

REPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2018

Jesus said, *“The simple truth is that if you had a mere kernel of faith, a poppy seed, say, you would tell this mountain, ‘Move!’ and it would move. There is nothing you wouldn’t be able to tackle”* (Matthew 17.20, *The Message*).

The Lord speaks here of how the extent of our faith relates to the fruitfulness of our activity in his name. Even a modicum of robust faith can make a deep and sustainable impact for the Kingdom of Christ. Here is a similar faith-based dynamic to that found in OT stories such as Gideon and his 300 men (Judges 7). Small can be big, if it is of God and in Christ. Faith that is Christ-reliant & prayer-dependent will open up limitless possibilities for gospel co-operation with others.

It has often been stated that the United Free Church of Scotland occupies a unique and strategic position with regard to ecumenical relations. Basically that means we can engage with a variety of different denominations and groups-some of whom may not be open to engaging with one another.

Therefore the small size of our denomination often results in an ecumenical contribution far outweighing our numbers and offering something of real stabilising value to the current, turbulent Church landscape. It is the Committee’s prayerful hope that this principle will guide our thinking for the future, thus equipping us to continue to bring our gospel priorities into the ecumenical forum.

Once again this Report divides into two constituent parts. Firstly a brief update on our ongoing relationships which reflect current contacts and memberships in terms of bilateral or multilateral connectivity. Secondly a fuller report on the process of review which the Committee has entrusted to a small Ecumenical Review Group which met three times in the course of this year.

It is our hope that the concrete proposals we now outline will be accepted as a statement of our ecumenical policy going forward upon which the broad spectrum of views within the denomination can agree. The Committee is strongly of the opinion that this issue needs to be settled for reasons of clarity and cohesion, allowing us to get on with the live task of actual engagement. That said we would assure the General Assembly that in these fluid times for ecumenism the Committee will closely monitor any changes or developments which may directly impact our ongoing relationships.

PART ONE: ONGOING ECUMENICAL CONNECTIVITY

Relationship with the Church of Scotland

As intimated in last year’s written Report, a joint meeting of members from our ER Committees was duly held in Church Office on Wednesday 17th January 2018. Three representatives attended from the Church of Scotland, along with those from our own committee available to be present.

The meeting was conducted in a warm spirit and with an emphasis on finding ways to explore our positive relationship and practical co-operation going forward. We discussed (inter alia) the current ACTS review as well as recent developments within WCRC. Perhaps most helpful was our open sharing of ideas as to the way forward for ecumenical policy across both our denominations.

It is hoped that we can continue to meet on a regular basis, share information and support each other in these uncertain times for ecumenism. The Committee would record particular thanks to the Church of Scotland’s Ecumenical Officer, Rev. Dr. John McPake, for his wisdom, willingness to engage positively and keep this vital channel of communication open to the United Free Church.

Again the Committee would encourage congregations to share and co-operate with Church of Scotland fellowships at local level wherever this is possible.

Relationships with the Free Church of Scotland & Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)

The Free Church of Scotland currently has around 100 congregations and recent years have witnessed a revival in our bilateral relationship which continues to develop. Meetings have tended to be small and informal, with a frank exchange on current issues facing our churches. This has been viewed as helpful by both sides.

At the time of writing (March 2018) it is hoped that once again an informal bilateral meeting between representatives from both our denominations will take place in early May 2018.

The Committee would acknowledge the work of Rev. David Meredith as a strong point of contact with the Free Church and thank him for his willingness to facilitate our meetings. The Board of Mission Report to the Free Church General Assembly 2017 contains the following deliverance under "ecumenical relations", "The General Assembly give greetings to the United Free Church of Scotland (UF). They thank the UF Church for recent meetings and look forward to future cooperation in the gospel." (Paragraph 7).

Again the Committee would encourage our own congregations to be open to establishing contacts with a Free Church fellowship in local contexts. We have much in common theologically and a shared tradition upon which in these difficult days it would seem almost natural to build.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has a total of 536 congregations with 225,000 members. Currently it is a member of WCRC, but the denomination withdrew from WCC in 1980. PCI has a Relationship with Other Denominations Task Group which, interestingly and currently, is also looking at options for future multilateral memberships which will be reported to its 2018 General Assembly.

