

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ~ SYNOD OF SCOTLAND

Minutes of the meetings of Synod held Friday 16 to Sunday 18 September 2005 at Tulliallan Police College

Present: Mr Maxwell Allan (Morningside United), Mr Kenny Athey (Barrhead), Mrs Elisabeth Athey (Barrhead), Revd Brian Bailey (Retired Minister), Revd Ian Baillie (Shawlands), Miss Marjory Bain (Thurso), Mr David Bain (Peedie Kirk), Miss Aileen Baird (Bathgate), Mr Barclay Bannister (Observer, Morison Memorial), Mrs Joyce Bannister (Observer, Morison Memorial), Mrs Rita Barr (Secretary Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College), Miss Jennifer Barrie (Galashiels), Revd Ian Bird, Mrs Janet Boyd (Greenock East), Mrs Sheila Brown (Giffnock), Mrs Doris Caldwell (Augustine United), Ms Ruth Camps (Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba), Revd Deborah Cornish (Granton), Revd Danny Cheyne (Dumbarton), Ms Carol Chisholm (Barrhead), Mr Tom Clark (Paisley), Mrs Margaret Clark (Paisley), Pastor John Clark (Dumbarton), Revd David Coleman (Barrhead), Mr Tali Coleman, Miss Millie Coleman, Mrs Margaret Cooke (Newburgh), Mrs Greta Costigan (Pollokshields), Mrs Anne Cowan (Stonehouse), Mr Jim Cowan (Stonehouse), Mr Stewart Cutler (Youth and Children's Work Development Officer), Miss Morag Donaldson (Portobello), Revd Colin Douglas (Livingston), Revd Willie Downie, Mrs Kate Durham (Morningside United), Revd Principal John Dyce (Principal, Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College), Mrs Effie Dyer (Greenock West), Mrs Anne Fraser (Dunfermline), Mrs Grace Geddes (Wishaw), Revd Suzanne Hamnett, Revd Elspeth Harley, Mr Douglas Hay (Hamilton), Mrs Nellie Henderson (Dunning), Mrs Lyn Higton (President, Women's Union), Revd Haydn Higton (retired minister), Mrs Anne Holmes (Righead), Mrs Mary Howatt (Stewarton), Revd Tim Huc (Helensburgh), Revd John Humphreys (Moderator), Mr Craig Jesson (ordinand), Revd Gareth Jones (Scottish Industrial Mission), Revd Paul Jupp (Pollokshields), Mrs Patricia Jupp, Miss Elizabeth King (Secretary, South Area Council), Mr Mark Kirkbride (Treasurer Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College), Revd Sue Kirkbride (Morningside United), Revd Roddy McFarlane (Stewarton), Miss Harriet Main (Nairn), Mrs Elinor McCulloch (Rutherglen), Mr Ron McKillop (Cumbernauld), Mrs Helen Mee (ordinand), Dr Jim Merrilees (Synod Clerk), Mrs Irene Merrilees (Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting), Mrs Molly Millan (Bathgate), Revd Leslie Morrison, (Duke Street, Leith/Portobello), Revd Richard Murray, Mr Tom Murray (Treasurer, East Area Council), Mr Keith Muskett (Helensburgh), Mrs Pauline Muskett (Acting Secretary West Area Council), Revd Kristin Ofstad (Thurso), Mrs Babs Paterson (Observer, Righead), Revd Alan Paterson (Righead/East Mains), Revd David Pattie (Morison Memorial), Revd Helen Pattie (Mosspark United), Mr Simon Peters (Synod Youth Representative), Mr Peter Ranscombe (Editor, SynNews), Revd Linda Rice (Newburgh/Dunning), Mr Robin Richardson (Annan), Dr Leslie Robinson (Observer, Rutherglen), Mrs Betty Robinson (Observer, Rutherglen), Miss Hannah Sanderson, Miss Morven Sanderson, Revd John Sanderson (Rutherglen), Dr Henry Sefton (Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting), Mrs May Simpson (Morison Memorial), Mr Bill Simpson (Secretary, Pastoral Committee), Miss Wilma Sinclair (Fraserburgh), Revd John Smith (Morningside United), Revd Gordon Smith (Hamilton), Mr Patrick Smyth (Secretary, Glasgow Area Council), Revd Carolyn Smyth (Drumchapel Essenside), Miss Janet Stirling (Dunfermline) Revd George Sykes (Secretary East Area Council), Revd David Taylor (Shawlands/Priesthill), Revd Mary Taylor (Galashiels/Selkirk), Revd Andrew Thomson (Cumbernauld), Mr Brian Walker (Convenor Finance & Property), Ms Zam Walker (ordinand), Revd John Wilson (Retired Minister), Mrs Margaret Wilson (Port Glasgow), Mr Tom Woodbridge (Treasurer Synod of Scotland), Revd John Young (Greenock West), Miss Sheena Young (Observer, Paisley).

Guests: Revd Erik Cramb, Mrs Elspeth Davey (Theological Reflector), Revd Sydney Graham (Church of Scotland), Revd Dr Marion Keston (Scottish Episcopal Church), Revd James Marshall (United Free Church of Scotland), Revd Watson Moyes (Baptist Union of Scotland), Mrs Janet Murray (Methodist Church in Scotland), Mrs Carol Rogers (Secretary for Communications United Reformed Church), Revd Lindsey Sanderson (Assistant General Secretary ACTS), Ms Elinor Todd,

Apologies Revd Dr Angus Allan (Retired Minister), Revd Jim Allardyce (Retired Minister), Revd Eliza Armstrong (Retired Minister), Revd John Arthur (Retired Minister), Revd Peter Arthur (Retired Minister), Revd Tony Ashcroft (Retired Minister), Miss Joyce Bain (Synod Legal Adviser), Revd George Barr (Retired Minister), Revd Mary Barr (Retired Minister), Mr William Beaugie (Dumfries), Revd Fiona Bennet, Revd Sid Bindemann (Retired Minister), Revd Jim Binnie (Retired Minister), Revd Janette Black (Paisley), Revd Connie Bonner (Annan), Revd Alex Brown (Retired Minister), Revd David Brown (Retired Minister), Revd Stephen Brown (Fraserburgh), Mrs Janet Browning (Livingston), Revd Mary Buchanan (Ecumenical Officer), Revd Mitchell Bunting (Augustine United), Revd Dr John Clark (Retired Minister), Mrs Nan Clark (Dumbarton), Revd Henry Cook (Retired Minister), Revd Derek Corner, Mr Ian Crozier (Grahamston United), Mr Bob Dalgleish (Granton), Revd James Dey (Retired Minister), Mr Terry Dobson (Duke Street, Leith), Dr Norman Ferguson (Falkirk), Mrs Margaret Gibson (Beith), Mrs Margaret Gillan (Women's Union), Revd Tom Gordon (Retired Minister), Revd Jim Graham (Retired Minister), Revd Ken Hilton (Dumfries), Mr David Hogg (Treasurer West Area Council), Revd James Kidd, Revd David Laing (Retired Minister), Revd Anne Lindsey (Retired Minister), Revd Tom Mackay (Retired Minister), Revd Gillean Maclean (Livingston), Revd Kenneth

McCaffrey (Roman Catholic Church), Mr George McCluskie (East Mains), Revd William McCrorie (Retired Minister), Miss Suzanne McDonald (ordinand), Revd Murdoch McKenzie (Retired Minister), Revd Dr William McNaughton, Revd Ian McPherson, Revd Norman McPherson (Retired Minister), Revd Robert McVey (Retired Minister), Mr James Mack (Airdrie Park), Mr Peter Massey (Hamilton), Revd A Milne (Retired Minister), Dr Kirsty Murray (Augustine United), Revd William Nicol (Retired Minister), Revd John Paull (Retired Minister), Revd Bob Philip (Retired Minister), Revd Morgan Phillips (Retired Minister), Revd Don Powis (Retired Minister), Revd Kathryn Smith-Anderson (Stonehouse), Mr Alan Smith (Montrose), Revd Hamish Smith (Retired Minister), Revd Anthony Spring (Retired Minister), Mr Ron Stewart (Beith), Mr J Summers (Dundee), Revd George Towson (Retired Minister), Revd Hamish Walker (Retired Minister), Revd Robert Waters (Retired Minister), Mr Alan Wayte (Giffnock), Miss Jen Wilson (FURY Representative), Revd Mark Wilson (Retired Minister), Mrs Moyra Young (Secretary/Treasurer Women's Union).

