

JOINT REPORT OF THE MINISTRIES COUNCIL AND THE LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2018

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Agree that the Council and the Committee have completed the work instructed by the General Assembly in terms of section 35 of the Deliverance on the Council's 2017 Report.

Report

The 2017 General Assembly issued the following instruction to the Ministries Council:- *Instruct the Council jointly with the Legal Questions Committee to consider issues that have arisen when implementing the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015) and report to the General Assembly of 2018 as to whether amending legislation is required.*

After discussions regarding the issues which the Council believe arise from the implementation of Act I 2015, the Council and the Committee are of the view that the Council's wish for change cannot be met through simple amendments made to the current Act. The Act is founded on an underlying theological premise, which was agreed at the 2013 Assembly, affirming the current and historic doctrine and practice of the Church in relation to human sexuality. The Act allows for a very specific departure in relation to the induction and appointment of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons to appointments in congregations. The Church cannot easily extend the scope of this 'departure' without further reflection on that theological premise.

This is a matter which requires careful theological consideration rather than a pragmatic solution. The Council and the Committee, therefore, seek to be discharged from the instruction quoted above.

The Ministries Council will bring a deliverance to a future session of the General Assembly under their Report identifying how they consider that work on these issues could be progressed.

*In the name of the Ministries Council and
Legal Questions Committee*

NEIL GLOVER, *Convener*
JAYNE SCOTT, *Secretary*
GEORGE S COWIE, *Convener*
GEORGE J WHYTE, *Secretary*