General Assembly Friday thanks

General Assemblies do not simply ‘happen’. I have been privileged for a number of years to work up front and behind the scenes and I know how much time and effort goes into making the General Assembly run.

In the offices at the Assembly, and at 121 George Street, in the Rainy Hall, with the Stewards, with IT and OSCUS, with Heart and Soul, in the cloakrooms, in the Comms team, with the catering, with the printing, with the drivers, with the Assembly Officers, with readers and speakers and musicians, and with my beloved Assembly Arrangements Committee – the best little committee in the whole Church. To say nothing of *all* the Councils and Committees of the Church, whose work throughout the year we have debated in these last days.

To my colleagues, my friends, at this top table I owe an inordinate amount of thanks. The Office of the General Assembly is small, and those who populate it give unstintingly of their time and talents. Two will be leaving us shortly, so to John Chalmers, our retiring Principal Clerk, and to Alison Murray, my PA, my deepest gratitude. You have put up with much, but the bright lights of retirement are drawing closer.

One of the things you learn when you are gloriously single – is that you find family in many places and with many people far beyond blood ties. I would be nothing without my friends who have supported me over the years, and my congregations in Cupar Old and in Morningside. At the end of this week I particularly want to thank my chaplains, John McMahon and Anne Mulligan. I know exactly how much you have had to do to keep me on the road, and my gratitude to you both goes beyond words.

And to you, the commissioners and delegates of the 2017 General Assembly – thank you. Your prayers and your support have been special and uplifting. I suspect we will always have a bond, for this is our moment, and will never be repeated. My one plea is that you continue in your prayers for me as I launch into the coming year. Without prayer, none of us is anything. With prayer, we have a world to bless in the name of Jesus.