleship follow.
4. Does it have a name that helps to give it an identity? An active search, not yet yielding a name, is allowed.
5. Is there intention to be Church? This could be from the start, or by discovery on the way. This admits the embryonic fxD (fx of developing community) and cases of fxE (fx of evangelism) and even some fxW (fx of worship). The key is that they are not seen as a bridge back to ‘real church’.
6. Requirement to be Anglican removed
7. There is some form of leadership recognised within, and also without.
8. At least the majority of members (who are part of the public gathering) see it as their major expression of being church.
9. There is aspiration for the four creedal ‘marks’ of church, or ecclesial relationships: ‘up/holy, in/one, out/apostolic, of/catholic’. We question validity in an absence of ‘mission/out’. (Our Church Army team see the two dominical sacraments as a given consequence of the life of a missional community which follows Jesus, but not the sole or even best measure of being church.)
10. There is intent to become ‘three self’ (self-financing, self-governing and self-reproducing). These factors need contextualisation, but are some marks of advancing maturity. They are not to be interpreted as indicators of congregationalist independency, or breakaway tendencies.

³⁰ CARU, p10

Under these criteria **none** of the groups who completed the survey qualify as Fresh Expressions of Church.

Reasons for exclusion

For ease of checking, I first considered criteria that could be easily checked against answers in the questionnaire. This included:

- Meeting at least once a month (83% meet this criteria)
- Having a name (92%)
- Aspiration to the four marks of church (58%)
- Offering discipleship (46%)
- Celebrating sacraments (13%)
- Intending to become “three self” – self-financing, self-governing, self-reproducing (8%).

These six criteria were easily checked against questions in the survey and I expected them to act as a filter before considering other aspects of the group in more detail. Figure 1 shows the numbers of groups meeting different numbers of criteria.

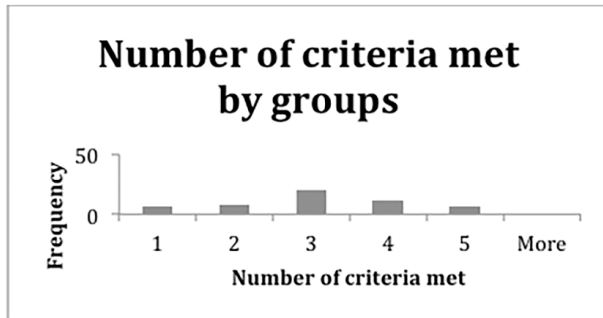


Figure 1: The number of groups meeting the number of criteria for inclusion

No group meets none of the criteria, and 37 (71%) meet at least three of the criteria. However, no group fulfils all six of these requirements, before issues of mission, context, or leadership are addressed.

Of the six groups which met all but one of the criteria, three did not offer the sacraments. This included

“Sanctuary” which is an online community and would not therefore be able to do so. The other three did not intend growing into full self-identity although “Family Tree” in Glasgow intended growing in two of the three areas.

APPENDIX VIII

CARTA MEETING DATES 2016/2017

2016: 30 June, 29 September, 24 November

2017: 23 February, 27 April

APPENDIX IX

CO-OPTED MEMBERS ON GROUPS AND COMMITTEE

Rural

Jim Alexander, Richard Begg, Andy Campbell, Ronnie Gall, Stephen Ogston

Pray Now

Carol Ford (C), Peggy Ewart-Roberts, Mark Foster, Adam Dillon, Rob McKenzie, Liz Crumlish

Why Believe?

Gary Caldwell, Daniel Frank, Scott McRoberts, Ross Watters, Liam Fraser

Music

Alison Adam, Fiona Buchanan, Robin Hill, Margaret McLarty, Richard Michael, Gayle Taylor, Martin Ritchie (since January 2016)

Liturgical Group

Karen Hendry, Neil Gardner, Robin Mackenzie, Liz Crumlish

Learning Disabilities

Barbara Leppard, Ivy Blair, Ronnie Black, Paul Goode

Joint Emerging Church

Doug Gay, Fyfe Blair, Stuart Smith

Life and Work Business Committee

Keith McIntyre

Communications and Marketing

Peter Johnston