

**REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MISSION COMMITTEE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022**

**INTRODUCTION (CLAM)**

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.” - 1 Peter 1:3-4.*

In last year’s report the words from 1 Peter 2 verse 9 were included: “...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” And the question could be asked - what are these excellent things we are to proclaim about God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? The answer, at least in part, is surely found in the opening words of Peter’s letter. He is full of great mercy. He can make us be born again to eternal life. He sent a Saviour who died in our place where we should have. He sent a Deliverer who rose again with authority and power and redeemed us from slavery to sin and its consequences. He bestows upon his people an inheritance that makes anything this world offers pale into insignificance. How can we do anything other than proclaim these excellent things? Far from having no message for Scotland in 2022, the Church of Jesus has the only message that will not get eaten by the moths of time or the changing whims of culture.

The purpose of CLAM is to assist, equip and resource our congregations in the proclamation of this Gospel, the making of disciples, and the ministry of seeing existing disciples mature. If any local congregation requires assistance, approach your Presbytery for help and if needed CLAM is here to assist in any way possible. The desire of CLAM is that our denomination would be filled with flourishing, healthy, local churches proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus, and we exist to facilitate this vision as much as possible.

CLAM started life with 6 working groups, the reports of which will follow shortly, however, during the course of the past 12 months the Local Life and Leadership Working Group (LLL) asked CLAM if its remit could be absorbed into the main CLAM Committee’s agenda as a standing item. This wasn’t because the remit of the Working Group was not important, but because the Working Group didn’t feel it could justify regular meetings. CLAM has therefore decided to take remit of LLL as a standing item on its agenda going forward. This includes:

1. Encouraging local congregations to be faithful in the Great Commission of making and teaching disciples by providing resources, events and/or training.
2. Overseeing the training and development of office-bearers in local congregations, both elders and deacons/board members/managers.

CLAM wishes to reassure the General Assembly that the remit of LLL continues. If a specific task requires further work CLAM can appoint a temporary Task Group to fulfil requirements. In the meantime, if any local congregation needs advice on training either for congregations or office bearers, please get in touch with CLAM. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s elder

training course is still recommended as a good training course for elders, and there are several excellent resources available for congregations depending on what they wish to explore.

## **RESOURCING MISSION (RM)**

### **Introduction**

The Resourcing Mission Working Group (RM) continues to fulfil its given remit, namely:

1. To encourage congregations, presbyteries and the denomination to be faithful in the Great Commission.
2. To oversee church plants, church revitalizations, and to stimulate mission in all congregations.
3. To ensure that mission remains central to the UF by engaging in consultation, resourcing, reviewing and accompaniment.
4. To be responsible for the selection, employment, training, deployment and supervision of any staff employed by the Committee.

As has been the case since its inception, this is primarily achieved by including 4 standing items on the agenda of Resourcing Mission meetings: schedules, part-time appointments, projects and church planting.

### **Schedules**

RM continues to receive all schedules submitted to Presbyteries, and the Working Group is grateful to presbyteries for their diligence in this task. The reason the denomination made this change in 2020 was to try and prioritise the vital work of mission in all areas of the life of its churches. We desire to use the resources we have in the best possible way in order to make disciples and disciple existing disciples into maturity.

### **Part-Time Appointments**

RM has been aware that no review of part time appointments had happened for some time due to mitigating circumstances. This was therefore a matter of priority for the group during the past year. Time was spent in late 2021 reviewing the previous system of management, including forms sent out and the interview process for all part time appointments. It was the desire of the group to ensure a duty of care was maintained for all those we had responsibility for, and after some minor adjustments, forms were sent out to congregations and part time appointments at the beginning of 2022 and be returned in time for interviews to take place in March. At the time of writing 5 out of 8 current part time appointments have been interviewed, with the remaining 3 due to take place in April 2022. RM wishes to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Rev. Deirdre Lyon and Rev. Wilma Pearson, both of whom are retiring this year. Special thanks are also due to Mrs Gladys Robertson for her many years of faithful ministry in Gorebridge.

### **Projects**

One of the key areas of RM's remit is to oversee projects within the denomination because the primary desire of CLAM is to see as many of our local churches as possible, flourish as healthy, local, gospel churches. To that end if any local congregation has an idea for a mission

opportunity, RM is here to help. It may be that advice can be given, or that resources can be allocated to assist a church in being obedient to the Great Commission. The best way to proceed would be for a congregation to submit a schedule to their Presbytery, who in turn can bring it to the attention of RM for assistance.

