

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 22 MAY 2017

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, the 22nd day of May 2017 years, at 9.15 am, Session II.

After observance of the Lord's Supper in the Assembly Hall, the General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with prayer.

Rev Alison Mehigan	(617)
Rev Valerie Ott	(131)
Rev Colin C Renwick	(418)
Mr Robin Stimpson	(50)

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Rev Rosemary Frew, *Convener*
Rev Ian Y Gilmour, *Vice-Convener*

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Business Committee which was given in by Ms Judith Pearson, Convener.

*It was moved, seconded and agreed-***The General Assembly:**

1. Agree the Order of Business for the third to the seventh day.
2. Appoint the following Selection Committee:

Rev Jane Barron	(460)
Mrs Ann M C Bowie	(603)
Mr Scott Burton	(34)
Mrs Jessie Cross	(225)
Mrs Jane Dargie	(548)
Rev David Denniston	(485)
Mrs Margaret Dow	(441)
Mr Jim Hamilton DCS	(310)
Mr John Haston	(399)
Rev Brian Hilsley	(77)
Rev Peter Johnston	(539)
Rev Margaret Lane	(15)
Rev Caroline Lockerbie	(681)
Very Rev Andrew McLellan	(435)

3. Note the 21 day deadline for the submission of commissioners' expenses.
4. Note arrangements for the election of the Committee to Nominate the Moderator.

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee appointed to prepare a reply to the Most Gracious Letter from Her Majesty the Queen which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr.

The Reply to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Letter was submitted and approved for signature and transmission to Her Majesty.

The Reply was in the following terms:

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

May it please Your Majesty

We, Your Majesty's loyal subjects convened in General Assembly, have received with pleasure Your Majesty's gracious letter to us.

We greatly value Your Majesty's continuing pledge to maintain the historic rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland.

Your Majesty and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh are always in our prayers and we rejoice at the unstinting service that Your Majesty and His Royal Highness give to both nation and Commonwealth. In this year it has been a particular joy to note that, in the world context, Your Majesty is now the longest-serving current Head of State and we are glad that good health has allowed Your Majesty to reach such a magnificent milestone. Your Majesty's commitment to public service is a model for the nation, and the Church of Scotland is thankful to God for the way in which that example pervades the nation's life.

We pay particular tribute to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. We know that the decision to retire from public duties is not one which will have been taken lightly; however, seventy years of public service is a remarkable record and the influence that the Duke of Edinburgh has had on so many groups and organisations is equally remarkable. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme will stand as an extraordinary legacy which has touched, and will continue to touch, the lives of millions of young people across the world. In the Church of Scotland we offer to His Royal Highness our warmest thanks, and an assurance of our prayers for continuing health and strength in a well-deserved retirement.

At a time of great unease and uncertainty around the world we are grateful for Your Majesty's support for the work that the Church of Scotland is doing to enable people to resolve their conflicts by peaceful means and we are particularly grateful for Your Majesty's acknowledgment of the efforts that we are making to work alongside colleagues in both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in

seeking peace and reconciliation for the beleaguered people of South Sudan.

Your Majesty has also commended the work of our World Mission Council which, in collaboration with Christian Aid, has joined with many other faith communities to work for gender justice across the globe. We, the ministers, elders and deacons of the Church of Scotland, cannot emphasize enough the need to address this issue both within our own Communion and across the continents. We will work tirelessly on this matter, believing that gender justice is a key element in strengthening the way that people and nations relate to one another.

We know too the importance, at this time, of interfaith dialogue and we can assure Your Majesty that the Church of Scotland will continue its efforts to be hospitable and understanding of those who belong to other cultures and faiths. Our prayers for peace and harmony across the world are constant and we remain committed to understanding our common humanity.

We sincerely appreciate Your Majesty's gracious words in commending the work that the immediate past Moderator, the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, has done to highlight the plight of people who are homeless. This is an area of work which should be of concern to all those who work for the common good, and the Church of Scotland will continue its efforts to coordinate work with Local Authorities, the Scottish Government, the UK Government and other agencies that are working to end this blight on our society.