Part of the 2017 General Assembly Task Group's Report reads, "It is recognised that while none of these inter-church bodies are perfect (and some indeed could be viewed as being quite remote from PCI, even at denominational level), nonetheless they provide a forum for relationship with a significant number of denominations, many of whom share much in common with the emphases of PCI" (General Council's Report, p.75).

The theological content and evangelical tone of PCI's activities resonate strongly with our views within the United Free Church of Scotland. Therefore an informal approach was made to the denomination (March 2018), suggesting we engage in some kind of bilateral communication/discussion. The Convener would hope to be in a position to update the General Assembly on progress during his verbal report.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

The vision of CTBI is, "to serve the churches of Britain and Ireland on our shared journey towards full visible unity in Christ." The practical outworking of this bold statement takes the form of organising, co-ordinating and facilitating events, programmes & projects which enable members to actualise that vision.

Areas of interest include the plight of refugees, human trafficking, gender-based violence, racial justice as well as faith-sharing topics such as digital mission and work with children & young people. In essence CTBI is a conduit, an ecumenical forum and instrument enabling churches to make action on these hard issues more effective and sustainable.

Our membership from within the Reformed family of churches sits alongside those from Anglican, Pentecostal, Methodist, Roman Catholic, congregational & other traditions. This diversity reflects the rich benefit of multilateral activity, something which it is hoped we will continue to advocate as a denomination.

Evangelical Alliance (EA)

The ongoing objective of Evangelical Alliance remains to create space for evangelical Christians to connect with each other and reflect on how the Church can witness effectively together to our very diverse society.

Its website states, "We believe the Church is the key to long-lasting change in our country- and that by working closely with our amazing members, we can transform our communities with the good news of Jesus."

Looking at their broad base of interest areas and topics for discussion, it seems one of the key benefits of belonging to EA is its sharp focus on contemporary culture and live issues-into which the church can learn to speak with the truth and integrity of the gospel.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)

Once again the Committee would offer its warm support to any of our congregations actively involved in local ecumenism. These connections are not only a positive witness to communities but they foster links and options which can build deep trust towards shared gospel-focused relationships. The invitation to share news & information with the Committee remains in place.

The formalised arrangements at Canonbie, Cathcart & Tayport continue and the Committee would commend congregations for their creativity and patience in sustaining these links.

The situation in Montrose has developed positively, with shared worship between the UF & Methodist congregations. They have increased joint participation in Montrose Churches Together, often in a context of one member from either having the recognised authority to speak on behalf of both churches. A small joint committee of office bearers also meets bi-monthly.

Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)

The ACTS review by *Theos* was made available to member churches in November 2017. The document draws richly on the round of in-depth interviews with member churches conducted prior to its publication. This process gives the final report an authenticity and sense of ownership to members as it is directly based on their own input.

It highlights issues of communication, accountability, structure, limited membership etc. as being areas of weakness within ACTS present form. Equally it draws attention to the changing expressions of Church now established across Scotland, but with no ecumenical input at this level. The lack of focus on vision & mission are also noted as key areas which need to be revisited.

The Report will (at the time of writing) next be discussed at the ACTS Members' Meeting due to be held in Edinburgh on 25th April 2018. It is anticipated that a process will eventually be agreed to facilitate the changes and reforms necessary to revitalise our national ecumenical instrument.

The Committee has already expressed its commitment to this process and would value the prayers of the wider denomination as ACTS seeks ways to reform itself for the good of Christian witness to the communities of Scotland. Much grace, patience and creativity will be required from all sides as the glacial processes of ecumenical change work themselves out.

It is encouraging to report that funds from the Scottish Churches House Legacy Reserve are being distributed to a variety of ecumenical projects across Scotland. Applications are assessed by the ACTS trustees according to strict criteria and then recommended to member churches for approval. One such project involves a significant ongoing contribution to ministerial training at ecumenical level, as well as smaller assistance to such organisations as Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland which is very active in the employment & business communities.