RM is directly involved in 5 local congregations. Kilmaurs, Ardeer, Torry and Carnoustie have now been recognised as UF “projects” for a number of years. Kilmaurs and Ardeer have both seen encouragement and growth to varying degrees over the past year and Torry employed Ian Hepburn as a church worker and evangelist at the end of 2021. RM continues to prayerfully support Carnoustie in its endeavour to be a revitalised church. In September of 2021 RM committed to support Darnley in their call of a full-time minister, agreeing to contribute towards stipendiary payments for the next 5 years and recognising Darnley as the 5th current revitalisation project.

RM has also been in conversation with several other local congregations over the past year, including, West Calder, Broxburn, Chryston and Cunningburgh.

As part of its response to its remit to help stimulate mission and growth in all congregations Resourcing Mission established the Leadership Network in 2021. The first meeting was held in November in the National Christian Outreach Centre in Perth. The Network is for church leaders who want to see their churches become more effective, flourishing, missional communities. Rather than focussing on keynote speakers, Leadership Network deliberately prioritises group discussion - here each church leader/team thinks through goals for the coming year and how best to work towards them. The aim is for the Leadership Network to meet twice a year, and each time participants will share how the last 6 months have gone, encourage each other afresh, plan for the upcoming 6 months, and pray.

### **Church Planting**

The Kilmarnock Church plant under the oversight of Kilmaurs Maxwell Church continues, with Paul Harkess employed as church planter. Paul Harkess was formally recognised as a 20 Schemes church planter at the beginning of the year. Paul has benefitted from training alongside other church planters in the West of Scotland and is looking forward to seeing this partnership and church plant grow over the coming months.

### **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES (CYPF)**

The Working Group consists of six members: Phil Steed, Mhairi McNaughton, Rachel Keane, Rachel Tait, Steve Marr and Laura Mackenzie who are all involved in local church ministry.

The Group’s first priority was to find the right platforms that would enable fulfil the first part of the remit to be fulfilled:

‘To encourage and resource outreach to, and the discipleship of, children, young people and families in local congregations’. The Working Group has launched a WhatsApp Group where those involved in any way with Children and Youth Work across the denomination can share prayer requests and follow up with answers to prayer with one another as and when events are happening. This enables up to date things being shared and helping all who are in the group, know about and feel part of the wider work across the denomination. This has proven to be a great encouragement to those who have already joined up and the Group would

encourage more to do so, email: philstead@hotmail.co.uk for further information to know how to join in.

A questionnaire has been created which will be sent around the churches to help the Group to find out what other platforms can be created that members are using, to further resource our congregations.

An annual subscription to Urban Saints “Energize” on-line resources, allows every UF Church free access to all their materials (information as to how to do this is available from Church Office). If your Church is unaware of this provision, we would encourage you to make it known. There are great resources to be had for all age groups and materials

It was good to see SPARKS and The Youth Weekend re-starting as we navigated out of the pandemic. The first few SPARKS took place “outdoors” and the Weekend was fully booked for which we give thanks to the Lord that we still had children and young people engaging in our congregations despite the interruption of the normal events.

The Youth Weekend for 2022 is booked at Lendrick Muir for 28th – 30th October 2022. Due to being fully booked last year the decision has been taken to increase the number of places from 28 to 42. So please pray that there will be a good response from the churches and if you have children and young people in your congregations from P5 to S6 start encouraging them to think about coming along.

The Easter Scheme 2022 joined in with the Global Focus Appeal for Flying Mission Zambia’s “Instrument Replacement Appeal”.

The “Zoom Open House” event took place in August 2022 to introduce the CYPF Working Group, share our purpose, and find out what churches would appreciate in terms of support. The main request was for prayer – which spearheaded the WhatsApp Group (mentioned above). It is the group’s intention to hold another “Zoom Open House” on Tuesday 9th August at 7:30pm to bring everyone together again and update and pray with one another. Links to this meeting will be sent out to churches ahead of the day.

### **GLOBAL FOCUS (GF)**

The Working Group was delighted with the outcome of the Photo Competition and Calendar. All the photos were judged by professional photographer, Mr Alastair Clunie, who willingly gave of his time to assist with this project. The winning entries formed the basis of a calendar of which just over 400 were sold. It was very encouraging to know that, not only were they used as gifts, but also as a way of sharing the Gospel with family, friends and neighbours. The sum of £1,860 was raised for Rerotle, a project in rural Botswana, that supports children in a number of remote cattle stations, with pre-school learning classes and, perhaps more importantly, at least one meal every day.

