

PANEL ON REVIEW AND REFORM MAY 2016

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Reaffirm the vision set out by the 2001 Church without Walls report and encourage members, elders, and ministers to read or re-read it.
3. Instruct all Presbyteries to create an opportunity by June 2016 for a congregation engaged in the Path of Renewal to report at a Presbytery meeting, inviting a congregation from a neighbouring Presbytery where required.
4. Instruct the Panel on Review and Reform, in consultation with Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils, to work on the next stage of the Path of Renewal, beyond that with the pilot congregations.
5. Urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to discuss and make suggestions about how to alleviate the administrative burden on local congregations and instruct the Panel to gather these suggestions and report to the Council of Assembly by December 2016.
6. Instruct the Panel, in collaboration with others as appropriate, to produce an online resource of stories of churches where new approaches are being developed.
7. Instruct Presbyteries to consider the section of the Panel's report on 'Empowering local leadership' (*Section 3*) and to report their reflections to the Panel by 31 December 2016.
8. Instruct the Theological Forum to consider whether those who are not ministers of word and sacrament might be authorised to administer the sacraments and in what circumstances.
9. Instruct the Panel, in partnership with the Ministries Council, to consider ways in which the scope of Ordained Local Ministry can be developed and broadened to meet the needs of the Church as it considers the future of ministry, and report to the GA 2017.

REPORT

1. Introduction

1.1 Over the past year, the Panel on Review and Reform has continued to explore how the Church rediscovers its missional focus in the face of a changing society. It is helpful to put this challenge into context and to recognise that the Church of Scotland is not alone in this. In his paper, 'Leadership Community and the Future Church', Leonard Hjalmarson, Director of Spiritual Formation with Forge Canada, comments:

Phyllis Tickle, author of The Great Emergence, notes that every five hundred years or so the Church holds a great rummage sale. Every five hundred years the foundations of culture shift, and each time the same great questions are on the table: what does it mean to be human? Where is the authority? These questions are in the background of all theological reflection, and theological reflection undergirds every conversation we have within church circles on the gospel, culture, church, leadership and mission.

Here we are five hundred years after the Reformation, with the foundations we built on for five hundred years now crumbling. No wonder we feel insecure! Many of the structures we built in modernity are now dissolving as if built on sand. While we have no maps for the way forward in this strange land, we do have voices full of wisdom, both old and new. Most of these voices tell us that in order to move forward, we must reach back. Both the Scriptures (the first witnesses) and the church Fathers and Mothers (tradition) can offer us resources for our future.¹

1.2 As a first step in exploring the kind of changes required, the Panel held a series of consultations with Church members across Scotland, as reported to the General Assemblies of 2014 and 2015. Two key factors emerged from those conversations: firstly, the need to act as servants within our communities, reaching out and being willing to work alongside others as partners; secondly, an awareness that we must develop a deeper discipleship, a more profound faith and reliance upon God.

Further study revealed that these two elements lie at the heart of the Missional Church movement which has brought together people from different theological backgrounds, uniting around a shared belief that working to bring about changes in society which reflect Kingdom values sits alongside the making of disciples rather than in opposition to it.

1.2.1 Missional strategy

In reflecting on how we approach mission, Raymond Fung's work for the World Council of Churches on an *Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism*² is useful. He suggests that three strands are needed for effective evangelism:

1. To work in partnership with other people to meet social needs and to bring about change so that justice prevails.
2. To create authentic, engaging Christian community and worship and to invite others to share in this.
3. To be encouraging others to become fully formed disciples of Jesus and to have in place groups, activities or mentoring to help with this.

The Panel believes it important that our approach is multi-stranded, each complementing the others.

Other denominations are reaching similar conclusions. The Anglican Church, for example, has produced what it calls the *Five Marks of Mission*:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize 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 earth.³

1.2.2 Vision

Together these elements give us some clarity over what we would like to see and this has informed the vision for those local churches who have entered into a pilot process with the Panel, seeking to build:

Churches with members secure in faith and their reliance upon God, being used by God to enrich the lives of others, bringing about personal and societal transformation and helping others become disciples of Christ.

The Panel offers this to the wider Church in order to stimulate ongoing discussion about our vision for the Church of Scotland.

