

# III. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

## 1. Introduction

Give a man, a woman or a child a Bible and that individual has a library of sixty six books – the most precious, wonderful and complete library on earth. There is not another that may be compared to it in the whole world, and there never will be. This library, the Word of the Living God, cannot be enhanced by any superlatives of men and no slur can detract from its value or its glory. It is loved by the Lord's people and they go so far as to take its advice and seek to hide it in their hearts that they might not sin against God. The Eternal Lord has seen to its writing, its printing, its translation and its preserving and we love it and treasure it above any library ever gathered in the history of the world. If we are found in Christ then it is in our blood to make it known and to preach its message of salvation through repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We take it home to our own hearts and lives as the unique and only guide as to how we are to glorify and enjoy God forever, and so we seek to present it to all men everywhere.

So why does the Church require a Publications Committee if not to publish and supply copies of this library to the world? We are thankful with a thankfulness which we will never be fully able to express that our Lord has put it into the hearts of many of His people to set up organisations that do that very work of translating, printing and distributing the Bible's library of books. The Lord God is publishing His Word. We have a responsibility to support the work and help maintain the integrity of these societies. So what have we to publish ourselves as a small Protestant, Reformed denomination? Our report will show you.

The day may come when like those in former Communist-controlled lands in Eastern Europe we will have to copy the Bible and other books by hand. We are thankful that such a time is not yet here and so we are free to publish what will be of help to our people, what will challenge the unconverted and what will ever speak of Christ. May the Lord help us to do so.

## 2. Magazines

**2.1 Editors** Our magazines are handmaidens to our Church and they exist to inform and instruct our people young and old. We are grateful to Rev. William Macleod and Rev. Harry Woods, editors of the *Witness* and *Explorer* respectively, for their diligent work in preparing edifying and stimulating material for us each month, which is no small task. The editors are accountable to the Committee who are in turn answerable to the General Assembly. This important aspect of the Committee's work is directed by a policy set by the Assembly in 2001 and it is perhaps worthwhile reminding ourselves of its main points:

### *Editorial Policy*

The material in the magazine and its supplement will be fully consistent with the doctrine, worship and government of the Free Church of Scotland.

There will be a balance of theological, devotional, historical, ethical, practical and missionary articles.

There will also be comment on current affairs in church and state, book reviews, church news, occasional Gaelic articles, financial information and a church directory. There will be no letters section in the magazine.

The magazine will be produced to the highest standard, making use of all the means of modern technology, and maintaining a balance of text, pictures and colour.

The magazine will be made available on the web site.

### *Policy for Editors*

The Editors will be responsible to the Publications Committee. They will have the assistance of a proof-reading committee consisting of the Rev. John MacLeod, Principal Clerk, the Rev. David Blunt and Mr Maurice Grant.

The Editors will be responsible for the writing and the commissioning of articles.

The Editors will be responsible for involving as many people in the Church as possible in producing material for the magazine and acquiring news from around the congregations.

The Editors will ensure a proper balance in the content of each issue, considering the needs of all sections of the Church.

Bearing these things in mind the Committee will continue to give thought as to how the magazines may best serve the interests of our Church and in this they welcome any suggestions from our people. As four years have elapsed since the last appointment of editors another appointment needs to be made and the Committee are recommending that the Assembly thank the present editors and reappoint both Mr Macleod and Mr Woods for a further period of four years.

**2.2 Production** The magazines continue to be printed by MMS-Almac of Keith who do an excellent job, responding to the various ‘emergencies’ which can arise from time to time in a helpful way and with commendable speed. Thanks are due once again to Mr Alasdair Macleod for the work he does on the design and layout of the *Witness* and to Miss Anne MacAulay for compiling and marking the children’s puzzles in the *Explorer*.

**2.3 Subscriptions and Distribution** Mrs Isobel McQueer took over the duties of Subscriptions Secretary from Sandra Judge last year and has settled into the rôle well. The work involves not only subscriptions but also correspondence. The magazine account has now been closed and the funds transferred to the Church’s main account, relieving the Subscriptions Secretary of this responsibility. We express our thanks once again to Mr Donald Robertson who is in charge of the mailing and distribution of the magazines and to Mrs Fionna Macleod who puts the magazines into audio form for the blind.

