

BOARD OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

MAY 2000

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PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report of the Board and note with appreciation the work of the Convener, Vice-Conveners and members of the Board.
2. Give thanks to God for the commitment and skill of staff and for their determination to aim for excellence in the delivery of service to those in need.
3. Note with satisfaction the major contribution the Board makes as an employer of 2262 staff.
4. Commend the Board for its efforts in keeping the Church advised of social care issues through the development of Congregational Contacts and the circulation of the Prayer Letter and Circle of Care in both its forms.
5. Welcome the manner in which the Board has pursued the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan and the development of an appropriate quality assurance system.
6.
 - (i) Commend the Board for the implementation of the concept of Staff/Member Groups.
 - (ii) Note the extract of their Reports on Child Care, Homelessness, and Social Inclusion.
 - (iii) Encourage the Board to pursue the implications and recommendations of those Reports as appropriate to the work of the Board, and
 - (iv) Urge all Presbyteries to discuss and take forward the concept of “Social Inclusion” in all its thinking, preaching and actions and to consider groups of people in their local community, who are suffering from exclusion, with a view to assisting the removal of such exclusion.
7.
 - (i) Note with serious concern the continuing under-funding of residential care of older people.
 - (ii) Note the Board’s efforts to secure the implementation of all the recommendations made by Sir Stewart Sutherland in the Royal Commission for Long Term Care – “With Respect to Old Age”.
 - (iii) Instruct the Principal Clerk to write to the Prime Minister urging the early implementation of the financial recommendations of the Royal Commission, and
 - (iv) Recognise that the Board’s continuing involvement in residential care for older people will require to be subject to a fundamental review in the coming year.
8. Note with satisfaction the continuing efforts of the Board to promote the Ministry of Healing within the Church and that a report will be provided to the General Assembly in 2001 on the responses received from Presbyteries and Congregations.
9.
 - (i) Give thanks to God for the wonderful way in which He has met the needs of people through services provided by the Board.
 - (ii) Note the many comments made by service users who have benefited from the services thus provided.

- (iii) Commend the Board for the manner in which services have been developed in times of severe financial restraint.
 - (iv) Thank The Guild for their continuing support of the Board's work, particularly through the Dignified Future scheme.
 - (v) Thank individuals and congregations who have given generously to assist the work of the Board, and
 - (vi) Congratulate the Board's counselling services on the accreditation from the United Kingdom Registrar of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.
10. Note with satisfaction the services which have celebrated particular events throughout the year.
 11. Give thanks to God for the service provided in St Andrews Home for older people in Dunbar and note with regret the need for its closure.
 12. Encourage the Board to maintain its commitment to training and staff development.
 13. Commend the Board for the manner in which it recognises the value of, and need for, efficient and skilled administrative staff.
 14. Note with gratitude that while the financial situation of the Board continues to cause concern there is evidence of a determination to address difficult issues and to take the necessary decisions.
 15. Commend the Board for its contribution of Christian comment to the Press and media.
 16. Note with gratitude the series of public lectures on "The Law and Christian Ethics" organised in co-operation with the Centre for Theology and Public Issues of New College, Edinburgh.
 17. (i) Commend the Board for its support for The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Bill as it seeks to improve the legal position of incapable adults, and
(ii) Note the serious concerns over provisions in Section 5.
 18. Note the stance taken by the Board in reference to Section 2A of the Local Government Act, 1986.
 19. (i) Congratulate the Board on the way in which the Millennium Year has been used to celebrate the work of the Board and use the opportunity to draw attention to its work.
(ii) Record grateful thanks to Mrs Heather Moir for the design and production of the Millennium Banner, and
(iii) Note with satisfaction the production of a new daily devotions manual.
 20. Note the development of the Staff Advisory Forum and the contribution its deliberations can make to policy and practice development, and thank staff for their willingness to contribute.

1. Introduction

AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE is the “tag line” under which the new Scottish Parliament through the Scottish Executive identifies its proposed reforms to modernise social work services in Scotland. It reflects a vision and a set of objectives which the Executive wish to see as part of the developing new Scotland. The Board of Social Responsibility seeks to work in the midst of and alongside social work services throughout Scotland and is committed to seeking the development of excellence in the services provided in Christ’s name.

The Board is happy to report a very productive year in which Board members, staff, friends and supporters have all played a positive part. The Board employs over 2000 people, has 81 homes and projects, delivers services to 4,684 people, involves 834 people as volunteer friends and supporters, works with 1,093 Congregational contacts, issues 8,000 prayer letters, 48,000 the Circle of Care newspaper and 1,400 Circle of Care audio tapes. In the past year the calls for public comment on issues of moral concern have been extensive and has meant that the Convener and Vice-Conveners in particular have had many calls placed upon their time, their communication abilities, their faith, and perhaps worthy of noting, their patience.

2. Reporting Diligence

The Strategic Development Plan produced by the Board in 1998, details of which were given to last year’s General Assembly, has been implemented as planned. Implementation has meant ensuring that time has been given to planning and to changing attitudes and approaches as well as to the delivery of services in the best way. The Board has been aware of the new demands placed on staff as the natural tensions between Divisions and Headquarters have evolved and been resolved. The General Assembly will recall that the Plan included six main Aims and 52 specific Objectives; it is satisfactory to report that all the Objectives have received attention, many of them having been achieved.

Attention of the Assembly last year was drawn specifically to the issue of *quality assurance* as recognised in Objective 1.9 “to develop a quality assurance system to be applied across the services run by the Board.” Considerable work has been done to identify the kinds of quality assurance system that might be appropriate for the Board. It was concluded that many of them could be “bolted on” to current practice but that the system would not impact sufficiently on the quality of service being offered. Last summer contact was made with researchers and practitioners who were developing a new system with specific reference to social care practice. This scheme is presently being piloted and the Board is maintaining contact with progress with a view to possible participation in later stages of the pilot. The use of this new system involves the Board having its own set of standards against which it measures quality; steps are now in hand to ensure that there is an agreed set of standards uniformly applied across all of the Board’s services. This is a major task but one which will serve the Board and its service users for many years.

The Member/Staff groups on Child Care, Homelessness and Social Inclusion have completed their work and have reported to the Board. The major purpose of creating such groups was to involve Board members and staff together to study an issue which would have an impact on the future development of the Board’s work. The groups are not only educative, resulting in better informed members and staff, but provide a body of knowledge on which the Board can base future work. The reports on Child Care, Homelessness and Social Inclusion are produced in part for information as appendices; recommendations of a specific nature are being pursued within the Board structure.

The Board warmly welcomed the publication of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care, chaired by Sir Stewart Sutherland, in March 1999. The report entitled “With Respect to Old Age” is still to be fully implemented. The Board has been actively involved in urging the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission through public statements, meeting with Iain Gray, Deputy Minister for Community Care, and in

correspondence to the Prime Minister. Government has indicated that they have noted the recommendations, are implementing many of the underlying implications through their programme of initiatives as laid before Parliament, and will address the financial issues in the spending review to be completed by the summer of this year.

The Scottish Parliament are maintaining a regular flow of consultation documents which the Board is required to note, submit comment, and implement when appropriate. There is a major consultation document within the Aiming for Excellence objectives on Regulating Care and the Social Services Workforce and similar documents on a wide variety of social care topics.

The Government introduced the New Deal scheme in 1997; it is a scheme designed to tackle youth and long term unemployment through the provision of training and employment opportunities. The scheme when introduced applied to young people aged 18–24 years who had been unemployed for at least six months and jobseekers over 25 years who had been unemployed for more than two years. The scheme is a partnership arrangement between government and employers. The Board has sought to join in this scheme by registering as a New Deal placement provider and by offering placements in each of the five Divisions. The uptake of placements has not been high but the Board is pleased to be involved.

The Board has constructive and regular contact with other Boards and Committees of the Church and, in particular, has a developing relationship with Ministry, Parish Education, National Mission and World Mission within the “Five Boards Group”; this regular meeting of secretaries and conveners of these Boards is facilitating the desire to develop more effective joint work.

The Board has also been active in its approach to ecumenical opportunities and in ensuring that gender issues are given proper attention. Our ecumenical approach can most easily be seen in our attendance at meetings such as Action of Churches Together in Scotland, and the Scottish Churches Housing Agency, and in the development of ecumenical work such as that at the new project for children at Buckie, where there is an

inter-church committee, and in the well established inter-agency management group attached to the Tynepark Centre in Haddington. On an international front the Board are very active within Eurodiaconia and in the International Christian Federation for alcohol and drug addiction.

The financial climate in which the Board operates is one which must continue to cause concern but other aspects of its work should give satisfaction to the Church; the love of Christ is being shown in very practical ways to many of Scotland’s people who need special caring, and it is being shown by Christian people who delight in offering service.

The Board continues to take an active role in sustaining and developing the Church’s interest in the ministry of healing. Major reports were submitted and accepted by the General Assembly in 1996 and 1998. The Deliverance in 1998 includes as section 13:

- “ (1) *Receive with satisfaction the Report on Health and Healing and commend it to Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions for study and action; and*
 (2) invite comments from Presbyteries and Congregations in the light of their experience and of their implementation of the Report”

The Board is in the process of seeking views from Presbyteries about how the report has been used. The Board is in touch with a network of ministers and others who are involved in the ministry of healing; this enables enquiries to be directed to experienced local people when it is considered that this would be the best way to respond. A successful one day conference was held in Aberdeen in April 1999 under the title “Healing comes from God” and the 11th Annual Conference in Carberry was held in November – “Healing and Hurting”. Conferences are a means of ensuring that the issue of the healing ministry is kept before God’s people and enables experiences to be shared.

Chaplains to the Board’s homes and centres continue to make a valuable contribution to staff and service users. Since the report on Chaplains to last year’s General

Assembly the Board has been in discussion with the Board of Ministry to take forward opportunities for joint work in assisting ministers in this area of work.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Service delivery includes not only an account of some specific services from which service users benefit but also other aspects of the Board's work which ensure that the services provided are properly supported. As in recent years only an arbitrary selection of the available services are reported upon and whenever feasible the thoughts and comments of service users have been quoted.

Anyone with current knowledge of social services in this country or in the UK as a whole would have no difficulty in accepting that the last ten years have been a time of turmoil and change, a change which is still very much in progress. It is therefore important not only to report to the General Assembly on the actual services provided but to seek to inform the Church on the general trends and issues which confront the Board. As an example, while the Board acknowledges its major historical and current contribution in residential care settings it is also keen to ensure that it has recognition for the growing services which are non-residential. The Home Support service is a key service for future development which acknowledges the *Care in the Community* objective to maintain people in their own home rather than using residential services inappropriately; the Board is totally behind this shift in emphasis while still seeking to develop and deliver its residential services to the very highest quality.

In a similar manner, the move continues to use ordinary housing to provide appropriate care settings whenever possible. The Church should know that at the present time the Board has 99 housing units and leases from 25 different housing providers. Upgrading to residential units also seeks to produce individual self-contained living units rather than "bedrooms" whenever possible. The Board increasingly seeks to work with other agencies on an ecumenical co-operative basis while retaining the commitment given in our founding

document to deliver the services through Christian people. Partnerships are enriching and challenging experiences in which the Board can influence and be influenced.

The partnership which the Board is seeking with Congregations is developing but it is considered that there are further extensive opportunities to reflect the major resource of committed Church members who have talents which they are prepared to use to serve others. Board members and Congregational Contacts, Friends and Volunteers, make a major contribution on behalf of the Church and there are many others who would serve if it became clear to them where and how this could be done.

3.2 Addictions. Alcohol addiction continues to be a major focus of the Board's work with five residential rehabilitation services, two supported accommodation projects and one day service. Malta House in Edinburgh offers a service for fifteen adults on a six month rehabilitation programme. Occupancy varies according to the vagaries of local authority funding. The Board is grateful to all who support this work but in particular would wish to record thanks to the congregation of Davidson's Mains Parish Church for their continuing support of this service, for the gift of a computer, and for providing a rota of volunteers who visit Malta House in two's each Thursday evening. The project is fortunate that Standard Life has also gifted two computers and the Bank of Scotland another two. These computers are essential for helping residents firstly to be computer literate and secondly to become proficient in computer use.

"My first two weeks at Malta House – I had been off drink for two weeks before coming to Malta House. My main worry was how both staff and residents would welcome me. I thought I would spend my first two weeks in my bedroom because I am a very nervous person. But on arrival I couldn't have been made more welcome by both staff and residents which made it so easy to knit in with the other residents. The first two days was (sic) rather easy but the rest of the week was hard because they were, I thought, rough.

I lost a lot of confidence in the staff but once I had spoken to my social worker and a member of staff and things were explained to me, it sorted out. I had felt that they had been saying that I was in the wrong even when I wasn't – it sounded like it was being put over like that. I understood better after the chat – and going over it in my head.

It has made it so easy to understand things at the meetings. I now think before I act or say something and the staff have told me just to speak up and not be frightened by anything I say. If I have any problems I don't need to hesitate to speak to any of them if my keyworker is not around. This makes it easier to explain my feelings at any time.

My second week has just begun and again I was upset by things that were happening. Again, I went to the Manager and had a chat. It resolved my anger and sadness. So, I am beginning to understand the programme better every day. I take every opportunity to use the staff as I need to and have never been refused.

So I am beginning to knit together, every day, bit by bit”

“Since coming into Malta House I have had great encouragement from both the staff and past and present residents. I have also regained self-respect and learned to respect others.

I feel a lot fitter, healthier and most of all sober and looking forward to a normal life. I have just over a month left before I go.”

“I've just completed the six-month programme in Malta House and have arrived home equipped for living, after years of misery, Alcohol abuse and generally not coping.

I have, through the love, compassion and guidance of the staff reached this stage. I have been filled with hope and have been spiritually refreshed, making the future, which before I looked on with fear, now beckon me with joy and grace.

Today I can trust people and most importantly, myself with this new Identity, nurtured and established through

the counselling and spiritual healing so lovingly given to me.

All this has not stopped even though I am now at home. An aftercare programme has been arranged to suit ME.”

“As a person who has completed four months of a six-month programme at Malta House ...

I am finding the experience helpful, encouraging and a caring one ... It also gives others and myself periods of time to rethink and repair what has been going wrong in the past. Also the spiritual dimension, which is the basis of the work undertaken at Malta House, is an area which has to be looked at seriously by the person with an addiction problem and is most essential to those who want to recover successfully from their problem.”

Ronachan in Argyll offers residential support to 19 adults seeking to change their substance abusive life-style; the unit has been undergoing some physical changes to improve internal and external facilities, with a resulting improved environment within which to promote greater peace to facilitate completion of the care programmes. In addition to the rehabilitation work in Ronachan, both staff and those residents who are able and wish to do so are involved in visits to schools, Churches and other community groups to talk about substance abuse and the benefit of prevention rather than cure.

“I came to Ronachan in the summer of '99 for a six – month programme in rehabilitation. I am in my twenties and have been abusing drugs since the age of thirteen.

I began my drug use with cannabis and by the age of eighteen was a full blown heroin addict. I felt as though I had a ball and chain attached to my ankles, weighing me down and suppressing everything. “The Devil's Dandruff” (heroin) had my life and was running the show. By the time I came to Ronachan I was a broken person physically, mentally and spiritually.

I am a mother with an infant son, but did not face up to that fact until I came through the doors. Being addicted to drugs while trying to be a mum is impossible. I love my son, but while using drugs the force behind it had driven

me to great lengths, from being a thief during the day to being a beggar at night. I was stripped of everything, my confidence, my self-esteem, I was scared, I no longer had my 'crutch' to lean on. I came to realise that I was empty, my coping mechanism for everyday life was gone. Heroin robbed me of everything. Heroin was left at the top of the drive in Ronachan the day I arrived. Coming to Ronachan meant facing the real person without the drugs!

The staff at Ronachan House have helped me learn other coping skills for life situations. This has been achieved through groups on topics like feelings & emotions, motivation, self-esteem and role play. Talking to my Keyworker, building up trust and being totally honest with one another. The groups have been good for building myself back up as a person, helping me to deal with my feelings and emotions.

The staff at Ronachan House are all Christians and while listening in Prologues, small seeds have been planted in me. I became more aware of God and my need for the Holy Spirit to fill the empty feeling I had. Ronachan House gives you the space to find out who you really are, without the drugs!

I have changed thanks to Ronachan House, I've been taken out of my drug infested environment and have learned that I can live a drug free life if I apply my programme and stick to it. I know what I want from life, to be a good mother, do God's will and more importantly apply my new coping skills.

I only have a couple of months of my programme left, and I will be forever grateful to Ronachan House and the staff for planting the seeds in my spiritual life, and for giving me the space to get to know the real me. Ronachan House has helped me to build myself back up physically, mentally and spiritually and taught me to believe in myself.

Psalm 116 is very real to me as "the cords of death entangle me" and God heard my cry for help and brought me to Ronachan where he delivered my soul from death. Another important Bible verse to me is II Corinthians Chapter 5 verse 7: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come."

Rainbow House in Glasgow works with up to 14 adults in a residential drug rehabilitation programme. The unit aims to provide a safe, secure, drug and alcohol free home environment, in which the service user will have opportunity to identify and explore what changes are required to personal life style and their surroundings to enable them to gain and maintain a drug free life style. Staff offer this through individual care plans, one-to-one keyworker/service user meetings, self awareness and self development programmes, and group work. There are four different types of group work opportunities each week: an Open Forum (to discuss topical issues of the day). Workshops (to provide a more structured approach to recovery where topics such as dealing with cravings, guilt, self esteem, stress and relationships, are discussed), Social Interaction (a more light-hearted setting involved in learning to co-operate and understand other people), and Community Education (which is about new opportunities on which a future life style might be built). As residents progress in their rehabilitation they develop an Independent Living Programme specifically geared to their individual needs in terms of future living plans.

In Inverness, Beechwood House continues to offer a valuable and well used residential rehabilitation opportunity for up to 15 men and women. In addition the adjacent Designated Place can receive up to eight people each night who are incapably drunk. The Board is pleased to note the close co-operation from Social Work, Health and Police Authorities in relation to the whole service and the Designated Place in particular. The Unit Manager has led the staff team through a review of practice and procedures, augmented by special training modules, which has facilitated improvements in practice.

Earlier in the year, Angus McKay (Deputy Minister for Justice) and Iain Gray (Deputy Minister for Community Care) visited Simpson House, the drug counselling service in Edinburgh. They and their party were impressed by the standard of work and Angus McKay commented:

"Simpson House is a good example of partnership and joint working at the strategic service development, policy

and practice levels and I wanted to see for myself the sort of work they do.”

3.3 Counselling Services. The Counselling Services continue to adapt to new challenges, with the National Counselling Service poised to take advantage of the distance learning experience of the Highland Theological College. This channel will enable the National Counselling Service to extend into Highland areas. Various Trusts assist in funding the Dundee, Dunfermline and Edinburgh bases to consolidate their work.

A successful application was made to the United Kingdom Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (UKRCP) to register the Board as an accredited counselling service. This accreditation is a further significant achievement which recognises and accepts the policies and practices of the counselling services.

The basement of the Tom Allan Centre in Glasgow has been adapted to provide comfortable individual counselling and group rooms, with easy access for disabled people. Number 21 in Edinburgh has developed a broader portfolio of counselling skills than hitherto to cater for a wider range of identified need. Art and music are two aspects of therapy counselling now used. During the Edinburgh Festival period a number of lunch time discussion groups were established to focus thoughts on the nature and value of counselling. The Board is grateful to the one hundred and sixty trained volunteers who contribute towards the delivery of the counselling services throughout Scotland.

The Post Natal Depression Project achieved some prominence during the year in radio interviews through being referred to in a Royal College of Nursing Report which commented:

“I was shocked to find that one of the major projects on post natal depression in Scotland was being funded by a charity while 17 NHS trusts failed to show any real evidence of tackling what is a complex and very distressing problem.”

This comment was offered to draw attention to the

appalling lack of attention given to this work by the NHS; the writer was in fact very impressed by the service offered by the Board.

The Lifestyle Centre in Stornoway continues to provide support in the Centre to people who have drug, alcohol and other problems and also provides outreach to North Harris. This service has been financially supported by the Tudor Trust, Western Isles Health Board, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Scottish Community Foundation and the Board.

3.4 Dementia. The Board continues to offer a high standard of residential care to older people with dementia at Adams House in Elderslie, Cameron House in Inverness, St Margaret's in Polmont and Williamwood in Glasgow. In addition, Belmont Castle in Meigle has a house registered as a dementia unit, as does Cumnor Hall in Ayr. With people remaining longer at home, those coming into residential care are more frail, more dependent and further into their dementia; this has an impact on house management and the degree of physical frailness underlines the need for all staff to be up-to-date with 'Moving and Handling' techniques. One Care Worker wrote:

“I have now been employed by the Board for a year and nine months, during which time I have undertaken several courses. Everything I have learned from the initial in-house training was cemented by what was taught on Head Office courses. Each course has whetted my appetite to gain further knowledge and improve my standard of care.

The key factors common to all of the courses are empathising with the service users, avoiding institutionalisation and promoting individuality. All of the courses I have attended have given me the opportunity to gather resources in preparation for my commencement of SVQ.” [Scottish Vocational Qualification in Care]

One staff member who achieved Level III SVQ commented:

“When I first started my SVQ Level III, I found it very hard to understand. As the weeks went on, I began to understand what to look for. Doing my SVQ Level III award made me more aware and alert in situations that arise in my daily work routine. I would say that doing my SVQ had helped my work practice to improve and I am pleased that I have now received my award.”

These two comments reflect the benefit to service users when staff are stimulated through training and are given opportunities to improve their skills.

From Adams House in Elderslie comes a lovely illustration of the importance of residents with a dementia having a stimulating environment:

“Mrs B had been trying to remember why she came to Adams House and was concerned about what happened to her old house. Her keyworker had taken Mrs B out for lunch one day and drove past her old house. Mrs B expressed her pleasure and remembered where she was. Her keyworker stopped the car. Mrs B started to describe the changes in the house and the surrounding streets. Seeing her animation, the keyworker offered to walk about the outside of the house with Mrs B. The present occupants of the house noticed both ladies and came out to speak with them and ended up inviting them in to see round their home. The keyworker felt they might be imposing, but the man of the house was pleased to show Mrs B what changes he had made and was most interested when she remembered what each room had looked like and even what furnishings had been there. The man stated that he had heard so much about her from a neighbour and went next door to fetch her. This ended up as a great reminiscing visit for all and Mrs B gained so much from being able to contribute to the conversation.”

3.5 Epilepsy. Westhaven in Rutherglen is registered to provide accommodation and support for eighteen adults with epilepsy with/without accompanied mild learning disability, brain injury, mental health issues, alcohol and drug damage. The service is based in the main house with thirteen residents and the remaining five supported in ordinary houses nearby to build up confidence before

moving on to more independent living. The Friends of Westhaven are now fully established, with the group offering both befriending and fundraising.