¹ See http://nextreformation.com/wp-admin/resources/leadership_comunitas.pdf, last accessed 11/02/16

² Fung, Raymond, *The Isaiah Vision: an Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism*, WCC Publications, 1992

³ See www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm, last accessed 11/02/16

2. Path of Renewal

Effective lasting missional transformation starts to happen ... by initiating all manner of experiments around the edges where people are given permission to try out what they are learning.⁴

2.1 Aware of the need for experimentation the Panel, in partnership with Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils, has begun work with 38 congregations in what has been termed the 'Path of Renewal'. Borrowed from the work of William Bridges, the phrase refers to the choice which needs to be made when an organisation finds itself functioning as an institution, but is no longer functioning effectively.

2.1.1 Steps to create missional churches

The Church without Walls (CWW) report set out a vision for local churches noting four key factors, that they should be:

1. Shaped by the Gospel
2. Shaped by the Locality
3. Shaped by Friendship
4. Shaped by the gifts of God's people⁵

This is, in large measure, the vision for churches entering into the pilot process, which will encourage development in the following important areas:

- Ensuring those in key leadership roles play the role of enablers and equippers.
- Rooting members in their walk with Christ, deepening faith and commitment.
- Building leaders – discerning those with leadership gifts and helping them develop.

⁴ Roxburgh, Alan J and Romanuk, Fred, *The Missional Leader: Equipping your Church to Reach a Changing World (Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series)*, Jossey Bass, 2006, p 101

⁵ Special Commission anent Review and Reform report to the 2001 General Assembly. Section A, 36/17-30

- Creating Christian community where all relationships are governed by Kingdom values and where relevant, inspiring worship has a central place.
- Equipping members to live for Christ in their families, work place, communities and the world and to be agents of change, seeking to bring Kingdom values.
- Developing active partnership with others in community and wider initiatives which help to bring positive transformation to lives and communities – recognising God at work in and through these.
- Equipping members to give a 'reason for the hope that is in them' (1 Peter 3:15) and encouraging members to speak appropriately about their faith.
- Creating opportunities for those interested in exploring faith to do so.

Quite how this will look on the ground is not clear, and it will be different in different places. One size will not fit all!

2.2 Pilot congregations

With 20 places available for churches, 43 congregations and one area grouping of congregations were nominated by their Presbyteries to take part in the pilot project. Following a series of conferences around the country during the autumn of 2015, the Panel's Path of Renewal Steering Group visited ministers and Kirk Sessions, undertaking a period of discernment about which congregations should be included.

It became clear early on that the energy and enthusiasm sparked by Path of Renewal necessitated something be put in place for all those nominated, rather than restricting it to 20.

After discussion, it was agreed to include 38 congregations in the process – 23 in the main 'Pilot', 8 in 'Pilot Light' and 7 in what is being called 'Pilot Team'. In doing so, the Panel sought to ensure a demographic diversity with a range of churches from different backgrounds. Appendix 1 indicates those involved in each part.

2.2.1 Main Pilot

In the main Pilot, there will be significant investment in training ministers so that they can equip their congregations to be involved in what has been termed *Missio Dei* - the Mission of God in their communities. Ministers and congregations will be accompanied for two to three years in a process of training and mentoring to enable them to discover how to become missional churches in their communities. This work will take place alongside maintaining the traditional patterns of church, at least in the short term. In order to create space for ministers to be involved in training and discernment, funds will be made available through the Parish Ministries Fund to appoint someone in those congregations a day a week to maintain work that is already being undertaken.

2.2.2 Pilot Light

A further eight congregations have accepted the invitation to participate in Pilot Light, a similar but less intensive programme of facilitation and training. Training will be offered through day rather than overnight conferences and funding for assistance will not be available.

As well as resourcing even more congregations to develop a missional approach, this will enable the Panel to ascertain whether the extra resources offered in the main Pilot make any real difference to the outcome, so allowing us to plan for future levels of involvement.

2.2.3 Pilot Team

A third strand, Pilot Team, has been offered to those congregations in which the Steering Group discerned a need for further exploration of missional theology and how it might impact local churches and communities. Ministers and leadership teams will be invited to embark on this together. Included in Pilot Team is a parish grouping.

The first set of training for all three strands began in early 2016.