It is particularly pleasing that Your Majesty has appointed for a second time Your Majesty's dearly beloved Daughter Her Royal Highness The Princess Anne, Princess Royal as High Commissioner. Her Royal Highness' presence is greatly appreciated and warmly welcomed.

Finally, we commend to the unfailing care and protection of Almighty God,

Your Majesty and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and as we begin our deliberations we pray that God will continue to bestow favour upon Your Majesty, that you may long reign over us.

Your Majesty's most faithful and loyal servants.

THE MINISTERS, ELDERS AND DEACONS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CONVENED IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Signed in our name, in our presence
and at our appointment by

DEREK BROWNING
Moderator

WORLD MISSION COUNCIL

The General Assembly called for the Report of the World Mission Council which was given in by the Rev Iain Cunningham, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Give thanks for the life and witness of Mission Partners who have died, acknowledge with gratitude those who have completed their period of service overseas, and uphold in prayer all who continue to serve.
3. Encourage members to prayerfully consider offering for service with the world church.
4. Encourage congregations to read and study the report, use the worship service and resources, and learn more about the life of churches in other parts of the world, and the links with the Church of Scotland.
5. Give thanks for 500 years of witness in the Reformed tradition, and the opportunities for women to exercise all forms of ministry within it.

6. Give thanks for the ordination of women in the Middle East and encourage the Council in its support of other churches considering ordaining women.
7. Encourage congregations and members to engage with, support, and promote the work of Christian Aid, especially in its work on gender justice through the Side by Side movement.
8. Urge attendance at the Duff Missionary Lectures 2017 to engage with Professor Kwok Pui Lan.
9. Welcome the Council's plan, with the Church and Society Council, The Guild, and Christian Aid, to organise a conference on September 16, 2017 with international partners on the theme of Women in the World Church, and encourage congregations to send a representative.
10. Encourage congregations with twinnings to invite a woman to visit at the time of the Women in the World Church Conference or to purposely have a bias to women being part of group visits in 2017/18.
11. Encourage congregations without a twinning to consider building a relationship with a congregation of one of our partner churches.
12. Celebrate the ongoing contribution of women across the worldwide church, and encourage Councils, Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and members to continue to challenge any theology that is used to persecute and discriminate against women.
13. Welcome the engagement with South Sudan, and encourage the Council to continue its commitment to the Presbyterian Church there, and its work in conflict resolution and mediation and to encourage the whole church to pray for the people of South Sudan and for a lasting peace.
14. Encourage the whole church to take part in the Thursdays in Black campaign.

15. Encourage support for the Church of Scotland HIV Programme.
16. Agree that the McKean Bentinck Fund be used to support Christian Witness in Southern Europe.
17. Pass an Act amending the Act anent the sale of Deaconess House, the application of the proceeds of sale, and the Mrs MacGregor (Batterflats) Endowment Fund (Act XIV 1963) as set out in Appendix V.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an addendum to the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 7 and renumber:

Regret the absence from this General Assembly of Rev Rola Sleiman (National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon) and Rev James Makuei Choul (Presbyterian Church in South Sudan) due to visa problems and instruct the Council, and other relevant bodies or individuals within the Church, to continue to work with Government, especially the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to ensure that the Church of Scotland is recognised as an institution whose word is accepted in all UK Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates around the world when visa applications are being considered.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 14 and renumber:

Instruct the World Mission Council, in collaboration with the Church and Society Council and the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to engage in vigorous advocacy on issues of peace for South Sudan and to work ecumenically, particularly with the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, in relation to the peace and mediation work which the Church of Scotland has already begun.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 14 and renumber:

Welcome the recent visit of Pope Tawadros II, 118th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark to the United Kingdom, and commend the clergy and members of the Coptic Church to the prayers of the General Assembly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the proposed amendment:

Add at the end:

'and the whole Church'.

The amendment as amended was agreed.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

JOINT REPORT OF THE WORLD MISSION COUNCIL AND CHURCH AND SOCIETY COUNCIL

The General Assembly called for the Joint Report of the World Mission Council and Church and Society Council which was given in by Rev Iain Cunningham, Convener, World Mission Council.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the World Mission and Church and Society Councils to make available an easily accessible study document based on the information in this report to help Church members understand the conflict and engage with steps for a just peace.