“Frank

A referral came one day from a gentleman who was residing in a supported flat that he was sharing with one other. After the meeting he was offered a place of assessment for twelve weeks. Within the first two weeks it was evident that he was capable of acquiring more life skills, and that he had the ability to retain such skills. Frank also was amazed to find that a great number of people were worse off than he was as far as having seizures.

Frank required a tremendous input to encourage his confidence within himself. Once the assessment was complete and the care plan was agreed, the long haul started. It was not easy for Frank to adjust to the more structured regime at Westhaven. But soon he settled down and began to make friends within the house.

Although there had been background information from the social work department there was a great deal of his past yet to surface. Over the next two years Frank made steady progress. There had been times when his lack of trust in people was very evident. It manifested itself in different ways. Sometimes he would be very argumentative and even strike out without thought although he did not mean to hurt. He was extremely moody when things did not go his way.

The seizure activity was high, with Frank having seizures mostly nocturnal. The post-seizure stage could last for a reasonably long time, thus leaving him tired. He was referred to the Western Infirmary and gradually the seizures were as controlled as possible.

‘With constant input from staff and careful planning Frank soon moved to a bed-sit within Westhaven. I am happy to report that Frank is now living in one of the ‘Link’ houses (in the community) supported by Westhaven. His daily living skills are good, he cooks his own meals, looks after his personal hygiene and has just announced that he will be getting engaged in the new year.

Frank’s next step will be to his own tenancy.”

“Susan

The rehabilitation system that is operating within Westhaven is proving to be successful and is very much fulfilling to staff when the outcomes are proving to be a success. One lady who came to stay at Westhaven has moved back into the community to pick up on her usual way of life and is very pleased to have made it. Susan came to the unit after having contracted Encephalitis whilst on holiday with her daughter and her family in Spain.

She had been divorced for several years and had suffered a troublesome marriage. Over the few years leading up to the Spanish visit she had managed to put her life back on the rails and was looking forward to being with her new grandchild. She took ill and at first the illness puzzled the GPs – finally they diagnosed Encephalitis. By this time the virus had really got a hold and Susan was extremely ill.

It took Susan a good few months to recover. On recovery she found that the seizure activity she was experiencing was not lessening. She also found that her memory was not recovering as they had hoped. This left Susan with the problem that she could not live alone. She moved in with her son, but it did not work out. After social work involvement Susan moved into Westhaven.

At first Susan felt lonely and ‘misplaced’ as the majority of the client group at that particular time had learning disabilities as well as epilepsy. Soon she settled down and became very aware of how others suffered from being labelled ‘epileptics’. With staff input a carefully devised care plan was put into operation. Within the year Susan’s confidence was beginning to show changes and she had acquired a job at the local Chapel.

Susan’s medication had been ‘fine-tuned’ by a specialist thus reducing seizure activity. She was being advised on drug management and supported in all aspects of daily living skills. A sheltered house was allocated and Susan is now living a good life – as she says.”

This resource offers support to people who have very specific challenges in attaining an ordinary lifestyle. The success of the service in helping people to rebuild their

lives and work towards greater independence illustrates the continuing need for such a specific resource.

3.6 Homelessness. Cale House in Inverness became a stand-alone service this year, having previously been linked to Beechwood, the addiction recovery service. The Board has cause to be thankful for those churches which regularly remember the needs of homeless people and in their generosity regularly contribute to the support provided at Kirkhaven, Cunningham House and Cale House. In particular, Wardie Parish Church showed initiative in raising £12,500 for storage and delivery of items of furnishings to residents from Cunningham House in Edinburgh as part of a starter pack. This is proving to be of significant help to those trying to re-establish themselves in ordinary housing. Some quotes from Kirkhaven in Glasgow underline the importance of the Church maintaining a secure base for homeless people working towards sustaining greater independence.

“I enjoy staying at Kirkhaven as I have my own privacy and still have support.”

“When I first came to Kirkhaven, I lacked confidence in everything I did. I built up a very good relationship with all the staff and now have loads of confidence and I have moved on to a more independent lifestyle. I found the staff members to be very supportive and approachable. My stay at the project has stood me in good stead for the future.”

The Member/Staff Report on Homelessness takes account of those kinds of comments. In September the Co-ordinating Forum accepted the principle of a named Board or Committee of the Church having a lead role to liaise with appropriate bodies within the Church on particular issues or organisations. The Board was pleased to accept responsibility for the lead role in liaising with the Scottish Churches Housing Association where, until now, the Church has been very ably represented by Mr George McArthur, who has also been Chairman since its inception in 1995. We give thanks to God for the work

done in this Agency and the Board look forward to working closely with the staff and members of it.

3.7 Learning Disability. Last year, the Board reported progress to the General Assembly on the relocation of men and women with learning disabilities who had lived at Humbie village under the auspices of the former Trustees of the Algrade Trust. All who lived there are suitably rehoused, with the Board being responsible through its Eskmills Project for twenty-one former Humbie residents.

Since the move to the new way of living, these twenty-one people have developed skills and confidence to take more control over their own lives. They live in eight homes, four of which are provided by the Algrade Trust through its new Trustees. A recent Inspection Report commented:

“The interaction observed during the inspection between the resident and staff members suggested a healthy relationship with mutual respect.”

The Board is thankful to God for his grace in providing the opportunity of service in re-provisioning the accommodation and care of former residents at Humbie Village.

The work at Cornerstone, a registered service which provides support for sixteen adults in four houses in North and South Lanarkshire, encapsulates elements of growth and achievement which enables people to attain and retain the highest quality of life which they can achieve. Two pen pictures illustrate this:

“Jack loves telling people what Jesus has done for him. He also loves going to meetings of Causeway Prospects, a voluntary organisation which seeks to make the Gospel meaningful to people with learning disability. With the help of Pathway Productions, a video was made of a conversation between Jack and the Team Leader of the house he lives in. This video was shown at a special Causeway Prospects Celebration at Keswick, when Jack was part of the platform party and was interviewed by

Causeway Prospects’ Director, Tony Phelps-Jones.”

“Francis loves snooker and pool even more than jigsaw puzzles. He has plenty of opportunity to practice on the pool table in the sun lounge of the house he shares with three other men in Wishaw. This year, all Francis’ practising was rewarded when he was the outright winner of a Lanarkshire-wide trophy tournament. His triumphal photograph can be seen gracing the September page of the Social Responsibility 2000 calendar.”

The Mallard in Springburn, Glasgow, is one of the Board’s residential and respite services for children who have a learning disability. The children and young people associated with The Mallard are valued individuals who, as well as receiving help and support, have much to give to others. This year, The Mallard made contact with a project in Harare working with homeless children. The Kids Street Project, Harare, Zimbabwe, is committed to bringing hope to the lives of disadvantaged children through education, counselling and family support. The children and staff of The Mallard are encouraged to correspond with the children of this project. This outreach is part of our millennium sharing.

Holidays and outings provide opportunities for exploration and growth. Following an Oasis holiday, a Care Worker wrote:

“The young men appeared to grow in confidence during these few days away from their normal routines and home environment. It may have been a challenge for them – but they managed to do so much in this different situation and coped well.”

3.8 Mental Health. Befriending forms an integral part of the growth and healing process. At Gaberston in Alloa, dispersed housing with support for twenty-one adults with a mental illness, a variety of support is on offer. One service user commented:

“Over the past six months I have found the home care

provided by Gaberston to be invaluable. Living with chronic illness and having just moved into my own flat for the first time, I do receive some practical care from Social Work. However, there are limits to the statutory services offered and my home carer from Gaberston has ably, confidently filled these gaps and given so much more."

A befriender wrote:

"I feel that I am a small part of her overall support and encourage growth in our relationship."

Another said:

"I feel that we are both more relaxed now than at the start and this helps him to be more at ease with any strangers we talk to. On our first visit he would not speak to anyone else."

Several hundred volunteers work with the Board in various ways. This is a comment from a volunteer worker at the Gaberston Café Project which has been running for over three years. The café has the dual purpose of offering therapeutic work experience to support the mental health of residents from Gaberston and of providing a service to shoppers.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie that exists between staff and residents and would recommend working at Gaberston to anyone who was seeking to do part-time voluntary work."

Allarton Day Services, the Haven, in Glasgow which attracts forty-five people each week is managed from the main residential house nearby.

The Board is grateful to Balshagray Victoria Park Church for use of their premises. Rev David Court, Parish Minister at Balshagray Victoria Park Church and Convener of the Board's Operations Committee says:

"The Haven is an indispensable service with support to many in the community who face difficulties related to their mental health. It is a real haven of encouragement in an often hostile world. We are happy that the building is used in this way and this is a project which has the full support of our congregation."

Tynepark in Haddington and Morven Day Services in Kilmarnock are larger, full-time services which assist adults to manage their everyday lives more effectively. Morven Day Services alone has the services of forty-one volunteers in addition to the trained and experienced staff. So many people carry around hurts which occasionally find expression in verse; one attender expresses feelings in the following way:

The Stigma

*Why do some folk think I'm mad when
all I have is depression?
Just let those folk come to see
I'll teach them a lesson.*

*I'm neither daft nor mad
I'm sometimes sad, you see.
Ignorance is what they have
Still, rather than me.*

There are other folk who understand
And try so hard to show them
Some don't want to understand
I find them rather boring.

So thanks to those who try to help
And understand our sorrow
The ignorant one who thinks I'm mad
Could be just like me tomorrow.

For who knows what the future holds
for each of us, that's true.
For those folk who look down their nose
The sad one may be you.

Some people need a long time to build up confidence and for medication to be identified which is finely tuned to their needs. Peter was resident at Allarton for nine years and always wanted to go back to his own locality. He has now managed to do this, with a house from a housing association. He left with a support package jointly arranged by the social work and health agencies. After nine months, Peter has successfully maintained the tenancy of his flat.

During the year, the Board has taken the opportunity of several invitations to comment on aspects of the *Adults with an Incapacity Bill*, which updates the law on matters to do with people who are unable to deal fully enough with their own business. This subject was also considered by the Social Interests Committee of the Board.

3.9 Offenders. While some offenders are referred to the Board's residential schools and others pass through the homelessness services, the main provision is through the Dick Stewart Hostel in Glasgow.

"A woman aged about 30 was admitted to Dick Stewart from Corntonvale Prison and on assessment she presented as quite chaotic in her previous illegal drug misuse. She said that she wanted a new life and to have custody of her two children who were in foster care. During her first few weeks there was evidence that she was still using illegal substances and this was addressed with her.

She seemed to take on board the need to reflect on her good intentions. In the next two weeks, she accessed a Methadone programme through her GP and was maintaining good progress. Unfortunately, she attended the District Court on a previously deferred case and received a 30 day custodial sentence, much to her disappointment and that of the Project staff.

On her release from Corntonvale, she was re-admitted to Dick Stewart. Her referral to SACRO was again progressed by staff and herself. Within five weeks she was still drug free and obtained new accommodation. A few months later, reports from her Social Worker indicate that she is still remaining drug and offence free."

3.10 Home Support. This service continues to develop in many parts of the country, with increasing referrals coming direct from people paying their own way rather than from the Social Work Departments. A number of the Board's day care services, such as Kinloch in Fife, have associated Home Support. As Kinloch moves into its second year of operation it provides ten places a day with Home Support for all client groups also working out from that resource.

The St Andrew's Day Care Centre in Dunbar is underused by Social Work because of financial restrictions but still manages to provide over one hundred meals a week to people in the vicinity as well as a Home Support service. The day attendance programme is much appreciated by those who use it.

Threshold operates a Home Support Service fully financially supported by South Lanarkshire Social Work Department specifically for people with a learning disability and their carers. This resource is well used. At the time of writing, more than five thousand hours of Home Support are provided by the Board each month, with plans for further development. The Home Support Voucher Scheme has been well used by individuals and by Churches.

Threshold is a dedicated home support service in Lanarkshire. It focuses specifically on meeting the care needs of those with a learning disability and their families. The longest established home support work is based in Adams House, Elderslie, one of the Board's specialist homes for older people with dementia. However, the home support staff available from that resource are recruited and trained to respond to a wide range of needs. One of the difficulties in employing home support staff is the uncertain number of hours which they may have to work. This means that staff can be trained but some leave to go on to more secure employment. To counteract this, as home support hours increase the Board is able to recruit staff for minimum guaranteed hours which is more of an incentive to those staff who wish more secure employment. While Threshold has been able to do this for some time, Adams House is now at the stage of being able to offer such guaranteed hours of employment. The

Board is encouraged to see such development geared to the specific needs of each client.

The Home Support service is a major plank of the Board's future development programme. Home support can be offered in almost any kind of domestic situation; to help and support an individual to live at home, to provide respite to a carer, to provide a short sitting service, a regular sitting service, or a long-term but occasional support, a specific service (such as shopping) or a range of services. The service will develop in accordance with demand and the Board will be actively seeking to advertise and promote the range of support available.

3.11 Older People. A number of developments are in hand to secure the future care options of a number of homes for older people. Those living in Morlich in Edinburgh moved back to the premises in October, following a full refurbishment with the financial help of the Stein Trust. The Walter and Joan Gray Home in Scalloway was also reopened as a new build facility, with half the building cost borne by the Shetland Islands Trust. The Elms, in Edinburgh, has just been vacated to allow full refurbishment with ensuite bedrooms. Others have undergone partial improvement with the excellent assistance of the Guild's *Dignified Future* support. These include: Budhmor in Skye and Cumnor Hall in Ayr. Guild money was originally targeted for Bellfield in Banchory. The Board was grateful to receive a substantial legacy for work in the vicinity of Bellfield which will now be fully upgraded. The Guild money originally allocated there will be used to progress ensuite rooms in other homes.

In addition to the much appreciated support from the Guild, local Churches are often a source of assistance. The Board wishes to thank the people of Netherlee Parish for the gift of £9,000 to purchase and install a new call system at Williamwood. Assistance from the Augusta Lamont Bequest in the Cowal Peninsula has enabled further improvement to Invereck in Dunoon.

Some of the Board's homes for older people have been host, offering assistance to community groups. This includes volunteers running a shop or helping with other

activities. It also means opportunity for Training for Freedom groups to assist in developing gardens, at The Elms for example, and New Deal opportunities in a number of services.

Unfortunately, despite the sterling efforts of staff working hard to stimulate referrals, occupancy levels in the homes for older people has dropped considerably in some places. This is not a reflection on the standard or quality of service, but relates directly to a reduction in referrals by local authorities. It is important that prospective service users are given their statutory right to choose a placement which suits them and that local authorities do not offer only local authority home placements, the advantage of which is that such placements are already included in their costs. The annual reports of each of the Board's homes provides a picture of good care, but this counts for little if local authorities are not prepared to pay for placements. Some make virtually no placements while others restrict placements which compounds reducing occupancy levels.

Despite all the challenges, Unit Managers continue to improve the care on offer. Physical improvements were noted in an Inspector's report on Achvarasdal, Reay:

"There were no registration issues raised at the Inspection. The Officer would like to comment on the completed alterations of the upstairs bedrooms to make them into single ensuite rooms. They have been decorated to a high standard, are spacious and comfortable and the residents living in them are extremely pleased with the finished results."

This year has been the 'United Nations Year of Older People'. To celebrate this, a number of homes took part in 'Tea on the Water', with some going boating, others having picnics on bridges or beside rivers. Staff put much effort and ingenuity into thinking up ideas and are to be commended for their efforts.

Continued effort by the Board and staff ensures that the Church offers Christian service in Jesus' name in different ways. This can be exemplified in the list of anniversaries and openings through the year.

1. Ashley Lodge, Aberdeen: Thursday, 13 May – 40th Anniversary
2. Whinnieknowe, Nairn: Tuesday, 18 May – 50th Anniversary
3. Kinloch Day and Resource Centre, Auchtermuchty: Monday, 7 June – Opening and Dedication
4. Walter and Joan Gray, Scalloway, Shetland: Thursday, 17 June – Opening and Dedication
5. South Beach House, Ardrossan: Friday, 18 June – 40th Anniversary
6. Baxter House, Glasgow: Monday, 28 June – 50th Anniversary
7. Geilsland School, Beith: Thursday, 1 July – Opening of and Dedication of Lomond Unit
8. Gaberston House, Alloa: Sunday, 3 October – 10th Anniversary
9. Eskmills, Musselburgh: Wednesday, 6 October – Dedication incorporated into the October Board Thanksgiving Service

While these events were cause for rejoicing, it was with deep regret that the Board had to move to the final closure of St Andrew's Home in Dunbar, having spent in excess of £350,000 keeping the home open at the request of the local MP and the local authority, while an alternative was considered. Attempts had been made to replace it with very sheltered housing in the grounds of the St Andrew's Day Care Centre, but the local authority could not afford to pay for the care which would have been needed and so that development could not proceed.

The Board acknowledges the additional stress on staff who through this long period of uncertainty for their future employment continued to give of their best. Many residents and relatives commented on the caring environment maintained during this period. The Board is happy to record its thanks and to give thanks to God for such commitment and care.

3.12 Supported Accommodation. The Board has a number of supported accommodation projects. Some are specific to particular criteria (e.g. learning disabled), while others such as the Whiteinch Project, Glasgow, and Lewis

Street, Stornoway, are open to people with a variety of difficulties. One resident wrote, on his move to Whiteinch:

"Since coming to the Project almost a year ago, I still can't believe how far I've come (sic). I came from Victoria View – one of the Board's alcohol/drugs rehabilitation units – because I felt that I still needed support and guidance in my sobriety and I didn't want to go back to my old environment. I had to learn to live a better quality of life and the support that the staff have provided has been invaluable to me. I now go to an IT course three days a week. I never thought a year ago I could work with computers. I attended the groups at the project (HELP group and Alpha). I find the groups are of a great benefit to me.

I am moving to my own tenancy and I never thought a year ago that I would have my own home. I'm really looking forward to the move and it's thanks to all the staff and hard work from myself that all this has been possible. I will take with me all the advice (sic) I have learned during my stay."

HIV/AIDS. Through the general operational work of its services, the Board continues to address the issues which arise due to HIV/AIDS. Through the addictions counselling services and women and children's work the Board offers support to all those infected or affected by HIV. It also seeks to raise awareness of these issues throughout the Church.

The number of people infected and affected by HIV continues to rise, with around 190 new Scottish cases reported between July 1998 and September 1999. (The Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (SCIEH). Report extracted from the October 99 Report.) The majority of new infections in the rest of the UK are amongst the gay and bisexual community; in Scotland the increase in numbers, as well as being among the gay and bisexual community, includes a higher percentage of people being infected as a result of drug misuse and unprotected sex. The Board is concerned to note both the increase in numbers and the apparent failure of safe

sex advertising; opportunities will continue to be sought to pursue a policy of prevention through publicity and education and by word of mouth from staff in the Board's various projects.

World AIDS Day is always held on 1st December and the Board encourages and supports initiatives to mark the day through services of commemoration and thanks, annual conferences and advertising services and help-lines. The theme for World AIDS Day 1999 was *Children and Young People – Listen, Learn Live*. Listen – to children and young people – hear their views about what they feel is important in their lives, talk with them about issues including sex, sexuality and HIV and AIDS. Learn – from one another about respect, participation, support and ways to prevent HIV infection. Live – in a world where the rights of children and young people are protected and where those living with HIV and AIDS are cared for and do not suffer from discrimination.

The HIV/AIDS information pack produced by the Board is still in demand and work has progressed to update this.

4. Training

The Scottish Executive in December issued their latest document in the Aiming for Excellence series to modernise social work services in Scotland; the title of this consultation document is *Regulating Care and the Social Services Workforce*. The document is wide-ranging in its contents but primarily deals with proposed legislation to regulate social care services and the social services workforce. The regulation of the workforce includes the registration of individual care workers and the future training requirements for social service workers.

The Board has always placed major importance on providing training opportunities for care staff. The result of this emphasis is a benefit to service users and it is hoped that this is reflected in comments from staff and service users in the operational comments. The following table reflects some aspects of how training staff have been engaged during the last year.

Comparative statistics for the last two years:

	1997/98	1998/99
No. of staff trained	1392	*1932
No. of days of training offered	168	174
No. of person days training provided	2304	2547
No. of person days training offered	3024	3132
Attendance Rate	76%	81%
No. of different courses	39	55
No. of courses run	98	132
No. of courses cancelled	7	8
No. of people from other organisations attending	12	36

* Higher number of staff trained in last year, results from increase in half-day courses.

Another major area of commitment is that of providing practice placements in which “students” can learn while experiencing the work; this covers students being placed from University and College Training Courses and staff who are undertaking assessment within the Vocational Training Scheme.

Practice Teaching Unit. This year the Board carried out an evaluation of Diploma in Social Work placements within the Board; staff in units/projects who regularly provide student placements were invited to complete a questionnaire. The response was good and highlighted the value of students in the workplace, and as students gained knowledge and experience so staff and clients also benefited from the student's overall contribution to the development of practice in areas such as care planning, assessment and keyworking.

Some examples of initiatives taken forward as a result of DipSW student placements include:

- Encouragement to staff and in particular keyworkers to challenge practice and act as advocates for clients.
- Setting up of a Home Support Project and producing Home support guidelines.
- Empowerment of residents.
- Setting up a Resident's Forum.
- Reminiscence Groups and other Activity Programmes.
- More “symbol” work in units – care plans, timetables,

review meetings now contain symbols that clients can interpret and understand.

The response to the questionnaire also highlighted services provided by practice teachers/practice assessors which benefit units/projects, i.e. services other than placement planning, student supervision and writing student reports, such as:

- In-unit training
- Consultation on practice development
- Workshops to support and inform practice teachers and link supervisors.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications: Assessment Centre. The External Verifier's reports from visits in March and September 1999 clearly show the centre has maintained a high standard. The systems of assessment and verification and quality assurance were all highlighted by the External Verifier as showing a thoroughness of scrutiny prior to certification of candidates. Last year the Board had increased the number of assessment panel meetings from two to four per year to enable the Centre to certificate completed awards between external verifier visits. The role of the assessment panel is to provide a final quality assurance check prior to candidates being recommended to the Scottish Qualifications Authority for their award.

5. Congregational Contacts

The Board was served extremely well for many years through the delegate system of the Woman's Guild and latterly The Guild. The Board also had the support of the Women's Council which was composed of Presbyterian Council, Social Responsibility Conveners, representatives of Young Women's Groups, and women members of the Board. Their record of achievements can be identified easily by reading past reports of the General Assembly. The Guild delegate has now been replaced by a Congregational Contact of whom there are 1,100. Regular contact is maintained between the Board and the Congregational Contacts both through personal contact in meetings and roadshows, and also through direct mailings. The Board is benefiting greatly from the work done by the Contacts through their own congregations.