Friday Evening

Session 1

Opening worship was conducted by the Moderator in the Lecture Theatre. During worship the Synod Clerk, Dr Jim Merrilees, and the Youth and Children's Work Development Officer, Mr Stewart Cutler, were invited by the Moderator to address Synod and speak of what they brought to the Synod in their new roles. They were welcomed by Synod and Synod shared in prayer for their service.

Ecumenical Guests: After the service the Synod Clerk presented the following guests to the Moderator, Synod welcoming each in turn:

Ecumenical Guests:

- Mrs Ruth Camps, Elder of Matanzas Central Congregation, representing our Cuban partners;
- Revd Watson Moyes, representing the Baptist Union of Scotland;
- Revd Sydney Graham, representing the Church of Scotland;
- Revd Janet Murray, representing the Methodist Church in Scotland;
- Revd Dr Marion Keston, representing the Scottish Episcopal Church;
- Revd James Marshall, representing the United Free Church of Scotland.

Theological Reflector:

- Mrs Elspeth Davey, Scottish Episcopal Church.

Newly inducted ministers:

- Revd Tim Huc, Helensburgh United Reformed Church
- Revd Kristin Ofstad, Thurso United Reformed Church
- Revd Gareth Jones, Scottish Churches Industrial Mission, Tayside Organiser.

The Moderator acknowledged the presence of the Synod Clerk and YCWDO at their first Synod meeting in these capacities and the office staff, Patsi Dickie, Jacqueline Kyle and Christine Paterson. He then invited Elders and members of Synod here for the first time to stand and be welcomed by Synod.

The Moderator received and welcomed the above, hoping that they would feel welcome to take full part in discussion and debate.

Minutes: The minutes of the Synod meeting held at Pollokshields United Reformed Church on 12 March 2005 were accepted as a correct record.

Apologies: Apologies would be listed in the minute of the Synod meeting and the Moderator asked that such apologies be intimated to the Synod Clerk.

Notices:

Domestic Arrangements: The Synod Clerk informed the meeting of procedures for fire alarm, emergency evacuation, reporting to fire assembly points, and no smoking policy. He invited members of Synod to the informal reception for ecumenical guests to be held later that evening.

Stewardship/ Advocacy School: Mr Patrick Smyth explained the aims of this school.

SynNEWS: Mr Peter Ranscombe, editor of SynNEWS, gave a brief presentation on SynNEWS and outlined the types of articles and information sought.

Resolution on Standing Orders

On behalf of the PPR Committee, the Synod Clerk moved Resolution 1.1 on page 8 of the Book of Reports:

'Synod agrees that Standing Order 5.1 (Rights of Speakers) be amended as follows:

"In each debate no one shall address the Synod more than once, except that at the close of each debate either the proposer or the seconder of the motion or amendment shall have the right to reply to previous speakers, but not to introduce new matter." '

Synod agreed.

Notice of Motion on Standing Orders

On behalf of the PPR Committee, the Synod Clerk presented Resolution 1.2 on page 8 of the Book of Reports:

'Notice is hereby given that the following resolution will be presented at the Synod meeting of March 2006:

"Synod agrees that as from the Synod meeting of September 2006 a new Standing Order 6.3 under **Section 6 Voting** to read as follows:

All Ecumenical Representatives and Guests of the Synod shall have the right both to take part in discussion and debate and to vote on all matters before the Synod in accordance with Standing Order 6.1."

Following discussion, Synod agreed that this notice of motion be conveyed to churches and Area Councils.

Pastoral Committee

Revd David Pattie, Convener, presented the report of the Pastoral Committee on page 45 of the Book of Reports. He highlighted the issue of ordinands and celebration of communion, which he had referred to Revd Principal John W Dyce, who had referred Mr Pattie to the principal's paper on this subject. It was agreed that ordinands who had reached an acceptable standard would be permitted to preside at communion services. This had been conveyed to Area Councils. Mr Pattie commended the report to Synod. Synod accepted the report.

Resolution on Clergy from other denominations at Area Councils and Synod

On behalf of the PPR Committee, the Synod Clerk moved Resolution 4 on page 9 of the Book of Reports:

"Synod agrees that all ministers in local ecumenical partnerships of which a church of the Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church is also a member are to be regarded as full members of Area Councils and Synod. It is understood, however, that all such members are subject to the disciplines of their parent body and not of the United Reformed Church."

Revd David Coleman asked for clarification regarding the resolution in terms of churches in ecumenical partnership in covenant relationship, as at Barrhead. The Synod Clerk responded that he would be willing to add the words "and covenants" to the resolution, following the words "local ecumenical partnerships". **Revd Alan Paterson**, however, advised that Mary Buchanan, Ecumenical Officer, be approached regarding this issue, as he understood that these were URC-specific criteria. **Revd John Smith** advised that many congregations professed relationships ecumenically and in partnership, while others had been recognised by the national sponsoring body. **Mrs Doris Caldwell** instanced Augustine United's covenant with Greyfriars and St Columba's and asked whether all ministers of the other churches were to be considered as full members of Area Council. **The Moderator** advised that where it was felt that we need more detailed advice, reference should be made to the Ecumenical Officer. Revd John Smith, seconded by Revd Carolyn Smith moved that the question be not put.

Synod agreed that the question be not put

The Moderator thanked Mr Pattie for his presentation of the report and asked that he convey the thanks of Synod to his committee.

Building a Better World – An Intentional Church

The Moderator sought Synod agreement to invite Revd Gordon Smith to chair this session in order to allow the Moderator to make a detailed presentation. Synod agreed and Mr Smith assumed the chair. The Moderator indicated that there would be three sessions devoted to this item, with a presentation at this time, to be followed on Saturday by time for discussion in break-out groups. Decisions on accompanying resolutions would be sought in the Sunday session.

PPR Committee having discussed the paper "On Being an Intentional Church" (pages 14-16 of the Book of Reports), had felt that it was worthy of some attention and had referred it to Synod. The theme for the Synod – "Making the World a Better Place" – was of itself an intention. Thinking of local church, Synod and the denomination, there is a need for a vision beyond us. We are not the end and be-all of God's purposes. God calls us to think and feel for others and for future generations. We are called to be a light for the future, for ourselves and for other denominations and, of course, this is beyond us. We are but a moment in the life of God in whatever ways we feel or sense God. We are here as a church meeting, through reflection and prayer, to discover more of what God is like and what we are called to be like and what S/he will do with us.

The Moderator indicated that we are on a Biblical journey, discovering God's call for us today. He spoke of Peter's struggle, through his conditioning, to accept that what God had created, in those marginalised, could not be unclean. He spoke of the re-writing of hope and vision for the exiles, for and by whom the Book of Lamentations had been written and of concern regarding what God was or is and what loss was like – loss of land, loss of nationhood, loss of the Temple, etc. It had been profoundly shocking to find themselves in exile.