**2.4 Circulation** Circulation figures for the *Witness* are available for the end of April 2012 (equivalent figures for April 2011 are given in brackets). The print run is currently 1000 copies (1000). At the end of April 2012 the total number of copies being ordered monthly was 833 (838) of which 677 (674) were for congregations and 156 (164) for individual subscribers. Of the individual subscribers 19 (19) were from overseas and 23 (28) were gift subscriptions of which 4 (7) were for overseas. In addition 16 (16) copies were ordered by bookshops, 16 (17) complimentary copies were sent within the UK and 7 (7) copies overseas, making a total circulation of 872 (878) copies. There are also 125 copies of the *Explorer* ordered separately.

Subscription rates for the *Witness* (including the *Explorer*) within the UK were increased from the beginning of 2012. Congregational subscriptions are now £24.00 (previously £22.00). Individual subscriptions are now £27.50 (previously £25.00). The rates within Europe and overseas were unchanged. The Committee are aware of the obligation resting upon them to attempt to balance the finances of the magazines. This is by no means a simple task. Printing and postage costs are continually rising – something which is clearly beyond our control unless we alter the format of the magazines, which we would prefer not to do. Subscription rates must be adjusted periodically in order to cover increases in costs but if they are raised too sharply the number of subscriptions tends to fall. To facilitate subscribing the Committee are investigating the use of PayPal as a means of paying subscriptions via the Church web site.

For a number of years the June issue of the *Witness* has been designed for use in the purpose of evangelism. Last year 13000 extra copies were printed and made use of throughout our Church and it is expected that a

similar number will be printed again this year. We pray that the Lord will bless the distribution of these magazines to the eternal good of many.

### 3. Publications

#### 3.1 Existing Publications

Last year stocks of the Committee's publications were moved to a new location and the opportunity was taken to discard any copies that had become unfit for sale. Also since then, rather than have material sitting unsold and therefore unread, as had been the case with most of our titles, there has been a policy to distribute items free of charge as appropriate so that they are at least in circulation and hopefully being made use of. This means that it is difficult to calculate figures for the number of copies actually sold and therefore we give figures which represent sales *and* complimentary distribution (plus wastage) of our existing titles at the end of April 2012 (with figures for 2010 in brackets where appropriate). The figures must therefore be regarded as approximate:

- (a) *Where is God now Gone?* by Rev. John J. Murray: 1240 copies sold or distributed free (1146) (out of 1250 copies printed in November 2003). 10 copies remaining.
- (b) *Sing the Lord's Song* by Rev. John W. Keddie: 346 copies sold or distributed free (173) (out of 500 copies made available to the Committee in May 2004). 154 copies remaining.
- (c) *Giving to the Lord* by Rev. John W. Keddie: 524 copies distributed free (515) (out of 524 copies printed in January 2005 and made available for free distribution in our congregations). 0 copies remaining.
- (d) *Echoes from Scotland's Heritage of Grace* by Rev. Hugh M. Ferrier: 400 copies sold (399) (first printed in May 2007). 16 copies in stock.
- (e) *Year Book 2009*: 516 copies sold or distributed free (461) (out of 525 copies printed in March 2009). 9 copies remaining.
- (f) *The Reformation 1560* by Rev. John J. Murray: 951 copies sold or distributed free (577) (out of 1000 copies printed in May 2010). 49 copies remaining.
- (g) *The Five Points of Calvinism* by Rev. John W. Keddie: 446 copies sold or distributed free (250) (out of 750 copies printed in May 2010). 304 copies remaining.
- (h) *The Lord's Supper* by Rev. John Morrison: 384 copies sold or distributed free (out of 500 copies printed in May 2011). 116 copies remaining.

#### 3.2 New Publications

**Booklets** Last year we reported that the Committee had received a request from the Welfare of Youth & Education Committee to print and distribute an edition of the Shorter Catechism with a new layout for learning devised by Rev. Harry Woods. This title is now ready for publication and may be available in time for the Assembly.