Of course, the Board also benefits from our continuing relationship with The Guild whose support in projects eases our financial situation and gives great encouragement.

A Congregational contact reports:

"Since I am not an elder, I feel anxious about talking to the Kirk Session on social responsibility matters but I have been greatly encouraged by the attention given to my comments when given the opportunity to report. I have been involved with social responsibility for a long number of years as a Guild delegate and convener and now feel that as a Congregational Contact I am making good inroads with the congregation. The Prayer Letter is of great assistance and keeps me informed."

6. Administration

Administration is crucial in ensuring that services to clients are delivered in a smooth and effective manner. Nowhere is this more clear than in the area of health and safety. In recognition of the continually growing body of legislation and the significance for the operation and protection of the Board's work, users and staff, a member of staff has been given full-time responsibility for all matters relative to Health and Safety. The Board now has a completely revised and improved documentation covering all health and safety issues, with consequent increased and accurate demands for training, and for in-depth Risk Assessments.

A change in personnel in both the IT and technical sections of the department has enabled a re-examination of job descriptions and a reorganisation in the allocation of tasks. These are routine departmental functions and yet if not given proper thought can result in inefficient use of time and resources.

The development of the five Divisions has meant an adjustment to staff responsibilities within the Finance Section in order to facilitate more effective liaison with operational staff in the Divisions. The increasing demands for financial material to support claims and tenders to local authorities and other agencies, highlighted the need to ensure maximum flexibility within the Board's computerised accounting systems. New additional software was introduced to meet the increasing scale and complexity of spreadsheets, and for the extraction of data

from the accounting systems for use in the regular reporting of management information. The supply of accurate detailed information in a reader friendly format has enabled the improved management of the Board's funds and resources. These changes have required constant attention to staff skills and abilities.

The Board has a major responsibility to manage properties, both buildings and in some instances large tracts of land. This requires detailed and regular surveys, followed by costed plans and implementation programmes. The Board is conscious of the financial restrictions on it at present and is required to maintain a balance between ideal goals and realistic objectives. The introduction of targeted fund raising has greatly assisted in this task. It is also good to record that on occasions the

Board still receives unsolicited assistance; a case in point is the allocation of a grant of £361,000 from a Trust to carry out specific building work in Crosbie Tower, Troon, leading to a development of the range of services the Board can offer in that unit.

During the last year preparations have been made for the introduction of a structured energy conservation programme and for creating a system to deal with the vetting, certification and record keeping requirements of the Inland Revenue's new regulations affecting the engagements of contractors in the construction industry.

The Board are fortunate in attracting and retaining staff who pursue routine clerical and administrative tasks with skill and ability in what are demanding and changing times.

7. Financial Overview

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1999

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Permanent Endowment Funds £'000	Total 1999 £'000	Total 1998 £'000
<i>Income and Expenditure</i>					
<i>Incoming Resources:</i>					
Income from Service Delivery	0	30,818	0	30,818	30,323
Donations	17	1,010	0	1,027	907
Legacies	123	1,623	0	1,746	1,915
Gain on sale of assets	0	1,553	0	1,553	22
Investment Income and Interest Received	295	767	0	1,062	1,057
Less: Deferred Income	0	(638)	0	(638)	(727)
<i>Total Incoming Resources</i>	435	35,133	0	35,568	33,497
<i>Expended Resources:</i>					
Direct Charitable Expenditure:					
Expenditure on Service Delivery	0	32,858	0	32,858	31,723
Support costs	0	1,937	0	1,937	1,477
Other Expenditure: Fundraising & Publicity	0	154	0	154	183
Management & Administration of the Charity	0	285	0	285	281
<i>Total Expended Resources</i>	0	35,234	0	35,234	33,664
Net Added/(Expended) Resources for the year	435	(101)	0	334	(167)

In the financial year to 31 March 1999 Board total income resources exceeded total outgoing expenditure by £334,000. This result was a significant turn round from the position a year previously when expenditure exceeded income by £167,000. The principal reasons for the turn round is the gain on sale of assets, £1,553,000 against a previous year figure of £22. It is gratifying that donations and legacies received also continued at a high level £1,027,000 (*£907,000 1998*) and £1,746,000 (*£1,915,000 1998*) respectively. Despite this position as indicated in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) underlying the excess of income over expenditure there is an operational deficit of £4,416,000 which highlights the financial climate within which the Board requires to operate.

The problem of an operational deficit is not a new one but one which the Board has been managing for a number of years. In February 1998 the Board established a budget within which staff were expected to manage the available resources. At 31 March the budgeted deficit was exceeded by £244,000. A significant reason for the increase in the deficit is due to a payment of £110,000 which required to be made to the Inland Revenue although the amount paid related to this and previous financial years. The additional amount the Board required to meet relates to extra security costs related to closed services while disposal of the property was being concluded. The budgeted deficit was therefore exceeded by 5.8%.

The Board provides services to a wide range of client groups in residential, day and other settings. These services are divided into sectors, such as elderly care, child care and adult care – with sub divisions to assist in understanding; reference is made to these sub divisions later.

Older People. Care of older people in residential care is the area where the major part of the Board's deficit is incurred. The main reason for this deficit is that neither central nor local government is paying the economic rate required by the Board. This experience is common to all non-statutory providers of care for older people. Central

Government is responsible for paying for older people who were admitted to residential care prior to April 1993 when responsibility for future admissions was passed to local authorities. In April 1999 the Board had 128 residents being subsidised by central Government, 391 by local authorities and 189 who paid the full economic rate from their own resources. In addition 147 people were in specialist homes where the financial structure is different. The 519 residents receiving public finance support create a weekly deficit between £80 and £100 per resident per week.

It is vital that all available beds are occupied as weekly costs, particularly staffing, heating and lighting, continue whether the home is fully or only partially occupied. In April 1999 the Board had 822 available beds of which only 708 were occupied. In general the Board's occupancy levels have been higher than the national average but over 100 vacancies is not satisfactory and cannot continue without specific management action.

In the same month of April 1999 the specialist homes, mainly for people with dementia, fared much better with 147 beds from 154 available beds occupied. Local authorities negotiate a rate for these services and the financial outcome for 1998/99 was a deficit of £59,500 due to Councils failing to pay the correct rate. For this period the Board budgeted a deficit of £67,500.

The deficit for the sector caring for older people was £4,130,500 while the budgeted deficit was £3,672,500. Due to the previously mentioned under funding £2,438,000 (59%) of the deficit in this sector relates to supported residents.

The Board is pressing for a Government response to the Royal Commission on the Elderly with the hope that this financial problem will be resolved and that the future of the Board's residential work with older people can be reviewed in the light of Government decisions.

Children and Adults. The ways in which the care of children and adults, other than older people, are funded are very similar and can therefore be considered together and attention paid to the relevant sub-divisions. In these areas of care, funding is provided by way of a maintenance

rate or through grant funding.

The Board seeks for those services funded through a per capita maintenance rate to break even, where income equals expenditure (although in recent years it has been necessary to budget for a deficit). To achieve a break even situation occupancy levels require to match those budgeted and costs should not exceed those anticipated; it is seldom that such conditions prevail in each project but it is hoped that as a group a break-even point might be reached. In the financial year to 31 March 1999 those services funded through a per capita maintenance rate produced a deficit of £231,000 against a budgeted deficit of £270,000.

The Board operates a number of services which are funded through direct grant. The level of grant provided is not expected, for each project, to fully meet the cost of providing the service. For this group of services it was budgeted that a deficit of £422,600 would be achieved while, the actual out-turn, a deficit of £288,600 was achieved. The reason for this reduced level of deficit is due to a variety of factors such as high occupancy and strict cost control.

For many years the Board has considered a number of services provided as not generating income but more as the area where the Church makes a financial

contribution to the provision of social work services. As an example counselling services have long been provided by the Board at no cost to those receiving the service or possibly only receiving a contribution at the client's discretion. Recently as part of the Board's control of resources such services have required to give a higher emphasis to the need to secure funding towards project costs. Many projects have been able to obtain funding through contributions from services users, through applications to trusts and companies and from local churches committed to funding services in their area.

In those situations where the Board anticipates making a significant financial contribution towards the cost of providing services it was anticipated that a contribution of £456,700 would be made. During the year to 31 March 1999 expenditure of £851,700 was incurred while income of £396,000 was received. These resulted in a contribution by the Board of £455,700. The reason for this increased contribution is varied as a number of projects actually generated significant surpluses while a few projects increased their costs or suffered reduced levels of income.

Conclusion. In conclusion the deficit incurred by the Board can be reconciled against the budgeted deficit, as follows:

Care of Older People – National and local government under funding	£	(2,438,280)
		(194,000)
Children & Adults – Share of additional Tax and security		(50,000)
		<u>(2,682,280)</u>
Care of Older People – Board contribution	(1,498,220)	
Children & Adults – Board contribution	(925,500)	
		<u>(2,423,720)</u>
	Out-turn	(5,106,000)
Church contribution – Mission & Aid Fund		<u>690,000</u>
	Total out-turn	<u>(4,416,000)</u>

The Church should be assured that all steps are taken to monitor and control the finances of the Board. Opportunities to improve the financial position of the Board are continually being considered.

8. Publicity and Public Relations

Three words dominated the Board's publicity and public relations in 1999 – media, merchandise and Millennium. The media were almost insatiable in their quest for elucidation on social, moral and ethical issues. While this is time-consuming every time someone from the Board is quoted an opportunity is given to put across Christian values and opinion to the people who are reading the newspaper, or listening to the radio or watching television.

Here are some soundbites from 1999:

January saw the Board run a conference on Human Genetics with 150 delegates in conjunction with Aberdeen University. One of the main speakers, Baroness Warnock, told the press: "A day like today is enormously helpful from an educational point of view, bringing together as it does the academic, scientific and theological arguments. I myself learned a lot." Later in January a mediation service aimed at stopping divorcing couples dragging their arguments through court was launched. The Board's Public Relations Officer, Hugh Brown, said: "This is an excellent initiative which takes people away from the adversarial context of the formal court process. From experience of our own counselling services we recognise the value of dealing with issues in a quiet, supportive and professional manner."

February saw MPs vote to lower the age of consent for homosexuals from 18 to 16. Board Convener, Ann Allen, said: "It is political correctness at its most damaging. It puts adolescents under even more pressure. They will be confronted with choice at an age of great confusion and insecurity." There was opposition to Glasgow's first live sex club. Ann Allen in the *Evening Times*: "It is a symptom of a decadent society that they have to have this sort of entertainment on tap. The last thing the community needs is an outlet for erotic dancing and a glorified sex club." A Labour MP came under fire after she revealed to the *Evening News* that she wanted to be the first single mum in Scotland to have an IVF baby. "The Board's Convener hit out: 'this is a sign of consumerism at its worst where a child becomes the ultimate accessory. We should not be able to buy children or conception'."

Divorce again came under the spotlight in **March**

when Scottish Home Office Minister, Henry McLeish, unveiled plans to halve the minimum time for divorce to a year, a move which provoked this comment from Vice-Convener, Rev. Jim Cowie: "We wouldn't want people to have to continue in a relationship that was in some ways abusive. It seems to me we would be against divorce in general, but if things have broken down it is important that people get mediation and think about it." Meanwhile the Royal Commission released its recommendations on funding of long-term care of older people. The Board's Deputy Director, Joyce Buchanan, said in *The Herald* that she felt they pointed a way forward: "The recent scaremongering which suggests that old age means ill health and dependency on expensive long-term care has resulted in a climate of fear. Today's older generation feel they have already paid for their care through taxation and national insurance."

April's Press (including *The London Times*) carried extensive preview coverage of the Board's report on prostitution which called for a widespread debate. Ann Allen, speaking to the Press and Journal: "The law at the moment is not working. We would support the development of alternatives to fines and imprisonment which are not productive in changing the lives of prostitutes." Also in **April** the Board revealed the results of its study amongst ministers about abortion which showed that the majority had not been approached by a female parishioner on the issue. Ann Allen in *The Scotsman*: "A large number of women are having abortions and yet few are turning to the Church. Ministers, therefore, want to break down this sense of inaccessibility that people have in regard to them but many feel inadequately prepared to deal with the issue."

May saw the Board's funding deficit for residential care reported in the *Daily Record*. Deputy Director, Jim Maguire, said: "To maintain our high standards of care and practice we need to be properly funded." A new daily lottery game was denounced by the Director of Social Work, Ian Baillie, in the *Scottish Daily Mail*: The Government introduced a national lottery supposedly to help good causes. In their estimation it has been a huge success. Why then is it necessary to create another one which is guaranteed to entrap more people in an addiction

to gambling?”

In **July** a lesbian couple who became parents for the second time thanks to a gay couple prompted this reaction from the Board's PR Officer, Hugh Brown: "Family life is critical as far as the Kirk is concerned and by family life we mean living with a mother and a father."

In **August** it was reported that couples were seeking to sort out potential trouble spots before their wedding by going for counselling. Quoted in *The Sun*, Ann Allen generally welcomed the scheme but highlighted a potential drawback. "Broadening the scope of counselling will put greater demands on services which will have to be met. The demand is already huge."

The Scottish Executive revealed plans in **October** to abolish Clause 28, which bans local authorities from promoting homosexuality. This was strongly opposed by Ann Allen in *The Scotsman*: "In the education of children the promotion of homosexuality would be as wrong as the promotion of heterosexual promiscuity." Edinburgh's sauna regulations were condemned as inadequate causing Ann Allen to make this claim: "There's no doubt that saunas extend the exploitation of women, and since the council has taken the responsibility for licensing these places they have to take ultimate responsibility for how they are run and who is working there."

Clause 28 was back in the headlines in **December** when a front page story in the *Sunday Herald* revealed that a number of leading Church figures had written an open letter calling on the law not to be scrapped. Ann Allen insisted: "There is huge concern about the promotion of homosexual practice." Since then the Convener has received in excess of 100 letters supporting the retention of Clause 28. Lastly, Health Minister, Susan Deacon, also came under fire from the Board's Convener for her plan to make contraceptives more easily available: "The proposals are a sticking plaster over a gaping wound. It would never be the Christian perspective to encourage sexual activity without long-term commitment."

Whilst column inches in the Scottish and national press is important, good local press coverage is equally welcome. In December 1999 the Board had 13 residents who were centenarians, 6 of whom celebrated their 100th birthday in 1999. All 6 ladies were featured in their local

newspapers, including the Board's oldest resident Miss Chrissie McLaren who was 103 on 27th September. Two of the residents appeared in a feature article in *The Herald* about people who will have lived in three different centuries on 1 January 2000. Other local stories included a former Deeford client who did a sponsored bungee jump, a Keith Lodge resident who completed a 14km walkathon (both these stories appeared in the Aberdeen *Evening Express*), and an alcohol conference in November run by the Lifestyle Centre which was reported in the Stornoway *Gazette*. During his presbytery visits this year's General Assembly Moderator, Rt Rev John Cairns, stopped off at some of the Board's homes including Well Hall in Hamilton, Ronachan near Tarbert and Auchinlee in Campbeltown, resulting in stories in the local papers. There is a good working relationship between the new Head of Media Relations, Pat Holdgate, and the Board through its PR Officer and the Director of Social Work having regular contact on media issues.

9. Social Interests

The social interests aspect of the Board's work is dependent both on the proactive determination of the Board to consider particular issues, and on the press and media in raising issues. The section of this Report relating to Publicity and Public Relations is very much reflective of this latter aspect.

The work of the Social Interests Committee has been very varied, ranging from an examination of the Board's views on children being brought up within a gay-parent setting to the formulation of a liaison group with the Society, Religion and Technology Project. This latter group aims to consider subjects which have an interest from both the Board and the SRT Project and to seek to agree public statements which are acceptable to both. It will also assist in ensuring that both groups are informed on new developments in common fields of interest, particularly human genetics and embryology and cloning.

The Board provided the General Assembly with an update report on **abortion counselling** in May 1999. A follow-up to this report has led to the production of a leaflet/poster advertising phone help-lines which provide counselling and support advice for women who are having

personal problems as a result of pregnancy or post-abortion. The leaflet is produced by the Board but advertises on behalf of the Board, CARE, and the British Victims of Abortion. These leaflets/posters will be offered to congregations throughout the country.

It is hoped that many Commissioners will be aware of the series of six public lectures arranged in conjunction with the Centre for Theology and Public Issues on “**The Law and Christian Ethics**”. The first lecture was given by Lord Mackay of Clashfern in January 2000 and the last will be in June. The reason for arranging this series of lectures was articulated as follows:

In the attempt to formulate a Christian perspective on such issues, the Board has been aware of the tension between what scripture teaches and the law permits; between those perceptions that stem from a conscience informed by standards and values drawn from Scripture and Christian tradition, and the standpoint of secular legislation which is largely determined by the spirit of the age and between what the Christian sees as desirable and what in terms of legislation and politics is possible. There is a recognition that our laws and institutions appear to be less related to Judeo-Christian traditions than in the past.

Such a shift in emphasis raises questions about the role of the Church in a pluralistic society. In a society in which many do not share the Christian world view, and where legislation and public policy is at best hard won consensus, evolved from the competing world views and interests of different groups, it is not always possible to attain what we as Christians would regard as right and best for society. When the Church has to settle for the feasible rather than the ideal, some see this as compromising their Christian convictions. Equally, it could be argued that such acceptance arises from a desire to discover what common ground may exist between Christian and secular perceptions in order that, from that base, shifts may be achieved in the thinking and practice of those who do not share Christian convictions; thus legislation and government policy may come closer towards the Christian ideal.

It is against this background that the Board of Social Responsibility decided that there would be value in

exploring the relationship between **Christian Ethics and the Law** in some specific social issues. The six topics considered are:

- *The Law and Christian Ethics: Yesterday and Today*
- *The Law and Theology in the Scots Tradition*
- *Human Rights Law*
- *The Law and Christian Ethics in Business*
- *Medical Dilemmas and the Law*
- *Christianity and Law Reform: A Living Tradition?*

It is hoped to produce a Board publication following the lectures. The Board also hope to publish this year the address given at the Conference in Aberdeen University on Human Genetics. Once again, our thanks are offered to Professor Iain Torrance for his work on editing this publication.

As in many other areas of the Board's work, the Scottish Parliament is making increasing demands on time and energies; in general this is positive in that the Board is being given an opportunity to influence the parliamentarians in a better and closer environment than Westminster offers to us. This can be evidenced by the manner in which the Board were able to be involved in making comment and giving evidence on the “**Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Bill**”.

As one of the largest providers of care for incapacitated people in Scotland outside the NHS the Board, clearly and appropriately, has a major interest in the legislation proposed in this Bill. The greater part of it is very acceptable. It significantly clarifies and improves the rights and legal position of incapacitated people with a clear emphasis on the encouragement and enabling of the individual to make the fullest use of their skills and capacity. There are some real misgivings, however, concerning Section 5, which relates to medical treatment, care and research and the conditions within which the withdrawal of food and fluid could be permitted. The Board has submitted written evidence and has been represented by a member of the Executive in giving direct evidence before the Justice and Home Affairs Committee and is making representation to the Scottish Executive and to MSPs in support of proposed amendments which would address our concerns. The Bill is moving towards

stage 3 when amendments are to be tabled and debated by the Parliament.

In a similar way, but using a different approach, the Board is deeply involved in the debate around the Government's intention to repeal **Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988** as it relates to Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986; a similar repeal is planned through Westminster for the English and Welsh interests.

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 amended the Local Government Act 1986 by inserting the following section after Section 2 (prohibition of political publicity):

- “2A – (1) A local authority shall not –
- (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;
 - (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.”

The position of the Board on this issue has been determined by the past Deliverances and Reports of the Board on Human Sexuality and Family Matters. In reaffirming the Board's conviction that there is no moral equivalence between heterosexual commitment in marriage and homosexual lifestyle the Board, acknowledging differences in conviction in the Church on this issue:

- (1) are opposed to the blanket repeal of Section 2A, being unconvinced by the Scottish Executive's arguments for repeal;
- (2) welcome the strengthening of protective guidelines in regard to sex education for children; and
- (3) believe there needs to be primary legislation–
 - (a) governing the action of local authorities in order to protect our children from a sexualised culture; and
 - (b) to impact on how local Councils spend their budget in this area.

The Board has continued to monitor the development and impact of the **National Lottery**, particularly as it

moves towards the allocation of a new licence in October 2001. Although the present lottery operator, Camelot, has reported a minor drop in income from sales (£5.2 billion in 98/99 as opposed to £5.5 billion in 97/98), they were also able to report that independent research showed that 71% of households had bought tickets in the seven days prior to interview, and 82% of households had played the draw at some time since its launch in 1994. Camelot's research also indicates that individual household spending on the lottery “continues to be modest” being “highest in households with highest incomes”. Other sources have quoted the number of households involved regularly in participation in the National Lottery to be as high as 90% and the press have regularly carried reports of individuals with little income spending an excessive proportion of it on the lottery.

The Board will continue to comment on aspects of the lottery which cause concern, such as under age participation, and the continuous development of new games in order to enhance profits. A major concern since the inception of the National Lottery has been the impact on charitable giving. Again, the statistics vary according to the research studied, but all of the research, whether scientific or by less stringent poll systems, confirm that giving to charities in general has decreased since the lottery began. While the Good Causes have received in excess of £6 billion over this time there is still a large percentage of the money paid for tickets which does not go directly to charities, whereas direct giving means that 100% of the donation should be used for the purposes of the chosen charity.

The Board are also concerned over the issue of “additionality” within which Government promised that statutory funding would not be replaced by lottery funding. Monitoring this aspect of the lottery is not easy as there are many factors which can influence whether or not real reduction has taken place.

The Board intend to pursue some of those issues with some vigour in the coming year.

The Board continues to consider new ways of approaching this area of its work using all the resources available to it. Work has begun on considering the Internet as a means of information gathering, and also to examine

ways in which users can bar reception of unwanted material such as pornography. The Board is also examining ways in which information can be more readily shared with individual Church members on issues relative to the Board's remit and responsibility.

10. Millennium Celebrations

The Board determined to share in the celebrations around the beginning of the year 2000 believing that as a Christian organisation any event in which the birth of Christ can be celebrated must be worthwhile. The theme adopted was "Light in the Darkness – Service to Others"; this theme is in line with the theme of the major churches but also reflects the Board's emphasis on bringing light into the darkness of individual lives through its service.

Since 1991 the Board has organised a worship service of Thanksgiving and Dedication each October for Board Members, staff and friends. In this service the Board gives thanks for the service of staff both in the immediate past year and as a celebration and recognition of long service; it is also an opportunity for senior staff throughout Scotland and all staff from Charis House to share in an act of re-dedication of themselves to the service of Christ and to serve others through the work of the Board. Last October our service fulfilled those objectives but also included an act of thanksgiving and celebration for the service to adults with learning disabilities in the Eskmills Project, and an act of dedication for a Millennium Banner designed and made by Mrs Heather Moir.

