

REPORT OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2010

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

Dan 1:8 (NKJV)

Daniel and his friends found themselves far from home and under the authority of a powerful ruler, one who had the power to take their life. The temptation to compromise was ever before them but Daniel and his friends had purposed in their heart not to defile themselves with the temptations around them. As a Committee we give thanks for the young people who have purposed in their heart to follow Christ Jesus. The opportunities to sin are many and the pressure to compromise is constant so continue to pray for our young people that God would keep them faithful and pure – as Paul says:

“That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”

Phi 2:15 (NKJV)

As can be seen from the themes of the various camps and all the events organised by the Youth Committee, our young people are encouraged to have that desire to follow after Christ and to learn of Him.

CAMPS AND YOUTH ASSEMBLIES 2009

The East/ West Camp (age 8-13) was held at Auchengillan International Outdoor Centre, Blanefield in September 2009. Our theme was the *‘Nuts and Bolts’* of what it means to be a Christian. The weekend was well attended and the children participated in all the activities and responded well to the teaching and group times.

Unfortunately due to lack of numbers we were not able to have a North Camp for ages 8-13 this year. This was also the case for the camp aimed at those aged 14 – 16.

In March 2009 the Youth Assembly met at the Cairngorms Christian Centre, Aviemore. This was Rev Ian Robertson's last Youth Assembly before retiring as the Convener. There was an excellent attendance (31) and the young people thanked Ian for his work with them and commitment to them over the past six years.

At the November Youth Assembly our theme was *‘All that you can't leave behind’*, looking at our history as a denomination, our walk with God and the challenge of mission. Our speakers shared with us something of their walk with God and helped us to look at where we have come from, what God has done in our lives and how we can effectively share that with others. It was an excellent weekend and a great opportunity for the young people to share with each other. We were pleased to have a delegation from UCCSA; Rev Kudzani Ndebele, Wellington Sibanda; Youth Convener for UCCSA and Miss Meagan Diergaart, Convener Elect. It was invaluable to have their insight on the Christian faith from a Southern African perspective and their work among the young people of UCCSA. It was also helpful to hear their views on the proposed Mission in 2011. We were also able to learn of their desire for training young people for future Christian work.

The Youth Committee would like to thank all those who volunteered to cook for the various events of 2009 and continue to support the youth work in this vital way.

SUMMER & OCTOBER MISSIONS

Summer Mission in July 2009, was with our Cunningsburgh congregation on Shetland, with the theme 'Champion's Challenge'. The evenings were taken up with training for the young leaders of the congregation. This was a very encouraging week both with the response from the young people helping and the children who attended the mission. The week ended with a parents' BBQ and party.

We had an October week mission in Balintore, held in the Community Pavilion, which also followed the 'Champion's Challenge' programme. This is a sports based holiday club that looks at Jesus being our coach for life and focuses on different aspects of His character. The mission was well attended and also finished with a parents' party. This was another very encouraging week.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

A request came from some of our young people for days to be organised for people of all ages to come together for prayer and bible study throughout the denomination. We ran three of these days in 2009, and will continue with another 4 in 2010 to be held in church office, Ayr UF, St. Ninians UF and Northfield UF. The planning group for these days is made up of young people who also lead the days. In February of this year, we held our first meeting at the church office. The topic chosen for this year is '*Walking with God in the Psalms*' and Rev Archie Ford was the speaker. The young people were very encouraged by the response and look forward to the other meetings scheduled for the rest of the year.

TRAINING DAY

Following on from a training day for the Presbytery of the West in November '08 a further training day was organised for the Presbytery of the East, called 'Feed Your Faith'. This was an opportunity to thank to everyone involved in youth work within the presbytery. It was also a time for looking at child protection, communication, youth work in general and a time to look at ideas for Christmas services.

YOUTH WORKER

The committee would like to express its thanks to Mrs Laura Mackenzie for all the work that she and Gordon do for us throughout our denomination. Laura continues to do a valuable work with our Drumchapel congregation in the Living Room. In 2009 Mr Gordon Mackenzie and Laura attended the General Assembly in Botswana from the 19th-25th August, on our behalf. This was an opportunity to meet with the youth representatives from the 5 Synods of UCCSA and to share the vision for the 2011 mission to Scotland. Laura continues to speak at various congregations and events. She compiles the monthly Youth Work Prayer Letter and would like to thank the denomination for their prayer support throughout the year.