2.3 Staffing

The Rev Elizabeth Crumlish has been appointed as full-

time Path of Renewal Co-ordinator. She is co-ordinating both the training programme and the support offered to churches and ministers. A team of coaches and mentors has been developed to work with congregations and ministers. Two of the team are involved in a voluntary capacity and this commitment has, in part, enabled the expansion of the Pilot from 20 to 38 congregations, with all of the work being funded within the original budget.

2.4 Learning from the pilots

The Panel hopes that what is learned from the Pilots will benefit the whole Church. As noted above, this work is being developed in partnership with the Ministries and Mission and Discipleship Councils and with the support of the Council of Assembly. The Panel is grateful for the encouragement and insights they have brought to this work. As well as benefiting from the expertise that these Councils bring to the shaping of the work of the pilots, the partnership will ensure that the lessons learnt will be available to them as they develop their own work in the future.

The Panel has secured the skills of Rita Welsh, a Human Resources lecturer, currently working towards a PhD at Queen Margaret University, to carry out research on the impact of the pilots on the work and witness of the congregations engaged in them. Three ministers in the Pilot are also completing academic studies which will focus on their engagement in the Path of Renewal.

Ongoing reflections on lessons being learnt can be found on <http://pathofrenewal.blogspot.co.uk/>

3. Empowering local leadership

3.1 Most recognise that leadership is a key factor in developing the vision and the purpose of the Church, ensuring that we remain true to our calling. But what kind of leadership?

One of the key passages in understanding the nature of Christian leadership is found in Ephesians 4 (GNT):

¹¹*It was he who 'gave gifts to people'; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. ¹²He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ. ¹³And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature.*

Encapsulated within that is the idea that Christian leadership is empowering in nature. In the gospels, we discover this modelled for us in the ministry of Christ, who prepares his disciples to continue his ministry without him, telling them they will not only do what he has done but will do greater things, empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 14:12)

This theme was woven into the Board of Ministry's Ministers of the Gospel Report (2000) and the Special Commission on Review and Reform's report of 2001. They provided substantial material which the Panel has been able to consider as they reflected on what progress has been made in implementing their recommendations about local leadership and to consider what action needs to be taken now.

3.2 Recognising the gifts of God's people

Both reports started with a clear understanding that all in the church are called to works of Christian service:

*'Follow me' means every disciple following Jesus is to share in his ministry through his Body, the church. ... or as Ephesians 4:7 says, 'to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it' ... Each congregation is to be a living college, where people learn to exercise their gifts in an environment of grace characterised by encouragement, humility and cooperation.*⁶

⁶ Special Commission on Review and Reform report to the 2001 General Assembly, Section A4.1, 36/26

Firstly, only the membership of the whole Church can demonstrate all aspects of the one ministry of Jesus Christ in and to the world. Ministry in the Church of Scotland must be re-defined in the attitudes and behaviour of every member and congregation as the service of Jesus Christ expected of ordinary church members as servants of God, in all the rich variety of our gifts, talents and avenues of service in Church and community.

*We must all repent of the wrong belief that ministry is primarily the work of ministers. This prevalent view in the Kirk distorts the New Testament teaching and contradicts our Reformed and ecumenical statements on ministry.*⁷

Both reports sought a mindset change – a 'fundamental transformation' as the latter report articulates it, based on an understanding that church is a place for affirming, nurturing and training people to live for Christ in the world.

Whilst a mindset shift has taken place in some local churches, the Panel is aware that this thinking is not as deep-rooted as it might be and requires further work.

Because story-telling plays a large part in highlighting places where positive change has brought an encouraging impact, the Panel plans to work with Councils and others bodies as appropriate to produce an online resource with videos and stories which is accessible for all to use.

It is also important to recognise that both reports reiterated Jesus's call to 'make disciples' and the importance of this being our focus. Mike Breen, author of *Building a Discipling Culture*, underscores this when he writes, 'Here's the thing that can be difficult to wrap our minds around: if you make disciples you always get the church. But if you make a church you rarely get

⁷ Board of Ministry's report to the 2000 General Assembly, 2.3.2.2, 17/7

disciples.⁸ His contention is that the missional movement will fail unless discipleship is at the heart of our work.

Aware of the importance of this, the Panel is in conversation with the Mission and Discipleship Council as they focus on discipleship in the coming year, with one of their strategic aims being to develop support in this area.

3.3 Affirming the gifts of leadership: eldership refocused

In considering the shape of local leadership which would lead to a renewing of vision and life, the first focus of the CWW report on leadership was not on ministry of word and sacrament but on eldership.