Finally the Committee would wish to record its thanks to Rev. Jim Neil for his role as a trustee within ACTS. We appreciate the fact that Jim's presence always brings an evangelical perspective along with many years of experience which are being fed into the governance of ACTS.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

The Convener attended a small part of the 2017 General Council in Leipzig, Germany as the delegate from the United Free Church. It was a very positive and engaging experience to meet with others from across the world, sharing our Reformed heritage and traditions. Having the opportunity to visit Wittenberg during the 500th Anniversary year of the Reformation was particularly meaningful. In a truly ecumenical spirit, it was good to be included in the self-styled Scottish delegation which

allowed for UF representation at planning and debrief meetings held under the auspices of the Church of Scotland.

The global reach of WCRC membership necessitates the holding of regional meetings, and the annual Europe Area meeting duly took place in Budapest from 12-14 April 2018. It is important for us to sustain links which give us a broader perspective on the shape and changing nature of the global Church.

WCRC continues its advocacy role on issues of justice and peace around the world. Areas of current interest and activity include Syria, Taiwan, Colombia & South Sudan. This is seen from a theological perspective as the practical outworking of “Communion”, an imperative which compels the Church to act where peace is lacking and conditions of injustice are being perpetuated.

World Council of Churches (WCC)

2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of WCC in 1948. A whole range of celebratory events has been planned, although the general course of the organisation’s activities continue. For example a major conference on World Mission & Evangelism was held in Tanzania during March, seeking to draw lessons from African experience which may have a wider application to the shared task of global mission. The WCC Central Committee (the main body which implements Assembly decisions and meets every two years) next convenes in Geneva from 15-22 June 2018.

It is worth noting that according to the WCC website (www.oikoumene.org) this multilateral body has 348 member churches representing more than half a billion Christians. WCC serves as a powerful internationally-recognised voice on matters of peace & justice. Its contacts with the United Nations (UN) for example allows significant advocacy to take place on behalf of those marginalised around the world and left with no voice of their own.

Unfortunately the prospect of hosting the 2021 Assembly of WCC in Glasgow has disappeared, though the WCC Assembly Planning Committee is still working through the processes of selecting a venue for this significant international event.

It is hoped that the United Free Church still recognises the need to align itself with a strong Christian voice in matters of such global importance. The sense of scale may suggest our own voice is small, yet in unison with others, it can become a catalyst for truly effective and transformative Christian witness.

PART TWO: REVIEW OF ECUMENICAL ENGAGEMENT

“The work of ecumenism is not merely an urgent question for the churches, it is an existential one. Looking forward, what I pray for is an ecumenism of action theologically under-pinned.” (Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, WCC Lecture on 19 February 2018, Geneva).

This quotation takes its context from a lecture to celebrate the 70th anniversary of WCC. Its most striking assertion is that ecumenical activity is “existential” for churches, in other words this activity is part of our core identity and very nature. Therefore it is not something we can opt into or out of, depending on whether we agree or not with the position of others. It penetrates to the very heart of who we are and defines a basic attribute of external and shared Christian witness.

Many denominations are currently reviewing their ecumenical priorities. It is hoped that the proposals to be outlined in the second part of this Report will finally establish a clear trajectory for our ecumenical policy. These make the case for maintaining some of our traditional memberships, whilst inviting the denomination to consider the gospel possibilities offered by a fresh model of direct engagement by congregations themselves.

Our task was guided by the terms of the following Paragraph of Deliverance agreed in 2017: *The General Assembly thank the Committee for the report of the review of ecumenical relations. Whilst recognising the correspondence of theological language of the various ecumenical bodies we are currently a part of, the General Assembly ask the Committee to continue its review of our present connections to these bodies to discern whether their present trajectories, activities, statements and*

priorities are helpful to the United Free Church of Scotland; and ask the Committee to identify and likewise evaluate whether there are other ecumenical bodies which may better match the gospel priorities of the denomination.

The Committee took an early decision to appoint a small Ecumenical Review Group comprised of Duncan Whitty, Nathan Owens, John Fulton, Jane McArthur & Alexander Ritchie to look at the options available to us. It met on three occasions and the Committee would wish to express warm appreciation to the group itself. Group members came around the table from a variety of theological perspectives and with different shades of opinion regarding ecumenical priorities.

That diversity opened rather than closed our discussions, which were animated but constructive and substantial. All contributions were heard and engaged with, this model has led to the conclusions which have now been approved by the Committee and are hereby presented for consideration by the General Assembly. It is our prayerful hope that this ecumenical policy will genuinely bring the denomination together and give a fresh impetus to our view of ecumenism.