AFRICA TRIP 2008

The Africa Trip 2008 team had a variety of speaking engagements throughout 2009 and we would again thank all the congregations who supported our young people and gave them the opportunities to tell of their experiences in South Africa and how the overall experience has changed their lives.

SUPPORT FOR STUDY

Last year's volume of reports recorded our financial and prayer support of various young people who were studying for Christian Ministry. Mr Mark Nelson is now working with the Faith Mission in Country Durham. Mr Lewis Campbell is working as a Youth and Community Worker with Elgin Baptist Church. Nathan Owens is working part time in the Living Room while doing his Theology Degree by distance learning through Highland Theological College. Allan Brown and Gordon Mackenzie continue their studies on the access course for HTC. Martin Patterson continues with his studies by distance learning through the International Christian College. We ask you to continue to pray for these young people as they study and serve God.

EASTER SCHEME

After the last Youth Assembly, the young people were very moved and challenged by the presentations on the work of Asia Link in North Korea and asked that we consider this work for the Easter Scheme for 2010. We were delighted as a committee to commend Asia Link to you and look forward to a great response.

Thank you to all who supported last year's appeal for '*Bibles and Bandages for Brazil*'. The amount raised was: £13,477 - an excellent response! Congratulations to all and thank you once again for working so hard to raise such a fantastic amount for a very worthwhile cause.

THE ISSUE FACING OUR YOUTH WORK

As can be seen from the statistical returns, the youth work in our denomination is in decline, affecting many of our congregations and also our Camps and Youth Assemblies. The committee is concerned about the future work and whilst we are aware that in youth work there are cycles, we are concerned with what the statistics reveal. We are continually reviewing the camp structure and the number of camps in light of the numbers of young people who are able to attend the various events. The cost involved for our young people is also being considered. As a committee we are dedicated to helping in any way we can at local level. Numbers of young people attending our congregations are falling. As such we urge you to pray for the youth work of our denomination and other denominations in Scotland. It is vital that young people are taught the word of God. In our ever changing world our young people need to know Christ.

CAMPS 2010

As part of the Camp Review, the Youth Committee decided to look at the age limits for the camps. The decision was made that a new camp for those in school years S1-4 would replace the previous 14-16 camp. The first of these camps, 'Camp Energise' was held in the Windmill Christian Centre, Arbroath in February. The number attending was small (10 young people) but it was an excellent weekend. The teaching focused on the basics of the Gospel message. There were times of team building, free time and a party night on the Saturday. A reunion day was scheduled for May for all who attended the camp. Unfortunately due to lack of numbers, the North Camp organised for the 5th-7th March at the Cairngorms Christian Centre did not run.

The East/West Camp at Auchengillan International Outdoor Centre, will be held from the 24th-26th September 2010 where the theme will be: 'Camp Realise', doing great things for God! We will be looking at the example set by Daniel and his friends, how they stood firm for God and would not compromise. We will also be looking at people in the past and today who have taken a stand for God. We will explore the choices we make, what our priorities are and what it means to stand for God. This event is open to all in P 5 – 7.

The committee is exploring the possibility of holding 'Taster Days' so that youngsters have the opportunity to experience something of what camp is like before deciding to attend.

TRAINING WEEKEND

As part of the ongoing review of the camp system, a training weekend was organised for the teaching team from camps. This weekend was held at the Cairngorms Christian Centre, Aviemore from the 5th-7th of March. The weekend focused on the biblical basis for youth ministry, personal reflection on our own walk with God and a variety of team building activities. The team of volunteers who teach at camp are very committed to the work they do and are an invaluable support for the work of the denomination. The camp team for 2009/10 is: Morag Steven, Nathan Owens, Gordon Mackenzie, Avril Fotheringham, Rachel Keane and Jennifer Wilson.

YOUTH ASSEMBLIES 2010

In the first Youth Assembly of the year, we explored the importance of standing for Christ in a secular and postmodern age, by studying together some of the themes coming from the book of Daniel which include the challenge to stand for God, conspiracy, commitment, compromise and the cultural demands of the age. We met at the Cairngorms Christian Centre, Aviemore from the 26th-28th March. This was an excellent weekend, attended by 12 young people. The leaders were enthused and excited by the depth of commitment for God's word shown by the young people.