We are ourselves experiencing warning signs, as in the decline of the Church, warning signs which had been visible for 100 years or more. It is not only the young of the Church who are being marginalised, but all. The issue of the Intentional Church is an offering by PPR to look at becoming the Church afresh. David Cornick has expressed a vision that the Church of tomorrow will be very diverse and that we can be enriched by sisters and brothers in other Churches seeking to be Church in other ways. Some churches of tomorrow will be recognisable, while others will not. Church cannot be Church unless we are alive to the holy and the mysterious, unless we speak of the wonders and the terrors. There will not be Church if we are not big enough to welcome the insights of others on the journey to the heart of God, if we think that this is as good as it gets.

He suggested that Lamentations might be the book of the Bible appropriate to the Church in Scotland today, as it expresses a sense of loss and abandonment, lament and nostalgia together. What is going to be here in 5 or 10 years time? There are "strong" churches, but many are still anxious about money and buildings and keeping people of all age groups. He spoke of conversation with two men from an oil-rig on a train, one of whom was a profoundly spiritual and caring man who instanced the gap between us of the Church and them. We need to be honest, to learn from those around us.

Is our journey one of Lamentations or of 2 Isaiah? Without Lamentations there can be mere jingoism. Without Isaiah there is despair and total emptiness. We can be over-negative or over-confident. It is often the case that we prefer to know the place we are in despite its difficulties, rather than move on. What can I do, poor as I am? It was ordinary people who brought down the Berlin Wall, who gave the MakePovertyHistory campaign its impetus. It was people acting in local community.

According to David Cornick, there is plenty to make us feel depressed – churches heavily weighted by age, numbers in decline, etc. But it should be encouraging to note that churches generally are wealthier than ever. There are 33% as many adherents as members. And we are not alone – this is the experience of sister Churches. We are slowly beginning to learn that denominational protectionism renders us incomplete.

The paper on pages 15-16 of the Book of reports was considered at the PPR meeting in June. Its purpose is not to solve all these problems or those of which we do not know. Changing structure alone will not solve them. The paper is about **intention** – what do we intend for congregations or for Christian pilgrimage as individuals? Somehow we do not confess that inner way that frees us. We need to create an atmosphere in which we begin to explore what we can be, what we are intended or called to be. We talk in platitudes about what we need – more children and young adults, more people at services – but such talk can be so glib. At heart it is about relationship – we want to be obedient to God, but there is no blueprint. We do not talk together about faith in any intense way. We do not grow opportunities for mission and outreach beyond the church.

The process involves 3 phases. In Phase 1 we seek to discover what we intend over 5 years, through theological focus – what is God like and how through him are we called to be? The paper stresses that we really take time and affirm the concentration and commitment to explore.

In Phase 2 we will identify the gaps between where we presently are and the intentions we proclaim and in Phase 3 we recommend and implement the shifts we must make in our lives so that the institution gives way to being sisters and brothers in Christ. We have always more to learn of God. This is a process of intentionality to help us measure and then arrive at a point where the journey begins again. It will take a lot of work and commitment and talking – to the right purpose.

The Moderator then invited comment and **Revd Roddy Macfarlane** stressed that in the assessment of church life today other books of the Bible were apposite – Ecclesiastes, in “realistic” mode underlining that nothing changes; Daniel, putting us in the lions’ den; and Genesis, with the seen that this has “aye been”. Perhaps Revelation will be appropriate if we find our way at Tulliallan. **Revd Paul Jupp** stressed that the final word is “community”. He instanced the Council’s regeneration programme in Pollokshields having no heart or soul, but needed a vision of community - more than simply infrastructure growing from the faith of ordinary people.

Revd John Smith expressed gratitude to the Moderator for his contribution to debate on the way ahead. He stressed that in Biblical history things were never as bad as in Lamentations, nor as good as in 2 Isaiah. The massive churches we have inherited were never at any point in their history full. There are different challenges in different places and different ideas of community. He hoped it would not take 5 years to process as the only things that matter are our relationships with God and with each other, which reflect that relationship with God. **Revd Gareth Jones** was interested in the comment on regeneration, which he believed is renaissance in the modern world. The whole principle is scriptural – in rebuilding what was there. There is a physical right to develop the heart and sense of community, which we need to do in prayer.

The Moderator thanked everyone for their comments.

Evening Prayers were conducted by Revd David Pattie, Convener of the Pastoral Committee.

Reception for Guests

An informal reception was held in the area outside the Lecture Theatre to give an opportunity for members of Synod to meet with ecumenical guests and others. The Moderator again welcomed guests and urged members of Synod to make them feel welcome. Revd Dr Marion Keston, Scottish Episcopal Church, responded on behalf of the guests.

Following the reception, Revd David Coleman, on behalf of the Mission & Ecumenical Committee, hosted a fringe presentation in the Lecture Theatre entitled “The Reformed Church in Hungary”.

Saturday Morning Session 2

The Moderator welcomed members of Synod and guests.

Worship and Bible Study: Revd Carolyn Smyth led Synod in worship in the context of a Cuban Bible Study.

The Moderator reminded Synod that the presentation of a committee reports should take no more than 10 minutes, the remainder of the allotted time accommodating questions and answers and presentation of resolutions, where appropriate.

Church & Society Committee

Revd Alan G M Paterson, Convener, presented the report of the Church & Society Committee. He expressed gratitude to the Church of Scotland for helping to produce two of the appendices and underlined that Church’s great gift in the form of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer, facilitating access to the Parliament’s work and to MSPs. He noted that on page 18 of the report under “Theology of Marriage and Family Law” the reference should be to the “Justice 1 Committee.” He referred to “Being Outside” (p 20) the first report from the working party on prostitution and was pleased to note the First Minister’s response to the proposal from the report making the act the problem. For too long society has picked on the woman and not the men as targets.

Mr Paterson noted that the work of the committee is ongoing and highlighted continuing involvement in proposals and issues such as “On Forced Marriages” and “On the Possession of Extreme Pornographic Material.”

On the latter issue he noted that it was already an offence to be in possession of child pornography and that the proposal is to treat possession of adult pornography as a similar offence. He pointed out that a large number of those in such possession could be seen as victims.

Mr Paterson expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to do this work on behalf of Synod. He commended the report to Synod.

In response to the report, **Revd Richard Murray** was glad that the Convener had accepted the invitation to join the Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland. The Appendix on page 26 on Fishing showed the value of working together on national issues. The General Assembly had thereby approved a significant deliverance and reaffirmed support for the Common Fisheries Policy. The problems were only resolvable by international action. He noted that on page 29 of the extract, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation had remarked that "the final outcome of the Council was broadly favourable to the industry. In supporting sustainability we were in effect supporting the principle of the fifth "mark of mission".

Mr Paterson thanked Mr Murray, but noted that in the restructuring of the Church of Scotland the Church and Nation Committee had been wound up shortly after he joined, but he had been grateful to be involved and to contribute.

Synod accepted the Church & Society Committee report.

The Moderator thanked Mr Paterson, commented on the talents offered by himself and other members of committee and expressed gratitude that Mr Paterson responded readily to e-mails on comments wanted by Church leaders. He called upon Revd Carolyn Smith to present emergency resolution on behalf of the committee.