Each Home and Project managed by the Board was involved in the embroidering of its name in blue thread on blue silk; all the names were then sewn together to form the backdrop of sky. A rainbow stretches above the sky – a sign of hope. The lower part of the banner shows roofscapes of some of the Board's buildings around Scotland, signifying that the Board has room for people needing care and support. The banner is eight feet high and three feet wide and is now enclosed in a well-lit case hung in the reception area of Charis House. It completes the area to perfection and the Board would like to record its thanks and indebtedness to Mrs Moir for using her obvious talents to produce a lasting reminder of the

Board's contribution to social caring across Scotland.

The Light in the Darkness theme was also demonstrated in the service with the lighting of a candle in the Board's Millennium Light; the candle was lit by a service user from the Eskmills Project. A light was given to each home and centre to use in their own service of celebration and to light at an appropriate time at the beginning of the year 2000. The Millennium Light also has been a very popular purchase from the Board's range of merchandise which reflects the work done by the Board.

Many years ago a former Convener of the Board, Rev. A W Bruce, prepared a Book of Prayers which was available in every home and project managed by the Board. It provided suggested readings from Scripture and prayers for each day of the year. It is still used in many centres. As an aid to daily devotions it was decided to produce a new book of readings, thoughts and prayers as part of our Millennium year celebrations; this project has been convened by our vice-Convener Rev. James Cowie and the first three months of material has now been made available.

The Board for some years has been considering bringing up-to-date the history of its work since 1969 when the Rev Dr Lewis L Cameron OBE published "*The Challenge of Need*" which recorded the first 100 years of the Board's service. As a result of discussions surrounding this theme the Board were successful in securing with the University of Stirling Department of Applied Social Science the award of a post-graduate research studentship through the Economic and Research Council. This studentship is now in its first year of operation and the Board looks forward to its outcome. The questions which will be addressed in this PhD study are:

- how has the position of the Board as a provider of welfare provision changed over time and what have been the major factors behind decisions about where and for whom its services should be developed;
- to what extent can the work of the Board be understood and theorised in terms of innovation, replication or complementarity, as meeting a residual demand or in partnership with the state;

- what has been the contribution of the Board to social policy development at national and local levels and to changes in the professional practice of social workers;
- how far have the activities of the Board been shaped by its religious ethos, by activity on its own initiative and by external forces such as changing social and economic conditions, demographic change and, latterly, the development of the social market, reform of local government and pending devolution.

The Board in partnership with James Cocker and Son, Aberdeen nurserymen, commissioned a special rose which will be a lasting memorial of the millennium, will include a “Church” rose in gardeners’ catalogues, and will contribute to the funds of the Board. It will be on sale for the first time in August 2000 and will be known as “Caring for You” to reflect the caring content of the Board’s work. The Board will receive £1.50 for every rose sold in the first three years of its sale.

Finally the Board’s homes and projects have been asked to provide a service to others during the year; it is hoped that local communities will benefit from our efforts as we seek to put something back into communities which regularly support our work.

At the beginning of a year none of us can foretell what might happen during the year but at the least we can expect results from some of the planned events. We look forward to the year in anticipation that much more will happen as we work under God in His service. We can also begin the year by recording our grateful thanks to a former vice-convenor of the Board, Mrs Maureen Stitt and the small committee who provided the first outline of plans for the year 2000.

11. Staff

11.1 Thanks to Staff

In responding to people in need, the Board is served by supportive and caring staff. The Board commends staff at all levels and in all areas of work, and gives thanks to God for their service and commitment.

11.2 Staff Advisory Forum

Members of the Staff Advisory Forum have made a major contribution to the work of the Board. The Forum, which allows two way discussion between management representatives and employee elected representatives enables the Board to determine the views of employees on a range of matters and provides management with a different perspective on future strategies and agreements.

In the past year the Advisory Forum has covered a range of topics such as Employee Benefits, Conditions of Service, Strategic Development Plan, Fundraising, Health and Safety Policies, Recruitment, Employment Legislation, and Training and Development.

There has been a balance between the issues placed on the agenda by management and employees alike and this has resulted in a number of key areas being clarified and employees’ views being taken into account in the development of policy.

The Advisory Forum Newsletter continues to be a means whereby relevant issues are brought to the attention of employees and has proved to be an effective communication tool.

Recently Employee Liaison Persons have been established in the majority of the Units and Projects throughout the Board. This provides a network of employees with whom individual Forum Members can consult on issues where they are required to reflect the views of employees as a whole. This is a developing initiative and it is anticipated that it will become a vital part of the communications structure within the Board.

The Board acknowledges the significant contribution which Advisory Forum Members have made to the Staff Advisory Forum and for the enthusiasm and commitment with which they have carried out this responsibility.

11.3 Employment of Ministers in Non-Parochial Work

In accordance with the regulations adopted by the General Assembly in 1949, the Board declares that no minister of the Church of Scotland is employed in its service.

11.4 Staff in the Employ of the Board at 1st February 2000

	Full-time		Part-time		Total		Full-time Equivalent	
	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999
Operations Staff	783	877	798	692	1581	1569	1247.56	1260.05
Executive, Office and Support Staff	70	71	15	13	85	84	76.96	78.12
					*1666	1653	1324.52	1338.17

*In addition there are an additional 596 people working in the Home Support service, and as relief and support workers their hours of employment depending on service requirements.

12. Retiral of Vice-Convener

The General Assembly of 1997 approved the appointment of Rev D J Easton as Vice-Convener of the Board. His period of service concludes at the General Assembly. The Board would wish to record its sincere appreciation of the contribution Mr Easton has made to the work of the Board and to give thanks to God for Mr Easton's commitment and dedication to his duties.

in the name of the Board,

ANN ALLEN, Convener
JAMES M COWIE, Vice-Convener
DAVID J EASTON, Vice-Convener
IAN D BAILLIE, Director of Social Work

APPENDIX 1 Member/Staff Group on Child Care "THE CHILD CARE CHALLENGE"

Member/Staff Group on Child Care

Convener: Mr. Ronald C. Lavalette

Secretary: Mr. Ranald Mair

Board Members: Rev. N. Galbraith, Mr. Peter J. Hinde, Mrs. Sheila Cormack, Mrs. Isabel C. Morrison, Mrs. Elspeth Wells

Staff Members: Mr. Kevin Brown, Mr. Jim Lawn, Miss Heather Lennox, Mrs. Evelyn Marquis, Mr. Sandy Russell

Administrative Support: Mrs. Annmarie Shannan

1. Introduction

"If a child lives with acceptance and friendship He learns to find love in the world".¹

1.1 The General Assembly of 1999 received the Strategic Development Plan, which had been prepared by the Board, as their basis for work plans for the next three years.

1.2 Aim 3 of the Plan, is to continue to review and develop, a portfolio of different styles of service delivery for current and new client groups, in order to meet present and emerging needs within a changing legal framework.

1.3 The associated Objective 3.9 in the Plan is 'to bring forward a paper identifying ways in which the Board can support children and families, in the light of the Children Act'.

1.4 Towards the end of 1998 the Board established a Member/Staff Group *"To investigate the wide range of child care services in the United Kingdom, particularly those of a non-residential kind, in order to determine the nature of services that the Board might wish to consider developing in the future"*.

1.5 In addition to the above, the Board's strategic plan had identified specific priorities which included:

- to seek to work co-operatively with others at a local level; and
 - to expand community based services.
- It is hoped that the report which follows takes into account all of the above factors.

2. Review of Board Provision

A. A short history of the church's involvement in social work with children

2.1 The Church's residential care for children began in Edinburgh about 1868, when the Rev. Dr. William Robertson established a home for orphan girls at South Queensferry. In 1898, it was taken over by the Committee on Christians Life and Work. (In 1936 after the Union this Committee amalgamated with the Committee on Social Work which had been brought into being in 1904).

2.2 From the outset, it had been made clear that the Church of Scotland's homes and agencies would serve the needs of all, irrespective of class, creed or colour, and principles established then still apply today.

"The Church's social work, is founded on the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. She goes forth, in her Master's name, to seek, that she may save, that which is lost".

2.3 The founding principles clearly stated that the work was to be based on the Christian Gospel and to be done by Christian staff.²

2.4 In 1905, the Committee on Social Work considered setting up a Day Nursery for children, several years before the statutory services were thinking along these lines. 'Care in the Community' was part of the thinking even in the early years.

2.5 Although the Committee on Social Work and the successor Committees, managed a network of residential care homes for children until the demand for such services reduced, there was always a recognition, that children's needs are often best served, by helping them, whenever possible, to live with their families and within their own communities. This is not to deny the need for some specialist residential provision for children, whilst seeking always to support them in their own homes.

2.6 The important part which Congregations can play has always been recognised, and in 1941 the General Assembly, in adopting a Moral Welfare Scheme, agreed that prevention was important and that 'Clubs organised by Churches will provide suitable contacts with girls and young women'.

2.7 Following the coming into force of the Adoption Act 1950, the Committee decided that the Church should register as an Adoption Agency. This was in further recognition of the value the Church places on family life. The Board's main work in this area was with single mothers and their babies. The work continued until the 1970's, when a decision was taken to depart from it.

Church members have always been encouraged to consider offering themselves as prospective adoptive or foster-parents to children, especially those with special needs.

B. Current projects

The Board's Directory of Services states that we care for, children with behaviour problems, and children with learning disabilities.

2.8 Residential Care and Education is provided at **Ballikinrain** and **Geilsland** schools. In partnership with families and social workers, residents' problems are addressed, with the aim of returning them to the

community at the earliest time. The young people referred to the schools are some of the most challenging and needy in Local Authority Care.

We believe that everyone has potential for change, and both schools aim to help residents to make progress such that they can return to the community safely. Between them the schools cover the age range 8–18.

2.9 Children and young people with a disability receive services from three units managed by the Board:

Keith Lodge in Stonehaven provides residential long-term accommodation for five children up to eighteen years of age and for four young adults. It also provides respite care to thirty-seven children.

The Mallard in Glasgow provides residential long-term accommodation for five children up to the age of eighteen years of age and respite care on a programmed basis to fifty families.

Cairnhill Place in Glasgow provides residential long-term accommodation to three young people.

The children are cared for within a homely, safe and stimulating environment. Staff support the children to enable them to reach their maximum potential. The staff work together with the children and others important to them to allow their individual needs to be met. Much emphasis is placed on preparing the children for their future.

2.10 Other areas of the Board's services also involve work with families and children. The **Alcohol and Drug Dependency services**, eleven in all, from Beechwood House in Inverness to Whiteinch in Glasgow are much involved in work with extended families including children. Similarly, the Post Natal Project in Edinburgh is directly involved with children and families.

The **Dundee Women and Children Project** supports vulnerable women and children. They list as one of their aims:

- To assist mothers ... to relate to their children ... and to ... observe how their children relate to their peers.

The **National Counselling Service** lists as one of its aims:

- To develop a Counselling Ministry for Children.

All of the Board's administrative Divisions acknowledge services for children and families as an important area for further development.

C. The board's base for development as a child care agency

2.11 The Board as part of the National Church, has the benefit of a link to every Parish in Scotland. The network of Congregational Contacts, helps to ensure that the work of the Board is known at local level, and provides an opportunity for Church members to highlight needs, and contribute to the development of needs led services.

2.12 Every Presbytery in Scotland, and the Presbytery of England, is represented on the Board, which adds to the network of support. Increasingly the Board is seeking to develop partnerships with local Congregations.

2.13 The Boards of National Mission and Parish Education and the Committee on Education are much involved in work with children and there is scope to develop partnerships with them in children's work.

2.14 As a major provider of social work services in the voluntary sector in Scotland, the Board employs a range of staff, whose expertise and commitment gives a firm foundation, on which to build additional services. In terms of child and family care developments, this resource base is a significant asset.

2.15 The recent restructuring into Divisions, promotes better use of resources at a local level, and facilitates partnerships with Presbyteries, Local Authority Social Work Departments and other agencies.

In addition, the Scottish Executive recognises the Board as a national provider of specialist Child Care Services, particularly through the work of the Residential Schools.

2.16 The Board was involved in child care work to a greater extent in the past, but scaled down its involvement because of changed policies and practices in local authorities..

2.17 Two factors which will be seen as positive by some,

but less helpful by others, are the Board's Christian employment policy, and the agreed policy in terms of not seeking, or accepting, financial support by application to the national lottery.

D. The board's approach/distinctive features

2.18 The Board of Social Responsibility manages a professional social work service serving the needs of the people of Scotland. Its distinctive feature is that it is a Christ centred organisation, focusing on the unique value of each individual, and ever mindful of Christ's injunction: *'whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me'*.

2.19 The Board re-affirmed this unique feature in its work when as part of the Strategic Plan it agreed that 'The Board of Social Responsibility will remain part of the Church of Scotland'. Increasingly much of the work is carried forward on an ecumenical basis, and in partnership with other voluntary and statutory agencies.

2.20 The social work services of the Board are available to all in terms of assessed social need. The work of the Chaplains in the units underlines the importance of the Christian basis of the work.

The existence of Friends Groups attached to units is a further demonstration of the Church's commitment to the work and gives added support to staff and clients.

2.21 The Board is in the unique position of being able to call on a whole range of volunteers and individuals in pursuing its remit to provide **in Christ's name** a service which aims to retain and regain the highest quality of life that each individual is capable of experiencing at any given time.

3. Review of trends in service provision

A. National overview

3.1 The national context for children's services is underpinned by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, and the endorsement of the principles of the UN Charter for Children that are subsumed within that legislation.

3.2 The UK Government has developed a 'joined up thinking' approach to services for families and young people, in terms of a range of policies and funding which promotes welfare for families, educational opportunities, employment initiatives, integrated health and family centre services, and remedial provision for those affected by drugs/ alcohol problems.

3.3 The Scottish Parliament is expected to have a budget of £14 billion. The UK Government's movement towards joint community care planning, new community schools, and the integrated provision of children and families services through education, social work and health will be implemented within Scotland.

3.4 There is an economic and political climate which stresses 'best value'. Service provision must represent good value for money, and be subject to quality assurance.

3.5 Demographic changes indicate that from 2000 to 2034 there will be 15% fewer children under 16 years and 15% more people over 65 years. The percentage of working age women in employment will continue to rise, reaching 27% in Scotland by 2011.³

3.6 The incidence of divorce is expected to increase from 7% to 14% by 2020. This may have an impact on the level of demand for child care provision as well as support for children from families where divorce features, as well as support for children and step-parents.⁴

3.7 Following Government re-organisation in 1996, the 12 Regional Councils were abolished and replaced with 32 unitary authorities.

3.8 Each of the 32 local authorities has been obliged to produce Children's Services Plans, incorporating the views of service providers and service recipients. These plans will shortly be reviewed by each authority. The emphasis is on developing services corporately across council departments and in partnership with service providers.

B. Policy development

3.9 The Scottish Child Care strategy, as documented in 'Meeting the Child Care Challenge', identifies 3 steps:

- (a) raising the quality of care for children 0–14 years;
- (b) making child care more affordable and available;
- (c) making child care more accessible by increasing places and information about availability.

3.10 The Mental Health Foundation's report 'Bright Futures' identifies the mental health needs of young people, including those who care for adults who have mental health problems, and recommends that every school has a support worker to address the mental health needs of children. It also focuses on the need for supports to be put in place for families.

3.11 The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places a new responsibility on Councils to identify and support the needs of young people who have to care for a disabled relative. Local Authority Children's Services Plans identify the fact that there are substantial numbers of young carers whose educational and developmental needs are not being met due to their caring role.

3.12 The needs of children who are "looked after" by the local authority have been highlighted. Particular issues identified are the need for them to be cared for in safety (the Kent report) and the need for them to have a stable educational experience as there is a higher propensity for looked after children to fail at school or fall out of mainstream education.

3.13 There is a major review of social work education and social work services being undertaken, which will lead to regulation of the profession. Child Care workers are likely to be amongst the first to be registered. Professional training requirements will also be revised. The review has reached the stage of the White Paper, '*Aiming for Excellence*'.

3.14 Key national policy elements (with attendant funding) are: social inclusion; family support; opportunities for lifelong learning; New Deal and fuller employment opportunities; community-based services accountable and accessible to local people; flexible care packages; and diverse educational initiatives including study support, after-school care and early years provision. In particular New Community Schools will be the locus

of inter-agency service provision – education, health and social work being the major partners – for children and families.

3.15 There is a concern to reduce the population of young women offenders (16–21 years) who are imprisoned by making alternative provision.

3.16 There is to be a national review of services to children affected by disabilities focusing on access to services, assessment, and transition from children's to adult provision.

C. Pattern of services – statutory and voluntary

3.17 The Scottish Compact endorses the principle that there is a partnership between statutory and voluntary service providers, and that service development should be undertaken within that framework.

3.18 There is a purchaser/ provider split, and increasingly services are **purchased** by local authorities and **provided** by the voluntary and private sectors. There is less private provision except in the early years provision of child care. The voluntary sector now provides more than 50% of the residential child care provision in Scotland.

3.19 There are several key specialist voluntary sector agencies who have infrastructures which support child care services. Contact has been made by the Child Care Working Group with the major voluntary sector providers in Scotland. Barnardos and NCH Action for Children each provide around 50 – 60 projects throughout Scotland covering a range of services; Quarriers, Aberlour Child Care Trust and Children First are more specifically located geographically, and each covers a smaller range of projects; SCF and Children in Scotland provide advocacy and training but no direct service provision. It is recognised that services are generally under-funded by purchasers, and that competition for tenders may not be the best way forward. There is concern nationally that competition for contracts by voluntary agencies will lead to under-cutting and reduced quality of provision.

3.20 Charitable organisations report increased difficulties

in raising general funds since the introduction of the national lottery. However, Barnardos and NCH Action for Children have been identified as two of the future recipients of Children’s Promise Millennium funding. This gives these agencies – and others who use lottery funding within Scotland – an increased foothold on potential service development and provision.

D. Range and models of service provision

3.21 It is perhaps useful to think in terms of a continuum of child care services covering the range of provision from informal support through to specialist intervention (See attached chart). This may allow us to locate the different sorts of service that the Board currently provides or might develop.

3.22 Increasingly too, it is necessary to think in terms of integrated or “joined-up” services rather than of fragmented provision. There are parallels in this regard with the Board’s development of services for older people with the integration of Home Support and Residential Care.

3.23 Rightly the emphasis is on enhancing children and young people’s experience of family life and the move has been away from long term institutional care. All services have to be committed to maintaining family and community links with a view to reintegration. It is also recognised that services for children and young people have to prepare them adequately for adult life and future parenthood.

E. The continuum of child care services

“Preventive” provision		“Protective” provision		“Promotive” provision
Informal	Formal	General	Specialist	
Family support	Parenting programmes	Children’s homes	Residential schools	Children’s rights Advocacy
Community resources	Consulting schemes Drop-in centres	Fostering and adoption	Disability and special needs provision	Awareness raising Lobbying
Befriending or — [®]	Mentoring schemes Respite care — [®]	Children’s panels	Alternatives to custody Work with victims of abuse	Consultancy and staff training Contributing to national policy

F. Current priorities for national and local government

3.24 The Government is putting £84 million into children’s mental health services within the UK over the next 3 years, mostly to Health Boards.

3.25 Child prostitution is becoming an increasing concern. Barnardos has instituted a project in England, but no funding has been allocated specifically for developing this work yet. Research into “Looked After

and Accommodated” children whose backgrounds have involved abuse and educational failure has suggested there is an increased likelihood that for both boys and girls prostitution may subsequently feature.

3.26 Alternative provision for young women offenders who are currently imprisoned is seen as an important area for development within Scotland.

3.27 Preventive and holistic family support is identified as a priority in Children’s Services Plans, and ties in with

Government policy of creating 'joined up' and locally accessible services, including specific reference to parenting programmes and child care support. However, generic budget headings, and preventive work generally, do not feature prominently in current central or local government funding programmes.

3.28 There is concern about the impact of drugs and alcohol on young people, both as users of these substances as well as being children in families where misuse is an issue.

3.29 Throughcare provision for children who have been looked after, to help them secure accommodation and employment, is a priority area for further service development.

3.30 Community-based services to children and families affected by disabilities are recognised as requiring significant investment and a focus for development.

3.31 Local authorities find it increasingly hard to locate community-based long-term carers for children, and adoption and fostering campaigns are currently unproductive. There is a need to increase the availability of family-based care for children who are unable to return to their families of origin.

3.32 Services to help children and families affected by child abuse remains a priority area, and further government funding is being made available to develop services which support recovery.

3.33 Education, health and social work services to children and families will be integrated within New Community Schools and in the early years service provision. Education-led initiatives have a central place within the Government's strategy to promote both social inclusion and life-long learning.

3.34 Social inclusion policies and initiatives are unlikely to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families and children, and therefore specialist services will continue to be required.

G. Unmet needs

3.35 There are unmet needs in terms of geographical provision. Few voluntary sector services are

provided in rural and island communities. Both specialist and non-specialist provision is lacking.

3.36 There are unmet needs in relation to general community provision. Funding is often directed towards discrete or particular services, rather than to broad-based preventive child and family support services. Holistic, accessible and flexible support to families is a major gap. This could be either free-standing or linked to specialist provision.

3.37 There are unmet needs in a number of specialist areas. These include:

- community provision for children with disabilities;
- support and counselling for children with mental health problems, including within educational settings;
- help for children affected by drug and alcohol misuse;
- preventive education and support in relation to teenage pregnancy;
- support and appropriate packages of education and care for young carers;
- community-based alternatives to imprisonment, particularly for young women offenders;
- parenting programmes;
- services to support looked after children, including throughcare;
- expanded adoption and fostering resources, including another adoption and fostering agency;
- support services which help children and families recover from child abuse;
- lack of provision of respite care.

3.38 The task is one of prioritising in conjunction with other voluntary and statutory agencies which areas of need the Board is best placed to meet.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 The development of new child care services presents the Board with a significant challenge and opportunity. The existing spread of Board projects and links with the wider Church provides a unique base for responding to need in any part of the country.

4.2 Developing new ways of delivering services to children and families also challenges us to innovate. The Board is already doing this in terms of the diversification of care for adults and older people into Home Support. This model could be developed further to provide respite care for children and family support. There would be scope for diversification in other service areas as well.

4.3 Working corporately and developing service partnerships is very much to the fore and the Board is well placed to pursue this approach to new provision. The Buckie Drop-In Centre is a good example where the Board has worked with the local community and Churches to facilitate a new service. Partnerships, both inside the Church and with other voluntary or statutory agencies need to be actively pursued and the Board should be open to the challenge this presents.