Last year’s inaugural Global Focus Prayer Week was well received and positive feedback was received on how individuals and congregations used the material. Following on from 2021, this year’s theme of ‘7 Continents, 5 Oceans, 1 Planet’ will be highlighted in two weeks of focussed prayer. The first week, between 8th-15th May will concentrate on the ‘7 Continents, 1 Planet’ while the ‘5 Oceans, 1 Planet’ will be the theme of the second prayer week just before Advent. A number of people were approached with regard to writing Prayer Week material.

Contributors were asked to research, in this instance, their continent and highlight the major issues affecting the peoples, wildlife and environment bringing these together in prayer.

The Global Focus Working Group looks forward to further developing our partnership with OMF. As with our other partners, Flying Mission Care, Flying Mission Zambia and the Scottish Churches' China Group (SCCG), OMF will be able to contribute to the monthly E-Update. Future opportunities may also include an article in Stedfast and a stall at in-person Denominational events.

In conversation with Matthias Bauert, Managing Director of Flying Mission Zambia, the Group learned of their plan to refurbish two of the Cessna planes. One key piece of equipment was the Storm Scope which assists pilots to safely navigate around storms during the rainy season. The Global Focus Working Group decided to launch a stand alone Appeal to raise the £5,000 required for a replacement Storm Scope. The Appeal was launched in August 2021 and Global Focus members were humbled and encouraged by the support the Appeal received. More than the required amount was raised and a new Storm Scope was purchased, and fitted, in time for the rainy season. The additional funds raised will go towards the cost of a new Storm Scope for the second Cessna.

Flying Mission Zambia Instrument Replacement Appeal Easter Scheme – The Global Focus Working Group is very grateful to the Children, Young People and Families Working Group for selecting the Instrument Replacement Appeal as the focus of this year's Easter Scheme. There is a long-standing partnership between the United Free Church of Scotland and Flying Mission and support for the refurbishment of the Cessna planes is the latest expression of this. The Global Focus Working Group is very grateful to Mrs Helena Jarvis for all her work in putting together a range of interesting and fun materials that we hope individuals, groups and congregations will enjoy using as they raise funds for the Easter Scheme Appeal.

The monthly E-Update has, again, proved to be a very useful tool in sharing information, insights and prayer points, from Global Focus Working Group partners and Mission Partners associated with the Denomination. The regularity of the E-Update has enabled the wider Denomination to keep abreast of ongoing situations that impact on the work and witness of organisational partners and mission partners. Repeatedly, the Group has heard from partner organisations and mission partners how important it is to them to know that they are being faithfully supported in prayer by so many people in the United Free Church.

The Global Focus Working Group would like to thank partner organisations and Mission Partners associated with the United Free Church for taking the time to keep us updated on their work and witness in such a wide variety of settings. Our Christian mission, here in Scotland, can receive and learn so much from the world-wide family of God. The Working Group is very aware that this is an additional task that they need to build into already busy schedules and is grateful for the dedication to keeping the Group and the Denomination updated.

## **CHRISTIAN LIFE ISSUES (CLI)**

### **Being and Identity**

The issues which have emerged in popular culture can largely be described as being in these two categories and these have largely been the focus of the Working Group. As a Christian

church we are called to speak up for the vulnerable in our society (Proverbs 31:8-9) and to realise that our fulfilled identity is found in being adopted as sons and daughters of God. We are to be shaped, or sanctified, by our identity being found in Christ, and as we are transformed, being shaped by having the mind of Christ. Often the issue that we find in the Christian church is the lack of teaching in many places on issues pertaining to who we are, and who we are made to be. This is particularly the case with regard to moral issues and more specifically in gender and sexuality on the one side and on the other, issues pertaining to the beginning and end of life. We need to receive teaching and guidance and we pray that we may be able to be salt and light in these areas.

The issues arising from Coronavirus have impacted on many sections of society, however there has been a particularly profound effect on older people. The largely Christian based Faith in Older people charity is one in which the Group has engaged with and would commend their online resources which can be found at: [www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk). The Working Group continues to take an interest in the widely changing area of Coronavirus restrictions and we welcome the successful judicial review at the Court of Session in the Scottish Government acting beyond their emergency powers in church restrictions.

### **Engagement in the public square**

The Working Group is particularly grateful for the work of the Christian Institute, CARE (Christian Action, Research and Education) and that of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office. The two former organisations have largely represented the United Free Church's views, particularly on human gender and sexuality and further information can be found at [www.christian.org.uk](http://www.christian.org.uk) and [www.care.org.uk](http://www.care.org.uk). Both organisations have well informed speakers in Nigel Kenny and Dr Stuart Weir who welcome the opportunity to speak in churches or lead worship. The Committee is represented in the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) by the Working Group Convener and the Group welcomes the increased diversity of Christian representation in the Parliamentary Office which is becoming more representative of Christian Churches and Christian organisations in Scotland. The SCPO is a very useful vehicle for being kept aware of Bills being raised at the Scottish Parliament, and also through the RADAR Committee, of issues at the United Kingdom Parliament.