Emergency Resolution on Dawn raids on children

Revd Carolyn Smyth moved the following emergency resolution, copies of which had been circulated:

"The Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church meeting at Tulliallan on Saturday 17th September 2005:

- 1 joins the Scottish Children's Commissioner in condemning the dawn raid to remove the Vucaj family into custody carried out by officials on behalf of the Home Office on 13 September 2005.
- 2 calls on the Home Secretary to justify the practice of dawn raids, the use of handcuffs and the removal of children still in pyjamas, in light of his department's declared policy on removal "done in the most sensitive way possible, treating those being removed with courtesy and dignity".
- 3 calls for the Scottish Executive to protest to the Home Office about the tactics used in Scotland to remove failed asylum seekers.
- 4 calls for the Scottish Executive to consider its obligations under the United Nations Children's Charter and the Human Rights Act pertaining to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment", and to explore with the Scottish police forces how these relate to Home Office removals from Scottish soil.
- 5 calls on all congregations of the United Reformed Church in Scotland to make representation to their local Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament protesting about the inhumane treatment of children and the trauma caused to them by witnessing the treatment of their families.

Revd Smyth highlighted recent news stories regarding dawn raids supported by police in various locations, including that on the Vucaj family in Drumchapel on 13 September 2005. She emphasised that it was wholly wrong forcibly to drag the family out of their home and quoted Professor Kathleen Marshall, Children's Commissioner, in support.

Revd Alan Paterson in seconding the motion, noted that it had been shared with the Children's Commissioner who was happy with the wording and grateful for the support. A good lawyer had been consulted, particularly with regard to section 4.

Revd John Sanderson sought clarity on sections 2, 3 and 4 as to what actions would result from the passing of this resolution. **Revd Lindsey Sanderson** asked whether C&S Committee could give further guidance to local churches, especially with regard to section 5. **Revd Gareth Jones** felt that, rather than calling on the Home Secretary to justify the actions, he should be called upon to cease such actions.

Revd Paterson indicated that, if the resolution was successful, he would liaise with the Synod Clerk to see that letters went to the Home Secretary and Scottish Executive and that further information would be issued to churches. He would love to have the raids cease, but had sensed more than irony in the words of the spokesperson for the Home Secretary and felt that we should make people at this level accountable for bland and insensitive statements. He urged reference to the BBC website and commended the resolution.

Synod agreed.

Mission & Ecumenical Committee

Mr Douglas Hay, Convener, in presenting the report of the committee on pages 35 to 38 of the Book of Reports, highlighted the success of "Mission Impossible," the CWM Youth Camp on Orkney in August. He thanked Jack and Helen Muir and those of the Peedie Kirk URC congregation who had acted as hosts. The "Windows on the World Conference" had also taken place in August in a new venue and a new style and had been described by Mrs Elinor McCulloch as "enjoyable and challenging." Ms Morag McIntock had represented the European Region last year at the Youth & Mission Camp in Tuvalu. A map of the CWM is being circulated to all churches, while the magazine "Inside Out" was commended, as well as the excellent resources from the CWM website. He thanked all those promoting Fairtrade, including the Cochran sisters manning the Fairtrade stall. He commended research by Dr David Hay at the University of Nottingham into understanding the spirituality of people who do not go to church. Having attended a workshop at General Assembly in Warwick to present the workbook Equipping Your Church in a Spiritual Age, he commended the book to Synod as well as the programme to be launched in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Orkney.

Revd Paul Jupp noted changes in personnel in Commitment for Life, with Ann Barton being replaced as Co-ordinator next month by Linda Meade and Alison Blick taking on the post of Administrator. **Mr Patrick Smyth** urged that people not think that the work on G8 is over and that they maintain a watching brief. He high-lighted the severe economic effects of Iraq and Hurricane Katrina and posed the question as to whether countries would keep promises made at G8. **Mrs Irene Merrilees** urged churches to commit to Fairtrade and instanced the variety and quality of products available, especially the many blends of coffee. She encouraged people to buy Fairtrade products from supermarkets to encourage them to maintain and improve stocks. **Revd John Sanderson** highlighted a conference he had attended on Iona, where Kathy Galloway had spoken of the money-gripping world with its sense of winners and losers. He expressed concern that the target to declare a Fairtrade Synod was so low. It was easy to sell tea and coffee. The real challenge is to undertake study and develop action. **Ms Zam Walker** emphasised the same disappointment in numbers and encouraged higher participation and more concerted and focused action. **Revd Brian Bailey** emphasised the value of the CWM website as a resource with its regular news releases, obtainable in e-mail format about twice per week. He commended the speed with which news was disseminated on the Tsunami as it affected partner churches. He noted that his wife buys all Christmas presents through Fairtrade. **Revd Paul Jupp** commended Mr Hay and the committee for really coming together and working towards an understanding of work between the committees. He hoped we could commit to work more with members of other faiths.

Mr Hay responded with thanks to all for their comments. Mr Sanderson had highlighted hearts and minds issues and he trusted these would be discussed at church meetings. He asked churches to commit to use and promote Fairtrade goods and commended the report on pages 35 to 38 and the membership of the committee on page 2.

Synod accepted the Mission & Ecumenical Committee report and remaindered at this time the resolutions on the Reformed Church in Hungary and Drumchapel Churches Partnership.

Education Committee

Revd John R Smith, Convener, presented the report of the committee on pages 39 to 44 in the Book of Reports. He reflected on training needs and opportunities for all in our churches and the Catch the Vision imperative to equip all our saints for the ministries to which God calls us. He emphasised the difference between training and learning, with the former being effective in the delivering of a product and learning being a more receptive activity in searching for visions and valuing the gifts given to people from God. He noted the range of programmes on offer, whose success is mostly due to the Education Secretary. He especially welcomed the appointment of the YCWDO after so many years of hoping and welcomed what he had seen of Mr Cutler's enthusiasm, imagination and commitment, which he hoped would be matched by our encouragement and support. There were issues of management and support for the YCWDO to be addressed.

Revd Principal Jack Dyce, Education Secretary, in seconding, underlined his own commitment to education and the need for the commitment of all of us to the learning church. He was glad that more and more people in the Synod are engaging in learning. The education programme seeks to respond to the needs of Synod as currently perceived. We must continually think of other peoples' needs, interests and potential and education has to be one of the main instruments in meeting these.

Mr Patrick Smyth underlined the need for various types of people to be given access to training as lay preachers. We need to ensure the critical mass to make TLS viable for them. **Mr Keith Muskett** noted that the programme was increasing in variety. Churches had a duty to encourage people to take up opportunities. He was concerned that people often had to contend with the fear that they were exposing

themselves to failure or judgment. We must work to convince them that they will be working amongst supportive and non-judgmental friends.

Revd John Smith appreciated all points made, which would be referred to the committee. He commended the report to Synod.

Synod accepted the Education Committee report.

Resolution on Drumchapel Churches Partnership

Revd Carolyn Smith proposed the following resolution which had been circulated to members of Synod:

“That Synod rejoices with Drumchapel Essenside United Reformed Church at the continued ecumenical commitment in Drumchapel; affirms the Revised covenant and the basis of association and recognises Drumchapel Churches Partnership as a Local Ecumenical Partnership, according to the ACTS definition.

Revd Smyth referred to difficulties over the past year regarding agreement on the Glasgow Presbytery Mission Plan, now happily resolved, with Church of Scotland recognition of Drumchapel Church Partnership as a local grouping. Relations with the community have developed, particularly in participating as key players in a new defending system for asylum seekers. There is now a shared funeral rota and a regular monthly newsletter, a youth group, a column in the local newspaper and another church would like to join the Partnership. The Partnership Minister is also making a difference.