It is worth noting that the group's work was built upon the detailed conclusions which emerged from the previous ecumenical review undertaken following the 2014 General Assembly. The Committee would acknowledge again the considerable insights gleaned from that initial process.

Realistically the Committee knew it was impossible to review the labyrinthine workings of every multilateral body we currently belong to with the time and human resources at our disposal. That said we felt it important to try and focus on the *gospel priorities* mentioned in the Paragraph, which led us to the suggestions for a more nuanced approach to ecumenical engagement. These reflect our theological under-pinnings as an evangelical denomination, but with a focus on ecumenical activity developing organically from looser network structures and involving our congregations directly, rather than the traditional, now somewhat outmoded, formula of multilateral memberships.

The Committee's suggested approach is one of balance - an ecumenical policy which functions at a number of different levels and offers a broad range of options to the United Free Church. This continues to sustain and complement the rich diversity of our bilateral relationships outlined in Part One. Equally we have tried to make a fair assessment of our multilateral commitments, seeking to streamline these in order to prioritise a gospel agenda whilst also recognising that there is still an inherent value in maintaining some memberships-both for us and (the Committee hopes) for the organisation itself.

Lastly the Committee wants to highlight strongly a different ecumenical perspective to the denomination, one which seeks to be intuitive, relational and in tune with the current flow of effective ecumenical work. It centres on the idea that the Committee facilitates a connection with an ecumenical network and invites congregations to tap into its rich resources as and when they deem it necessary. There is no formalised membership, more an affiliation through the normal channels but with an emphasis on grass-roots activity which has a missional focus and a clear gospel priority. We believe this has the potential to be a rich and exciting avenue of opportunity.

EXISTING MULTILATERAL MEMBERSHIPS

The Committee has looked as closely as possible at our current multilateral memberships. Our priority and guiding principles have been to identify a set of criteria by which the United Free Church has a rich and well-balanced platform to conduct a broad range of ecumenical connections and discussions. Equally we need to exercise wisdom and fairness by setting the parameters for our ecumenical activity in terms of what we can effectively and meaningfully contribute to the body and that which we will gain by a sustained and formalised relationship in return.

Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) is the national ecumenical instrument for Scotland. It is currently undergoing a review process to which the United Free Church has committed itself. The possibilities are many, but at this stage the outcome is an unknown commodity. The Committee asks the General Assembly to be patient, the multilateral body which emerges from this review may look very different in terms of its structures, governance, means of affiliating and future priorities. Our recommendation is, at present, to remain in full membership of ACTS.

Evangelical Alliance (EA) does an excellent job in facilitating a broad range of ecumenical activities across a variety of churches and groups. We have already noted our strong agreement with its founding principles and the Committee sees no reason to change our position in terms of current membership.

World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest multilateral body to which we currently belong, both in size and theological diversity. Many see that reality as its deepest flaw, the Committee would suggest this still remains one of its greatest assets. It is essential for us to maintain some kind of link with a global platform, especially in matters of advocacy and the ability for a Christian voice to be heard and respected internationally. We understand the views of those who struggle with the range of theological perspectives co-existing within WCC. However our position is that the gospel options for ecumenical engagement outlined below now offer a balancing evangelical basis for rich and diverse relationships. Our recommendation is, at present, to remain in full membership of WCC.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) shares many overlapping roles with WCC, especially in matters of international Christian advocacy. That said we have found it difficult to grasp the full meaning of "Communion" in terms of our past engagements with WCRC, particularly in relation to consequences of ending the formal covenant with the Church of Scotland. Equally WCRC moved towards association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) at its Leipzig General Council by referencing the concept of Communion, but perhaps with limited recognition and scrutiny of concerns raised.

The Committee's view is that in terms of international advocacy WCC has a much higher profile than WCRC. Therefore when compounded by the ongoing issues surrounding its core concept of Communion, and how this impacts the formation of policy & decision-making within this multilateral body, our recommendation is to take steps to withdraw from membership of WCRC.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) has strong links with the four ecumenical instruments across Britain, all of which (ACTS included) are members of CTBI. This Report has already recognised the excellent work being co-ordinated by this multilateral body, driven in particular by the ecumenical vigour of Churches Together in England (CTE, www.cte.org.uk). That said, the Committee find it difficult to identify any area of CTBI's work which is directly impacting any of our congregations, even at the level of basic recognition of its identity or activities.