3. Urge that any public commemorations of the Balfour Declaration are undertaken sensitively, and always in the context for calling for peace and justice, and instruct the Church and Society Council to write to the Scottish and UK governments to that effect.
4. Call on UK government to base their engagement in this conflict on the principles of justice, equality, dignity, equal access to natural resources and freedom of opportunity for all.
5. Commend all those who are committed to the use of non-violent means of resolving the conflict and instruct the World Mission Council to continue to support partners who are working in this way.
6. Deplore the increased expansion of settlements which are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace.
7. Instruct the World Mission Council, in consultation with the Investors Trust, and with the full cooperation of the Church and Society Council, and Council of Assembly, to undertake a strategic review of our presence, and to examine what would be the most effective use of its assets, in the pursuit of a just peace in Israel/ Palestine, and report back to the General Assembly of 2019.
8. Instruct the World Mission Council to continue to support, encourage, and organise 'Go and See, Come and Tell' visits; and urge congregations, Presbyteries and individuals to make this kind of pilgrimage which offers opportunities to meet with, and better understand the realities of partners working for peace and justice.
9. Encourage all church members to read and engage with the Kairos Palestine document.
10. Affirm that Christian theology should not be used to justify or perpetuate a situation of injustice.

11. Instruct all church members to challenge antisemitism and anti-Muslim prejudice.
12. Encourage all church members to work ecumenically and with interfaith partners to pursue a shared vision for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of Section 2:

After 'in this report' add 'noting the limits of the report as stated in section 1.3 of the Report'.

On a vote being taken For or Against it carried Against.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.19 pm until 2 pm.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of Section 3:

Amend Section 3 to read:

Urge the Scottish and UK Governments that any public commemorations of the Balfour Declaration are undertaken sensitively, recognising the costs involved for the Palestinian people.

On a vote being taken For or Against it carried For.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to Section 3 as amended:-

Urge the Scottish and UK governments to ensure that public commemorations of the Balfour Declaration are undertaken with integrity, recognising the enormous cost to the Palestinian people of the failure to fulfil the promise in the Declaration, and to safeguard and secure their human rights which continue to be violated.

On a vote being taken between the motion (the amended Section 3) and the counter-motion as amended, the motion carried and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 5:

Amend to read:

Commend all those who are committed to the use of non-violent means to resist the occupation and achieve a just peace, and instruct the World Mission Council to support partners who are working in this way, particularly those civil society organisations under threat because of their work.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to Section 6:

Condemn all infringements of international law, including the expansion of the illegal settlements, which are obstacles to peace, and urge the adoption of economic measures to pressure the state of Israel to comply with international law.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment to the proposed counter-motion to Section 6:

Delete 'and urge the adoption of economic measures to pressure the state of Israel to comply with international law'.

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment to the proposed counter-motion it carried For.

The counter-motion as amended was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 7 and renumber:

Express deep concern in regard to Hamas's continued declaration, despite recent changes to its charter, that Israel does not have the right to exist which is unjust and an obstacle to peace.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 7 and renumber:

Note that 2017 marks the year of the Jubilee since the demarcation of Israel/Palestine and call for renewed prayer for all those who are displaced and live under occupation, and encourage the restitution of all Palestinian lands within the 1967 borders.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 7:

Amend Section 7 to read:

Instruct the World Mission Council, with the co-operation of the Church and Society Council, Council of Assembly and other relevant bodies within the Church, to undertake a strategic review of the Church's presence in Israel/Palestine, and to consider what would be the most effective use of the Church's assets in the pursuit of a just peace in Israel/Palestine, and report to the General Assembly of 2019.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as a counter-motion to Section 9:

Commend the Kairos Palestine document and invite the World Mission Council to produce resources to encourage all church members to engage with the document.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 12:

Urge all Presbyteries where such a service has not yet taken place to organise a '24th of the month' service of prayer for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Social Care Council which were given in by Mr Bill Steele, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and Supplementary Report.
2. Note the work carried out by the Business Strategy Group and its helpful recommendations on the future direction for CrossReach.
3. Note the changing and challenging environment in which CrossReach is currently operating and, as a result, the difficulties in setting a Strategic Plan at this time.
4. Welcome the Strategic Direction of Travel approved by the Council and endorse the commitment to continue to offer quality services in Christ's name as part of the Church's mission.
5. Endorse the revised financial principles and the need for continuous review of all services and service areas in order to continue the journey towards financial sustainability.
6. Note with sadness that resources are not available to implement the Scottish Living Wage for all staff and support all steps to encourage funders to include these costs and those of reasonable salary differentials in the funding of contracts.
7. Note the changes to the Council's Recruitment Policy which no longer requires all staff to have a Christian faith but, in order to achieve the Mission and Ethos of the work of CrossReach, confirms the need to continue to employ people with a Christian faith in certain positions by virtue of their responsibilities.
8. Note the difficulties of running small homes for older people in rural locations within the funding levels provided by the National Care Home Contract, and in situations where recruitment is also a challenge, and instruct the Principal Clerk to write on behalf of the General Assembly to both the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to encourage them to review the funding in such situations.
9. Encourage Church of Scotland members, in addition to their normal church giving, to adopt CrossReach as their chosen charity and make a regular standing order to support the work.
10. Recognise the quality care and support provided by the staff of CrossReach as evidenced in the Review and Performance section of the Report and register appreciation of the work carried out to further the mission of the Church.
11. Welcome the commitment of the Council to fund Social Care Mission support in order to resource local churches for a further two years.
12. Note the progress made with key partners highlighted in the Report.
13. Note the work being done to support the four churches involved in the pilot project and commend the commitment of the Council to continue working with them.
14. Note the Council's intention to develop universal resources for access by a wider group of churches.

15. Note the number of churches unable to receive support due to the limited resources available to the Council.

PANEL ON REVIEW AND REFORM

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Panel on Review and Reform which were given in by the Rev Graham Duffin, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and Supplementary Report.
2. Instruct the Panel to work in partnership with others to enable conversation and discussion across the Church of Scotland on Ecclesiology in a post Christendom context.
3. Instruct the Panel along with Ministries Council to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2018 on payment, training and placement of Ordained Local Ministers.
4. Note the ongoing work being carried out on enabling sacramental ministries and, in this ongoing work, instruct the Panel to consider, alongside other developments, the potential use of Commissioned Local Ministers as outlined by Rev Dr Doug Gay in the 2017 Chalmers Lectures.
5. Instruct the Panel to work with Ministries Council, Fresh Expressions and outside agencies to ensure that appropriate training for Pioneer Ministry is developed.
6. Instruct the Panel to consider fully all the options set out in the Supplementary Report and to consult widely on this before bringing a final report to a future General Assembly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 3:

After 'training and placement of' add 'Auxiliary Ministers and'.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to Section 4 and Section 6 (Section 2 of the original proposed Deliverance of the Supplementary Report):

Instruct the Panel, the Theological Forum, the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Legal Questions Committee jointly to give consideration to whether, in the light of the ideas raised in the Report and Supplementary Report of the Panel on Review and Reform, there should be any change to the practice of Sacramental Ministry in the Church of Scotland and report to a future Assembly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the proposed counter-motion:

After 'Church of Scotland' amend the text to read 'and to consult with others and to report to a future Assembly'.

The counter-motion as amended was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 5:

After "Ministries Council," add 'Mission and Discipleship Council,'.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly took up consideration of Section 5 of the Deliverance of the Supplementary Report of the Council of Assembly, and it was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

5. Note the report on the Future of the National Church Offices and with it the intention of the Council to bring to the General Assembly of 2018 fully costed proposals and business plans for the future development and use of the Church's Offices in Edinburgh, based on the careful examination of the Options presented in Section 3 of the Supplementary Report.

The General Assembly adjourned at 5.28 pm to meet again in this Hall tomorrow at 9.15 am for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
EDINBURGH, 22 May 2017, 5.28 pm