The Covenant and Basis of Association before the Synod has taken several months to achieve, but has been approved by the Ecumenical Officers of 4 denominations. Revd Murdoch McKenzie has declared the wording to be refreshing, combining sensitivity and the Spirit of Christ. The original Covenant was agreed six and a half years ago and three sentences have been added to the version before Synod. On the back have been added the list of current aims. The Basis of Association represents the constitution of the partnership.

Revd John Smith wished to be reminded of the wording of the ACTS definition and **Revd Smyth** responded that “A Local Ecumenical Partnership is defined as existing where there is a formal written agreement affecting the ministry, congregational life, buildings and/or mission projects of more than one denomination: and a recognition of that agreement by the Scottish Churches National Sponsoring Body, and authorisation by the appropriate denominational authorities.”

She commended the resolution to Synod.

Synod agreed.

Copyright and Data Protection

The Moderator was pleased to welcome Mrs Carol Rogers, Secretary of the Communications and Editorial Committee and a friend to the Synod for the whole of its life. Mrs Rogers confirmed that she had brought the bookstall every year since 1997, under the CUS. The Moderator noted that Mrs Rogers would be retiring in September of next year, but would be with us at September Synod prior to retirement.

Mrs Rogers then gave a comprehensive presentation on Copyright and Data Protection, highlighting the following areas:

- recognition and recompense for creative work;
- material in copyright for the lifetime of the writer + 70 years;
- limitations on copying for private use;
- King James version of Bible never out of copyright – belongs to Crown;
- poor man’s copyright;
- reproducing words of hymns;
- Christian Copyright Licensing – Words Licence; 10% discount for URC Churches;
- Christian Copyright Licence – Music Licence; no discount;
- Mechanical Rights Licence – CCL holders covered by music and words licence;
- Performing Rights Society – licence operated by CCL;
- Video licence – CCL operate a church licence;
- The World Wide Web;
- Data Protection Principles;
- Drawing up Data Protection Policy for Church;
- Responsibilities for data held; responsibilities to those on whom data held;

- Consent to hold people's data;
- Appropriate security arrangements for data held;
- Archiving and deletion.

Mrs Rogers intimated that, rather than deal with questions in forum, she would be available in the bookshop for further advice necessary. She circulated leaflets dealing with all aspects of copyright law for each congregation in the Synod. The Moderator thanked Mrs Rogers for a full and thought-provoking presentation

Building a Better World – An Intentional Church 2

The Moderator invited members of Synod to break out into six distinct groups, allocated by numbers on badges, and address a series of questions previously circulated.

Saturday Afternoon Session 3

Communion: The Moderator presided at Communion held in the area outwith the Lecture Theatre.

Seeds of Hope

Revd Lindsey Sanderson, Assistant General Secretary of ACTS, introduced a presentation on "Seeds of Hope", the Ecumenical Gathering to be held at Bell's Sports Centre, in Perth, on Saturday 17 June 2006.

Report of Glasgow Area Council Resolution Task Group

The Synod Clerk began his report with an apology that the group title did not reflect what group has become and might perhaps be altered to "Structures and Strategy Working Party" but other suggestions would be welcome. He reminded Synod of key principles previously agreed:

- Effective communication
- Covenant and commitment
- Pastoral effectiveness
- Understanding of ministry and deployment
- Ecumenical dimension

He underlined concerns of Keith Muskett on page 57 of the Book of Reports and those also expressed by Revd Principal John Dyce that any change must not be knee jerk change or change simply for change's sake. The aims are still:

- to encourage a grassroots driven church
- to ensure effective interaction between local and synod aspects of church life and development

No committee of itself can guarantee success; this is in the hands of churches, groups and individuals to respond positively and creatively; we are looking to build a consensus structural model. He underlined the importance of the sessions on "Being an Intentional Church led by the Moderator." The task group focus had been on structural and operational matters – the mechanics, largely. The Moderator's focus was on intention and inspiration. But if Synod agreed to continue the exploration by the task group, the two would merge.

Mary Buchanan, Ecumenical Officer, had raised concern regarding the use of the title "local covenants" in the report before Synod. He quoted from her letter and stressed that all terminology in use in the report is presently text in principle and can be liable to alteration as agreed, but pointed out that an alternative term would be used for "local covenants." The Ecumenical Officer was further concerned about changing the Field Officer's title in Resolution 2.2 and questioned the Task Group's right to do so. As a result he had amended to Resolution 2.2 to remove the wording concerned and ending that part of the resolution after the word "structures", provided Synod agreed.

The task group had not come with full and finished proposals – this was slow and thorough work – no quick fix – and the intention was to take Synod along each step of the way as far as practicable. Thus the resolutions were mainly resolutions about principle. There will be opportunity for Area Councils and Synod to influence thinking and decision at all stages. But the principles are inviolate once agreed. As agreed at last Synod the task group has kept the "Catch the Vision" process in mind. Area Councils and Synod are to be asked to consider two resolutions passed at General Assembly by 31 March:

40 General Assembly resolves, subject to any legal constraints, that there

shall be one level of council between the General Assembly and the local church.

- 41 General Assembly resolves that as from general Assembly 2007, there shall be one level of council between the General Assembly and the local church, the thirteen 'new Synods'.

The task group in the meantime would bear in mind structures that will fit with Assembly's final decision in these resolutions in terms of both the removal and the retention of Area Councils.

Revd Helen Pattie thanked the task group for persevering with its work. She agreed that the group change its name to reflect that the process belongs to the whole of Synod. **Mrs Helen Mee** queried the development of a field work team. She felt that the PPR Committee had developed bad habits in referring matters too readily to the PPR Reference Committee and the Development Team. This had been a shelving of responsibility, particularly to the detriment of the Development Team, but would the field work emphasis be equally unfair? **Revd David Coleman** asked whether the role of localities covered URC churches only or whether ecumenical partners were involved. **Mr Keith Muskett** underlined that the change of name to Policy, Planning and Strategy must also be a change of approach, recognising the accompanying responsibility. He also queried the role of localities. Was 4 the appropriate number? There seemed no natural geographical boundary or definition to justify this. He was also concerned regarding the variety of people who might meet in the name of the locality for whatever purposes. **Revd Alan Paterson** was concerned that the name for the local was crucial in terms of identity, in claiming loyalty and commitment. As a former member of SCIFU he was conscious of the baggage attached to virtually every name suggested in the ecumenical dimension. He suggested that the committee seek a new, fresh term, with no prior associations. He also felt that there was a lot of thinking necessary on roles of responsibilities of committees and wondered what implications there might be for present practice. **Revd Ian Baillie** said that like a number of others he was unsure as to how present systems worked and therefore unable to determine whether the changes would improve matters. He was trying to relate the intentional church to structural change and foresaw major difficulties. Can we be sure we are taking on brand new ways of being Church? **Mr Brian Walker** raised concern regarding finance with regard to the role of localities and geographical implications. It had cost Northern £2,500 to hold a meeting in Orkney. The pastoral process as described could also cost a lot of money.

Revd George Sykes underlined that it had taken East Area Council 5 years to change from an independent stance to a conciliar structure and recognise the accompanying rights and responsibilities. If we now remove one level of the structure we remove the framework of responsibility. Who will do what and how? It will come down to the same people and finding officers will continue to be a problem. **Revd Tom Murray** noted that all papers concentrated on the Synod level above the local church. He felt there was a lack of commitment by local churches to Area Councils. If we are to think coherently and rigorously, we should apply this thinking to the level of local churches. **Mr Patrick Smyth** pointed out that our Synod is similar in size to some English District Councils. We are spending so much time thinking of the local situation we forget about Synod. We should think what localities are and concentrate on mission with ecumenical neighbours. **Revd Elspeth Harley** felt we should have the confidence to drop the in-between level and relate across the whole of Scotland, focusing more on the real work.