An important caveat needs to be entered here. If we seek to end formal membership of CTBI, what effect does the ongoing inconsistency of our sustained membership of ACTS (itself a full member of CTBI) actually involve? The Committee would request some patience once again from the General Assembly as we investigate this apparent anomaly. It must be recognised that the impact of how any withdrawal is received and understood by the wider ecumenical community is sensitively presented and properly executed. Our recommendation is, at present, to seek to explore the viability & potential consequences of withdrawing from membership of CTBI.

NEW ECUMENICAL CONNECTIONS

Here are the organisations/networks we looked at closely during our final process of review:

- World Reformed Fellowship (www.wrfnet.org)
- Lausanne Movement (www.lausanne.org)
- Global Christian Forum (www.globalchristianforum.org)

World Reformed Fellowship (WRF)

WRF currently has 61 denominational members-including the Associated Presbyterian Churches in Scotland (APC) and the Free Church of Scotland (FC). Significantly however these two Scottish Churches are amongst its only members in Europe. A General Assembly is held every four years or so, the most recent taking place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, during March 2015. The cost of membership would be in the region of £200 - £300 per annum. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) is also looking at the possibility of joining WRF.

This multilateral body is confessional, which from our point of view raises the nature of our relationship with the Westminster Confession of Faith. Our position is that the Confession is our subordinate standard, yet under our Declaratory Acts liberty of judgement is allowed on matters which do not enter into the substance of the faith. Does this make us a non-confessional denomination, thereby precluded from WRF membership?

The Committee raised this with WRF and the initial answer suggested that it would most likely still be possible for us to join the ecumenical body on the basis of our current position. We were encouraged by this response and the Review Group took steps to investigate the WRF's own Statement of Faith. Most of its content on issues like the doctrine of God, the person and work of Christ, the authority of Scripture etc. would be very similar to our own theological perspective.

Equally there are obvious ties of Reformed history and shared tradition which would make membership of WRF almost a natural ecumenical progression for us. However the Committee has come to the view that joining WRF at this point would not offer us sufficient practical connections and fresh opportunities to justify it. We already have a strong bilateral relationship with the Free Church, whilst most other member Churches are outwith Europe. Whilst the sense of like-mindedness would be tangible, it could well be that we soon find ourselves in a similar position to that experienced in other multilateral situations-namely with many questions about direct impact, actual difference and practical relevance to our denominational circumstances and priorities.

There is much for the United Free Church to commend and agree with in looking at WRF. However our feeling is that getting a sense of more direct, relational and sharp focus on immediate gospel priorities like mission, evangelism and church planting might equally be found elsewhere.

The Lausanne Movement

The spirit of Lausanne finds its roots in the vision of Billy Graham in the 1970s to create a forum to bring Christians together-specifically for global mission. The city hosted the first gathering of 2,400 participants in July 1974.

The Lausanne Covenant followed shortly thereafter and it contains evangelical statements about the nature & being of God, the authority of Scripture and the unique saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, "We affirm that there is only one Saviour and only one Gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches" (Covenant, Section 3). Doctrinally we can align ourselves with the terms of this Covenant very comfortably.

The spirit of Lausanne has grown organically into a connected system of some thirty issue-based networks which cover missional topics such as church planting, children & evangelism, leadership development & tent making (i.e., gospel service through the job you are doing).

It is essential to point out Lausanne has no formal structures or official channels for denominational membership. This model of ecumenical engagement functions differently and is centred on the idea that gospel connections occur between individuals & congregations-as well as organised denominations. The most recent Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation was held in Cape Town, South Africa, during October 2010.

The Committee's understanding is that it would be possible for the United Free Church to affiliate itself with and contribute financially to Lausanne, but the major impetus for our participation would come from within-as congregations connect with the appropriate issue network and engage in the process of dialogue. We would ask churches to let us know if they take up this gospel challenge and feedback to the Committee on any outcomes.

This is not bi- or multilateral ecumenism. The model is different, but the gospel focus is undeniable. As expressions of church evolve and as means for communication change very rapidly, there is a need for this kind of relevant, accessible and informed ecumenical engagement. It places a gospel imperative at the forefront of its work and builds ways to share ideas about this focus on an organic platform of ecumenical networking.