*We need leadership. We need elders with vision and flexibility. In our Presbyterian church the role of elders is crucial. In the role of the elder the 'one size fits all' pattern of districts is prevalent, but that does not give room for variety of abilities to be exercised. There needs to be an honest appraisal of the gifts and callings of our elders, and to recognise that not all elders are gifted in leadership, nor are all gifted in pastoral care.*⁹

However, as reported to the General Assembly in 2015, those who attended consultations organised by the Panel in 2014 indicated that most Kirk Sessions were not well placed to provide the leadership needed by the Church at this stage, so to that extent, the changes envisaged in the CWW report do not appear to have taken root. The report by the Eldership Working Group of the Mission and Discipleship Council to this year's General Assembly creates an opportunity for this to be taken forward in a more robust way.¹⁰

⁸ Breen, Mike, *How to Build a Discipling Culture: How to Release a Missional Movement by Discipling People Like Jesus Did*, 3dm Publishing, 2014, p 11

⁹ Special Commission anent Review and Reform report to the 2001 General Assembly, section A4.3, 36/27

¹⁰ Developing the Eldership – Interim Report, Mission and Discipleship report to the 2016 General Assembly, Appendix 1

The Panel believes that this is crucial if the role of elder is to be developed appropriately and if Kirk Sessions are to play a key role in shaping the future. As a consequence the Panel has accepted an invitation by Mission and Discipleship Council to be involved in further thinking on this.

3.4 Affirming the gifts of leadership: ministers of word and sacrament

The Ministers of the Gospel report talked of ministers fulfilling their vocation by:

- Proclaiming the Word with Authority
- Celebrating the Sacraments
- Forming Christian Community
- Building up the Body of Christ
- Leading the Church through its structures
- Witnessing prophetically in all aspects of life¹¹

Similarly the CWW report encourages us to think beyond the narrow confines of ministers being those who preach and administer the sacraments to being those who give shape to the work and witness of the people of God, ensuring they remain true to their calling as disciples of Christ and are nurtured in their faith and commitment.

*The term 'ministry of word and sacrament' remains our description of 'the ordained minister'. That role means keeping the people of God truly centred on Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and the sacraments. The role of Christian leadership is to keep Christ central and all other competitors for that position secondary.*¹²

To that end, Christ calls and gifts some within his Body to ensure that God's people faithfully hear and obey that Gospel in Scripture and Sacrament, in worship and witness, in life and service. For this reason, and in this sense, we call such people ministers or servants of the

¹¹ Board of Ministry report to the 2000 General Assembly, 2.4.2, 17/17

¹² Special Commission anent Review and Reform report to the 2001 General Assembly, section A4.4, 36/28

*Gospel – those called and gifted to proclaim that Gospel and enable God's people to serve Jesus Christ and grow in grace (Ephesians 4:7-16). The purpose of the ordained ministry is to keep the Church faithful to its nature and calling as the people of God, in worship and witness, fellowship and service.*¹³

In this context, the theological education of ministers makes sense: it is not simply to inform good preaching and to bring a clear understanding of the sacraments but to ensure that all the work and witness of the Church truly reflects the values and attributes of Kingdom work. The minister's role, therefore, becomes less one of 'doing everything' but of equipping others to carry out 'works of Christian service'. (Ephesians 4:12)

At a time when much of the work previously carried out solely by ministers of word and sacrament is being shared by others, ministers can feel the value of what they do is undermined and that their theological training is devalued. However, this understanding that their calling is to equip others for Christian service, underscores the crucial importance of the role they play.

The CWW report also suggests that the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4 is central:

The term 'ministry of word and sacrament' ... represents an unquestioned assumption that sticks with the role of pastor-teacher as the primary model of leadership. The Biblical description of leadership in Ephesians 4:12 includes also the apostle, the prophet and the evangelist, along with the pastor and the teacher. According to that passage it takes all five leadership roles to express the 'ministry of Christ'. This is a time to recover and reaffirm these other roles of leadership and break out of the reductionism of the pastor-teacher model.