4.4 This is a challenging time also for family life with many children experiencing disruption and a lack of good parenting. Providing young people with positive experiences and sound role models is essential to their own future effectiveness as adults and as parents. This is a challenge we cannot afford to ignore.

4.5 There has been the suggestion of a shift recently, away from residential care towards community-based provision with the emphasis on 'social inclusion'. However the need for high quality specialised residential provision for children and young people with complex needs and problems is still there and likely to continue for some time. The Board's expertise in this area is acknowledged and this provides a sound base for future development.

4.6 All of the areas of '**unmet need**' identified earlier provide scope for service development. The question is how best to do this. The Board already has its strategic planning and development framework in place through the Divisions and it is important to link in with this.

4.7 The Working Group strongly endorses the Board's existing commitment to Children and Family Services and would encourage the Board actively to pursue potential developments in this area.

January 2000

ADDENDUM A

Parties consulted

Scottish Office Social Work Inspectorate Children and Families Team – 9th March 1999.

Board of Parish Education Child Protection Unit, Mrs. Gillian Scott – 29th January 1999.

Local Authority Social Work and Education Departments. Board Divisional Staff and Projects.

Conferences attended

'Best for the Child' – Best Value in Child Care Services (Children in Scotland, COSLA) Edinburgh – 18th January 1999.

'From Rhetoric to Reality' – Childrens Services: Joined Up Working (ADSW) Dundee – 24th March 1999.

The Childcare Strategy in Rural Scotland (Children in Scotland) Perth – 25th August 1999.

ADDENDUM B

Selected Bibliography

1. Board Strategic Plan – 1998.
2. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
3. The Skinner Report 'Another Kind of Home' – 1993.
4. Childrens Services Plans (examples from 7 Councils) 1998–2001.
5. The Report of the National Planning Group for the Care and Education Services for Young People with Behavioural Problems which include Offending (Scottish Office SWSG) – 1999.
6. The Scottish Compact (Scottish Office) – 1998
7. Modernising Social Work (Scottish Office) – 1998
8. Aiming for Excellence (Scottish Office) – 1999.
9. Childrens Safeguards Review (Scottish Office) – 1997.
10. Social Work into the Millennium (ADSW)
11. "Women Offenders – A Safer Way – A Review of Community Disposals and the Use of Custody for Women Offenders in Scotland" (Scottish Office) – March 1999.

ADDENDUM C

“Children Learn What They Live”⁵

If a child lives with criticism,	she learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,	he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,	she learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,	he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,	she learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,	he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,	she learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,	he learns justice.
If a child lives with security,	she learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,	he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship he or she learns to find love in the world	

APPENDIX 2

Member/Staff Group on Homelessness

“No Place to Call Home”

Member/Staff Group on Homelessness

Convener: Rev Graham T. Dickson

Secretary: Mr Graham Lumb

Board Members: Rev Ron C. Whyte, Mr Alexander Bennie, Mrs Marian Finlayson, Dr Jean Irvine, Mr Angus Cameron

Staff Members: Miss Victoria Espener, Miss Morag Hamilton, Mrs Jean Simpson, Mr Ronnie Smith, Mr John Watt

Preface

This report has been prepared by the Member/Staff Group on Homelessness, a short-life working party established by the Board of Social Responsibility and comprising of Board members and Staff members in equal numbers.

In working towards the preparation of this report the

Group sought to identify what homelessness is and who it is that is affected by the problem. We carried out some research into current provision for homeless people. This included carrying out an overview of the services provided by the Board as well as making contact with national organisations that have a significant role to play.

We sought to identify the significant gaps in provision and considered what should be the future role of the Church and the Board in tackling homelessness.

1. Introduction

1.1 As we move into the new Millennium we can reflect back on the old and, in particular, on a past century of unprecedented social and technological advancement, beyond the imaginings of those who were alive at the start of the 20th Century.

1.2 The last twenty years in particular have seen the advent of the so-called ‘Global Village’, with technology bringing travel and communication on a global scale apparently within the reach of almost everyone. There are very few areas of the world which have been left untouched by this technological revolution, including our own nation of Scotland.

1.3 Whilst such advancement has brought undoubted benefits to our world the problems of social injustice, inequality and social exclusion remain. One of the most shocking manifestations of this is the problem of homelessness.

1.4 It is a sad indictment of our society that we begin the Third Millennium having not only failed to solve the problem of homelessness here in Scotland but with the number of people affected each year being on the increase.

2. A Theological Perspective – Why should Christians be Concerned?

2.1 Before examining in more detail what homelessness is and what can and should be done about it we need to explore the biblical and theological context within which our thinking and actions should take place.

2.2 The problems of social injustice, inequality and social exclusion must be the concern of any Christian church. The issues of land, home and hospitality are central to the prophetic tradition. Isaiah the prophet declares the Word of the Lord saying “*And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.* (Isaiah 5.7–8)”.⁶

2.3 The prophet Micah says much the same thing. In Micah the Plaintiff (God) calls his witnesses (the mountains), speaking through his messenger, the prophet Micah. The Defendant (Israel) stands accused of failing to reciprocate the Lord’s love and is without defence. In the place of obedience to the covenant and concern for the poor, the land has become a refuge for greedy land grabbers who “*covet fields and seize them; houses and take them away*” (2.1–5) and oppressive leaders who “*abhor justice and pervert all equity*”.

2.4 The Jubilee principle of Leviticus was intended to subvert the practise of unlimited accumulation of land, by returning it to its original owner every fifty years. God has provided plenty of land for all earth’s inhabitants.

2.5 However, throughout Israel’s history, acquisitive landowners had sought to purchase houses in the cities and peasant holdings in the countryside – removing the means of sustenance from a growing throng of landless poor, and creating circumstances which forced peasants to sell themselves into slavery.

2.6 God does not want shows of extravagant worship as compensation for such injustice – some of the most stinging passages of the whole Bible are reserved for empty religious performances. According to Micah, God does not long for destruction and vengeance either, but for repentance and restoration. In one of the most memorable passages of the Old Testament the prophet summarises God’s requirements: “*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God*” (Micah 6.8).

2.7 The prophets wanted to call the People of God back to the requirements of the Covenant as a way of life which was within reach. It did, however, demand a concern for the poor and a system of equitable land holding that went against the grain of their society. To take the prophetic message to heart is to embrace a discipleship where people matter and where such faith expresses itself in the fundamentals of our lives; our economics, social relationships, power and decision making.

2.8 It therefore involves more than just providing finance or ‘throwing money at a “problem”’. It involves building real relationships. 1 Corinthians 1.28 says that God, “*chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are*”. The members of the early church were often excluded from mainstream society and held inferior social and economic status. They were unable, in conscience, to join the economically dominant pagan guilds, and often did not enjoy full rights of citizenship.

2.9 New Testament churches had a varied social mix and were inclusive communities. Poor people, rich people, sojourners and citizens mingled together in fellowship, breaking down prevailing social, sexual and racial barriers.

God's choice of this varied community turned the normal world order on its head.

2.10 This is something Christians must seek to practise in daily life. Making additional finance available is all very well. Setting up day centres, night-shelters, soup-runs and housing associations are all good things; and having a national campaigning role can be very important. But Christians are called to more. It would be easy to do all these things but still keep our homeless neighbour at a distance.

2.11 The message of the Old and New Testament alike is that we cannot wish away our neighbours but must embrace them and make them part of one socially inclusive community. One 12 year old girl when asked about her experience of homelessness said "homeless is when you don't belong anywhere".⁷ As Christians we must seek to create a society where no one, of any age, can say that.

2.12 In a recent issue of *Our Homeless Neighbour*, the newsletter of the Scottish Churches Housing Agency (SCHA), Bishop Richard Holloway says:

"Churches have been around for a long time and they have long memories. We know that human nature, especially if it lives in comparative comfort, finds it easy to ignore the pain of the poor. That is why we try to speak for them, to be the nation's conscience.

It could be argued that prophecy is the sole task of the Church, that it should call the world to bring inside those who are on the outside, and to bind the wounds of those it has cruelly injured. But, as a matter of record, the Church has never confined itself to prophecy. The Church down the centuries has always been closely identified with the practical provision of help for those society has thrust to the margins...

We'll keep reminding people that homelessness is an outrage. We'll keep telling the nation that to send the most vulnerable and isolated of our young people out onto the streets, because we have not figured out how to shelter them, is an act of evil indifference that disfigures us as a nation."⁸

2.13 The Christian message is one of justice and mercy.

The prevailing philosophy within our society at the end of the twentieth century would seem to run counter to this. It is often one that appears to legitimise the seeking of individual personal gain at the expense of others. There is an apparent acceptance that some people will succeed and that others will fail. It is in this social and theological context that the Member/Staff Group has pursued its remit.

3. What is Homelessness?

3.1 The Group gave consideration to trying to define homelessness and in so doing recognised the difficulty in finding one all-embracing definition. What is clear from reading the literature and discussing with those working in the field is that homelessness is not simply a matter of people without a roof over their heads.

3.2 The Scottish Council For Single Homeless, in their information sheet, point out that people who are sleeping on a friend or relative's floor, or who are sharing overcrowded or slum-like conditions, who are in institutions or living in bed and breakfasts, are all homeless. They share in common the lack of "a permanent, secure, affordable and decent place to call home."

3.3 Scottish Homes Report No 64, 'Homelessness and Children's Education' suggests that "homelessness is an extreme form of social exclusion which has a detrimental impact on all family members, especially children".⁹

3.4 To be homeless then, is not simply to have no accommodation to call your own. It is to be excluded from participating in the social and economic life of society. Homeless people are typically unemployed, live on extremely low incomes, and struggle to maintain familial and social relationships.

4. What is the Extent of the Problem?

4.1 In 1997-98, 43,135 households applied as homeless to Scottish local authorities.¹⁰ The number of people in those households is estimated at around 80,000. This represents an all time high and is almost four times the 1983 figure and is a 74% increase over the previous ten years.

4.2 These families and individuals come from all sorts of backgrounds. For many, homelessness conjures up images of people sleeping on the street or 'rough sleeping', (and indeed between 500 and 1000 people sleep rough in Scotland every night). Recent figures suggest that anything up to 11,000 people slept rough on at least one occasion during 1997/98.¹¹

4.3 Most homeless people, however, do not have to sleep rough, at least not in the long term. More likely, as indicated at 3.2 above, homelessness will take the form of moving from house to house, sleeping on floors, sofas or spare beds. Or it might mean sharing a room in a Bed and Breakfast establishment, or living in temporary council accommodation.

5. Who is Homeless?

5.1 Around 60% of homeless applicants are single people. Families with children, usually with only one parent, account for around 45% of applicants, the remainder being couples without children.¹²

5.2 All ages are represented within the homeless population, including older people. There is a small but significant number of older people who present as homeless. This group is harder to account for, as a subtle difference exists between 'older homeless people' and 'homeless older people'. The first group represents those who have been homeless and are defined as roofless, or those who have grown older whilst living in hostels. The second group represents nine-tenths of those older people presenting as homeless to Scottish Local Authorities. The following are reasons why these people present as "homeless older people":

- marital disputes in old age;
- action of private landlords;
- loss of tied housing;
- break of a shared living arrangement where an older person has been living in the house of one of their grown up children.¹³

Notwithstanding this point, the great majority of homeless people are aged between 25 and 60 years.

5.3 The number of under 25's who are homeless has increased by 30 per cent over the past seven years.¹⁴ A significant proportion of this group are young people over the age of sixteen who have previously been in care. It is estimated for example that one in four rough sleepers in Scotland fall into this category. The work of this Member/Staff Group therefore has significant overlap with the other two groups working on Child Care and Social Inclusion.

6. The Causes of Homelessness

6.1 There is no overall consensus as to the cause of homelessness. On the one hand there is the belief that the issue is primarily a social structural problem, and on the other that the problem is caused by the inherent problems and inadequacies of the individuals affected.

6.2 The structural view is that homelessness is the inevitable consequence of social policies and political decisions. In recent years, for example, social policies have placed great emphasis on home ownership at the expense of investment in new public housing, and have also introduced significant changes to the benefits regulations. Policies such as the 'right-to-buy', which allowed council tenants to purchase their homes at discount prices, have resulted in the best quality council houses being lost to the rented sector. Changes to benefit regulations, and, in particular, the withdrawal of benefits from the 16–17 year olds is perceived as having had a significant impact on the increase in youth homelessness.

6.3 From this perspective the primary response to homelessness needs to be to campaign and lobby politicians for changes in social policy which will result in a significant investment in new housing and more favourable benefit regulations.

6.4 The individualist view argues that people become homeless as the result of individual problems such as relationship breakdown, or drug or alcohol addiction, or mental health problems. Homelessness is seen as a problem of the individual and the appropriate response is to focus on the needs of the individual.

6.5 Most organisations working with homeless people, both local authorities and voluntary organisations, agree that homelessness is the result of a combination of the aforementioned view-points. The 1998 *Church and Nation* report to the General Assembly summed up the causes as follows.

“Frequently, people become homeless because friends or relatives are no longer willing or able to provide accommodation or because there has been a dispute, often violent, with the spouse or co-habitee. Homelessness can also occur when a new adult partner moves into a home. Tensions caused by this change can lead to the older children being discarded and sent out to fend for themselves. Older children can also be sent out to find their own accommodation when they are not able to pay for their keep, a situation that has been exacerbated by the 1991 changes to the benefit rules. Others become homeless because they have had their home repossessed and others again have come from some institutional background and have not been able to settle in the community. Unemployment and poverty will often be the underlying causes of the circumstances that lead to homelessness.”¹⁵

6.6 This statement is backed up by Scottish Office Statistics. 32% of applicant households in priority need in 1997–98 stated that the immediate reason for their loss of accommodation was that friends or relatives were no longer willing or able to accommodate them.²¹⁶ This increases to 80 per cent for one person households under the age of 18. A further 34 per cent of applications in priority need gave a dispute with a spouse or co-habitee as the immediate reason for homelessness. More than half of these involved violence.¹⁷

6.7 As this statement indicates one of the difficulties relating to young people and homelessness since 1991 is the withdrawal of benefit from 16 and 17 year olds and the reduction of benefit to those under 25. All agencies in the housing field point to the congruence between these policies and youth homelessness.

6.8 Another very sad fact in Scotland is the disproportionate number of young people previously in

residential care who are homeless. It is particularly of concern that many young people who are vulnerable and have been looked after by society have neither the confidence nor the support to make and sustain a home for themselves.

6.9 Even when housing is provided, young people are often overwhelmed by the task of making the property habitable and organising their affairs to cope with the responsibility. Often such young people, lacking in social skills and deprived of appropriate models when growing up, are confronted at the earliest age with tasks which would daunt secure and well resourced adults. Only the strongest personal support is of value in these circumstances. (The Scottish Executive is seeking to address this issue through its proposal, announced in September 1999, to transfer monies from the DSS to the local authorities to fund through-care and after-care support for young people leaving care).¹⁸

6.10 The policy of selling council houses has also had an impact during the 1980’s, especially in rural areas where housing stock reduced by 40 per cent compared with the national average of 14–20 per cent.¹⁹ This, coupled with the drastic reduction in council house building in rural areas, has made far fewer homes available for rent and for purchase. Many young people leaving home and elderly people losing tenancy of tied houses upon retirement are unable to find suitable accommodation. The growth in “holiday homes” has also had an impact in rural communities pushing up the prices beyond the means of local people.

7. What is Being Done to Address the Problem?

Policy Context

7.1 The primary legislation governing homelessness is the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 as amended by Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. This lays out the duties of local authorities with respect to homeless persons.

7.2 The Labour Government, elected to the Westminster Parliament in 1997, has made housing a priority since coming to power. New policy initiatives of particular relevance to homelessness have included an increase in the funding for the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) (see 7.8. below) and the introduction of the Empty Homes Initiative– which aims to encourage local authorities to identify existing disused properties which could be reinstated as housing.

7.3 In May 1999 the Government published its Green Paper “Investing in Modernisation: An Agenda for Scotland’s Housing”, the first housing Green Paper for over twenty years.

7.4 The newly elected Scottish Executive has also made housing a priority and recent initiatives include additional funding for the RSI; the establishment of a Task Force on Homelessness; and proposals relating to young people leaving care (see 7.11 and 7.12 below). It is likely that a new Homeless Bill will be introduced in 2000.

Local Authorities and the Scottish Parliament

7.5 Local authorities have a duty, in accordance with the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1997 to provide advice and guidance to all people who present to them as being homeless. In priority cases, as defined by statute, local authorities have a duty to provide accommodation for them. People are considered homeless if they actually have no accommodation or cannot use their accommodation, for example because of threats of violence. They are considered to be potentially homeless if it is likely that they will become homeless within 28 days.

7.6 Homeless and potentially homeless households are likely to be offered accommodation only if they are considered to have priority status, that is: (a) the household contains children; (b) a member of the household is pregnant; (c) a member of the household is vulnerable because they are old, or have a mental or physical disability or there are other special reasons; (d) the household is homeless in an emergency. In other instances the responsibility of the local authority is to give

advice and assistance.

7.7 According to official statistics 62 per cent of households who applied under the legislation in 1997–98 were assessed as homeless, and a further 13 per cent were assessed as being threatened with homelessness.²⁰ 41 per cent of all applicants were assessed as being in priority need. This obviously leaves the other 59 per cent as being regarded of lower priority. On the above criteria it must embrace young people aged 16–25, including those moving out of care. It must also include those leaving prison and other institutions as well as those with drug, alcohol and other related problems.

7.8 The most significant recent Government programme targeted at homelessness is the ‘Rough Sleepers Initiative’ (RSI). Since its inception in 1997, £30m has been made available across Scotland to tackle the problem of rooflessness. A further £6m was announced in September 1999 for RSI Phase two which will fund projects from April 2000 until March 2002.²¹ The Scottish Executive’s declared aim is to eradicate the need for anyone to sleep rough by the end of the new Parliament’s first term in 2003.

7.9 To date a wide range of projects has been funded. In areas where there was already much information about the extent of the problem, the Initiative has funded resettlement workers, direct access accommodation and specialist supported accommodation for those with particular needs. In other areas, the Initiative has funded outreach work and research to help gain a better knowledge of rough sleeping in the area.

7.10 However, “rooflessness”, at which the RSI is targeted, is only the sharp end of the spectrum of homelessness and as we have already suggested homelessness is not merely the problem of a lack of accommodation. There are other initiatives targeted elsewhere. It is estimated that there are about 100,000 empty homes in Scotland and the Scottish Office allocated £7m in 1998–99, through its Empty Homes Initiative, to help local authorities develop strategies and programmes to bring as many of these houses as possible back into use.

7.11 The Scottish Office in conjunction with Scottish Homes “HomePoint” also provides funding for The Scottish Housing Advisory Service (SHAS). SHAS is a joint project run by Citizen’s Advice Scotland and Shelter. From 1 April 1998 the SHAS has been available nationwide. At its launch the then Scottish Housing Minister, Calum Macdonald, said “prevention is a key part of our homelessness policy and the provision of timely advice is crucial to achieving this. Readily available advice can often help avoid homelessness arising, for example by helping examine the tenancy rights of those faced with eviction or assisting with rent arrears difficulties. This service provides the right type of advice. It is accessible advice, provided through the widespread network of Citizen’s Advice Bureaux, and it is expert advice, as Bureaux can draw on the knowledge and expertise of Shelter Scotland”.

7.12 Potentially even more significant was the announcement in September 1999 by Wendy Alexander, Minister for Communities in the new Scottish Parliament, relating to a major overhaul of the benefits system with the aim of solving the crisis of vulnerable young people sleeping rough in Scotland.

7.13 The proposal is to transfer DSS funds into one pot for distribution by local authorities as part of a series of measures aimed at preventing people from falling through the social safety net. Local authorities will be required to develop personalised through-care and after-care plans for 16 and 17 year-olds leaving care to ensure they have access to follow-up services and are collecting their proper benefits. The intention is that benefit money (£50–£60 per week) should be combined with other money available for local authorities in order to provide much better care for this young vulnerable group. This proposal certainly appears worthy of support for its intent. The Group’s view, however, is that the details of the proposal would need to be examined before unqualified support could be given.

7.14 Ms Alexander also underlined the Scottish Executive’s support for a new Homeless Bill next year. She said, “The current legislation is 20 years out of date and the law at the moment doesn’t recognise the different categories and key causes of homelessness.”²²

Non Governmental Organisations (NGO’s)

7.15 Whilst local authorities must provide the statutory response to homelessness, the bulk of work carried out directly with homeless people comes from non-governmental organisations, mainly the voluntary sector.

7.16 Some of these organisations, including the Board of Social Responsibility to whom we refer to later, are quite significant in size and influence and have a national perspective. These include:

- **The Scottish Council For Single Homeless:** this national umbrella organisation represents a membership of individuals and organisations. Its primary functions are to identify and promote appropriate ways of preventing and solving homelessness; to disseminate information on the causes, nature and extent of the problem and to work with its membership and homeless people to tackle the problem.

- **Shelter, Scotland:** this organisation is part of Shelter, the National Campaign for Homeless People which was launched over 30 years ago by five church housing association trusts. Shelter campaigns and lobbies on behalf of homeless people; provides housing advice centres around the country and offers direct services to homeless people.

- **Scottish Churches Housing Agency:** SCHA was formed in 1993. Its Board comprises of representatives from each of eleven Christian denominations in Scotland including the Church of Scotland. The Agency describes itself as having ‘established itself as the organisation working through Scotland’s churches to challenge the crisis of homelessness’. One aspect of its recent work has been the Churches Homeless Initiative Programme whereby the Agency has offered assistance and support to local church initiatives. This has included the establishment of ‘Fresh Start’ in Edinburgh – providing ‘starter packs’ of basic household items to new tenants; the promotion of similar schemes in Glasgow and Inverness; and working alongside a local organisation in Ayr to establish a rent-deposit guarantee scheme. The Agency also seeks to raise awareness of homelessness within the churches. An example of this has been the

promotion (jointly with other national agencies) of the annual Homelessness Sunday, for which promotional information and worship material is made available.

- **The Big Issue:** The Big Issue seeks to help homeless people help themselves by providing the means to make an income. This is through the selling of 'The Big Issue' magazine. The organisation seeks to raise the profile of homelessness; to make explicit the level of the problem; and, through having homeless people as street vendors, provides the opportunity for people to talk directly to homeless people.

- **The Salvation Army:** The Salvation Army is the largest single provider of accommodation for homeless people in Britain. Currently 50 centres provide beds for nearly 5000 men and women every night of the year. Whilst primarily a provider of services, including soup runs, hostel accommodation and resettlement services, the Army also campaigns on issues of relevance to the problem of homelessness.

