

III. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

1. Introduction

The Committee have sought to faithfully discharge their duties over the past year, meeting as required and taking seriously the oversight of our Church's publications and the other matters entrusted to them and giving thought to ways in which they may serve more effectively. That is not an easy task in the days in which we live but we are thankful that our magazines and other publications, though perhaps small in scope when set alongside what is produced by some other publishers, are read and appreciated by our people. Seeking to keep costs to a minimum and maintaining quality is a crucial factor in all that we seek to do, in order that we may deliver good quality reading material that glorifies our Lord and that edifies, challenges and comforts young and old.

The Report this year covers the usual range of our responsibilities. Much of our work has been routine but there have been significant developments with regard to the magazines and the website.

2. Magazines

2.1 Editors

The Committee are grateful to Rev. William Macleod and Rev. Harry Woods, editors of the *Witness* and *Explorer* respectively, for their good work over another year. It will be remembered that last year the Assembly reappointed both editors for a further period of four years. However in January of this year Mr Woods indicated that he wished to give up his editorship and that he would like his appointment to cease from this year's Assembly. Having considered the matter and having established that he is willing that his name should go forward, the Committee are nominating Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod for the post with a recommendation that he be appointed editor of the *Explorer* for a period of three years, the length of the period having been chosen with the aim of keeping the editorships of the two magazines in tandem.

The Committee wish therefore to express to Mr Woods the Church's deep appreciation of his sterling service over many years. We are sure that whoever is eventually appointed as the new editor will find Mr Woods ready to assist, as he always is, with his technical and other skills as required.

2.2 Production

Mr Alasdair Macleod, now Rev. Alasdair Macleod, continues to do most useful work in laying out the *Witness*, and Miss Anne MacAulay puts in hours of dedicated work in putting together the puzzles in the *Explorer* with such ingenuity and then marking the answers. The Assembly's thanks are due to both.

Only the sharp eye will have noticed that the address of the printer which is given on the inside front cover of each magazine has changed to DM Design & Print of Inverness. While grateful to MMS-Almac of Keith for their excellent service over more than twelve years, when the Committee received a substantially lower quote for the magazines from another printer they felt it should be accepted. We believe that the quality from the new printer is very good and we now have more full-colour pages in the *Witness*.

2.3 Subscriptions and Distribution

Mrs Isobel McQueer has continued in her rôle as Subscriptions Secretary which is one she performs most ably. At the end of 2012 the work of magazine distribution was transferred from Mr Donald Robertson to Mr Bill McQueer. We therefore thank Mr Robertson for his labours over the last few years, which he

cheerfully took on despite his busy schedule as a Resident Lay Agent. We also gladly acknowledge once again our indebtedness 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 2013, with equivalent figures for the end of April 2012 (subscription to the *Witness* includes the *Explorer*):

	2013	2012
Print run:		
Magazine:		
Witness	1000	1000
Explorer	1150	1150
Circulation:		
Subscriptions:		
Congregational	653	677
Individual	145	156
Total	798	833
(In addition an extra 122 copies of the Explorer are ordered separately from the Witness)		
Complimentary copies:		
UK	18	16
Overseas	6	7
Total	24	23
Trade orders:		
UK	14	16
Overseas	0	0
Total	14	16
Total Circulation:	836	872

Sometimes the Subscriptions Secretary receives requests for extra copies of a particular issue of the *Witness*, such as the January 2013 issue which contained a helpful article on the woman's headcovering in worship. She also receives letters of appreciation from readers of the magazines, particularly the *Explorer*. Recently a young lady from the Republic of Ireland was in touch and included the following in her note:

"I am writing this note to thank you for the Explorer Magazine which I have been receiving for many years now. The Magazine has been a great blessing to me and my family over the years, thank you and God Bless."

Subscription rates for the *Witness* (including the *Explorer*) were unchanged for 2013. The Committee are continuing to investigate the use of Paypal as a means of paying subscriptions via the Church website. As may be seen from the circulation figures there are well over 100 copies of both magazines spare each month. We therefore ask Ministers and Congregations to consider ordering some extra copies free each month to distribute in their area: it would be far better to see the surplus copies used in this way than sitting in storage. If this offer is not taken up the print run for both magazines will need to be reduced.