The church will require the pioneering gifts of the apostle ('sent out'), the building and dismantling gifts of the

¹³ Board of National Mission report to the 2000 General Assembly, 17/2.2.2

*prophets, and the frontier-friendly gifts of the evangelist. The pastor and the teacher are no less important, but their monopoly on the term 'ministry' needs to be broken.*¹⁴

A report by the Board of National Mission in 1993 encouraged a deeper focus on the role of evangelists and encouraged the Church to:

*Recognise people who have the gift of evangelism in the wider church and harness them, part-time or full-time.*¹⁵

While, there are some signs that this wider understanding of ministry is being engendered, there are no significant indications that what the CWW calls the pastor-teacher 'monopoly' on the use of the term 'ministry' has been broken.

The Panel is pleased to note that the Ministries Council report to this year's General Assembly begins to address this and is committed to working with them to explore and develop different models as we look towards the future shape of leadership within the Church of Scotland.¹⁶

3.5 Structures and training

Section A4.2 of the CWW report considers structures and training, underscoring the importance of these being enabling and empowering rather than restrictive.

The report highlighted the work of Churches Open College which subsequently closed. Nonetheless, the Ministries Council has experimented, in their Priority Areas work, with the approach used in the Training for Learning and Serving (TLS) course, developed by the College and continued by the United Reformed Church.

Non-stipendiary ministry referred to in the CWW report, led to the introduction of Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs) in 2011. There has, however, been restricted take-up. The

¹⁴ Special Commission on Review and Reform report to the 2001 General Assembly, p 36/28

¹⁵ Board of National Mission report to the 1993 General Assembly, section 4.5.4.3.3, p 411

¹⁶ Ministries Council report to the 2016 General Assembly, section 1: The Future of Ministry

two issues most consistently raised with the Panel in relation to OLMs are whether the training is excessive in its requirements and whether some OLMs might be paid. Working in partnership with Ministries Council, the Panel intends to look at these issues among others as it considers ways in which the scope of Ordained Local Ministry can be developed and broadened to meet the needs of the Church.

Where the training of stipendiary ministers of word and sacrament is concerned, it has been suggested that there is a need for a better mix of academic and practical training, shaped by the current leadership needs of the Church of Scotland. The Panel is aware of research being undertaken within Ministries Council which will be reported to a future General Assembly.

The CWW report pointed to developments in other denominations, since which time further developments have taken place which are worthy of consideration. Some have already been adopted in the Church of Scotland, notably Mission Shaped Ministry, with the 2014 General Assembly setting a target of having at least 100 people a year undertaking this course.

Similarly, in response to the General Assembly's instruction that training should be offered for Pioneer Ministry, a Pilot for Pioneer Ministers drawn from those already ordained has been set up by the Ministries Council.¹⁷ Whilst training is not yet in place for Pioneer Ministers, the Panel was represented at a recent pioneer training event hosted by the Ministries Council. Present on the day were a wide range of people exploring the challenges and opportunities that the present situation in the Church presents us with.

The Panel is aware that the work of St Mellitus College in London, one of the largest theological colleges in the Anglican Church, might provide some helpful insights for

this area of work. As well as preparing students for traditional forms of ministry, it offers training in church planting and leadership. In addition, the new Scottish School of Christian Mission in Glasgow are offering courses in Pioneer Ministry alongside an MA in Theology (Transforming Leadership.)

We look forward to further collaborative discussions with those inside and outwith the Church of Scotland as training for Pioneer Ministry is developed.

The Panel welcomes these developments and will seek to ensure that we learn from and draw on the expertise and experience of others as this area of work is taken forward.

In this, the Panel is aware of their role to ask questions, initiate discussions and bring suggestions and is committed to working with other Councils to explore this further.

3.6 Working with reality

Despite all that is articulated in this report, the Panel recognises that the reality of many situations is that a lot of ministers and congregations are struggling just to keep things going. As a consequence, ministers often find themselves taking on responsibility for work which would have formerly been carried out by others, making it difficult to focus on their core calling.

In addition, the increasing complexity of statutory compliance (finance, health and safety, protection of children and vulnerable adults, and data protection, for example) is leading to an increased burden upon ministers and office bearers which is causing considerable strain. While recognising that most of this has been dictated by government legislation, it is important to find ways to ease this load.