7.17 Most of the voluntary organisations, however, are fairly small and focus their activities on often quite locally defined geographical areas. This can be an area within a city or a rural area perhaps co-terminus with a small local authority boundary.

7.18 Many such organisations have their roots in a local church or churches, where Christian people have sought to respond to the needs of homeless people in their community. In other instances 'secular' organisations are well supported by volunteers from the churches in their area. A significant characteristic of such local responses, whether initiated by church or community groups, is the sense of 'ownership' which prevails amongst the local people involved. There is evidence that people will become involved positively and effectively with projects which offer practical solutions to locally identified problems. (See Addendum A for examples)

7.19 In 1997 the SCHA published *Tending the Mustard Seed*, a directory of services for homeless people provided by churches or church based agencies, available at that time. It presents a picture in terms of service type and

geographical area. It does not claim to be exhaustive but is probably as comprehensive as any other available publication and is recommended as a very useful resource for the way in which it highlights the range and extent of church-based responses to homelessness around the country.

7.20 Throughout the country there are a vast number of services provided for homeless people. These include hostels and supported accommodation; day and night centres (where people can 'drop-in' and receive food, company, health services, counselling and support); street-work teams which make contact with homeless people on the streets; soup vans and soup kitchens; rent deposit guarantee schemes and resettlement support schemes.

7.21 In spite of the vast range of existing responses, homelessness has continued to increase and there are a number of gaps in available provision. These will be focussed on in Section 8 below.

The contribution of the Board of Social Responsibility

Historically

7.22 The Board of Social Responsibility has provided social services since 1869. A Hostel for destitute men was opened in Edinburgh in 1889 and 'The People's Palace' as it was known continued to provide shelter for homeless people until 1995.

7.23 In the early years of the twentieth century homes, or hostels, were opened in Glasgow, Dundee and Ayr, including a hostel for 100 women located at Glasgow Cross. Throughout the century the Board has continued to provide for homeless people with services evolving and changing as required.²³

Current Services

7.24 Almost all of the Board's present work with homeless people is carried out under contract with local authorities. Where the bulk of the funding comes from local authorities, with DSS payments accounting for the

remainder, the nature and type of service is determined by the requirements of the local authorities. (See Addendum B for financial information)

7.25 Within this funding environment, the Board's current provision for homeless people reflects the need to keep abreast of policy and practice developments and, in keeping with this, two of the Board's longer-standing services have radically altered in the past few years.

7.26 Cunningham House in Edinburgh opened in 1995 and replaced the People's Palace Night Shelter. It provides modern hostel accommodation for 24 homeless men and women for up to three months, as well as overnight and emergency accommodation. **McGregor House** is a four person long-term supported accommodation unit run from Cunningham House.

7.27 The Kirkhaven Project in Glasgow is a residential facility for 14 people accommodated within flats in a dedicated Glasgow 'tenement close'. This service replaced the original hostel which was located within a converted church. Many of the clients at Kirkhaven have been excluded from other homeless facilities and an increasing number suffer from alcohol related brain damage.

7.28 In Inverness, **Cale House** offers housing and support to 22 homeless people in self-contained flats.

7.29 The aforementioned services all have homelessness as their primary focus. The Board provides a number of other services which also have an impact on homeless people.

7.30 Seven residential rehabilitation services cater for people with drug and alcohol problems, many of whom have associated problems with homelessness. Within the programmes offered by these services is support to enable the individual concerned to manage life effectively in a tenancy or some form of supported housing.

7.31 Simpson House drug counselling service in Edinburgh offers a service to prisons. As a result, it is hoped that a number of prisoners have avoided homelessness through having addressed their drug misuse prior to discharge.

7.32 The Rankeillor Initiative in Edinburgh, which provides supported accommodation for those recovering from substance mis-use, has recently begun offering a home support service to homeless people taking up new tenancies.

7.33 As well as the practical outworking of care in this way, Board staff engage with local interagency homelessness forums in the evolution of policy and practice to assist people's problems with homelessness.

8. Where are the Gaps in Provision?

8.1 In the life-span of a short-life working group such as this it is obviously not possible to produce a fully detailed and up-to-date survey of all service provision relating to homelessness. The Group, however, brought together the existing knowledge and experience of its members and also gathered information from a range of relevant documents. In addition, contact was made with representatives of a number of local authorities and voluntary organisations to seek their views. This gave the Group a reasonable over-view of the current position from which to draw some conclusions.

8.2 From this research, it is clear that the current services provided are insufficient to meet the level of need that exists. Our research did indicate that all local authorities have in place a range of provision in order to meet their *statutory* responsibilities. However, the following general issues emerged from our enquiries and subsequent discussions:

8.2.1 The great bulk of services for homeless people are, as might be expected, concentrated in urban areas, with the greatest range and number in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

8.2.2 Some rural areas have virtually no provision at all e.g. The Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Highland although needs have been identified through group members' local knowledge and contact with local authorities and other agencies.

8.2.3 Even some large towns have very few services although there is a significant need.

8.2.4 Service provision tends to cluster around emergency accommodation and supported accommodation although the latter is often limited to groups defined by other social needs (e.g. by age, alcohol/drug dependency etc.)

8.2.5 No one agency offers a comprehensive national provision.

8.2.6 Very few agencies are able to offer an integrated approach providing a range of services from emergency accommodation, through supported tenancies, to independent living.

8.2.7 It is very difficult to provide accommodation in rural areas. Local authorities are reluctant to allocate from their low level of stock to homeless people when they need to retain stock for emergencies such as fire and flood. There is real gap in the level of adequate housing for rent.

8.3 In addition to the findings above, the Group's research identified three particular and significant gaps in service provision –

- Lack of direct access emergency overnight accommodation;
- Lack of good quality affordable housing in desirable locations;
- Tenant support

Lack of Direct Access Emergency Overnight Accommodation

8.4 Changes in policy and practice in recent years have resulted in the closure of traditional night-shelters. Night shelters provided very basic accommodation – often no more than a space on a floor in a 'dormitory' which would sleep 40 or more people – would open at 9 or 10pm and close again at 9am having offered a basic breakfast. Homeless people would often queue from early evening to ensure they obtained a place. Night shelters often offered slum-like accommodation and were frequently characterised by abuse and violence. They offered no meaningful solution to the homelessness of those who used them.

8.5 The Board of Social Responsibility has fully supported this move away from such provision towards higher quality accommodation and a greater emphasis on individualised care plans which seek to offer meaningful routes out of homelessness.

8.6 Large-scale hostels do, however, continue to exist, and for many homeless people have become their long-term homes. These hostels also have their problems as illustrated in a feature in *The Scotsman* on Tuesday 30 November 1999. One article reported a call from Shelter for the closure of 'Victorian institutions' in Glasgow targeted by heroin dealers. The report suggests that, in many hostels 'drugs, alcohol abuse, violence and theft are rife'²⁴. Some homeless people, it is suggested, say they would rather spend the night outside than stay at a hostel where they are afraid of losing any possessions they have, or, if they are recovering addicts, of coming back into contact with drug dealers. Another article illustrates this through the experience of a thirty-two year old man. He is quoted as saying that he believes he is safer sleeping under bridges or park benches than in hostels. He spends most of his days sitting in shop doorways begging in order to feed himself.²⁵

8.7 In addition to those who will not use hostels for fear of their safety, there are also a significant group of homeless people whose personal circumstances are such that they are unable or unwilling to use the kind of hostel provision currently available. Years of short and/or long term rough sleeping, the psychological and physical damage resulting from substance abuse and a chaotic lifestyle has resulted in many people being unable to fit in with the requirements of many of the existing services.

8.8 The Group believes that there remains a legitimate role for the provision of a service which will fill the gap left by the demise of the night shelter. This need not be a large institution and, indeed, it is preferable that such a model be avoided. The service should, however, provide clean, warm accommodation with individual bedrooms and direct access for those who simply want a bed for the night with no strings attached. This is what some of those who are homeless want, at least for certain periods in their

lives. The Cowgate Day/Night Centre in Edinburgh, for example, reported that 90% of those using it want overnight accommodation in addition to the facilities on offer there.

8.9 This need is beginning to be recognised more widely. In Edinburgh Bethany Christian Trust intended to open a 20 bed hostel in Candlemaker Row to offer emergency accommodation for single homeless men as well as eight units of supported accommodation for stays of around six months. This was to be financed by RSI money. However, objections at the planning stage mean that this has not come to fruition. Yet a temporary hostel opened in Leith had 400 users in 6 months. Our own local knowledge and research suggests a similar need exists in the other major Scottish Cities.

8.10 Nobody working with homeless people wishes a return of the old night shelters and indeed, such are the connotations associated with the term, it is no longer appropriate to use the term to describe services. **There is, however, a need to offer an appropriate dignified service to those unable to benefit from existing resources and for whom the only alternative is to sleep rough. As already suggested, this need not be provided in a large institutional setting.**

Lack of Good Quality Affordable Housing in Desirable Locations

8.11 The *Herald* magazine of December 12th 1998 carried a feature on homelessness.²⁶ It told the story of Hector Stewart whose life was ruined by alcohol and who has been homeless for 30 years. The council allocated Hector a house once in that time. It was in the Pilton area of Edinburgh and he found himself in the centre of the hard drugs scene. He was surrounded by dealers and addicts – “junkies willing to beat up anybody or rob any home to pay for their next fix”. Hector could not stand it and left, opting to return to the streets as a more secure life. Hector’s story is not uncommon.

8.12 The story highlights the problems which have arisen in recent years. As previously mentioned, the sale of

council housing has left local authorities with less stock available and a greater percentage of that stock being below decent standards of habitation. Many properties, designated as ‘hard to let’, are allocated to homeless people and these are, by definition, in less desirable areas with social problems akin to those experienced by Hector.

8.13 It is also not uncommon for new tenants to be presented with a virtually empty flat and have no resources to buy even basic cooking utensils, cleaning materials, a bed or a pair of curtains or anything else most of us would take for granted.

Tenant Support

8.14 The same issue of the *Herald* magazine also told the story of 42 year old Moe who, raped by her father as a child, ran away and became a prostitute. Moving around between English cities, Moe managed to get private tenancies from time to time. She admits struggling and explains “Ah grew up oan the streets, like. Ah didnae ken about keepin’ hoose and naebody shows ye.”

8.15 Moe’s life, like many of her peers, is a story of desperately trying to settle in a home, failing and returning to the homeless scene where she knows the rules and has survived – thus far.

8.16 This “revolving door” syndrome is well known to local authorities. The average length of tenancy in North Edinburgh is six weeks. Since some tenancies last for many years this indicates many break down within the first few days, or even hours. This must be hugely expensive to all concerned.

8.17 An informal telephone survey of some local authorities by the Group highlighted a general lack of tenant support provision. Many housing authorities indicated that they consider the responsibility for offering additional support to tenants to lie with social work departments. Some authorities have sought to address the issue. The City of Edinburgh Council has recently operated a pilot scheme to help teenagers become model council tenants. As a result four times fewer council homes have been abandoned by young tenants and rent arrears

and complaints from neighbours are down by three-quarters. Based in Granton, Pilton and Drylaw, the scheme includes lessons on managing money, household skills, information packs and help from local agencies.

8.18 The Scottish Churches Housing Agency has been responsible for initiating 'Starter Pack' schemes, of which The Edinburgh 'Fresh Start' Project, is the most well established. These schemes aim to make available to new tenants 'starter packs' of basic household items such as crockery, cutlery, pots, pans and cleaning materials. A unique feature of the schemes is the essential link with and involvement of local church congregations of all denominations. Churches are responsible for donating goods and supplying teams of volunteers to make up the packs. Plans are well advanced in Inverness and Glasgow for similar schemes, with the Board represented on the planning group for the Glasgow scheme.

8.19 The issue of tenant support has been particularly highlighted as an area of need. With the Board's Strategic Plan placing emphasis on community based and home based services there would appear to be an opportunity to use the developing Home Support service as a means to engage with this particular need. This, however, would be dependent on important funding issues being resolved.

9. The Way Forward for the Board of Social Responsibility

9.1 In considering the future role of the Board with respect to homelessness the Group considered where its current strengths lie and the range of other factors affecting development.

9.2 Strengths

- **Christian ethos** – the Board carries out its work 'In Christ's Name'. By employing Christian people the Board brings a unique motivation to the services it provides.
- **Track record/expertise** – the Board has been providing services for homeless people for almost 100 years.

- **Range of work** – as well as services dedicated to homeless people the Board has expertise in providing services for those with drug and alcohol addiction and mental health problems. These are closely associated with the problems of homeless people.
- **A national yet local presence providing resources of people and premises** – as a national organisation the Board has resources in many local communities which can be utilised for local benefit. In addition, the Board has the opportunity to link with local church congregations and to use such links to facilitate and encourage local responses.
- **Ability to marry professional expertise with local projects** – the Board can increasingly offer its expertise to local initiatives bringing its professional experience to support local concern.
- **Willingness to work with those 'at the bottom of the pile' who suffer most from social exclusion** – for example, the Kirkhaven Project.
- **Good at 'niche' work.**
- **The Strategic Plan** – drawn together in early 1999, the Strategic Plan provides the framework within which the work of the Board is now being taken forward. The Plan sets the strategic direction and priorities for the work of the Board over the next three years.

9.3 Factors Impinging on work in this field:

- **Dependence on external funding** – the source of funding determines the nature of the service and the priority given to aspects of service provision.
- **Relatively small player in the homeless field** – the number of places which the Board provides for homeless people is relatively small compared to other providers.
- **Practitioners, not lobbyists** – the Board's primary function is to provide services. There are times, however, when the Board could be lending a stronger voice to those who campaign on a wider front for appropriate policies and finance in tackling homelessness.

- **Publicity/marketing promotion** – many people, both within church congregations and in the public at large, remain generally unaware of the work of the Board with homeless people.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

10.1 Homeless people are amongst the most vulnerable in our society. Homelessness affects people of all ages and from all social backgrounds. It is more likely, however, to affect those already disadvantaged by poverty, unemployment and poor housing.

10.2 The Board has many years of experience in responding to the problems of homelessness and is well placed to continue to do so.

10.3 There are three primary functions for the Board to perform in the future in relation to homelessness. These are:

- To continue as a direct service provider (these are services in which the Board employs the staff and independently manages the service). The Group believes that the potential is there for the Board to play a more significant role as a direct service provider. Group members did, however, share concern about the danger of creating a 'homelessness' industry, whereby organisations become dependant on homelessness continuing for their existence. It should clearly be the ultimate aim of any organisation working with homeless people to 'work themselves out of a job'. The reality is that there will be people needing support as a result of their (experience of) homelessness, for many years to come. The Board, as it moves forward, must remain focused on meeting those continued needs and not on maintaining services and institutions for their own sake.
- To enable and facilitate service developments at a local level. The Group believes that some of the most effective responses to the needs of homeless people are those schemes which have a local base, a local perspective and involve local people. Such initiatives

are increasingly attractive to funders both from the statutory sector and from Trust funds and other private funding sources.

- To continue to use the political **process to remove the causes and results of homelessness.**

ADDENDUM A

There are several examples of successful initiatives by churches to combat homelessness which have resulted from people at a local level being concerned enough about the problem to want to take practical action. A significant feature of the three examples given below is that they have all involved inter-denominational partnerships between churches.

West End Churches Keyfund (WECK)

This project was an initiative of the Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) group in the west end of Glasgow. This inter-denominational group has had a concern for homeless people for a number of years and, prior to establishing the Keyfund, the main expression of this concern had been through the running a soup kitchen.

A steering group was established to develop the project and, in time, a Management Committee was formed. Five of the Directors on the Committee are from the ACTS group, two Directors are representatives of other voluntary organisations engaged in responding to homelessness and two of the Directors are individual members.

The staffing for the project comprises a full-time paid Co-ordinator, a voluntary support worker (provided through the CSV organisation) and a volunteer administrative assistant. More recently the project has begun to seek volunteers from within the local churches to befriend and support recipients of the service.

The objective of the project is to enable homeless people to access private rented accommodation. This is generally very difficult for homeless people as most private landlords require one month's rent in advance as a

guarantee against damage to property or non-payment of rental. The sums involved are often around £300–400 which is, of course, prohibitive to homeless people whose main source of income is likely to be welfare benefits. The project seeks to develop a working relationship with a number of private landlords and, by acting as a guarantor, enables homeless people to access accommodation from which they would otherwise be debarred.

WECK is funded by a combination of monies from various sources. This includes a significant contribution donated by local congregations, grants from certain Trust Funds, together with some seed-corn funding from the Priority Areas Fund of the Church of Scotland and SCHA.

This project provides a local focus for Christian people to give a practical response to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves through the giving of their time, talents and money.

The Lomonds Trust

The Lomonds Trust came into existence following an initiative of Kirkcaldy Presbytery in 1992. As a direct response to an address to Presbytery by the local Homeless Person's Officer, a number of individuals formed a steering committee. This committee sought representation from all the local denominations and set about establishing a new church-based organisation with the aim of developing a variety of responses to homelessness. Within a year The Lomonds Trust was formed, establishing itself as a company limited by guarantee, with a Management Committee of representatives of a number of Christian denominations.

One of the first initiatives of the organisation was to set up a Keyfund – a rent-deposit guarantee scheme. The funding for this came directly from donations from local churches. The level of fundraising in the first year of The Lomonds Trust's existence was testimony to the way in which people will support local initiatives. Something over £12,000 was raised, mainly through coffee mornings and retiral offerings within Kirkcaldy Presbytery.

In parallel with establishing the Keyfund, the organisation made a successful application, supported by

the Local Authority, for funding from the Government's Urban Programme Fund. This was in order to set up a short-stay hostel for young homeless people which opened for business in 1996.

Fresh Start, Edinburgh

Fresh Start was an initiative of the Edinburgh Churches Millennium Project in conjunction with the Scottish Churches Housing Agency (SCHA). The project was initially formed in order to provide 'starter packs' of basic household items for homeless people newly allocated tenancies. Research has shown that many homeless people fortunate enough to be allocated a tenancy have little or no possessions and that DSS Community Care grants will often barely be sufficient to buy basic items of furniture. As a result many people end up giving up their tenancy almost before it starts because they have no resources to make the house into a home.

Fresh Start began originally with the involvement of seven churches from where donations of household items were received. A small basement room was used to store and prepare the packs with a small band of volunteers carrying out the task. In the three years of its existence the number of congregations involved, of all denominations, has risen to nearly 60. Between 5,500 and 7,500 church members are estimated to be taking part, many on a regular basis. The organisation now operates out of old supermarket premises, sharing its accommodation with a furniture distribution project.

Fresh Start launched itself as an independent organisation in July 1999 and its work has expanded to include:

- the provision of 'Hit-Squads' – teams of volunteers who assist new tenants with tasks such as cleaning, painting and decorating their new tenancies;
- Empty Homes Initiative – in partnership with the City of Edinburgh and the City Training Initiative, teams of volunteers experienced in trades, such as painting and decorating, joinery and plastering, help to restore empty homes to bring them back into use.

The organisation is hoping to develop services for

homeless people geared toward helping with household skills, budgeting and befriending.

This project has been a fine illustration of the potential which exists within the churches at a local level to respond in very practical ways to the needs of homeless people.

ADDENDUM B

Funding Issues for Homeless People

1. When entering residential care:

Prior to the 1st April 1993 many residents in private and voluntary registered residential care and nursing homes had their fees met through Income Support. Major changes occurred to these arrangements as a result of the implementation of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.

Individuals who need financial assistance from public funds to pay for a place in residential care or nursing home must now contact their local authority social work department. That department carries out an assessment of the individual's needs to determine the most suitable type of care. If appropriate, the individual is helped to choose or find a place in a residential establishment. The department should meet the fees of the establishment but also assess how much the resident should contribute towards the cost on the basis of a means test.

People entering such homes can claim income support on the same basis as they could in their own homes.

(A) Conditions of entitlement – Income Support

- You are at least 16 (although 16/17 year olds can qualify in only very limited circumstances).
- You fit into one of certain specific groups of people, e.g. aged 60 or over, incapable of work because of illness or disability; you are caring for a sick or disabled person.
- Your income is less than your “applicable” amount which is the amount of income which the law states you require to live on in your own particular circumstances.

- Your savings and other capital are worth £8,000 or less (higher capital limits may apply if residential care/nursing home or residential accommodation).
- You are not in full-time education.

You must claim for yourself and your family unit.

In addition they also qualify for an income support residential allowance. This is to help towards the housing element of the home's fees. People entitled to an income support residential allowance are not entitled to housing benefit. Most residents of private or voluntary care or nursing homes have been excluded from housing benefit entitlement since 14th January 1991. Prior to that date residents not on income support e.g. those with capital over £8,000 but under £16,000 could claim housing benefit on the accommodation element of the home's fee.

2. Living in Hostel accommodation:

When living in hostel accommodation, payment is found through housing benefit whether for a long term tenant or for someone entering emergency accommodation.

Housing Benefit

- Housing benefit is a means tested benefit which helps people to pay their rent.
- It is payable to people who have a low income and who pay rent.
- It may be paid in addition to other social security benefits or just by itself.

(B) Conditions of entitlement – Housing Benefit

You can claim Housing benefit if the following conditions are satisfied:

- Your income is low enough. How low it has to be depends on your circumstances.
- Your capital does not exceed £16,000.
- You or your partner are treated as liable to pay rent for accommodation.
- You normally occupy that accommodation as your home or are only temporarily absent from it.
- You are not excluded under certain rules, e.g. you pay rent to someone you live with and that person is a close relative of you or your partner.

3. Additional Information on Other Benefits

(C) *Job Seekers Allowance:*

J.S.A. is not paid for the first 3 days of unemployment – these are known as ‘waiting days’. The exceptions to this are – claimant has been entitled to income support (I.S.), incapacity benefit (I.B.) or invalid care allowance (I.C.A.) within the 12 weeks before claimant became entitled to J.S.A. To claim J.S.A. the claimant must not only be available for work but also actively seeking work.

Note: It is very rare indeed that a 16/17 year old will have the contributions necessary to receive contribution based J.S.A.

(D) *Incapacity Benefit:*

Incapacity Benefit (I.C.B.) is a contributory benefit for people who are unfit for work and not entitled to SSP.

It is paid at 3 different rates: Short-term lower rate; Short-term higher rate; Long-term rate.

Long-term rate is payable after 28 weeks if in receipt of D.L.A. highest rate care component and/or terminally ill.

National Insurance contributions are required and there are two conditions:

- Claimants must have paid, in any one tax year in the past an adequate amount of Class I or II national insurance contributions

AND

- Must have either paid or been credited with adequate contributions in each of the two complete tax years before the year in which sickness commenced.

