

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE FAITH IMPACT FORUM

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Supplementary Report.
2. Welcome the work of the Jewish-Christian Glossary project, noting that the Glossary aims to improve mutual understanding; encourage Ministers in particular to study and engage with it in a way that will inform local, national and international relationship with Jewish communities.
3. Pass an Act amending the International Presbytery Act (Act II 2016) as set out in Appendix 1.

Report

1. JEWISH-CHRISTIAN GLOSSARY PROJECT

1.1 Church of Scotland and Jewish community representatives were in a formal dialogue process from 2017-2019, with the objective of repairing relationships between the Jewish community and Church of Scotland after the *Inheritance of Abraham?* report to the General Assembly in 2013. The dialogue set about to establish a frank theological exchange on this report and the politics and theological ideas it contained. The broader aim for this dialogue was always to share insights and mutual learning that reflected the dialogical process for those who could not be involved directly. This objective was the subject of a meeting with the Chief Rabbi and the Convener of the Assembly Trustees, along with participants of the dialogue and staff support, in February 2020. The decision reached at this meeting was for a small group of Ministers and Rabbis to begin a process of focused dialogue that concentrated on terms and words that either directly or implicitly convey beliefs and attitudes to the politics and theology of land.

1.2 The Jewish Christian Glossary (available at <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/general-assembly-2023/reports-documents>) has been a long time in the making. It has gone through various stages of development. From determining its brief as an aid to understanding and as a resource that provides a tool for starting introspective conversations amongst Christians and Jews as well as Jewish-Christian dialogue to creating a process by which dialogue could be used as the basis of each entry and as a means to determine the terms we would be covering, to editing and refining each entry. The editing stage has led to the decision to add an additional layer of reflections for each section which helps offer an insight into the impact that the Christian entry on one side of the document has on respondents from the Jewish community and vice versa. These sections are designed to prompt additional reflections about what material from the other faith tradition may surprise readers, or make them uncomfortable and what may resonate with them. Users are invited to continue these reflections in their own setting.

1.3 Given that this document is comprised of views and material from another faith tradition, it is not something the General Assembly can endorse or even approve as a whole. The Church of Scotland entries will also reflect a broad perspective on each term but there will be disagreement within the Church. The glossary also contains references to specific ecumenical influences and motivating factors to Church members' attitudes and beliefs on various subjects related to the land of Israel which such as Palestinian Liberation Theology, encounters with partners in the land, and strands theological tradition which inform Christian Zionism.

1.4 The staff and volunteers involved have been keen to ensure that stakeholders within the Church of Scotland as well as select partners both in Scotland and in Israel Palestine have been sent a copy of this glossary in advance of its wider release with their feedback and insights welcomed. As the glossary finds its way into the hands and discussion of congregations, the hope is that it becomes an aid to greater empathy, insight and compassion. The resounding impact of the process of creating the resource has been, for those involved, that they better understood the multiple foundations that prop up views they had previously encountered. Though they may continue to disagree with the alternative perspective, it was harder to deny the complexity of any given issue and easier to recognise the assumptions and beliefs they had projected onto those views. The headings that define each section around how a term may be understood, heard, influenced Christian and Jewish identities and had different meanings depending on time and location, offer a visual reminder of this insight and force us to acknowledge that even shared and familiar terms can contain so much disparity of impact and meaning. Such disparity creates space for assumptions and misunderstanding which can be helped by simply addressing the simple fact that what we mean when we say something may have unintended impacts. Used as a tool to remind a person to simply ask what someone may have heard or understood after saying something, or to explain your thinking in more accessible terms, can be hugely helpful for building bridges with the Jewish community as well as improving spiritual self-understanding. Faith Impact is planning a formal launch of the document in the second half of 2023 for both community members to attend.

2. PRESBYTERY OF INTERNATIONAL CHARGES

2.1 As changes brought in by the General Assembly impact upon the life of the Presbytery of International Charges, the Act relating to the Presbytery (Act II, 2016) needs to be amended to bring it up to date. The congregation of Gibraltar has been closed and the Presbytery is working with the Forum in seeking different ways of working cooperatively in some international locations, which may involve making Mission Partner appointments rather than calling ministers through the Vacancy process. The changes to the Act are laid out in Appendix 1.

In the name of the Faith Impact Forum

REV KAREN HENDRY, *Convener pro tem*
 REV PETER JOHNSTON, *Vice-Convener*
 REV DR SCOTT SHACKLETON, *Secretary*

Appendix 1 – Act Amending The International Presbytery Act (Act II 2016)

[] ACT AMENDING THE INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERY ACT (ACT II 2016) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that The International Presbytery Act (Act II 2016), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *In Schedule 1 to the Act, delete the Charge of Gibraltar.*
2. *In Schedule 2 to the Act, add a new paragraph 2.4:*
“The ministers of any of the Charges in the Presbytery may be Mission Partner appointments, made by the appropriate agency of the Church, of (i) Church of Scotland ministers or (ii) ministers holding a Restricted Certificate of Eligibility under s.12(c) of the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022).”
3. *In Schedule 5 add the following wording at the start:*
“Save in relation to the charge of St Andrew’s Scots Church, Malta, where the provisions of the Local Ecumenical Partnership apply, and in any Charges where Mission Partner appointments are being made,”