The Mission and Discipleship's report to this year's General Assembly on consultations with rural parishes notes this difficulty and suggests ways of streamlining governance,¹⁸ whilst a Presbytery in the north of Scotland has suggested employing 'Factors'. Another suggestion

¹⁷ Ministries Council report to the 2016 General Assembly, section 2.3: Pioneer Ministry

has been that support could be provided nationally or at Presbytery level, with the recognition that additional financial resources would be required to facilitate this. The Panel would welcome other ideas from congregations or Presbyteries who have been finding creative solutions of their own. The Panel looks forward to working with Presbyteries and the Council of Assembly as they keep this under review.

4. Pilot with vacant congregations

4.1 In 2015 the General Assembly noted the desire expressed by Presbyteries to see local leadership developed which would sustain congregations without an inducted parish minister and instructed the Panel on Review and Reform:

(b) ... to consider the shape of new local church leadership roles which might be developed to sustain and build the Church in the future;¹⁹

To address this, the Panel on Review and Reform is designing a two year pilot with congregations who find themselves without an inducted parish minister and who see no realistic prospect of appointing one.

It is proposed to work with eight congregations to develop a local leadership team. The Panel has identified three leadership roles which are desirable within each congregation:

- leadership oversight;
- traditional parish work: leading services and pastoral work;
- mission and outreach development.

In a congregation with a full-time minister of word and sacrament, the minister usually fulfils all three. In a vacant congregation the first is filled by an Interim Moderator;

the second by a Locum, with the third often set aside. Effectively, we separate the roles.

One possible approach might be for a congregation to enter Guardianship but retain the equivalent of a full-time post within the Presbytery Plan, appointing different people part-time to each of the three roles above. For example, an elder rather than a minister might be appointed as an Interim Moderator (salaried); a retired minister could serve as a Locum, and a part-time family outreach worker might be appointed. There is nothing in legislation or practice to prevent this.

The Panel envisages that this might work for those congregations who are willing to embrace a new approach to local leadership and who:

- are outward-looking;
- have a demonstrable potential leadership from amongst their number.

Discussions are continuing with a number of presbyteries, and some OLMs have expressed an interest in being involved with this process. Some concerns have been raised about whether congregations would be willing to step out of the vacancy process, even temporarily, and there are many issues around congregations' expectations. Much can be learned and explored, however, from the experience of those presbyteries with high levels of vacancies, and/or from some very long-term vacancies and so the plans for the pilot are evolving as discussions continue.

One of the questions already raised is the concern about the administering of the sacraments if a congregation does not have an Ordained Minister serving as Locum and whether those who are not ministers of word and sacrament might be authorised to administer them. Similar questions have been raised by churches developing Fresh Expressions. The Panel proposes that consideration of this matter should be taken up by the Theological Forum.

¹⁸ Mission and Discipleship report to the 2016 General Assembly, Appendix, section E4

¹⁹ Deliverances of the 2015 General Assembly, Panel on Review and Reform, section 2(b)

5. Developing supportive Presbyteries

The CWW report highlighted the need for Presbyteries to provide support, encouragement and oversight. The Panel has already begun to work with a small number of Presbyteries as they consider their own future strategies. It will continue to do so as resources allow, with the main work on the structure of Presbyteries being undertaken by the Council of Assembly.

6. Kirk Sessions

The Panel was instructed by the 2015 General Assembly to consider the role of Kirk Sessions in providing strategic leadership within local congregations. Preliminary work involves researching churches where good strategic leadership is in place and the role that Kirk Sessions play in this.²⁰

7. Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

As instructed by the 2015 General Assembly, the Panel has liaised with the Priority Areas Committee of the Ministries Council about the use of Asset Based Community Development.²¹ The Panel recognises the positive work in Priority Areas who are using this approach to affirm and release the gifts of people within their own communities. Of particular note is the work being carried out by Helen Pope, New Connections Project Co-ordinator in the Presbytery of Hamilton, who is developing this approach with a number of churches in the Presbytery.

The Panel sees value in the asset based approach to community development in different kinds of communities and will encourage churches engaged in the Path of Renewal Pilots to consider using this.

8. Scenario planning

In 2013, following an informal chat with Professor George Burt, now Head of the Business School at Stirling

University, who offered to provide his services free of charge, the Panel agreed to explore the use of the scenario planning methodology as a way of helping the Church to engage with the considerable challenges posed by a fast-changing society.

A number of participants were invited to take part in a project to explore one particular aspect: interaction in the digital age. They helped to map out four different scenarios and potential responses the Church might make to them and which might give the Church some insights into areas for development or further exploration.