January 2000

APPENDIX 3

Member/Staff Group on Social Inclusion

“Jesus the Man for Others”

Member/Staff Group on Social Inclusion

Convener: Rev Alexander Glass

Secretary: Mr Paul Robinson

Board Members: Rev Graham Henderson, Mr Stuart Lynch, Rev Douglas Alexander, Mr. Sandy Russell

Staff Members: Mr William Campbell, Mr Alan Carmichael, Mr Stuart McCarter, Mrs Marlene Smith, Mr Jonathan Wood

Administrative Support: Mrs Rena Broadfoot

1. Introduction

1.1 There is no doubt that “**Social Inclusion**” is more than a flavour of the month. Sometimes explicitly, but more often implicitly on the agenda of the Church, it has been given a new impetus by the Government’s programme of action to eliminate (or at least to reduce) poverty, homelessness and unemployment. The Church has welcomed this programme of action, because ultimately the only solutions which will make a radical impact on these issues, and these include some redistribution of wealth, will require the political process. The creation by the Government of a **Social Exclusion Unit**, and in Scotland of a **Social Inclusion Network** and **Social Inclusion Partnerships**, has been a highly positive step forward, reinforced by other policy initiatives such as the New Deal approach to unemployment, revised benefit payments to encourage employment opportunity, and initiatives in schools to improve standards and address their exclusion policies. The Scottish Office publication – “**Social Inclusion – opening the door to a better Scotland**”, together with the most recent “**Social Justice – a Scotland where everyone matters**” (Scottish Executive) clearly explains the thinking behind the Government’s “**Social Inclusion Strategy**”. The appointment of a Minister of Communities (Wendy

Alexander) would seem to confirm the Government's serious intent. Implicit in Government policies is an acceptance that "Poverty is a violation of human rights". At the same time, there is scepticism about this political commitment. Kirsty Milne of "The Scotsman" (19th May 1999) commented "Social Inclusion is turning into the Blairite equivalent of motherhood and apple pie... The phrase, intentionally vague from the start, is becoming as deep as Mary Poppins' bottomless carpet bag. It now applies to everything from rural bus routes to feudalism." Despite such scepticism the Government's initiative has been generally welcomed by the Church.

1.2 This Report will examine **Social Inclusion** and clarify what is understood by it as far as it relates to the Board's work.

1.3 The whole issue of **Social Inclusion** is, of course, what the gospel is about. "Love your neighbour as yourself" surely sums it up, and this is why the Church of Scotland, especially through its Board of Social Responsibility and its Church and Nation Committee, has welcomed **Social Inclusion** as a top priority issue for the Government. Both the Board of Social Responsibility and the Church and Nation Committee are represented on the Scottish Churches **Social Inclusion Network**, established in May 1999 by the Rev. Graham K Blount, Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer. The Scottish Churches have a special responsibility in responding to and commenting on Scottish Executive policy statements and documents on **Social Inclusion**, which no doubt will be forthcoming in both the immediate and long term futures.

1.4 The Board of Social Responsibility appointed three Member/Staff Groups in October 1998 to examine **Social Inclusion**, Child Care and Homelessness. The remit of the **Social Inclusion** Group was to highlight the implications of and make recommendations on **Social Inclusion** for the Church of Scotland in general, and for the Board of Social Responsibility in particular. The Group used scriptural teaching, especially that in the New Testament and the Epistles, to underpin its approach to

Social Inclusion; it was acknowledged that there is ample evidence to show that people behave in unhelpful ways towards others. This behaviour shapes, and is shaped by, attitudes which lead to the practice of treating people differently, including or excluding; this process needs to be fully understood if the problem is to be overcome. Most of us in our lives are participants and recipients in some form or other of prejudice. It is important to be aware of such prejudices and for this reason the Group submits a Questionnaire on Prejudice for self-evaluation by individuals.

1.5 There is a basic paradox for the Church, which is at one and the same time both inclusive and exclusive. A person can be truly 'included' in the Church, only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and through full commitment. People may, however, 'exclude' themselves, but the Church must be ready to 'include' all and be a welcoming, open Church, prepared to promote, in love, the physical and spiritual well-being of all, with the hope that all will come to see Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Ultimately it will be God who will judge the individual.

1.6 While recognising that it may be unwise to categorise people and so incur the risk of labelling them, the Group found it helpful to reflect on how wide ranging is the spectrum of people who might suffer **Social Exclusion**, and how far it extends beyond the Government's current concern with poverty, homelessness, unemployment etc., although these conditions may exacerbate the difficulties of those affected. Samples are listed below of the individuals who may often be considered when discussing **Social Inclusion** (because they are excluded).

1.7 People whom society has described as:

- Poor
- Unemployed
- Poorly Housed
- Disenfranchised
- Lonely
- Mentally Ill
- Those with Learning Difficulties
- Those who are Educationally Disadvantaged
- Offenders in Prison
- Homeless
- Socially Deprived People
- Older People
- Those with Chronic Illness

- Those with Sensory Impairment
- Those with Physical Disability
- Children in Need • Lone Parents
- Minority Ethnic Groups • Young People in Care
- Those racially discriminated against
- Prostitutes
- Those whose first language is not English
- Those with Dementia • Drug/Substance Abusers
- Sex Offenders
- Victims of Domestic Violence
- Those who are discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation

The list is not exhaustive and could, of course, be extended.

1.8 The task confronting the State and the Church is, therefore, immense, and even if **Social Exclusion** may at first sight appear to many to be a minority problem, it is not. It has been estimated that up to one third of the population in the country is affected. How to increase people's awareness of the scale of the problem is at the heart of the matter for the Church. One observer stated, "It is amazing how often I have been involved in the prosperous City of Edinburgh with well-meaning, affluent and intelligent people who have never appreciated the scale of poverty in their neighbourhoods", and has spoken of "the ignorance of the affluent majority".

1.9 The Group believed that it was vital to involve some of those who are socially excluded people in its discussion, however difficult this might be to realise in practice, and even if this entailed the use of intermediaries or advocates. It was considered important to make earnest efforts to appreciate really what it feels like to be excluded and what the mountains are that some of the socially excluded people have to climb each day. The group sought to substantiate their reading through this exercise.

1.10 The Group believe that although the objective of total **Social Inclusion** is difficult, and can present extreme situations of conflict, it is correct that the issues be identified and then addressed.

2. The Word of God

– **Social Inclusion as discovered in the Scriptures** –

For the Church, the Bible is the supreme rule of Faith and Life. It is the Bible which provides the vision, the challenge, and the basis for Christian action. What follows is an outline of the way that **Social Inclusion** is part of the very fabric of the Faith, as learned in Scripture. The Scriptures give the warrant for what Christians believe and how they must act. For the Church, the Word of God is to be found and traced in the pages of the Bible and in the lives of people. It is always an active Word. Always dynamic. And by the Scriptures, to those who listen in humility and trust, God speaks. This, the Church believes, and on this basis the Church speaks.

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Old Testament is the revealed record of God's saving purpose for humankind in history. This record traces this purpose from Creation, through the Fall and its consequences, God's remedy through judgement, covenant love, the giving of the law, the choice of a people special to Himself and the blessing of everyone who believes in Him, thereby becoming rightly related to Him through faith and the call to be obedient in loving and forgiving. This culminates in the coming of the Messiah/Saviour – Jesus Christ.

2.1.2 It is in the Gospels that we find the clearest expression of inclusion in the whole of the Scriptures. Jesus' teaching is very clear and unambiguous.

2.1.3 The tendency to exclusivism manifest in Israel throughout its history, forms the background to Christ's advent and ministry. This is what faced the early Church. It is this situation that is addressed by the apostolic writers in the letters of the New Testament.

2.1.4 The aim of this brief comment is to show that in His dealings with humanity God's purposes are inclusive. By that is meant that His will is to embrace the whole of human kind within the covenant of His grace.

2.2 Old Testament

2.2.1 Creation: The creative work of God provides for humanity to be given a position of pre-eminence as the highest order. Humanity was given authority to ‘subdue the earth,’ by which is understood the ability to harness its resources to work together for the benefit of all. There was, pre the Fall, a perfectly inclusive relationship between man and God. Had the generations of humanity continued in this perfect relationship with God, then each would have found its place within this inclusive harmony.

2.2.2 The Fall: Understandably, all this harmony was broken by the Fall. The harmony between God and man, between God and nature, between man and man, between man and nature, was disrupted. Essentially, what had been a perfectly **inclusive** relationship man/God and man/man became **exclusive** in both respects.

2.2.3 Redemption: From the time of the Fall, God’s purpose of grace was focused on redemption. This was fulfilled completely in Christ, and the history of the Old Testament era was directed to that end:

- (i) With each successive generation enmity and exclusion became more noticeably the norm – e.g. Cain and Abel, Tower of Babel, Sodom & Gomorrah.
- (ii) Over and against these trends, God made provision to reverse them by the unfolding of his Covenant of Grace – e.g. Grace to Noah and his posterity, through judgement; The Covenant of Grace to Abraham (“Through you and your seed **all the nations of the earth will be blessed**” – Genesis 12:3/22:18). The giving of the Law through Moses (“Blessing to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments – Exodus 20:6). God causing the Egyptians to show favour to the Israelites, both through Joseph, and also at the time of the Exodus; Israel achieving virtually its full potential in the time of David and Solomon, (Queen of Sheba etc.); and many more.
- (iii) Two examples among others address this issue of **Inclusion** more directly, viz., The Covenant with Abraham (re-affirmed with Isaac and Jacob), envisages the development of a nation from his descendants, which would become the means of witnessing to the Sovereignty

and Grace of God to all the nations of the earth. At the times when the Children of Israel, and ultimately the nation, were fulfilling this role more faithfully, most notably through David and Solomon, they were more effective in including more and more from the nations near and far, both in their national life, and, more importantly, commending faith in God (being included by Him).

(iv) Jesus Christ came as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. Thus He much more effectively released the inclusive purposes of God to the whole world progressively through the Gospel.

2.3 New Testament

The Gospels

2.3.1 Perhaps the most inclusive statement is found in the Great Invitation, “Come to Me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!” (St Matthew 11:28), or similarly St John 7:37ff. In these statements, no distinction is made along traditionally social lines – only those who are weary and burdened, or are thirsty, because these are the ones who will appreciate what Jesus has to offer. Furthermore, the unconditional invitation is extended to all humankind, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or social background. In Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman in St John 4, His readiness to associate with, and even grant eternal life to one who was a social outcast demonstrates an important inclusive principle. Similarly, in Jesus’ parable of the Great Banquet in St Luke 14, the invitation is extended ultimately to anyone who may be interested in coming to enjoy the ‘fare’, although it is acknowledged that some will require to be compelled to come in. In His teaching, designed to reinforce the Law, Jesus makes a further statement, which emphasises the unconditional nature of God’s and His LOVE – “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (St Matthew 19:19 & 22:39). When asked, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus shared a story of compassion and care for someone from a very different, unacceptable grouping.. This is the GOSPEL – Good News by which believers may communicate God’s unconditional love to all.

2.3.2 However, nowhere in Jesus' teaching do we find that the inclusion is universal. In most of the parables of the Kingdom, where Jesus reveals the true nature of the Kingdom, especially its constituency, He makes it clear that those who ultimately find themselves not to be included, are those who have excluded themselves by their own choice through their unbelief or disobedience. In parables such as the wise and foolish virgins (St Matthew 25) and Dives and Lazarus (St Luke 16:19ff) those who find that they have excluded themselves, are so because they failed to value the Kingdom and its Eternal Life more highly than their own. Indeed, Jesus also makes clear that those who reckon that they have earned a place in His Kingdom will, in fact, end up finding that they have missed out.

2.3.3 How many times in the Gospels do we find the phrase, "The last shall be first, and the first last"? or "Whoever saves his life will lose it, and whoever is prepared to lose his life, (so far as this world is concerned) will find it"? In this way, Jesus turns the tables on traditional and conventional 'wisdom' so far as gaining acceptance with God is concerned. Even in the well-known parable of the sheep and the goats (St Matthew 25:31ff) there is surprise expressed on both sides when the ultimate judgement is given. Those who expected to be on the right side considered that they had done sufficient in their lives, or been fortunate enough to have been born into the right environment were surprised to find that their efforts were not the way into the Kingdom. Those who served others purely out of a love for Jesus and their fellows without looking for reward will find themselves in the Kingdom.

2.3.4 These are a few of the many passages which could be instanced to show that Jesus regards the Kingdom, and entry into it, to be inclusive to anyone who responds to the call to follow Him, renounces the right to his/her own life, and becomes one of the Lord's disciples – i.e. is prepared to accept the hardship that goes along with discipleship. Anyone who is prepared to obey His commands out of love and devotion to Him will, irrespective of his/her background, culture or social

standing, find him/herself included amongst the people of God. Conversely, anyone who thinks and acts as though, because of his/her standing or 'good connections', he/she has a right to be in the Kingdom of God and who fails to humble him/herself to become as innocent as a little child, will find that he/she has excluded him/herself from the Kingdom. Although some of these issues are not clear to us from our human, fallen perspective, Jesus also says that it is the day of the Lord's coming that will reveal all. (St Matthew 10:26). Thus, there is no room for human judging or speculation as to who will be there and who will not. Those who are faithful to their Lord will inevitably bear the distinguishing marks of discipleship, although only God knows ultimately who are His.

Acts

2.3.5 The early Church was fundamentally outward looking, open and welcoming – evangelistic – seeking to spread the Gospel and to see society bettered by its influence and power. This is clear from Acts 2:42–47.

2.3.6 In Acts 10, Peter underwent a significant change of heart and attitude following the vision that he received on the rooftop. He was challenged at the point of his Jewish cultural prejudice. This cleared the way for the Apostles' acceptance that the Gospel could have an impact on Gentiles as well as Jews. The reluctance of the traditionally minded Church based in Jerusalem to accept this fact resulted in the significant transfer of the centre of operations from Jerusalem to Antioch (a Gentile centre).

2.3.7 These developments illustrate the inclusive influence when the Church is being the true Church, i.e. the Body of Christ, at its best, and also conversely, when tradition and prejudice play a disproportionate role, exclusiveness becomes the more noticeable feature.

The Letters

2.3.8 In the New Testament letters, we have two principal passages where both the Apostles Paul and James recognised the dangers of the Church fellowship being restricted by tradition, which in turn harbours prejudice.

2.3.9 In 1 Corinthians 1:10–3:22, Paul deals with this problem, which was apparent in the Church in Corinth. Not only were exclusive attitudes manifest, but it also led to a divisive spirit and partisanship. These often go hand in hand. James attacks the fairly blatant prejudice in the churches that he addressed – James 2:1–13.

2.3.10 It is important to remember at this point that there is also inclusiveness indicated in our common identity with humanity in its fallen state – Romans 3:23.

2.3.11 In Galatians 3:26–29, Paul reminds believers that from whatever different ethnic, religious or social background they have come, through their faith in, and relationship to Christ, they are all one. Christ unites them all.

2.3.12 In Ephesians 2:14 the apostle makes clear that the work of Jesus is to break down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile “for He Himself is our peace”.

2.3.13 At the last times, however, there will be both **Inclusion** and **Exclusion** – **Inclusion** in that the whole human race will bow the knee before the Sovereign Lordship of Christ Jesus – Philippians 2:6–11. The acknowledging of Jesus as both Lord and Saviour will in a sense, be exclusive – 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. The crucial factor in all this will be the inclusive purpose of grace providing the opportunity in these days of grace for anyone who believes to be saved! – 2 Corinthians 6:2.

2.3.14 In the well-known passage, 1 Corinthians 13:4–7, Paul reminds us that God’s Love underpins our inclusion within his Covenant of Grace, while confirming and illustrating just how we must love others.

3. Social Inclusion Defined

3.1 The Group was anxious to find any useful definitions of **Social Inclusion**. It began an exhaustive search of the literature on the topic and came upon a large selection of definitions. Moreover there was a great deal more literature on the topic than had been realised and covering a wider area of social concern than that for which it had

initially been prepared.

3.2 It has to be said that many of the essays and papers, which were read, were worthy but dull. Some of the material had the marks of one professional in the social work field writing earnestly for other professionals in the field. The sheer bulk of material at times threatened to overwhelm, and the Group sometimes felt itself to be adrift on a sea of lengthy erudite definitions and explanations – some of which served to conceal as much as they revealed.

3.3 However, some Public Information material issued by the Government provided a concise and valuable clarification of the definition of the term **Social Inclusion** offered by the Prime Minister. It also reflected the dichotomy of defining **Social Exclusion** in order to identify **Social Inclusion**.

3.4 The definition offered by the Prime Minister helped considerably in making sense of so much that had already been studied and by its simplicity gave a new confidence in continuing to wrestle with the issue. Herewith is the definition which was found to be so useful:

“A shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.

Social Exclusion is complex; its causes are connected, and its effects themselves become causes of further exclusion; for example, poverty is both a key cause of Social Exclusion and a key effect. Action to promote **Social Inclusion** therefore needs to be both comprehensive and co-ordinated: it must address the full range of issues facing an individual, a family or a community.”

3.5 Following-on from this defining statement, in the same Government publication “**Social Inclusion Strategy; opening the door to a better Scotland**”. (Scottish Office) there was provided a further explanatory statement of what **Social Inclusion** looks like in practice. This was found to be of real help and is reproduced here:

“Many people across Scotland are engaged in action to promote **Social Inclusion**, working with individuals, families and communities to identify routes out of exclusion and pathways into inclusion through employment, education, housing, or healthcare. So, for example the Personal Adviser who is working with people on the New Deal to secure employment; the volunteer street-worker who is supporting homeless young people to find secure housing; a health visitor working with teenage mothers; the social worker who is making sure the needs of a vulnerable child are addressed; or the teacher who is giving extra attention to a pupil who is struggling to pick up basic literary skills; all are making a contribution to the chances people in Scotland will have to be included in society. Sometimes this action will have an immediate effect; sometimes long-term but it is all part of the one concerted contribution.”

3.6 This concerted, linked, comprehensive approach which acknowledges the complexity and inter-relatedness of so many of the problems which beset people and which shut people out – this is what **Social Inclusion** looks like in practice.

3.7 So, to conclude, **Social Inclusion** is not a contemporary, trendy term. It is part of a vocabulary which is becoming ever more important for those who are serious about tackling the problems of society. The Church has much to learn from the current studies – and it has some crucial insights to contribute. So much of what is involved in **Social Inclusion** chimes in so well with the witness of the Christian Faith – the totality of approach; the subtlety of sinfulness, not just in the individual but in families and communities; the way the hand of God reaches out in love through the hands of all who care for their neighbour and serve their neighbour irrespective of condition or creed; the care for the bodies of people as well as their souls – and the care for the body politic.

3.8 Social Inclusion is not just a term which the Church should learn to live with. It is an attitude and an involvement which the Church should recognise as being of its own heritage of faith. It is a challenge, now, to

continue in the world to love our neighbour with the gentleness of doves and the wisdom of serpents and a compelling compassion for the excluded.

4. Review of Publications on social Inclusion/ Exclusion

4.1 The publications reviewed are to be found in Addendum B. This addendum contains summaries of materials that are relevant to the subject of **Social Inclusion** and relate to Social Care and the work of the Church.

4.2 What follows, by way of an addition to the summaries are thoughts on **Social Inclusion**, mainly inspired by the materials. There is an assessment of the significance of **Social Inclusion** to the Church as a whole and a follow up review of the publications “**God in Our Place**” and “**Good News For a Change**” and of the ‘socially inclusive’ activities undertaken by congregations and Church organisations throughout Scotland.

4.3 Social Inclusion – The Importance of the Concept to the Church

4.3.1 Although the term **Social Inclusion** is relatively new, the conditions which bring it about have been with us for many, many years. There is no doubt that in recent years politicians and academics have been working hard to draw our attention to this and at the same time develop ways of coping with it. Some commentators and academics have been critical of this, and especially of the emergence of the UK Government’s **Social Exclusion Unit**. Barry (1998) describes it as “A politically attractive concept but one which diverts attention away from the need for radical change and encourages compliance with the status quo.”

4.3.2 The Church should bear this sort of comment in mind when assessing any new concept, but it would be wrong to dismiss the concept of **Social Inclusion** as merely a trendy notion. After all much of the thinking surrounding the concept has been traditionally embodied

in the Christian ethic. The Church as a whole needs to become more aware of **Social Inclusion** and to alert itself to the important changes which are taking place in society.

4.3.3 There appears to be an authentic attempt to move away from the ‘Individualism’ of the 1980s and 90s. There is a positive attempt to rediscover the concept of ‘Community’ and ‘Neighbourliness’. There is a definite move away from rigid political ideologies towards a form of government and management of society based on practical idealism. The Church should be encouraging politicians and academics in their efforts to pursue policies and practices which encourage **Social Inclusion** and whenever possible be taking an active part itself. Faith is not only about the ‘Church’ as such. It is about people, and recognising God’s love for all humanity to the extent that He is in us. Therefore whenever we embrace His people as a Church, we embrace Him.

4.3.4 Today the church needs to be aware of the emergence of the so called ‘underclass’ who are trapped by the socio-economic factors inherent in working against **Social Inclusion**. Society has developed into a definite ‘them and us’ environment with a perceived decline in moral standards and all the dark and threatening consequences which accompany such a decline.

4.3.5 Social Inclusion is the very essence of the Christian faith. Jesus himself implores us

“Anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me” (*Matthew 25:40*)

For the Church the consequences of not doing anything are immense and fearful.

5. Current Initiatives in the Church

5.1 Work of The Board of Social Responsibility: At present the Board provides services to a range of client groups and in a variety of settings.

Residential work involves service users who are older, have dementia, mental health problems, learning disabilities, challenging behaviour, drug and alcohol problems, offending behaviour, children with special

needs and those who are homeless. There are counselling services in Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Dundee and Glasgow, which help individuals with a range of difficulties, and four day centres for those with mental illness. There is a specialist service for drug users in Edinburgh. A project in Dundee pays particular attention to women and children’s special needs. There are three supported accommodation projects for adults with various difficulties, and two day resource centres for adults with a learning disability. Respite care is offered in residential units, if a permanent place is not being used. The Home Support Service provides care and support to individuals in their own homes and in the wider community as and when they require it.

5.2 Work of the Wider Church: A great deal of work is being done by local churches in response to the local need for individuals and larger groups of people. Much of this work is going on quietly and routinely, without the particular initiative being publicised, but this should be acknowledged along with the concern of many congregations to include any who are marginalised. A most recent example has been the development of a new charity “Glasgow the Caring City” developed by Rev Neil Galbraith and his Church. Involving a range of volunteers including those from other denominations and faiths, they offered acceptance and practical care to Kosovo refugees. From this work grew the charity.