### **Representations**

The Working Group has made a submission to the Scottish Parliament on Conversion Therapy, noting that the definition of conversion therapy is so wide that it risks placing ministers in the place of breaking the law to counsel and pray with someone who has asked for help with their sexuality. There have undoubtedly been issues with some approaches to those struggling with sexuality and gender issues, but this dictates to churches that they cannot from biblical beliefs provide biblical counsel and help. Secondly, the proposals seem to actively discriminate against those who are genuinely struggling to lead biblically patterned lives; and indeed, even to discriminate against the many who, for example, have gender transitioned and now regret the action. Where can they turn to for help?

Regarding Liam McArthur MSP's Private Members Bill on Assisted Dying a response was made noting that we need to seek as a nation to "create a new standard for how we die" as stated in the Bill. However, the Group feels that the proposed Bill would be a move in the wrong direction – a move away from excellent palliative care towards involving healthcare

professionals in killing patients. It would result in a huge amount of pressure being placed on the most vulnerable in our society to end their lives and a more unjust society. Rather, the Group recognises that there is a need for much greater investment in palliative care for those facing death along with support for their family and friends; and that a truly compassionate and just society would recognise that all life has intrinsic value and dignity – regardless of our circumstances. It would seek to do all that we can to care well for the whole person.

### **International Development: Tearfund and Christian Aid**

Both of these International Development organisations have made particularly valuable contributions on behalf of the Christian Churches in the United Kingdom. The Group has particularly appreciated, and commend the work, of Tearfund in their evangelical approach to international development work.

### **Scottish Faiths Actions for Refugees**

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR) continues to be active in areas of refugee integration, supporting campaigning calls for changes to the UK asylum system, engaged in work around resettlement programmes and raising awareness about the ongoing international situation facing people forced to leave their homes.

One of the aims at present is to get greater involvement from people who have wide experience in supporting and working with refugees as well as getting input from those who have experienced life as a refugee. The Nationality and Borders Bill is a major piece of legislation put forward by the UK Government and faith leaders have urged the Government to “substantially” change the terms of this controversial Bill.

The Group is particularly grateful to Sabine Chalmers for her work for SFAR and for her article in Stedfast.

### **Financial contributions**

The Working Group has allocated financial contributions towards the following organisations:

Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office - £2,000

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees - £1,000

Christian Action, Research and Education (CARE) - £1,000

The Christian Institute - £1,000

### **Future work**

The area of communicating the group’s work and that of raising awareness of social and moral issues is one which we aim to undertake further work on. It is recognised that many of our members and churches will receive information directly from the organisations mentioned and there is no wish to overload people, which can be counter-productive. The Group has managed to promote some of its work via Stedfast, however we are looking at other means of conveying relevant information.

## **NATIONAL CHURCH EVENTS (NCE)**

The annual 'Dunblane' event has become one of the most important and encouraging in the life of our denomination and so the fact that it has not been possible to gather in the usual way for the last two years has been a great disappointment. During this period, the National Events Working Group has, however, organised online events, the most recent of which 'Rise and Shine' was held on 28th August 2021. These have been appreciated by many and their success was in no small measure due to Rob and Gwen Barlow who worked tirelessly both in respect of the content and the technology and the Committee is grateful for all their work. Despite the success of these events and the excellence of speakers and workshop leaders, the sense of fellowship and the meeting up with friends could not be replicated online. It is the fervent hope of the Working Group, therefore, that this year's event will be in person and the Group is working towards that end.

Dunblane High School has been booked for Saturday 27th August and, the plan is for the day to follow its usual format of worship, teaching and sharing. This year's event will be called, 'Cross Purposes' and will consider 'Christian Priorities in a Shaken World'. The keynote speaker will be Rev Peter Turnbull of Burghead Free Church and a selection of seminars on the general theme are being planned. This will provide a further opportunity to think about renewal and revitalisation within our congregations. Often talks on such subjects focus on city churches or those in areas of deprivation but most UF Churches are in smaller communities and so the intention is to consider the theme within the context in which most of our congregations work and witness. The Committee commend the event to all members and friends.

It is only right to conclude this report by expressing our grateful thanks to Mr Adrian Rootes and Mrs Helena Jarvis for their unstinting support and guidance to CLAM over the past year.

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