

REPORT OF YOUTH COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006

*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you,
I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel
from the first day until now, being confident of this,
that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion
until the day of Christ Jesus.
Philippians 1: 3 - 7*

Partnership in the Gospel is a great joy but it also carries a great responsibility. As a committee we have sought to build on the work of previous years while still holding onto our belief that:

"As part of the Church of Jesus Christ we must seek to meet the confidence of youth with the conviction of our faith and endeavour in all our activities to send the clear undiluted message regarding the claims that Christ has on them and every other individual, regardless of age.

We must do this, fully reliant upon the Mercy, Grace and Help from the one who called us to follow Him, Christ our Saviour and Lord."

We thank God that we are not alone in this endeavour and that you are our partners in the task of presenting the claims of Christ to our young people and being encouragers to those who seek to find God's way in their lives. At the outset of this report, we would wish to thank everyone who has been a partner in prayer over the past year and invite you to share in the joy of this report.

SUPPORT FOR THOSE AT 'THE COAL FACE'

As a committee we are aware of the day to day work that is going on, sometimes in difficult areas within local fellowships. It is hard to persevere when numbers are on the decline and fewer younger families are to be found within the precincts of our fellowships but that is what we are asked to do. Not only are we asked to persevere but we are asked to have confidence in the doing.

The task set before us is unchangeable, that of taking the Christian message to the young people whom God has placed in the care of this Denomination. The means whereby we endeavour to carry out this task are, however, changeable and we as a committee thank God for the way the day-to-day Youth work within the congregations has developed throughout the Denomination. Sunday Schools which were felt to be ineffective in reaching the children have re-emerged as midweek meetings which are attractive to the young people. Others have moved away from the traditional Sunday School to develop an exciting new event which is proving attractive and catching the imagination of the youngsters while still holding to the same time slot on a Sunday.

This work is invaluable and requires every form of encouragement both at a local level and by this committee. What is true at a local level is also true at a denominational level. The aim of the committee is to complement the work which is going on week in week out by the dedicated staff within our fellowships. We rejoice in the fact that we have you as partners in what can seem a daunting and difficult task. We commend you for all your endeavours in the name of Christ and continue to support you in prayer and in any other way possible.

EASTER SCHEME

Last year's Easter Scheme went towards the work of C.H.A.S. who seek to help the estimated 12,000 families in Scotland with a child who will die prematurely. We rejoice in the fact that the children and their churches raised £7,402. The recently opened "Robin House" down by Balloch is where our gift is being used.

This year we have set the young people the task of raising the cost of 10 new homes in Rwanda. As a committee we have decided that this year's Easter Scheme will be to support the work of "Signpost International" particularly in their "Children Headed Villages" project. Working with the government of the country, Signpost aim to provide brick built homes for the many thousands of children left orphaned after the genocide which took place in Rwanda. Their first village in Ruhanga has made such an impact on the situation that the government has given them two new plots of land plus the roofing material for a further 900 homes.

CAMPS

Accommodation is proving to be a real problem both in terms of location and of availability at the appropriate time. Cost is also a serious issue. As a committee we have seen the cost of accommodation spiral over the last few years as more and more centres are having to upgrade their premises to comply with new legislation. On the one hand this is good, but the down side is that the cost has increased. We are also finding that most centres have now adopted the policy of having to declare the numbers attending the event at the time of booking. Having to book at least 9 months ahead of the event without any way of accurately predicting the uptake is a major problem for the committee. At times this leads to overbooking and at other times having to refuse individuals a place at the camp because demand has outstripped availability. One other problem is the lack of support from Church leaders in respect of adhering to the information being sent out to them. The week before or even on some occasions a day before the event is not an acceptable time for a booking to be made! Too much of the time of the youth worker and office staff is being spent chasing up responses for these events.

This is something which is outwith the committee's control and lies firmly with the local church. As a committee we strongly urge every congregation to examine the way in which the response to these events is undertaken and to make sure that responses are made that they are made by the date required otherwise we may have to refuse late entries or even cancel events which would be a retrograde step, but necessary due to the financial implications.

Last year the committee's total subsidy for camps was £2449.51. This year the tariff for all camps has been set at £50.00. The committee is reluctant to increase prices further, but realises it may well have to do this as the cost of centres and other costs increase. You can be assured that as a committee we have no desire to see any of our young people denied the opportunity of attending camp and we will do all that we can to keep the cost down but there is only so much that we can do. We therefore respectfully ask that you become our partners in this aim and help us by both supplying accurate figures when required and assisting your youth organisation by offering financial support to them. Some congregations have a retiring offering while others hold a coffee morning so that they can offer financial assistance to those who wish to go. Please give this serious consideration.

