

REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2010

Jesus said *“When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” Acts 1 v 8 GNB*

Paul said to Timothy, *“God doesn’t want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold, loving and sensible. So don’t be embarrassed to speak up for our Master” 2 Timothy 1 v 7&8: The Message*

When the Christian Education and Evangelism Committees merged following last year’s General Assembly, there was some concern that Evangelism may become less of a focus. We wondered if two sub-groups should be formed each dealing with their own topic. However, this has not been the case and, although we have tried to give evangelism and education equal time, we have probably focussed more on evangelism. The committee regards itself as a resource in evangelism and training and invites contact from congregations seeking support in those areas.

CONGREGATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

As a joint report we brought an initiative regarding assistance with evangelism to the General Assembly in 2008/ 9. Due to a lack of response to this initiative we had to consider if we were trying to provide a resource that was not required. It was decided that we should gather further information to give us an overview of what churches were doing with regards to Mission and Outreach. A questionnaire was devised and sent to congregations. This was designed to assist us in identifying any trends relating to the demographics of congregations, to stimulate thinking about Mission and Outreach within Kirk Sessions and to identify churches with active mission and outreach projects that may require assistance or churches who would like assistance with preparing a Mission Plan. An appendix showing the responses to the questionnaire can be found at the end of this report.

As a result of the questionnaire we have identified up to 5 congregations with projects which may benefit from additional resourcing and 10 congregations who wish assistance with mission plans. Each of them has been contacted to assess how we can best meet their needs. All congregations have been written to regarding the questionnaire responses.

MISSION PLANNING

The committee has examined a Mission Planning pack currently being used by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. We propose to trial this with congregations who wish to develop a Mission plan. We are in contact with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to find out how their congregations responded to the material and how Mission plans are being implemented.

COURSES IN EVANGELISM

The committee commends to congregations’ resources such as “Blowing Your Cover”. This is designed to equip and release churches to confidently share their faith in a natural way. It helps in identifying congregations’ predominant style of evangelism and what natural contacts there are within their sphere of influence.

DENOMINATIONAL EVENT

We continue to be blessed with our annual event "Celebrating the Word". Dunblane High School proved to be a modern alternative to our previous venue at Bannockburn and produced only minor teething problems. The committee commends the planning group for the organisation of the event would urge congregations to attend this year's event on Saturday 28th August when we will be "Together in Christ". The keynote speaker will be David Miller, Vice-Principal of the ICC and a member of the committee. Several workshops are planned and a "non-workshop" area will also be available.

TRAINING

Requests for training are still very low. Wishaw have continued their on-going commitment to training, the Kirk Sessions of Croftfoot and Cumnock have had day conferences which involved training input. The Kirk Session of Burntisland has participated in one training workshop and an overview of training resources was presented at the West Presbytery. Only one trainer has been involved. From this year, adult trainers will have to undergo an assessment every three years to retain their accreditation as trainers. It will be a poor reflection on the denomination if we have to run training courses just to ensure our trainers can retain their accreditation.

New material on pastoral care will shortly be available and this will be added to the trainers portfolio. The material will be suitable for Kirk Sessions, Pastoral groups/visitors. Intimation will be sent out as soon as this material is available

Recently there has been a 'Session Clerks Conference' where the role of the session clerk was discussed and "Building Team Session" was introduced. Following the success of the School of Evangelism a follow up was arranged in May.

The committee decided not to have a Leaders' Forum at this year's General Assembly as Elaine Duncan, Chief Executive of the Scottish Bible Society, is the speaker at the Ladies morning meeting and it was felt that we should support this meeting given quality of the speaker and the assistance that Elaine has given us over the past few years.

LINKS WITH CONGREGATIONS

1) Drumchapel

We are encouraged by the work of the Living Room and of Laura MacKenzie, Nathan Owen and formerly of James Haram. We pray for the way that they make the Gospel relevant to individuals within the local community.

2) Perth

Representatives of the committee (and of the Ministry Committee and Presbytery) met with the office-bearers at Perth to discuss their situation and the most appropriate way forward. As a result there is the possibility of a part time pastor being appointed by the Ministry Committee. We commend the interim moderator for his tireless efforts and thank members of the committee who have visited and supported Perth.

The committee continues to explore resources which may assist congregations in Mission and Outreach and in providing relevant training where appropriate across the broad spectrum of Church activities. The committee acknowledges the vital need for prayer and have arranged a meeting for Monday 21st June to engage in prayer as a way of helping us to feel our way into the work God is calling us to do.

In the name of the Committee

GORDON STEEL
JAMES D. NEIL
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener
Vice Convener
Secretary