#### 3.3 Future Publications

**Booklets** The 'Finding out about...' series is designed to set out our position on important issues where there seems to be confusion in our day and age. Two titles have been published to date and work is in progress on material dealing with the subjects of Baptism, Funerals, Presbyterianism and the Sabbath. A booklet on Marriage is also planned. It is hoped that the majority of these titles will be ready for publication before the next Assembly.

**Books** In 2009 the Committee approved the printing of 500 copies of a work on the Shorter Catechism by Rev. Murdo A.N. MacLeod, consisting of articles first published in the *Explorer* which have been revised by the author and proofread. With the agreement of Mr MacLeod and with a view to a greater circulation for the work the Committee offered the material to Christian Focus Publications. After consideration the material was declined and the Committee then made contact with Reformation Heritage Books who also declined to publish the work. Mr MacLeod now intends to have his work published privately.

In 2009 the Committee were notified of a work by Mr Maurice Grant on the lives of two Covenanter ministers,

John Kid and John King. They suggested that Mr Grant contact Reformation Heritage Books but after consideration this publisher decided not to go ahead. An approach to Tentmaker Publications also proved unfruitful and the Committee have suggested to Mr Grant that he now try Crown & Covenant Publications.

After interest had been expressed by one of the directors of Evangelical Press in the series of articles on missionaries by Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod which appeared in the *Explorer* Mr Macleod sent three sample articles to this publisher for consideration. Eventually Evangelical Press indicated that they did not intend to publish these articles and the Committee have suggested that Mr MacLeod offer his work to Reformation Heritage Publications instead.

The General Assembly of 2008 instructed the Committee “to take the necessary action to have a draft manuscript prepared in popular format recounting the events leading up to and following the division of 2000.” The Committee appointed Rev. James Gracie to begin work on producing a book on the Division in consultation with Mr Lindsay MacCallum and anyone else who may be suitable. They were pleased to be able to report to last year’s Assembly that a synopsis of the contents of the projected book prepared by Mr Gracie was now to hand. The details of the synopsis are as follows:

#### Synopsis of Book on Division of 2000

1. The Background to the Division
  - 1.1 Allegations against Professor Macleod
  - 1.2 Implications of the allegations against Professor Macleod
2. The Church’s response to the allegations
  - 2.1 The investigations of the allegations against Professor Macleod 1989-90, 1993-94
  - 2.2 The 1995 Assembly
3. Flaws in the investigations and the implications of these flaws
4. The Sheriff Court trial of Professor Macleod and allegations of conspiracy against members and office-bearers of the FCOS
5. Implications of the allegations of conspiracy against members and office-bearers of the FCOS
6. The Church’s response to the Sheriff Court trial of Professor Macleod and allegations of conspiracy against members and office-bearers of the FCOS
7. Concerns within the Church regarding the Professor Macleod issue
  - 7.1 The re-establishing of the FCDA
8. The Church’s response to the concerns of the FCDA
  - 8.1 The establishing of the Special Commission
9. Denial of fundamental principles of the FCOS
  - 9.1 The Right of Continued Protest – A Case For Litigation
  - 9.2 The Headship of Christ
10. The libel against office-bearers of the FCDA
11. The reconstitution of the historic Free Church of Scotland
12. Action in the Scottish Parliament
13. Negotiations with the residual Free Church of Scotland
14. The action in the Court of Session on the Right of Continued Protest
15. The Broadford Case

Work on preparing the material has continued with a narrative of events which has now reached the crucial 1995 Assembly (some work has been done on the theme of conspiracy also). The men who are compiling the book are conscious that it needs to be popular in format and although progress may appear to be slow it is necessary that the material be meticulously researched and checked in order that the contents may stand up to the scrutiny which they will undoubtedly receive when the book is eventually published, God willing.

Following a request from one of our ministers that the Committee consider making their publications available in electronic form so that they can be read in an e-reader the Committee agreed that out-of-print publications would be placed on the Church website in pdf form for free download. It is hoped that this can take place once the redesign of the website is complete.

In 2010 the Committee's stock of publications was transferred from North Uist to a more convenient location near Inverness, making distribution of our titles easier. We are thankful to Mr & Mrs Glenn Fraser for their willingness to help in this matter and for their continual efforts to promote our publications and other sound Christian literature. They are now responsible for orders of our titles.