5.2.1 Examples of good practice initiatives are:

Ruchill Tea Room, Glasgow — Run by the local Minister and Priest, it is operational five days per week and used by local people, e.g. drug addicts, people with complex mental and emotional needs. The tea room is run by people from the congregations, but the groups like AA, NA, Al-anon, Al-a-teen are run by specialists. The volunteers are all Christians as the aim is to change people spiritually. Other services offered include outreach, summer mission and a nearly new shop.

Membership of the congregation is dropping, which possibly allows the Minister to allocate his time differently and in less conventional tasks. His approach is to use the analogy of golf – playing the ball where it lies. In other

words, the Church should go to where the people are and be the place where God's power is seen to help.

The greatest problem encountered is how to move people on a spiritual basis.

The Wynd Centre, Paisley – This is operated by several local congregations. It is run mainly by volunteers, with a small nucleus of selected staff. They start each day with a time of prayer and worship. The Centre is used to offer counselling. Rooms are available for self-help groups and the Centre also runs a youth club. The people involved at the Centre find it provides an ideal opportunity and venue, both to reflect on spiritual matters and provide a service to others.

Ripple Project – Edinburgh – This was established three years ago by St Margaret's Church to make **Social Inclusion** a reality in the local area. It provides an after school club, parent and toddler group; youth volunteer scheme and, in partnership with Capability Scotland, a lunch club. There is also time given to listen to people and several of the volunteers have trained in listening skills. Should there be a requirement individuals may then be referred for specific counselling. Local GPs and social workers refer individuals to the project for advice and support.

5.2.2 Other Examples Currently Operated by Local Churches

Street Level, Carlisle – This is a service, which is in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council and aims to work amongst young people.

Birsay, Harray and Sandwick, Orkney – This is a project involving the three churches, where the children have taken the lead to unite the congregations.

St Andrew's Church, Blantyre – There is a lunch club, a tea room and a pastoral care group. The pastoral care group has been trained in bereavement counselling and facilitates Christian education programmes, including seminars, home groups and study groups. They also have a regular parish magazine, which spreads the good news

throughout the whole parish, not just to the Church members.

Church and Community Projects, Bearsden – This project gives a service to carers of sufferers from Alzheimer's disease and also stroke victims. The Community also initiated a talking newspaper in the district and this is now made available by local services and the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

The Tryst, Pitlochry – This works in partnership with Chequers, one of the local Social Responsibility Homes, and provides day facilities for older people. There is also a family centre, which has a children's nursery. It also provides after school and holiday childcare for parents working within the Pitlochry community.

Colston Milton Children's Project, Glasgow – This is a project, which is run on artistic lines and develops artistic talent in young people in the Church and community.

Whitfield Church, Dundee – A day centre for elderly people and also specialist day care run by Alzheimer's Scotland is provided. There is also a community mediation scheme funded by the former urban programme. There is a breakfast club for children.

The Tuesday Club, Bo'ness – This is providing support for people who have dementia.

Parish Care, Comrie – This is a joint initiative between the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic and Scottish Episcopal Churches. It is run by volunteers from these Churches and provides a day club and home visiting service for older people.

The Abigail Project, Possilpark, Glasgow – This is a run by a group of women and is a safe café for drug users and also a support group for their families.

St Andrew's Church, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton – This Church works closely with the neighbouring Roman Catholic Church in the local scheme of St Peters. They share services at Easter. They share outings and activities together. One person says, "Our Church is a humble wee

building, but we love it and all it stands for. It is well used by the community and God is always there.”

5.3 From these examples it is evident that the Church is active within the community in a variety of projects and initiatives. The work includes a broad range of people, many of whom could be experiencing **Social Exclusion**. Perhaps the way forward in developing further such work is for a greater degree of communication between the initiatives and the wider Church. In this way projects can learn from each other and new initiatives can avoid the pitfall of ‘reinventing the wheel’. The two publications “**God in Our Place**” and “**Good News for a Change**” are good examples of this type of communication, as is

the **database** information held by the Board of Social Responsibility or Congregational Liaison. This records initiatives undertaken by individual congregations and acts as an information exchange to promote and support the Church’s socially based activities.

6. Questionnaire and Responses

6.1 Questionnaire: The Board of Social Responsibility is preparing a report on **SOCIAL INCLUSION** with implications for the Board and possibly for the wider Church. We would welcome your co-operation with this brief survey questionnaire.

What does social inclusion mean to you? (Responses incorporated in other questions)

In what ways have you experienced social exclusion?

In your background or circumstances?

1

2

3

By something which happened?

1

2

3

How did each circumstance or event leave you feeling?

1

2

3

1

2

3

What for you would make a big difference?

How could this be achieved?

The Group considered that it would be very important to ask questions of those with an experience of exclusion.

6.2 A questionnaire was designed (**6.1**), which was circulated to a number of the Board's service units. There was also a meeting at a prison with some prisoners and the Prison Chaplains.

6.3 The following are comments made by those responding. Comments are from individual and groups, who have experienced **Social Exclusion**. Their particular situations reflect all the issues.

Question: In what ways have you experienced Social Exclusion?

In your Background and Circumstances?

- Brought myself up, no one wanted me.
- Left out, especially Christmas and birthdays.
- Too little money: choice: freedom.
- Bad school
- Dad was nasty.
- No help to do jobs properly.
- Limited choice: work: social life.
- Primary school – discrimination for not writing and reading properly.
- Secondary school – picked on by teachers.
- Prison – loss of family: unemployment.

- In hospital – mental illness.
- At work – attitudes.
- At Church – attitudes.
- Bullied at school – other children.
- Teenage friends.
- When mentally ill.
- Anywhere socially.

By something which happened?

- Attitude of people to me, even professionals.
- People calling me names.
- Name-calling about appearance.
- Addiction to drugs.
- Housing application refused.
- Prison, and consequent stigmatisation/bar to employment
- Addiction to drugs and alcohol.
- Being unable to mix with other staff at work.
- Seen as strange by people I didn't know.
- When I didn't dress right.
- On school trips – seen as different.
- At parties – no one would speak to me.
- Treatment by 'friends'
- Terms people used when I went into hospital.
- Feeling different on buses or trains.
- Staff abuse, List D schools.

Question: How did each circumstance or event leave you feeling?

- Good, when I can do things independently.
- Accept not being wanted.
- Just another day – but it hurts.
- Annoyed and sad.
- Feel like ‘crap’, angry.
- Ashamed and sorry for other people.
- Terrible.
- Hurt.
- Sad and angry.
- Bitter.
- Feeling ‘less than’ other people at school.
- Hostile to the Church.
- Numb when ‘using’: remorseful and worthless when not.
- Angry.
- Feel better when able to communicate with people.
- Lost.
- Depressed.
- Shattered.
- Alone.
- Scary.
- Frustrated.
- Embarrassed.
- Angry at treatment by people.
- Lonely.
- Not Loved.
- Lots of fear.
- That people are better than me.
- People are looking at me.
- Better after alcohol.
- Frightened.
- Loss of confidence.

Question: What for you would make a big difference?

- To be taken seriously.
- More money.
- More involvement.
- Power-driven people not allowed to teach children.
- Education.
- Understanding addictions as more disease than a disgrace.

- Prayer.
- Schemes to support ex-addicts to discourage youngsters.
- Work.
- Money.
- Housing.
- Family!
- Support.
- People to have more awareness.
- More awareness in TV programmes and advertising in papers.
- Christianity.
- Learn values at school and in assembly.
- Teaching on mental illness at school.
- If people were not so ignorant about mental illness.
- Better understanding at a younger age.
- Reaching out to people who are cruel: they need help.
- Improved staff attitudes in institutional care.
- Ministers and Priests not abusing kids.
- Respecting privacy of others.
- Church should not be involved in List D school.

6.4 Comments

6.4.1 It seems clear that many people have experienced being excluded all their lives. Some experienced it in their families and local community before they were at school. They and others then experienced the same thing within schools – from teachers and from other children. This ranged from feeling left out and not being accepted to being picked on and/or victimised as different.

6.4.2 Unemployment, drug and alcohol concerns, mental health, offending and learning disability all contribute in different ways to individuals feeling unworthy, unacceptable, powerless, frustrated and with a general lack of confidence. Being unable to change or influence things around them and not being listened to usually made matters worse. Individuals focused upon improved education, public awareness, acceptance, involvement, faith and finance.

7. Attitudes and Behaviour

7.1 We are all prejudiced in some way or another. For some of us, these prejudices are rarely brought up to the surface. We might not come into contact with individuals or groups who provoke those feelings in us. We might though have strong feelings against prostitution or homosexual practices or drug users or immigrants or unemployed people without even having met an individual from those groups. We may think that our feelings have a reasonable ethical base. We may think that our opinions are simply 'normal'.

7.2 Were we to meet someone though from one of our 'pet hate' groups, without knowing his/her background, it is quite likely we would find something about him/her we could relate to. We might find him/her reasonable, friendly, even interesting. Until, that is, our particular button was pressed. Consider these other statements from the questionnaire and interviews, and see if any of them would cause, in you, even a slight stepping-back from the person who said it.

- 'I am a Catholic'. 'I am a Rangers' supporter'.
- 'I think the army has a lot to offer the youth of today'.
- 'I believe in voluntary euthanasia'.
- 'I had an abortion a few years ago'.

7.3 It is shockingly easy to make snap judgements about another person and then stay forever on our guard in relation to him/her. What is doubly shocking is that it is often only a single word which triggers our response. Some of the above statements can be modified by other key words, which might allow us to keep relating to that person, long enough to get to know him/her.

- 'I had an abortion a few years ago, because I was raped'.
- 'I think cannabis should be legalised for the use of sufferers of multiple sclerosis'.
- 'I believe in voluntary euthanasia for the terminally ill, who are fully aware of what they are doing'.

But often this is not the case. How someone looks, how someone speaks, how someone dresses, where someone comes from – we are judging all the time, often

running to the head of the queue to cast the first stone.

Why? There are all sorts of debates about why we have prejudices and how they work.

7.4 One line of thinking says that if we are told by someone we trust in authority what is right and what is wrong, we will simply accept it. A famous psychological experiment in 1960's America showed that if a school teacher told her class that those with blue eyes were brighter and more able than those with brown eyes, the children in both groups began to act accordingly. The blue-eyed children started to treat the brown-eyed children as second class in every way. The next day, she reversed it. She had been wrong. Brown-eyed children were brighter. This time the blue-eyed children started to make mistakes, achieve less, and be badly treated by the brown-eyed children.

7.5 Another line of thinking is that we hold strong prejudices about particular issues because of unhappy experiences in our own past, with which we have not come to terms. For example; suppose that our early childhood had been dominated by an authoritarian, punishing father, that there had been no kindness or encouragement there, where all aspiration was squashed. Suppose that later in life we became aware of a group who appeared to have everything we did not have – strong supportive family networks, encouragement to their children to aspire and do well, financially successful and good at business. And suppose also that this was in part or historically an immigrant group. Our inner resentments, held in check for so long, might easily attach themselves to this group. We might find all sorts of criticisms to make of them. We might feel that we did not like them at all, that they should not be in our country...

7.6 Hitler's background was something like the one described. He, like many Germans at that time, found a convenient scapegoat to carry his buried resentments – the entire Jewish race. But even this was not enough for the amount of inner rage and hatred he carried. Eventually any group who differed from the Aryan norm was attacked – travelling people, homosexuals, mentally ill, disabled and black people. The groups Nazi Germany

set itself against read like a checklist of the socially excluded.

7.7 Hitler's Germany is a convenient and terrible example of the end result of prejudice, but it is not as remote as we might think! Every country has its secret, or not-so-secret history of how it has dealt with minority and vulnerable groups of people. Every individual will have his own experience of rejecting or excluding or oppressing another person, for no very good reason other than he could get away with it, and it fitted with a prejudice he had at the time. The history of all religions is littered with atrocities committed against non-believers or heretics – those who held different views from ours. Christianity does not have a good record in this respect.

7.8 Social Inclusion has always been difficult because so many people are continually excluded. Much of our comment so far has been about individuals; let us now consider groups of people from a sociological base.

7.9 As we grow up, we each learn a pattern of expectations which influences the way we behave. Norms and rules affect our responses and contribute to our roles in social groups – in family, among friends, in work and leisure situations. Employment offers an example. Those of us fortunate enough to have paid employment belong to a majority grouping; we are included. There are no particular rules which attach to this membership other than remaining in paid employment. Those who are unemployed are excluded where a variety of rules (or requirements) apply to them. Children and older people form groupings, which we all understand, while each group is viewed and treated differently. Mental illness is an example which is less easily defined and while not a clear grouping, often becomes labelled as one through a lack of understanding or apprehension. It is also an example, as with offenders, where our understanding is heavily influenced by media information. Single parents, those with no home, those with problems of alcohol or drug abuse, those who are physically disabled, those with learning disability, can each be defined, and each can experience its particular version of exclusion.

7.10 There are other groupings where we make more of a choice, or do we? We may support a football team or other sports club, but what led to us making those choices? Church membership could be viewed as another social grouping. Here the rules would have come from the teaching of the Gospels and the wisdom of the Old Testament. Membership will be according to a recognised process (or ritual) and meeting certain criteria. But if we look more closely, we would recognise that for some the allegiance to a particular church or denomination can be controlled by traditional family and cultural expectations and by continuing loyalty. This loyalty may have little or nothing to do with the truth of Jesus.

7.11 In church terms included people meet the agreed criteria of each Church. In Jesus' terms those who are included are those who have made the decision to follow Him.

7.12 Some differences in social groupings are confirmed by events and conflicts from hundreds of years ago. Some differences are confirmed from assorted information; the accuracy or otherwise of our information is then crucial to our understanding. In some situations, passions and commitment are often fuelled by the conviction of correctness and right in the one group and the fear and apprehension of the other. It is also recognised that larger, or majority, groupings will seek to dominate, if not to control, the smaller minority.

7.13 Social stratification describes other social groupings with different levels. But class is a divisive and exclusive concept defining us by category. More recently there have been examples of movement. Support for the Conservative Party from 1979 was confirmed and developed by previously 'working class' people becoming included as more 'middle class' by a combination of property and share ownership. New Labour support was developed by rearranging the traditional boundaries of support and seeking to include and represent the needs of a broader, if not all, segment(s) of the population. Through such a time of change, some redefining is helpful. If class is divisive, then inclusion as a concept has the potential to unify. Clearly there are those who are

excluded, who are socially disadvantaged by poor housing, poor education, unemployment and poor prospects. There are large groupings in our cities, who do not feel part of our society. Those growing up there will quickly recognise that they are likely to experience exclusion from school and employment. Others are excluded across all previously defined 'class' groupings, by age, appearance, attitude and actions.

7.14 There has been an identified trend away from the passing on of traditional values. With family and community more segmented traditional expectations and controls have been challenged. More individual choice has brought innovation and opportunity but less community accountability, more individualism and less collectivism. But a new collectivism may be evolving as people recognise once again that co-operation underpinned by honesty, reciprocity and responsibility is a better way.

7.15 The hope of inclusion is for the future. We can all aspire to be included and to include others as a concept for our whole population where everyone could come to feel involved and be a part of a total society. We can each experience a form of exclusion in some part of our lives.

7.16 The practice and policy of exclusion separates, isolates and confirms difference. The implications are powerful and yet it is still easy for a caring person to be complacently unaware of the impact. It is equally easy for excluded persons to consider that they deserve the way in which other groups behave towards them. Some, of course, become angry, while others become depressed.

7.17 At this point this Report requires to move from the conceptual to the more active progression of action through the Board. A Self-Awareness Questionnaire to stimulate personal thinking, and the outline of a possible basis for a Code of Practice will be shared with the Board; both will require further development before wider use.

8. Conclusion

8.1 This Report has sought to open up the whole question

of **Social Inclusion** and show the extent to which **Social Inclusion** is relevant only when it is integrated into our attitudes and behaviour.

8.2 Although the Church, at all levels of participation, has been for long committed to Social Justice, and although there may be more understanding among Church people than non-church people about **Social Inclusion**, there still remains a major need for increased awareness, which must be addressed by Ministers, Kirk Sessions and Congregations.

8.3 It is recommended that the Board determine how this Report can be used to develop, and where appropriate change, the attitudes and practices in the Board and in the wider Church.

ADDENDUM A

Triumph House/Forward Press are publishers of Christian poetry and over the past few years have published a number of Anthologies which reflect the thoughts and ideas of contemporary poets on the state of our society today. The following is an example of this work:

The State of the Nation

There is no God forsaken place
Even in this careless land
where violence does not strike
Randomly, frequently
With no apparent plan

God has not forsaken us
Even in our fearful place
Forgive the man his violence Lord
For violence has a human face.

God has not forsaken us in our madness to succeed
And this selfish society, based on human greed
Where fat cats stalk, randomly, frequently
To steal the bread of homeless folk, and watch them fall
and bleed

The have's and have nots
divided by design
Forgive the man his gluttony Lord
For it is a human crime.

God has not forsaken this age of the individual
With its poison pushers preying on the addictions of the
vulnerable.
Where naked power menaces, randomly, frequently,
Malignant violence, rape and death become almost
fashionable.

God speaks but we do not hear his voice
Morality has been replaced by choice
In the midst of all this sorry lot
'tis God Himself that's been forgot.

(Bill Campbell 1996 –
Faith in Society Published by Forward Press)

A Father Knows No Sadness

A father knows no sadness,
No deeper-searching pain,
than children who have taken,
But will not give again.
What profit from his loving,
If love is never shared,
what insult to his giving,
If nothing can be spared?

They wait for our remembrance,
The ones who live in need,
The ones our father trusts us
To shelter and to feed.
And if you truly love him,
Then they are precious too,
And if they are a burden,
That burden is for you.

And one day when he asks us,
To say what we have done,
Our answers will go flying
Towards the setting sun.
And how we shall remember
The truth that we were told,
As every word that leaves us
Is burned, or turned to gold.

(Adrian Plass –
Clearing Away the Rubbish)

I dreamed death came the other night
And heaven's gate swung wide:
An angel with a halo bright
Ushered me inside
And there, to my astonishment
Stood folk I'd judged and labelled
As 'quite unfit', 'of little worth'
And 'spiritually disabled'.
Indignant words rose to my lips.
But never were set free.
For every face showed stunned surprise.
No one expected me!

A Loner's Prayer

Why don't you look beneath our clothes
And see what's underneath?
Why do you take what we show
As what we will be?
Don't we all have feelings
No matter how we look?
Should you really think
That the cover makes the book?
Look into the depths
Of the hole that is our hearts.
Think of how we feel
When you tear our hopes apart.

Think of how it hurts us
 When you point and laugh.
 Think how when we see you
 We take another path.
 Each time that you hurt us
 Another candle dies,
 The candles being dreams
 That make us glad to be alive.
 Look inside yourself
 Then take a look at me,
 If you're really better
 What difference do you see?

(Linzi Phillimore –
Big Issue 11–17 November 1999)

ADDENDUM B

Literature Review

1. Social Exclusion and Social Work (*Barry & Halbert 1998*)
2. Social Exclusion, Poverty and Unemployment (*Tony Atkinson*)
3. Employment & Social Cohesion (*Andrew Britton*)
4. Childhood Disadvantage and Intergenerational Transmission of Economic Status (*Stephen Machin*)
5. Labour Market Flexibility and Skills Acquisition: Is there a Trade-off?" (*Wiji Arulampalam And Alison L Booth*)
6. Are British Workers Getting More Skilled? (Francis Green, David Ashton, Brendan Burchill, Bryn Davies and *Alan Felstead*)
7. NCH Action for Children
8. Intergenerational and Life-course Transmission of Social Inclusion (Researched by *John Hobcroft*)
9. Thatcherism – New Labour and the Welfare State
10. The Legacy of Parental Divorce: Social, Economic

and Demographic Experiences in Adulthood

11. Tackling Social Exclusion – British and European Perspectives
12. Sustaining Community Inclusion for People with Profound Disabilities: Opportunities and Barriers
13. Scottish Office/Scottish Executive Reports
“Social Exclusion in Scotland”, A Consultation Paper (The Scottish Office)
“Social Inclusion – opening the door to a better Scotland” (The Scottish Office)
“Social Inclusion – opening the door to a better Scotland” – Summary (The Scottish Office)
“Social Inclusion – opening the door to a better Scotland” – Strategy (The Scottish Office)
“Social Justice – a Scotland where everyone matters” (The Scottish Executive)
“Making it Happen” (The Scottish Executive)
“All Together: Local Action to Tackle Poverty” (The Scottish Executive)
“Inclusive Communities” (The Scottish Executive)
“Excluded Young People” (The Scottish Executive)

N.B. A summary of the material listed in 1–12 is available on request to the Board of Social Responsibility, Charis House, 47 Milton Road East, Edinburgh EH15 2SR

Footnotes

- ¹ From Poem “*Children Learn what they Live*”
- ² From ‘*Challenge of Need*’ .
- ³ Office for National Statistics
- ⁴ General Registers Office (Scotland)
- ⁵ *Parents Anonymous Inc, USA*
- ⁶ All biblical quotations are taken from the New International Version.
- ⁷ Report by Ayr Housing Aid Centre and Barnardos Homeless Service 1999.

- ⁸ “Our Homeless Neighbour” Issue 13 Winter 98/99, the newsletter of the Scottish Churches Housing Agency.
- ⁹ “Homelessness and Children’s Education, Scottish Homes Report No. 64, Dec 1998.
- ¹⁰ Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: Operation of the Homeless Person’s Legislation in Scotland 1987–88 to 1997–98: National and Local Authority Analyses HSG/1999/3.
- ¹¹ National Monitoring and Interim Evaluation of the Rough Sleepers Initiative in Scotland 1999.
- ¹² Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: HSG/1999/3.
- ¹³ Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: HSG/1999/3.
- ¹⁴ Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: HSG/1999/3.
- ¹⁵ Church and Nation Report to the General Assembly 1998.
- ¹⁶ Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: HSG/1999/3.
- ¹⁷ Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: HSG/1999/3.
- ¹⁸ Wendy Alexander, MSP, Minister for Communities, in her address to the SCHA Conference “Homelessness – The Human Dimension” 23 Sept 1999.
- ¹⁹ Information taken from the Church and Nation Report to the General Assembly 1991, section 4.24.
- ²⁰ Statistical Bulletin Housing Series: HSG/1999/3
- ²¹ Wendy Alexander, MSP, in Press Release 16 Sept 1999.
- ²² Wendy Alexander, MSP, 23 Sept 1999.
- ²³ Information contained in “*The Challenge of Need*” by Lewis L L Cameron, The St Andrew Press 1971.
- ²⁴ “Action Plea After Huge Rise in Hostel Drug Deaths” by Mark Daly in *The Scotsman* 30 Nov 1999.
- ²⁵ “It’s safer sleeping under bridges or park benches” by Mark Daly in *The Scotsman* 30 Nov 1999.
- ²⁶ “What happened to the Hobos?” by Reg McKay in *The Herald* 12 Dec 1999.