The Committee would commend the Lausanne Movement to the denomination and strongly encourages our congregations to consider signing up to and participating in the kind of gospel conversations which can facilitate a real difference being made directly in each local situation.

Global Christian Forum (GCF)

GCF exists to bring churches together, specifically those not naturally and regularly in relationship with one another. Like Lausanne it has no formalised membership structure or tiered governance, although administration & oversight are provided by a small staff plus International Committee. It operates on a more denominational level of engagement.

The next global gathering of GCF is due to take place in Bogota, Columbia during April 2018 with an expected attendance of around 300 leaders representing a balanced mix of traditional denominations and newer expressions of Church from around the world.

The United Free Church of Scotland could opt to participate in GCF, but not officially join it. The body works on the basis of creating safe ecumenical space for churches to engage in discussion and dialogue.

It is worth quoting directly from GCF's Guiding Purpose Statement, "To create an open space wherein representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organisations, which confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges." (affirmed in 2007).

Once again GCF is an expression of different patterns within ecumenism, a multilateral body which has minimal structures, but seeks to maximise relational interactions between Christians on the basis of a shared gospel focus.

Again the Committee would stress to the General Assembly that this kind of activity moves away from traditional ecumenical modes and has a rich sense of organic growth with active participation. Like Lausanne this mode invites participation and connection, it is not about joining and then not taking part. The whole ethos and *raison d'être* of GCF are about facilitating the connection to sustain the discussion across boundaries of tradition, theological difference and lack of natural connectivity.

Perhaps one of the key distinctives about both Lausanne & GCF is that the lack of formal membership allows the ecumenical process to work more naturally, easily and instinctively. Discussions are less about day-to-day funding or planning issues, and far more about subjects like mission & evangelism, shared experiences and common concerns which cut across traditional boundaries. Churches get as much out of this kind of ecumenism as they are willing and courageous enough to put into it. This represents an ecumenism of action.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN ECUMENICAL POLICY

The Committee would submit that the proposals which make up this ecumenical policy represent a well-balanced approach between different modes of engagement. We feel it is vitally important to maintain strands of bilateral & multilateral connection for the reasons given above, whilst at the same time taking advantage of more relational networking modes which draw congregations directly into the ecumenical process in order to explore their own gospel priorities.

We are aware that any movement in our position sends signals to the wider Church, but the Committee has no intention of seeking either to restrict discussions or limit fellowship. The policy is not isolationist or elitist, rather it is creative, fair and diverse across a range of possibilities. We feel strongly that it redresses the balance substantially and strengthens our evangelical options.

We have not recommended taking steps to consider withdrawing from two multilateral bodies (WCRC & CTBI) lightly, but in terms of the criticisms often levelled at their lack of efficacy, the policy allows for more time to be devoted to direct engagement on practical matters rather than occasional attendance at meetings to discuss formal issues of governance and business with little gospel relevance.

It was wisely stated during our review meetings that we should seek to identify a path of least resistance for ecumenical matters which can bring us together as a denomination. This does not mean the Committee will not still be keeping things constantly under review and it may be that we will revisit issues such as membership of WRF or other multilateral bodies in due course.

The United Free Church can contribute something that is ecumenically distinctive, the point which started this written Report. We must take cognisance of our small size, but this is no barrier to effective contribution-if our faith is strong enough and our vision is wide enough. It is surely time to settle our position, or at least its broad shape and initial trajectory. The Committee feels this Report allows us to do that and continue our ecumenical journey with a sharper focus on gospel priorities.

THANKS

The Committee looks back on another year with a deep sense of gratitude to all those who have assisted in its work, by way of sharing ideas & opinions about the best way forward for the United Free Church in these times of real flux for ecumenism. The Committee is grateful to the members both of the Review Group for their insight, positivity and rich contributions to our work. Finally we record sincerest thanks to Rev. John Fulton & Mrs. Helena Jarvis for their unstinting support, practical encouragement and wise advice.

In the name of the Committee

ALEXANDER RITCHIE	Convener
ANN DEACONS	Vice-Convener
JOHN O FULTON	Secretary