There is of course plenty of other material that we would wish to publish ourselves or see published. Though the West seems to be awash with Christian literature in a way unknown in the past so much of it is of a dubious quality. We long for our people and indeed people everywhere to read books that will inform and challenge them with regard to the Christian life as it needs to be lived out in our ever-changing world.

#### **4. Web Site**

Of all the items which come within the Committee's remit the Church web site has proven to be the most frustrating in the years since 2000. In 2009 we reported that Rev. Greg MacDonald had requested to be relieved of his rôle as Editorial Overseer of the web site. Last year we reported that the Committee had approached Mr William MacLeod (Ness) to lead the work on designing a new Church web site with Mr Scott Melhuish (Inverness) to assist him. The main aim behind the new design is to improve the layout and navigability of the site and to enable the individuals who will be responsible for supplying material for the site on a regular basis to upload the material directly.

It was anticipated that a prototype of the new site would be available for the Committee's consideration at their meeting in June 2011. However the work has taken much longer than expected and has sadly been affected by ill-health involving the personnel involved. The Committee were able to view the basic design prior to their meeting in March of this year but things have not progressed much since then. It is earnestly to be hoped that the Committee will be in a position to bring formal proposals to next year's Assembly for the editorial and technical oversight of the new web site.

#### **5. Spring Conference**

The Spring Conference was held on 6th April and once again it made use of the modern facilities of the Culduthel Christian Centre, Inverness. The theme this year was 'Family Worship' and the speakers were Rev. John J. Murray and Rev. Graeme Craig (who kindly stood in for Rev. John MacLeod, Tarbat, who had taken unwell some weeks before). The total attendance was slightly down on the previous year with fewer adults at just over 60 but more children at around 30. The Committee's thanks are due to each one of the many individuals who helped with the Conference, in particular to Mr Glenn Fraser for his work in organisation, Mr Lindsay MacCallum as booking secretary, Rev. Harry Woods who once again chaired the proceedings and Miss Anne MacAulay and Miss Flora MacLeod who organised the children's programme.

As with the magazines the Committee are conscious of the need to try and ensure that the Conference does not run at a loss. It was felt necessary to raise the Conference fees slightly this year. While we are grateful for the use of the present venue we are actively exploring more economic options. We are most thankful to Mr Glenn Fraser for his sterling efforts in reducing the cost of the catering. The best solution to the finances of the Conference is for more people to attend! The Committee strongly encourage ministers to make the Conference known and to encourage their people to support what is invariably an enjoyable and spiritually profitable occasion.

## **6. Audio Ministry**

The Audio Ministry provides a selection of sermons from our ministers, including those who are now retired, and has been appreciated both within and beyond our Church. The sermons are in CD format and priced at £1 per CD, including postage and packing. The Committee are grateful to Mr Donald Morgan of Stornoway who having undertaken this work since 2008 is now relinquishing it. We are pleased to be able to report that Mr Bill McQueer has kindly agreed to take on this work. A new list of sermons has been prepared by Mr Morgan and will be distributed with the *Witness* as soon as is practicable.

## **7. The Annals of the Free Church of Scotland 1900-2000**

The Annals of our Church help us to maintain a historic and accurate picture of the Lord's dealings with us, that we might tell it to our children. Mr Maurice Grant continues his work on this project and during the year he was able to expand the database from various sources including material from the Registrar General's Office in Edinburgh. The returns from the 1911 census continue to yield helpful information on the early post-1900 ministers and their families and much of this has now been imported into the database. Once again however we have to note that, given the uncertainty regarding a final settlement of the dispute between the two denominations resulting from the division of the Free Church in January 2000, an approach from the residual body of the Free Church about publication of the project is unlikely in the near future.

## **8. Disruption 2000 Video**

There is nothing new to report on this subject. We simply state once again that while the Committee has an outline narrative from Rev. John J. Murray of the events connected with the disruption of the Church in 2000 for possible use in a video it is unlikely that a video can be produced in the near future. As is evident from an earlier section of this report the Committee are devoting their efforts to a book on the Division.