Our thanks are due to those who have contributed articles to this year's *Good News*, the special evangelistic June issue of the *Witness*, which we hope will be available during the Assembly. As in 2012 an extra 13000 copies of this issue are being printed for distribution by our Congregations and further afield and we ask prayer that its contents may be blessed by the Lord to those into whose hands the magazine falls. We are

pleased to report that the price for these extra copies has been reduced this year from 30p to 25p.

3. Publications

3.1 Existing Publications

Below are approximate figures representing cumulative totals for sales and/or complimentary distribution of our existing titles at the end of April 2013 (with figures for 2012 in brackets where appropriate). With the transfer of the stock to the new distributor previously uncounted stock of titles (a) and (b) was discovered, meaning that in these cases the figures for 2012 must now be regarded as inaccurate:

- (a) *Where is God now Gone?* by Rev. John J. Murray: 1200 copies sold or distributed free (1240) (out of 1250 copies printed in November 2003). 40 copies remaining.
- (b) *Sing the Lord's Song* by Rev. John W. Keddie: 314 copies sold or distributed free (346) (out of 500 copies made available to the Committee in May 2004). 186 copies remaining.
- (c) *Giving to the Lord* by Rev. John W. Keddie: 524 copies distributed free (524) (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: 402 copies sold (400) (first printed in May 2007). 14 copies in stock.
- (e) *Year Book 2009*: 524 copies sold or distributed free (516) (out of 525 copies printed in March 2009). 1 copy remaining.
- (f) *The Reformation 1560* by Rev. John J. Murray: 996 copies sold or distributed free (951) (out of 1000 copies printed in May 2010). 4 copies remaining.
- (g) *The Five Points of Calvinism* by Rev. John W. Keddie: 487 copies sold or distributed free (446) (out of 750 copies printed in May 2010). 263 copies remaining.
- (h) *The Lord's Supper* by Rev. John Morrison: 390 copies sold or distributed free (384) (out of 500 copies printed in May 2011). 110 copies remaining.
- (i) *The Shorter Catechism*: 469 copies sold or distributed free (out of 500 copies printed in May 2012). 31 copies remaining.

As an example of the complimentary distribution of our titles we are pleased that on his recent visit to Covenant College in Zambia, Rev. Harry Woods was able to take a number of copies of *Sing the Lord's Song* and *The Five Points of Calvinism*, both by Rev. John Keddie, for the use of the students.

3.2 New Publications

Booklets In 2012 following a request from the Welfare of Youth & Education Committee the Publications Committee arranged the publication of 500 copies of an edition of the *Shorter Catechism* featuring a new layout to aid learning devised by Rev. Harry Woods. This title has proved to be a popular one and a second printing of 750 copies has recently been ordered.

3.3 Future Publications

Booklets The 'Finding out about...' series was launched in 2010 and is intended to provide instruction for our people on some important doctrinal and practical issues. We reported last year that work was in progress on material dealing with the subjects of Baptism, Funerals, Presbyterianism and the Sabbath (with a booklet on Marriage also planned) and that it was hoped that the majority of these titles would be ready by this Assembly. In the end this was not possible but we hope to see at least some of them appear later this year. A booklet on Worship is also now in preparation.

Books In 2009 the Committee approved the printing of a work on the Shorter Catechism by Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod, consisting of articles first published in the *Explorer*. In last year's report we explained how matters had taken a course which led Mr MacLeod to consider having his work published privately and he is presently exploring ways to go about this.

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 some publishers for him to contact but approaches to these have proved unsuccessful. The manuscript has now been submitted to the Scottish Reformation Society for possible publication in their new *Scots Worthies* series and a decision on this is awaited.

In last year's Report reference was made to the series of articles on missionaries by Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod which appeared in the *Explorer* a number of years ago and the possibility of having these published by Reformation Heritage Publications. Sadly there has been no progress here and Mr MacLeod has now indicated that he has no plans to take this any further.

