

# **XII.**

## **REPORT**

### **OF THE**

### **STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

#### **1. Introduction – The Rôle of the Committee**

It is not the rôle of this Committee to:

- a. lord it over other committees in some kind of hierarchy as happened in years past with the F.L.A.;
- b. act as a bin in which other committees can dump issues which they do not wish to handle;
- c. replace the General Assembly and dictate to presbyteries;
- d. take the vitality out of the local church by making their decisions for them.

Rather the Committee's rôle is to:

- a. suggest a coherent plan and objectives which the Assembly may adopt.
- b. provide a vision for our time.
- c. co-ordinate pan-committee matters.

#### **2. Ministers Serving Outwith Presbytery Bounds**

Following the induction of Rev. David C. Lachman as Missionary in Zambia, advice was sought as to his status and whether he would still be able to be of service to the Congregation of Shettleston, of which he had been a member and Elder before his induction to mission work. Advice having been given, the Committee believed it would be useful to indicate the principles which would apply in similar situations, and this is noted below:

1. A Minister, by virtue of his induction to a Charge or Mission Field which is outwith the Bounds of a Presbytery, is no longer under the jurisdiction of his former Kirk Session or Presbytery, but under the jurisdiction of the Home & Foreign Missions Committee acting *in loco synodi*;
2. Where a Minister is labouring in a situation outwith the bounds of a presbytery, his connection with the Church is directly with the General Assembly through their Home & Foreign Missions Committee;
3. A Minister, not being under the jurisdiction of a local Kirk Session, it is questionable if his name should appear on a Communion Roll in any capacity;
4. Communicant Members of the Church who are absent from home on missionary service, may remain on the Communion Roll of their home Congregation in terms of Act XXX 1979 (see Practice 1995 p18, ssI.II.9 ult para.).

Further, the Committee noted that the law of the Church has always been that an Elder cannot remain a member of a Kirk Session if they cannot be deemed to be a *bona fide* acting elder of the Congregation.

#### **3. Candidates for the Ministry and Church Courts / Committees**

There is no law that prevents a candidate for the ministry who is an officebearer from serving on Standing Committees of Assembly, being elected a member of Presbytery or even elected a Commissioner to the General Assembly. However, it must be recognised that in certain situations, it would be inappropriate for a Candidate for the Ministry to be involved. This would be particularly true with regard to any situation involving fellow students or Lecturers at the Seminary. The Training of the Ministry & Admissions Committee is an example of one of these inappropriate situations, but there is also potential for this to happen elsewhere. The Committee trust that this will be borne in mind in order that inappropriate situations may not arise.

#### **4. Dissent and Protest**

Some time ago, it was drawn to the Committee's attention that protests have been lodged from the floor of the Assembly where it appeared that no constitutional principle was at stake. Rather than consider further the matter themselves, the Committee referred the matter to the Legal Advice & Property Committee in order that they might deal with the matter, as they deemed appropriate, they having been directed by the 2011 General Assembly to prepare a paper on the Right of Continued Protest. It was believed that it would be more suited to deal with this matter in the broader context of their paper.

#### **5. Strategic Overview of the Present Needs of the Church**

This remit has been filled by the General Treasurer who has carefully gathered and tabulated the secure properties, the disputed properties and the measures taken by those threatened with loss of their properties. This continues to be monitored by the Finance & Sustentation Committee. The appointment of a Special Committee on Building Projects has also relieve the Committee of this matter.

#### **6. Pensions**

Over the years the Committee have been concerned about various aspects of pension provision for retired Ministers. They are happy to note that these matters are being dealt with by both the Finance & Sustentation Committee and the Legal Advice & Property Committee.

#### **7. Schedule of Statistics**

The revised Schedule of Statistics has been put into use from December 2011. No adverse comment has been received and thus the Committee concludes that it is serving the purpose well.

#### **8. Use of Rooms Belonging to Inverness, Greyfriars FCC by the Seminary**

The Committee were asked to review the Seminary's use of rooms at the building of Inverness, Free Greyfriars. Noting that the original arrangement for the Seminary's use of the building of Inverness, Free Greyfriars was arranged between the Deacons' Court and the Committee on Finance & Sustentation, the Committee believed the latter Committee were the appropriate body to deal with this matter and accordingly remitted the matter to them.

#### **9. Special Commission Report**

The General Assembly of 2011, in considering the Report of the Special Commission, noted that Section II of their Report dealt with disciplinary procedures in general and remitted the said Section II to the Strategy Committee for consideration and report with recommendations to this General Assembly. The Committee sought the assistance of the Assembly Clerks' Department thereanent. Little progress has been made for a variety of factors, including the recent ill health of the Principal Clerk of Assembly. It is hoped that progress can be made in the coming year.

DAVID S. FRASER, *Convener*  
JOHN MACKENZIE, *Vice-convener*

### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Strategy Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and Clerk;
2. The General Assembly note the advice given in the Report regarding the Status of Ministers in Charges outwith the Bounds of a Presbytery;
3. The General Assembly advise Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise due caution in nominating

Candidates for the Ministry for service on Presbyteries or Standing Committees of the Church, especially Group 2 Committees;

4. The General Assembly note that the work of the Committee on Protest & Dissent, Buildings, Pensions and Seminary Accommodation has been remitted to the relevant Standing and Special Committees for their consideration and, if necessary, reporting to the General Assembly;
5. The General Assembly note that the newly revised Schedule of Statistics appears to have proved acceptable;
6. The General Assembly continue the remit of the Committee to consider Section II of the Report of the Special Commission, May 2011 which deals with disciplinary procedures in general, and instruct the Committee to bring forward any recommendations thereanent to the next General Assembly.