Resolutions from Glasgow Area Council Task Group

The Synod Clerk opened the session after tea by addressing the comments made following presentation of the report.

He thanked Revd Helen Pattie for her endorsement and agreed that Synod should own the process. He agreed with Mrs Mee that the Development Team had suffered in the past through PPR's failure to address issues, but pointed out that officers had been consulted and largely welcomed the field work emphasis. It would be for the future PPR/S Committee to support the officers and establish priorities. The key principle of pastoral care was paramount here. He informed Revd Coleman that the role of the localities was to accommodate URC churches, but hoped they would also support those churches involved in ecumenical partnerships. He endorsed Mr Muskett's views on new approach and responsibility in relation to PPR/S Committee, but pointed out that reduction to four localities was an attempt to aid the field work process. Various groupings of people might meet within the locality for specific purpose – e.g. Sunday School staff for training or planning. He agreed with Revd Paterson that identity and a new unassociated name were crucial elements and invited Synod to make suggestions regarding the name. The task group hoped to retain what worked well in committees, but needed to look afresh at certain elements. Revd Baillie had rightly raised concern about our commitment to new ways of being church. Mr Walker had legitimate concern regarding costs, but it was for PPS to prioritise work and apply resources responsibly. He reminded Revd Sykes that the disappearance of Area Councils would be decided by General Assembly, as a result of which we

required a strategy. The “Catch the Vision” report before the Assembly had sought to look at the responsibilities of Area Councils as exercised in the new situation. Revd Murray and Mr Smyth’s concerns for local churches and for Synod were understandable, but the task group was addressing the needs of both in a possible new relationship. Synod wished to be more responsive to church meetings. He felt that Revd Harley’s suggestion might pose even more of an identity problem, but agreed with her sense of urgency.

The Synod Clerk then moved Resolution 3.1 on pages 8 and 9 of the Book of Reports:

“Synod endorses the report of the Glasgow Area Resolution Task Group and resolves that, as from the date of implementation of the new structures:

- a) The Policy, Planning and Resources Committee will in future be termed the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee;
- b) The PPR Reference Committee will cease to exist;
- c) The Moderator, Synod Clerk and Synod Treasurer will be given the authority of the Synod to make appropriate and necessary decisions between meetings of the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee, provided that any such decision is reported to the meeting of the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee immediately following the decision;
- d) Local churches be grouped in local covenants, as per the model structure attached to the task group report; and that the local covenant groups meet for covenant renewal once a year as designated in the report;
- e) Local and mutual care and oversight is effectively delivered to local churches and groupings by those from each locality appointed so to do and through visitation by Synod officers and interaction between local representatives and the Synod Pastoral Committee;
- f) Finance & Property Committee be empowered to set up appropriate links and procedures with local church treasurers with a view to guaranteeing effective consultation and negotiation on MMF contributions and other financial and property matters.”

Revd John Sanderson moved an amendment that the words “in future” be deleted from point (a) in the resolution as they seemed to conflict with “the date of implementation” in the first sentence. **Revd Gordon Smith** seconded. The Synod Clerk expressed sympathy with the amendment. *Synod voted in favour of the amendment.*

Mr Mark Kirkbride moved that the word “urgent” be added to “appropriate and necessary” in point (c). **Mr Brian Walker** seconded. *Synod voted in favour of the amendment.*

Mr Keith Muskett moved that point (d) be removed from the resolution because of the intention not to use the term “local covenants.” **Revd Roddy Macfarlane** seconded. *On being put to Synod the amendment failed by 29 votes to 27.*

Revd Helen Pattie moved that the words from “as per the model structure ...” to “... as designated in the report” be removed from point (d). **Revd Carolyn Smyth** seconded. *Synod voted in favour of the amendment.*

Revd Lindsey Sanderson moved that point (d) in the resolution be amended to read “Local churches be grouped”. **Revd Carolyn Smyth** seconded. *Synod voted in favour of the amendment.*

Revd George Sykes moved that the resolution be amended to read as follows:

“Synod endorses the report of the Glasgow Area Resolution Task Group and resolves that, with immediate effect:

- a) The Policy, Planning and Resources Committee will be termed the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee;
- b) The PPR Reference Committee will cease to exist;
- c) The Moderator, Synod Clerk and Synod Treasurer will be given the authority of the Synod to make appropriate and necessary urgent decisions between meetings of the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee, provided that any such decision is reported to the meeting of the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee immediately following the decision.
and
Synod further resolves that, as from the date of implementation of the new structures:
- d) Local churches be grouped;
- e) Local and mutual care and oversight is effectively delivered to local churches and groupings by those from each locality appointed so to do and through visitation by Synod officers and interaction

- between local representatives and the Synod Pastoral Committee;
- f) Finance & Property Committee be empowered to set up appropriate links and procedures with local church treasurers with a view to guaranteeing effective consultation and negotiation on MMF contributions and other financial and property matters.”

Mr Maxwell Allan seconded.

Synod voted in favour of this amendment.

The Moderator then put the substantive motion to the Synod clause by clause. Synod then voted in favour of the final amended resolution immediately above.

The Moderator thanked the Synod Clerk and advised that resolutions 3.2 and 3.3 would be remaindered at this point in the proceedings.

Finance & Property Committee

Mr Tom Woodbridge, Treasurer, presented the Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2004 as circulated to members of Synod. He pointed out that around £40,000 of reserves had been used, as budgeted. The sale of the Broomhill property had recently been completed, though a substantial sum had been spent in working through the development proposal. The money was now in the bank, amounting to £700,000, with some other costs to be deducted. These monies will enable us for the first time to provide a manse fund and enable us to develop possibilities. Mr Woodbridge recommended reappointment of Gilchrist & Co as auditors.

Mr Woodbridge then referred to the Synod Office Administration Budget 2006: Resource Sharing. He had attended a meeting in the last fortnight to pool figures for Synods giving and receiving. The resulting surplus amounted to £65,000, with those giving overall getting £5,000 less and those receiving overall receiving £5,000 more. Thus the original resource sharing allocation to the Synod of Scotland, at £101,994 becomes £106,994. Without this allocation we would be unable to run the Synod Office. Mr Woodbridge expressed his thanks to contributing Synods for living out the Gospel.

The paper on Ministry and Mission Fund gave details of Synod contributions to the fund since 2001 – the first full year. Such contribution had been our first priority. The overall Fund itself has been a huge success as churches can have ministry irrespective of being able to afford it. Ministry and pastoral care are essential aspects of church life. General Assembly this year has encouraged churches to maintain contributions at 2005 levels for 2006, but where churches can give more, this will be welcomed.

Mr Woodbridge introduced the paper on “The Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005”, which has received the Royal Assent and advised that churches keep changes to a minimum to comply with the law and not lose status. He confirmed the establishment of the Office of the Charity Regulator in Dundee, and warned that the Regulator will wish to make a difference to Charities in the future. The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer had been helpful and there will be areas where we will require to tighten up and comply.

Ms Sarah Brown queried the listing of Imperial Tobacco Group shares in the Financial Statement. **Mr Woodbridge** responded that there may be an opportunity to dispose of these during the year. Our advisers know we wish to do so. We have a duty to move to more ethical investment which needs to be balanced with our legal fiduciary duty.

The Moderator urged representatives to share the resource-sharing paper with congregations in order that they may know something of the family around us.