8 - 13 CAMPS

The total numbers attending the three camps run for this group in 2005 for were 75 from 13 churches. In 2006 we planned to hold an 8 -13 camp for the North Presbytery at the Alltnacriche Outdoor Centre in March but this had to be cancelled due to adverse weather and has been re-arranged for May. The bringing together of the East and West camps in 2005 led to a very successful event which will be repeated this year with the addition of a small group from the North presbytery. This will take place from 27th - 29th October at the Auchengillan Outdoor Centre.

The team this year consists of, Laura Hubbert, Sarah Meredith, Gordon MacKenzie and Nathan Owens. The theme is "The 'I' am sayings of Jesus." You will notice that two names are missing from previous year's team members, Morag Stevens and Lindsay Anne Purdie. This is because of changing circumstances in their personal life. They will be absent this year but may be back in future.

14 - 16 CAMP

27 young people from 7 churches attended the 14 – 16 camp in 2005. This was a rise of 5 from 2004. The camp was held in the Atholl Centre Pitlochry from 11th- 13th November and was led by Laura Hubbert, Karla Fleming, Gordon McKenzie, Gavin McKenzie and Monica and Allan Murray. This year's camp is being held in Auchengillan Outdoor centre from 17th - 19th Nov.

YOUTH ASSEMBLY

There were two Youth Assemblies in 2005. 13 young people from 7 congregations attended the first in March, which looked at the events in scripture where God chose to break through to mankind. This was commented on in last year's report. The second Youth Assembly, which was attended by 11 young people from 7 congregations, was held in the Lagganlia Centre, Kincaig and was led by Rev Alexander Ritchie who took the young people through matters that had arisen from the General Assembly. They included: The Proposed Covenant with the Church of Scotland, Evangelism and the Panel on Doctrine Report on Civil Partnership. The discussion, which arose, was very open and frank. A summary of these discussions can be found in Appendix 1. As our devotional topic we looked at the Holiness of God.

These were days of blessing for all who attended and we were indebted to Rev Alexander Ritchie for the manner in which he introduced the material and facilitated the thinking of the young people.

Spring arrived early for the second Youth Assembly, January 27th - 29th to be precise, and was attended by 13 young people from 9 congregations. The event was held at Dunolly Outdoor Centre, Aberfeldy when the theme was "Benchmark" and in particular God's benchmarks. We studied Ephesians 6:10 - 20 and this proved very profitable for the young folk and led them to think more about their personal situation in life and with God. They were also interested and challenged by Margery Collin and Colin McAulay regarding their work with WI'AM in the Middle East and in particular in and around Bethlehem. This was a fascinating insight into an area of life we seldom see and complemented the later discussions. The numbers attending these events were

Hosting two Youth Assemblies per year, although for smaller numbers, is proving to be very interesting and rewarding as we are just now beginning to see lives being challenged and decisions being formulated in the life of these young people. The

committee, while mindful of the cost implication, is still convinced that this format of two events is the correct one. We ask for your prayer support in these ventures.

SUMMER MISSION

In 2005 a summer mission was held at our Lochwinnoch Church. This was the first time the team undertook to work with teenagers at night as well as the younger ones during the day. Although very tiring the team was pleased at the outcome of the week's mission as several of the older teenagers attended the event in Laggonlia Centre, Kinraig held later in the year. We as a committee owe a debt of gratitude to the Lochwinnoch congregation for the manner in which they interacted with the team and made themselves available to help during the week.

The team consisted of Laura Hubbert, Gordon MacKenzie, Sarah Meredith and Nathan Owens along with members of the congregation.

Due to a clash of dates, the proposed October mission at Sauchie & Fishcross did not take place last year. This year's Summer mission will be hosted by our Burntisland fellowship from 4th - 11th August.

YOUTH LEADERS TRAINING

Finding the appropriate time to hold a training day for the East and West Presbyteries in the late spring proved to be an impossible task due to other commitments for the committee. Instead an approach was made to the planning group of 20/20 vision to run 2/3 workshops within this event in August. We are pleased that the planning group agreed to allow us this facility. This we feel will make the attending of these events more accessible to many more of our leaders and it is the committee's hope that the workshops will be well attended. More information regarding the make-up of the workshops will be sent out nearer the day.

YOUTH WORKER

Laura has, over this last year, organised and participated in the 8-13 camps, 14-16 camp, summer mission and the Youth Assemblies, all of which require a great deal of preparation beforehand and a lot of work in their execution. She also continues to work with the Drumchapel Fellowship in the "Living Room" four afternoons per week, a work she finds very challenging and rewarding. The work with the Lochwinnoch fellowship and the ABCs Youth group on a Sunday has also continued.