The four scenarios were:

Scenario 1: *Getting the best of both worlds*. In this scenario the church embraces technology as an essential tool, believing it can enhance and benefit the work and witness of the church.

Scenario 2: *Out of Darkness* describes the attitude of those who see the value of some technology but is resistant to most of it, preferring more traditional means of communication and shopping! How does the church connect meaningfully with them?

Scenario 3: *Journeying into Separation*. In this scenario society is dominated by technology with the church resisting getting drawn into this, believing the church should take a counter-cultural approach.

Scenario 4: *Sleepwalking into submission* describes those who are totally immersed in new technology and social media. Again the challenge is to explore how the church connects meaningfully with them.

After initial experimentation to find a medium of presenting the findings in an accessible and stimulating way, the Panel engaged the services of a production company which resulted in four edited scripts which outlined the scenarios the Church might face as it engages in an increasing digitalized world. We are grateful to Sanctus Media and to Kharis Productions, particularly Iain

²⁰ Deliverances of the 2015 General Assembly, Panel on Review and Reform, section 3

²¹ *ibid*, section 4

Morris, for their work on this material. The scripts may be accessed using the following link:
http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/general_assembly/general_assembly_2016/reports-and-minutes.

While consideration was being given to the way the scripts would be presented, Professor Burt facilitated a discussion with a focus group consisting of representatives of a congregation in west central Scotland. Because neither the Panel nor Professor Burt were able to draw conclusions about the benefits of using the scenarios or the scripts, a subsequent focus group with a different demographic profile was planned for the end of last year in the east of Scotland. Timetable commitments meant this could not be carried out so, as a consequence, and given the pressing nature of other work, the Panel agreed to conclude its work on this area.

The Panel is of the view that, although the methodology is sound and has proved very useful in the corporate world, its usefulness was not proven in a setting with a diverse group of people working on a voluntary basis. There is a need, however, to differentiate the scenario planning tool from the subject under consideration (in this case the digital age). It seems to have been a combination of the two that led to a complexity that might not have developed had the tool been applied to some other aspect of the church life.

The Panel wishes to express its sincere appreciation of the time and effort expended on the project by many participants, chief amongst whom was Professor Burt.

In the name of the Panel

GRAHAM DUFFIN, *Convener*
 DAVID C CAMERON, *Vice-convener*

APPENDIX 1

PATH OF RENEWAL – PARTICIPATING CONGREGATIONS

PILOT (by geographical grouping)

| Presbytery | Congregation |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Edinburgh | Tron Kirk |
| Edinburgh | Pilrig St Paul's |
| Lothian | Longniddry and Gladsmuir |
| Melrose and Peebles | Innerleithen |
| Stirling | Alloa: Ludgate |
| Dunfermline | St Leonard's |
| Glasgow | Bishopbriggs Kenmure |
| Glasgow | Bearsden: Killermont |
| Falkirk | Camelon |
| Stirling | Balfon |
| Perth | Auchterarder |
| Dumfries and Galloway | Dumfries Maxwelltown West |
| Ayr | Monkton and Prestwick North |
| Ardrossan | Stevenston High |
| Greenock and Paisley | Linwood |
| Greenock and Paisley | Sherwood Greenlaw |
| Hamilton | Hamilton South |
| Kincardine and Deeside | Mid Deeside |
| Gordon | Kintore |
| Inverness | Culloden |
| Sutherland | Melness and Tongue |
| Orkney | Shapinsay |
| Shetland | Burra Isles |

PILOT LIGHT
(by geographical grouping)

| Presbytery | Congregation |
|-----------------------|---|
| Lothian | Dunbar |
| Duns | Coldingham and St Abbs linked with Eyemouth |
| Irvine and Kilmarnock | Kilmarnock New Laigh |
| Glasgow | King's Park |
| Glasgow | Lenzie Union |
| Hamilton | East Kilbride: Claremont |
| Hamilton | East Kilbride: Moncreiff |
| England | Guernsey St Andrew's |

PILOT TEAM
(by geographical grouping)

| Presbytery | Congregation |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Edinburgh | Murrayfield |
| Ayr | Annbank I/w Tarbolton |
| Lanark | Tinto Parishes |
| Argyll | South East Cowal |
| St Andrews | Howe of Fife |
| Angus | West Angus Grouping |
| Buchan | Longside |