The Moderator put the following resolutions before Synod:

“That Synod appoint Gilchrist & Company as auditors.” *Synod agreed.*

“That pledges to MMF in respect of the year 2006 should be based on the approach set out in sub paragraphs 1 to 3 above of this paper.” *Synod agreed.*

Synod also noted “that the developing situation in regard to regulation and monitoring of charities in Scotland may result in changes to the way in which Synod and churches currently operate in order to ensure compliance with the regulations.”

The Moderator expressed thanks on behalf of Synod to Mr Woodbridge for his presentation and to the office girls, to members of the Finance and Property Committee and to its Convener, Mr Brian Walker.

Saturday Evening Session 4

Schools

Synod then gathered in schools as follows:

- **Stewardship Advocacy**, presented by Mr Patrick Smyth in the Lecture Theatre
- **Climate Change/ Creationtide**, presented by Ms Eleanor Todd, Science Technology & Religion Project, in the Courtroom.

Women's Union

Mrs Lyn Higton provided an update to the Women's Union report on page 65 in the Book of Reports. The year started sadly with the death of Mrs Ina Durrant at Christmas. The Christian Women's Convention, 17-19 March 2006, would be addressed by the Synod Moderator. The annual Bible Study will be held in Dunblane from 19 to 20 April 2006.

The project realised £2,760 which was handed over to Mr John Kelly of Alzheimer's Scotland. A further £50 has been donated since. The project for next year is Maggie's Cancer Care. Moyra Young and Margaret Gillan are unable to be at Synod because they are in Germany with a group of ladies from the Yorkshire Synod.

The report was received by Synod and the Moderator expressed thanks to the Women's Union for its work.

Resolutions on the Glasgow Area Council Task Group Report

The Synod Clerk moved Resolution 3.2 on page 9 of the Book of Reports, having first gained the approval of Synod to remove all wording from the original resolution, following the word "structures.":

"Synod resolves that PPR Committee be asked to agree amendments to the remit and job description of the Field Officer for Local Mission and Development in order to meet the requirements of the new structures."

There was no discussion.

Synod agreed.

The Synod Clerk moved Resolution 3.3 on page 9 of the Book of Reports:

"Synod resolves that the task group continue to work on structures and operation of other Synod committees and report to the Synod meeting in March 2006."

There was no discussion.

Synod agreed.

Resolution on the Reformed Church in Hungary

Revd David Coleman moved the resolution appended to the Mission & Ecumenical Committee report on page 38 of the Book of Reports:

"Synod encourages the Mission and Ecumenical Committee to participate in hosting visitors from the Reformed Church in Hungary in the spring of 2006 and to explore how a link between the Synod with this church could be developed ecumenically in Scotland and further enhance our partnership with the Reformed Church in Cuba."

Mr Coleman referred to the presentation given after the formal sessions the previous evening and underlined that while our two churches are disparate and do not wish to be like each other, we can benefit from partnership and co-operation. Membership of the EU has brought us closer to Hungary than we thought we could be. He hoped we would actively encourage the committee and show the Hungarian visitors something of who we really are and afford a good welcome. He commended the resolution.

Revd Carolyn Smyth declared herself to be excited about this prospect and hoped that for some of the time

there might be a 3-way link with our partners in Cuba. Both these partner churches have experience of being Church within different faces of a communist country and we could benefit from their insights.

Mr Coleman indicated that there would also need to be discussion with Church of Scotland representatives about their long-standing relationship with the Church in Hungary.

Synod agreed.

The Moderator closed this session of Synod and invited everyone to the Social and Quiz Night to be held later that evening.

Evening Prayers were conducted by Mr Douglas Hay, Convener, and members of the Mission & Ecumenical Committee.

Sunday 18 September

Session 5

The Moderator welcomed members of Synod to the Sunday morning session.

Worship and Bible Study: Revd Carolyn Smyth and Ms Ruth Camps led Synod in worship in the context of a Cuban Bible Study.

On behalf of Synod the Moderator greeted Mrs Alison Blick, Administrator of the Commitment for Life Campaign, and Revd Erik Cramb, Secretary of the Church of Scotland's Ecumenical Relations Committee.

FURY Report

In the absence of the FURY representative, Mr Simon Peters, Synod Youth Representative, explained that FURY was an organisation for all youth in the URC who were automatically members. He urged local congregations to find out more about FURY and to ease the communication problems for the organisation in contacting and attracting young people to events. FURY Assembly will be held from 27th-29th January 2006 at the Pioneer Centre in Kidderminster and any young person may attend, but should apply soon. Unfortunately the FURY camp planned for August had to be cancelled. He asked members of Synod to pray for the changes taking place in FURY. We are co-collaborators with God and should all be working together to help FURY.

The Synod Clerk pointed out that all Area Councils should have appointed a Youth representative to the Assembly and encouraged youth participation in the Synod.

The Moderator thanked Mr Peters for his report.

Schools

Synod then gathered in schools as follows:

- **Finance & Property** presented by Mr Tom Woodbridge and Mr Brian Walker in Conference Room 1;
- **Disability Issues** presented by Revd Erik Cramb in the Lecture Theatre
- **Commitment for Life** presented by Revd Paul Jupp in the Courtroom.

Building a Better World – An Intentional Church 3

The Moderator invited representatives of the Saturday morning break-out groups to make any general comments following their discussions yesterday.

Mr Stewart Cutler's group had considered things missing from the paper. They spoke of political correctness in the world around us; of crematoria and hospital chaplaincy as the community face of the church; and of eroding intentions and the opportunity for forming new ones. There is an assumption that people know what we are talking about in the language we use about Christ, from the Bible and what happens in church. What we do next must be rooted in the practical and local. The ecumenical dimension had not been implicit in the paper. **Mr Patrick Smyth's** group had examined what we might be hoping for in an intentional approach. They would wish to see us integrate better with other parts of society and the community. There is a fear that we may be setting out with no clear goals or targets. We may be going forward in hope and faith, but not a great deal else. We need to learn to be self-critical and regain the confidence to talk about our faith. We need to really understand why we are here and what we are doing here. **Mr Mark Kirkbride's** group was looking for something exciting and vigorous from the process. They talked of a level of cynicism around and felt we should not worry overmuch about structures. **Revd Carolyn**

Smyth spoke from the perspective of talking to others generally. She hoped that “being intentional” would not block out the unexpected, unintentional and surprising. **Mr Douglas Hay’s** group had considered what the congregation might be expected to pick up on this “intentionality”. They were concerned about everyday members understanding intentionality and how we enable churches to come to decisions. How we approach churches is crucial, beginning with what representatives take back from this Synod.

Resolutions on Being an Intentional Church

The Synod Clerk moved Resolution 2.1 on page 8 of the Book of Reports with the updated reference to Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee as previously agreed:

“Synod instructs the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee to enable a three phase process within the life of the Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church:

- From the autumn of 2005 to the March Synod of 2007 to enable the Church Meetings of the Synod to articulate and communicate to the Synod their Intentions as a church (reporting progress to the synod meetings of March and September 2006);
- From the March Synod of 2007 to the March Synod of 2008 to identify the ‘gaps’ between the expressed intentions and the present realities of church life (reporting progress at the September 2007 synod meeting);
- Make recommendations to Synod of ways of enabling the churches and the Synod to live out their intentions.”

Mr Keith Muskett emphasised that we are asking churches to commit to strategic planning for the future and we should undertake this process responsibly. He expressed concern that we do not underestimate the difficulties churches may have in handling the process. We must provide good facilitators and must not fail to provide the correct resources. He instanced senior management in business often decreeing what should happen, but messages being distorted or misunderstood so that results are far from what was expected.