Laura has acted as an adviser to several of our Kirk Sessions regarding the field of youth work as well as speaking at several youth fellowships through out the year. Laura has availed herself at denominational events such as Spirit of Life Unlocked, 20-20 vision planning group and Youth Committee. The provision of the online Bible Study and a monthly prayer letter are but two of her other commitments to God and this denomination.

During the year she has been given the opportunity to conduct Sunday worship in several of our churches. This she has done with joy and much blessing to all involved. All this and still finding time to plan & organise the event of the year, her wedding to Gordon in July 2006. I am sure the whole Church wishes them God's blessing as they set out on this new venture of husband and wife. The committee wish to put on record the debt which is owed by this denomination to Miss Laura Hubbert for the manner in which she has dedicated herself to the work with the young people both of our denomination and beyond. We

commend her to your prayer support as she seeks to serve this Church and her Lord in the work that she does.

Laura has indicated that she would like to reduce her workload a little and this means she will not be continuing her work at Lochwinnoch after the summer.

PRAYER SUPPORT

Again we are delighted with the response of those fellowships who have asked to be prayer partners with us in the work. If the work does not have the covering of prayer then it is left wide open to attack from Satan. Thank you all for your faithful prayer support in this past year. We are indebted to Laura for the compiling of the monthly prayer letter.

THE BIG DAY

The venue is Carronvale House, Falkirk and the date is 3rd June. It is hoped that more will join with us on this day of celebration and joy. The last time the event was run in 2004 we had 654 people attend. Their verdict was that they wanted a repeat. Well here it is so come along and enjoy the day! At the time of writing the plans are still being finalised but we can assure you of even bigger and bolder attractions this year. Please cover this event in prayer and make preparations to attend with your fellowship.

YOUTH LINK PAGE

We regret that the 'Youth Link Page' on the UF website did not materialise as we had hoped. There are three reasons for this. First that of finding material able to be reproduced on the Internet without infringing copyright; second, time to produce and manage the page; third, the fact that no Sunday School had indicated that they were endeavouring to find out information from the page which we indicated would be available in last year's report. The committee considered these points and decided for the present time not to proceed with this project.

FINANCE

"The committee is well aware of the financial constraints that all our fellowships are under and do regularly undertake a review of running costs. However if the structure of the youth work in all its aspects is going to continue to grow then we do need help from local fellowships."

These words formed the final paragraph of last year's report regarding finance. As a committee we thank you for your help and partnership in this matter. It is a constant struggle to balance the work and at the same time be mindful of the financial aspects of the work. We take no joy in the cost of the camps programme but do ask for your continual support in easing the burden to the individuals who wish to attend. We are grateful for the financial support from individuals and fellowships and we would wish to express our thanks to the General Treasurer and his committee for their continual support.

SHETLAND VISIT

As a committee we are delighted that we are able to provide the services of our youth worker to our Shetland fellowships. For too long we have been unable to support the faithful work done by the congregations of Cunningsburgh and Sandwick over many years. From 20th April - 1st May Laura will be visiting the local school during lunch time and

working with the 7:15 club in the evening. Later in the year from 7th July - 14 July she will be returning with a team to lead a week-long camp. We are sure that this new venture will lead to God doing great things within the lives of those who attend these events and invite the Denomination to support Laura and the team in prayer.

PROSPECTIVE NEW LEADERS

We plan to run a training course in March 17th - 19th at Auchengillan with the aim of identifying and commencing training for new leaders for Summer Missions and Youth Camps. This is exciting, daunting and challenging work! Please be prayer partners for these young people as they start this exciting journey of faith as they seek to find the avenues which God can and will use their enthusiasm, vitality and zeal to serve Him.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE REVIEW

Rev. A. Ritchie has kept the committee abreast of the developments from the Scottish Executive regarding this important matter

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. R Bingham continues to report on the work with the Church and Society Committee on the report entitled " Respect and Responsibility Strategy and Action Planning for Improved Sexual Health"

CONCLUSION

The theme of partnership runs through this report because we in the committee are fully aware that it is the prayers of the denomination that carry this work forward. Yes, God has given us gifted leaders for our youth work. Yes, God has blessed the dedication of these young people as they endeavour to bring the richness of the Gospel to the young people of today. We rejoice in their willingness to be used by God in this way; but we dare not let them or the youth leaders within our own fellowships enter into the battle for the souls of our youngsters without the all-covering protection of our prayers. We thank you for your prayer support over the last year and urge you to persevere in this task for the sake of the Kingdom.

The convener would like to thank the Vice -Convener as well as the committee for their work, their support and prayers during the last year. We are extremely grateful to the General Secretary, General Treasurer and Mrs. H. Jarvis for all their help, advice and encouragement throughout the year.

In the name of the committee

IAN N. ROBERTSON	Convener
ELIZABETH McNAUGHTON	Vice-Convener
JOHN O FULTON	Secretary