## **9. Year Book**

The Year Book serves as an aid for our people and for friends elsewhere who visit Scotland and are interested in our places of worship and the times of our services. In addition it contains contact details and other information relevant to the varied work of our Church at home and abroad. We reported last year that the Committee were publishing 500 copies of a new edition of the Year Book which it was hoped would be ready soon. For various reasons publication was delayed but God willing it is hoped that the new edition will be published shortly after the Assembly.

## **10. Press Officer**

The Committee wish to record their thanks to the Rev. John MacLeod (Tarbat) for his work as Press Officer and trust that he will soon recover from his illness.

WILLIAM B. SCOTT, *Convener*  
LINDSAY MACCALLUM, *Vice-convener*

## **PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report of the Publications Committee and thank the Committee and especially the Convener and Vice-convener;
- 2.1 The General Assembly express their grateful thanks to Rev. William Macleod and Rev. Harry Woods for their work as Editors of the *Witness* and *Explorer* respectively and reappoint Mr Macleod and Mr Woods for a further period of four years;
- 2.2 The General Assembly thank Mr Alasdair Macleod for his work on the design and layout of the *Witness*;
- 2.3 The General Assembly thank Miss Anne MacAulay for providing the puzzle page for the *Explorer*;

- 2.4 The General Assembly thank Mrs Isobel McQueer for her diligent work since taking over the post of Subscriptions Secretary last year;
- 2.5 The General Assembly thank Mr Donald Robertson for his work in distributing the Church's magazines;
- 2.6 The General Assembly thank Mrs Fionna Macleod for her work in recording the magazines for the blind;
- 2.7 The General Assembly thank the proof-readers of the magazines for their work;
- 2.8 The General Assembly thank all who from time to time contribute articles both to the *Witness* and the *Explorer*;
- 2.9 The General Assembly note once again the special June issue of the *Witness*, thank those who contributed to it and pray that it would be used for the extension of Christ's Kingdom;
- 3.1 The General Assembly note with pleasure the imminent publication of a new edition of the Shorter Catechism with a revised layout for learning prepared by Rev. Harry Woods. They pray that the Lord will bless this publication to the spiritual good of many;
- 3.2 The General Assembly thank those who are engaged in preparing material on issues of importance to our people in the series 'Finding out about...' and encourage the Committee as they oversee the production of these booklets;
- 3.3 The General Assembly note the information regarding the work on the Shorter Catechism by Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod and pray that it will be possible for this work to be published soon;
- 3.4 The General Assembly note the information regarding the work on the Covenanters John Kid and John King by Mr Maurice Grant and pray that it will be possible for this work to be published soon;
- 3.5 The General Assembly note the information regarding the work on missionaries by Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod and pray that it will be possible for this work to be published soon;
- 3.6 The General Assembly note with satisfaction the progress regarding the preparation of an account of the events leading up to and following the division of 2000 and pray that the efforts of the Committee and those directly involved in the work will know the blessing of the Lord;
- 3.7 The General Assembly thank Mr & Mrs Glenn Fraser for their kind help in storing and distributing the Committee's publications and pray that they will know the Lord's blessing upon their efforts to spread good Christian literature;
- 4.1 The General Assembly note the difficulties which have occurred in relation to the work of redesigning the Church's new web site. They pray that the Committee and those involved in the project will know the Lord's help as they continue their labours;
- 4.2 The General Assembly thank those who have contributed articles to the Church's web site and encourage the brethren to supply suitable material;
5. The General Assembly thank all those involved in the organising and running of the Spring Conference and also Culduthel Christian Centre for the use of their premises. They once again urge ministers to promote

the Conference and encourage their people to attend the Conference;

6. The General Assembly thank Mr Donald Morgan for his work over recent years in producing and distributing CDs of sermons by our ministers. They welcome Mr Bill McQueer to the work and pray the Lord's blessing on this ministry;
7. The General Assembly thank Mr Maurice Grant for his ongoing work in updating information for the Annals of the Free Church of Scotland and once again express the hope that this project may eventually be able to proceed to publication;
8. The General Assembly note the situation regarding the project to produce a video on the disruption of the Church in 2000;
9. The General Assembly note the intended publication of a new edition of the Year Book;
10. The General Assembly thank Rev. John MacLeod (Tarbat) for his work as the Church's Press Officer and pray that he will soon be restored to full health and strength.