Revd David Coleman moved an amendment that the words “by the grace of God” be added to the final section after “live out their intentions.” The Synod Clerk was happy to accept the amendment and Synod voted so to do.

The final amended section then read:

- Make recommendations to Synod of ways of enabling the churches and the Synod to live out their intentions by the grace of God.

The amended resolution was then put to Synod.

Synod agreed.

The Synod Clerk then moved Resolution 2.2 on page 8 of the Book of Reports:

“Synod instructs the Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee to develop plans for a Synod Day for the summer of 2007 which will celebrate the intentions of the churches and Synod.”

He pointed out that while this proposal does not appear in the report before Synod, both the task group and PPR Committee had endorsed the idea that we would wish to celebrate these intentions and that planning for such a day must be done well in advance.

Revd Alan Paterson urged that, given summer holidays, people be given at least a year’s notice of the date of the celebration. The Synod Clerk agreed and commended the resolution to Synod.

Synod agreed.

Vote of Thanks

The Moderator expressed thanks on behalf of the Synod to Mr Ron Bow, Conference Manager, and the staff of Tulliallan Police College, to members of Synod Office staff, to Irene Merrilees and Joyce Bannister, as unofficial caterers and waterers, to John Young and Stewart Cutler for hosting the Social and Quiz Night, to Conveners of committees for their reports, to all those presenting schools, including Revd Erik Cramb and Ms Eleanor Todd, and to officers of the Synod, including the Synod Clerk, who would be glad to have reached the end of his first Synod in post, not forgetting Danny Cheyne for his timekeeping. He thanked ecumenical guests for journeying with Synod and particularly Elspeth Davey for her theological reflection.

He also thanked members of Synod for their participation and looked forward to reconvening in Nairn United Reformed Church on Saturday 11 March 2006 and in Tulliallan 15-17 September 2006.

Closing Worship

The Moderator led Synod in an act of closing worship which included the theological reflection by Elspeth Davey, which is appended to the minutes.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION BY ELSPETH DAVEY CHURCH RELATIONS OFFICER OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

This paper includes my initial “spontaneous reflection” and some further reflection on the weekend. I hope that you will find both useful.

I was honoured to be asked to attend your Synod and act as Theological Reflector although my initial reaction to the invitation had been one of trepidation. I was asked to spontaneously reflect theologically on your Synod as well as give some hints and tips. What follows certainly contains reflection but how much of it is theological I leave to you to decide.

Not only did I learn a lot about the URC this weekend I also learnt something about myself: I uncovered a particularly competitive streak which I did not know I had until I participated in the Quiz Night!

I have thoroughly enjoyed your Synod and I thought the level of debate was good- an honest airing of concerns and problems as well as covering a wide-ranging number of topics. The Bible studies were good and I enjoyed the worship. There is a real sense of friendliness and good natured humour in your Synod as you all seem to know each other well. Whilst this is admirable, on further reflection, it could lead an “outsider” to think that you were a “closed shop”. But, I was made to feel very welcome and had many interesting chats with quite a number of you which I found invaluable.

So, whilst I experienced your warmth and friendliness I was aware that underlying all of it is a sense of anxiety and worry. You are going through a period of trying to become more self aware and to have more self understanding/knowledge of yourself as the United Reformed Church in Scotland.

And so this brings me to my first reflection

1. I have heard much talk about the lack of young people in your congregations and in the denomination as a whole. It is admirable that Stuart Cutler has been appointed and I am sure he will be excellent at his job. But, I do not think that more young people is necessarily the only answer. I firmly believe that young people are the church of today and not the church of tomorrow – we are all the church of today, and tomorrow, and we cannot expect the burden to be landed on the young to see the church into the next 5 or 10 years. I would hope to be around in the next 5 or 10 years and I am sure you do, too, so we would all be part of it. It is not only the young who need to be attracted to the church and encouraged/ enabled to stay but people of all ages.

The church in 50 years will not be the same as today. Why should it be and why would we want it to be? So, let's be part of the transformation.

It is very easy to get into the frame of mind of Marvin the paranoid android from “A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy” who on thinking he was no longer useful said “ I'll just go and stand in the corner and rust, quietly” It is so easy to rust quietly and wait for someone else e.g. the young, to come along with the oil can to get things moving again.

Instead of waiting around for the young to arrive why not capitalise on what you have and if necessary become the best SAGA generation congregation in your community (there will always be 50 year olds + about) and if another denomination attracts the young families perhaps that is ok. You cannot be all things to all people with limited resources so make the best of what you have.

It is not right to say that without young people the congregation has no life in it – of course it has, it has the congregation! It may not be the life you would like, but it is life and can be lived abundantly.

What is required is for the whole people of God (and we do talk about this a lot but I wonder if when we do we actually mean everybody – young, middling, old, disabled, troublesome etc) to be enabled, encouraged,

empowered to grow to participate in the journey which is lifelong learning, going at their own pace and in their own time. I also think you need to build in “lay-by” stops when you have had enough, want a rest and space and an opportunity to get some more energy.

I was very impressed by the educational programme that Jack and John spoke about which is one that seems to have something for everyone.

In management and personal development speak nowadays it is quite common to hear the opinion that it is when people are over 50 that they begin to bloom. And I am convinced that there are people in your congregations just waiting to blossom, desperate to blossom, want permission to blossom. You are all “blooming marvellous” therefore! Some of the most radical thinkers I know are in their 70’s and 80’s.

2. Do not worry about being small. The SEC is small. In fact there are more Muslims in Scotland than “Piskies” so that gives us a sense of perspective. But, we make our voice heard, we participate in consultations etc and when we sit round a table with the other denominations we do so as equals. I was quite concerned to hear of the Barrhead experience where you felt that you were less important than the big denomination.

We undertook an exercise not unlike the “intentional church” idea a few years ago. It is called Mission 21 and is a facilitated programme which enables each congregation to look at itself and what it would like to be. The first stage is called MYCMI- Make your Church More inviting and asks congregations to look at where they have come from, what they are like now and then look to the future. If your congregation is not inviting to those who do attend how can it be made inviting to others? Whilst numerical growth is one of the aims of Mission 21 the main aim, the most important aim, is that the members grow spiritually and, therefore, by being more open, confident etc the congregation will be more “attractive” and thus attract others to it. The second stage is Continuing Congregational Development (CCD) looking at how to create and maintain a healthy congregation (of any size)

Mission 21 is not perfect and some congregations have not undertaken it but it has proved successful. Therefore, it may be worth speaking with us about it as we have been there, done that, got the handbook and may even have had the T-shirts as well.

3. We also have undertaken to “go and see” what gifts and untapped resources there are in our congregations so that links in with being inclusive (the whole people of God) and encouraging lifelong learning particularly amongst the laity.

4. All of what I have said I think is covered by the idea of an intentional church, that there will be thought and action and a definite decision to move – to go on the journey together.

5. I only hope that you will not get bogged down in talking about structures and so end up in an endless number of displacement activities rather than “doing theology” or carrying out your intentions.

6. You want to be a “grassroots driven” denomination so that does imply giving responsibility to the laity, giving permission to the laity, recognising the gifts of the laity, enabling/educating the laity so that all can work as a team. I would also hope that this would be something which could be done ecumenically with your neighbours.

I end with something from Nelson Mandela (not checked for copyright I’m afraid)

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure
It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us
We ask ourselves “who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?”
Actually, who are you not to be
You are a child of God.*