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. Last year's report contained a Synopsis of the book listing fifteen sections and indicated that at that point work was concentrated on the second section which deals with the 1995 Assembly. This section is now more or less complete and it is hoped that by the end of this year a draft up to and including the 1996 Sheriff Court case, which represents the fourth section of the Synopsis, will be ready for proof-reading.

The Committee were informed by their Convener, who is also Convener of the Psalmody Committee, of a possible reprint of the 2003 split-leaf Staff edition of *The Scottish Psalmody*, for which copyright had been cleared. It is expected that details on this project will be included in the report of the Psalmody Committee.

During the past year the Committee's stock of publications was transferred from Mr & Mrs Glenn Fraser to Mr & Mrs Bill McQueer who also live near Inverness. The McQueers are now responsible for receiving and dispatching orders for our titles and since the McQueers are also responsible for subscriptions to the Church magazines and distribution of the magazines the new arrangement is helpful as it means that everything is now under one roof.

4. Website

It is with a sense of relief that we report that a new Church website is finally up and running. It was in 2009 that Rev. Greg MacDonald requested to be relieved of his role as Editorial Overseer of the website and we thank him for his patience since then.

From a technical point of view the new site is the work of Rev. Bert Pohl to whom the thanks of the Assembly are due. At the Assembly last year Mr Pohl indicated his willingness to set up a new site on behalf of the denomination and the Committee gratefully accepted his offer. He has managed to fit this work in among his many other commitments.

The Committee believe that visitors to the new site will find it both attractive and informative. An effort has been made to improve layout and navigability but the most important feature of the redesign is that several individuals now have access to the site with the ability to upload material: the result ought to be that new content is added frequently and the site kept up to date. Currently three individuals are involved in the editorial oversight: Rev. John J. Murray (Articles); Rev. Andrew Allan (Calendar of Events, Denominational News, Sermons); Rev. David Blunt (Congregations and Contacts, Current Comment).

The technical and editorial oversight of the Church website is governed by a policy set by the Assembly and with the new site now launched the Committee hope that they will soon be in a position to bring forward formal proposals for the revision of the current policy to the Assembly or its Commission.

5. Spring Conference

The annual Spring Conference took place on Friday 29th March. As usual it was held in Inverness but this time in a new venue. The Kingsview Christian Centre was kindly made available to us by the Inverness Congregation of the APC and was more than adequate for our purpose, including the catering.

The theme of the conference was 'Women and Children in the Church' and this important subject was handled by two of our ministers. In the morning session Rev. John Macleod, Senior Minister of Duthill-Dores, addressed the topic of Women in the Church. Mr Macleod began his address by looking at the relationships of the different persons within the Trinity and then at the Scriptural teaching on the position of women in the church and in relation to men. He also answered a feminist view of this relationship. In the afternoon session Rev. James Clark, Minister of Inverness Free Greyfriars, addressed the topic of Children in the Church. He mentioned the status of children as members of the visible church and the responsibility of the church and particularly of parents in the nurturing of covenant children. There were many practical points made in the address and also in response to questions.

An enthusiastic company appreciated both studies which were of a high quality. In addition to being mentioned in the *Witness* the Conference was publicised to a number of churches and Christian bodies in the Inverness area and it is pleasing to note that the attendance this year, including children, was over 120 compared to below 100 last year. While we do not measure the worth of the Conference in financial terms the result of the increased attendance, combined with a restructuring of the booking fees and a reduction in some of the costs, is that the Conference made a small profit this year after many years of loss. Once again the Committee urge ministers to make the Conference known to their people.

The Committee express their thanks to the two speakers and to all who helped in any way with this year's Conference. In particular they thank Mr & Mrs Glenn Fraser for their work in organising the catering, the bookstall and other aspects of the Conference, Mr Lindsay MacCallum for his work as booking secretary, Rev. James I. Gracie for chairing the proceedings and Miss Anne MacAulay and Miss Flora MacLeod for organising and running the children's programme.