The second Youth Assembly of 2010 will meet at the Windmill Centre, Arbroath from the 29th-31st October. We look forward to another challenging and thought provoking weekend. The time of year has changed for this weekend in response to the fact that many of the young people have jobs on Saturdays and find it difficult to get time off during November and December.

MISSIONS 2010

This year's summer mission will take place at our Sauchie & Fishcross congregation from the 9th-13th of August. The team are looking forward to an exciting fun filled week of teaching, games, singing, crafts and drama, as they share the good news of Jesus with the children and families of Sauchie.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR THE YOUTH COMMITTEE

A concern of the Youth Committee is training for volunteers who work with or are interested in working with the youth of the denomination. As such we are putting together a training programme which will be on offer for those aged 16+. The course will run for a year on a module basis with residential weekends and day events, placements and assignments. People signing up for the course can do so for the whole course or for individual modules. We hope this will make it more accessible for those who want training in certain areas. The modules covered will include First Aid, food hygiene, child protection etc as well as topics such as the biblical basis for youth ministry, communication, prayer and using the bible with children. We hope that local congregations will support people who wish to take up the course. More information will be available soon. (See appendix for details.)

EASTER WEEK LONG CAMP 2011

The committee are exploring the idea of organising a week-long camp (Monday to Friday), during the Easter holidays to be held at the Windmill Christian Centre, Arbroath. Due to falling numbers at presbytery camps the committee feel that exploring a week-long camp where we all come together may be the answer. A provisional date has been booked

for this event as at present this is at planning stages as we try to ascertain what the response would be.

YOUTH VISIT 2011

The Youth Committee want to share their sense of excitement and anticipation as plans are made for a group of 24 young people from United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and the United Free Church of Scotland to come together in August 2011. The committee see this as a great opportunity for congregations to look at sharing the Gospel with those in our communities. We have invited all congregations to consider how the young people might assist with outreach work that is already happening or in some new initiative. It has been suggested this could assist in sharing the word of God with people in our local communities through a series of special events or services, or by the team going into a local school, perhaps a summer mission, 'detached work' (with another group but which has links to the congregation) in the community; it could be some musical/dramatic items in the local shopping centre etc with leaflets being given out inviting people for coffee at the church or to services. It could be more of a performance/ concert type event in the church or other venue with music, drama etc being used as a way of communicating with people. The young people could also be involved in some practical work on your premises as part of a plan to make them more suitable for engaging with the community. The possibilities are endless!

Already the preparations have begun for this venture. The young people of both the UF and UCCSA are very excited about this mission to Scotland. We hope that before the Assembly, congregations which are interested in having a team come and work with them will have submitted their visions for what the young people could do in their areas. This opportunity is open to any congregation with a passion to see God's word shared in their locality. The team will be split into several smaller teams who will engage in all sorts of evangelistic events, detached work, musical presentations, summer missions, work with older people and a whole host of other projects.

A series of meetings took place in presbyteries last November to begin to spark ideas with congregations. At the same time we held a series of meetings with the representatives from UCCSA to share the vision together. The young people who wish to be part of this mission will all go through the same application process before being chosen. The leaders of the team will prayerfully consider the projects suggested by the congregations here in Scotland and then the work will begin. There will be a series of training weekends for those who are chosen to be on the team and some information evenings for the hosting congregations. This is a really exciting venture for the Youth Committee and the denomination. We look forward to a group of teams working together in Scotland, learning from one another and sharing faith in a variety of settings.

Finance: It is hoped that congregations will be able to cover the cost of materials etc required for work done locally although assistance could be available if required. Those we are working within UCCSA believe it is important in terms of partnership that they make a significant contribution towards the cost of the trip. Some of the young people coming from southern Africa may be able to make a substantial contribution towards the cost of the trip with assistance from their local congregation. However we recognise that others, from countries such as Zimbabwe, will be able to contribute very little. We estimate the cost for each of those coming could be in the region of £1,500.

To assist with this, the Youth Committee is proposing that a denominational appeal be launched to give congregations and individuals the opportunity to contribute towards the costs of those coming from southern Africa. We believe it will be a very valuable experience both for those from southern Africa and those from Scotland.

The committee would express its thanks and gratitude to all who support our young people in their Christian commitment.

We would also express our thanks to Rev John Fulton and Mrs Helena Jarvis for all their help, advice and patience shown throughout the year.

In the name of the Committee

ROBERT O. OWENS
ELIZABETH MCNAUGHTON
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener
Vice Convener
Secretary