6. Audio Ministry

The Audio Ministry provides a selection of sermons in CD format at a price of £1 each including postage and packing. The sermons are mostly from our own ministers, including retired men, and we believe they are appreciated both within and beyond our Church. Since last year the work has been in the capable hands of Mr Bill McQueer. A new list containing 50 recordings was prepared and circulated with the January issue of the *Witness*. Of these recordings 43 were sermons preached in our Congregations, including 2 in Gaelic, and the remaining 7 were papers delivered at the 2012 School in Theology in Larbert.

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

The Annals are a link with our past as a people, containing biographical details of the various ministers who have served the Free Church since the division of 1900. During the year Mr Maurice Grant was able to make further additions to the database from various sources including material from the Registrar General's Office in Edinburgh. The returns from the 1911 census have been a particularly useful source of information on the early post-1900 ministers and their families. 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

Once again there is nothing new to report on this subject. The march of time means that videos are actually no longer being produced. As we indicate in section 3.3 the Committee's efforts are being concentrated on a book on the Division and one possibility which might be appropriate for the present day is for a DVD to be

made in conjunction with the book. Obviously this will need to be explored by the Committee.

9. Year Book

It is now four years since the present edition of the Year Book was published but after several delays and a couple of false starts a new edition is on target for publication at some point in May and, if the Lord wills, in time for this year's Assembly. Many details in the current edition are now incorrect and while much of the information which people require on our Congregations, Committees, etc., may be found on the Church website there is still benefit in having all the relevant information brought together in a printed form. 500 copies of the new edition are being produced and we trust that the Year Book will continue to be a useful tool for our own people and for letting others know of the work and witness of our Church.

10. Press Officer

The Committee wish to record their thanks to the Rev. John MacLeod (Tarbat) for his work as Press Officer and to express their gratitude to God for the measure of recovery which Mr MacLeod has enjoyed from his illness of last year.

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 gratitude to Rev. William Macleod and Rev. Harry Woods for their work as Editors of the *Witness* and *Explorer* respectively. They note Mr Woods' desire to relinquish his editorship and thank him warmly for his service in this role;
- 2.2 The General Assembly appoint Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod as editor of the *Explorer* for a period of three years;
- 2.3 The General Assembly thank Rev. Alasdair Macleod for his work on the design and layout of the *Witness*;
- 2.4 The General Assembly thank Miss Anne MacAulay for providing the puzzle page for the *Explorer*;
- 2.5 The General Assembly thank Mrs Isobel McQueer for her work as Subscriptions Secretary;
- 2.6 The General Assembly thank Mr Donald Robertson for his work as the distributor of the Church's magazines over several years and note that Mr Bill McQueer has now taken up this work;
- 2.7 The General Assembly thank Mrs Fionna MacLeod for her work in recording the magazines for the blind;
- 2.8 The General Assembly thank the proof-readers of the magazines for their work;
- 2.9 The General Assembly thank all who from time to time contribute articles both to the *Witness* and the *Explorer*;
- 2.10 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 encouraging sales of the new edition of the Shorter Catechism and trust that the reprint will be in equal demand;
- 3.2 The General Assembly thank those who are engaged in preparing material 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;
- 3.4 The General Assembly note the information regarding the work on the Covenanters John Kid and John King by Mr Maurice Grant;
- 3.5 The General Assembly note the information regarding the work on missionaries by Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod;
- 3.6 The General Assembly note 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 help in storing and distributing the Church's publications of late. They thank Mr & Mrs Bill McQueer for their willingness to take on this work and pray that they will know the Lord's blessing upon their efforts to spread good Christian literature;
4. The General Assembly note with pleasure the launch of a new Church website. They thank those who have been responsible for its design and content and look forward to formal proposals for the revision of the current policy for the technical and editorial oversight of the site. They pray that the Lord will be pleased to make use of the new site for the furtherance of His cause;
5. The General Assembly thank all those involved in the organising and running of the Spring Conference and especially the Inverness Associated Presbyterian Church for the use of the Kingsview Christian Centre. They once again urge ministers to promote the Conference and encourage their people to attend;
6. The General Assembly thank Mr Bill McQueer for his work in producing and distributing CDs of sermons by our ministers. They pray that the Lord will bless 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 with pleasure the imminent 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 thank the Lord for granting him a significant improvement in his health over the past year.