



The Church of Scotland

Communications Department

GOOD NEWS GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

THURSDAY 26TH MAY 2011

PLEA FOR MINISTERS TO CONSIDER A CALL TO CHAPLAINCY



Above: Chaplains at the General Assembly today

THE convener of the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces made an impassioned plea for eligible Church of Scotland ministers to consider a call to the services.

Reverend Neil Gardner, minister of Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh, urged his colleagues to seriously think about serving as a chaplain in the Armed Forces, and spoke of the increased appreciation of this vital role from service men and women. Currently ministers aged 49 and under are able to apply for such a post.

The convener said: ““Whatever the uncertainties generated by the Strategic Defence and Security Review, whatever the talk of redundancies and drawdown, all three chaplaincy branches remain anxious to recruit and are being encouraged to do so by their wider services.”

The Assembly also commended the HM Forces and their families to the prayers of Church of Scotland congregations.

GREENOCK AND PAISLEY OVERTURE DEFEATED

AN OVERTURE from the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley against the Ministries Council's 20:20 Vision was defeated at today's General Assembly session.

The motion, which was also unanimously backed by the Presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock, called for the 20:20 Vision initiative to be suspended and that an independent Special Commission be set up to consider the matter as well as Presbytery weightings.

Reverend Graham Nash, who made the Presbytery's case, said the plans approved at last year's General Assembly "devalued" parish ministry and were to the "detriment of the whole Church".



Above: Reverend Graham Nash

The Paisley minister said ministers were overstretched, in some cases exhausted, and were rarely finding time to get alongside people or even properly prepare for Sunday services.

Mr Nash acknowledged that the retirement of 70 per cent of parish ministers in the next 15 years was "an enormous challenge", but suggested the cap on admissions from overseas could be lifted so that preachers from China, Korea and Africa could be the next generation of pastors.

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GREENOCK AND PAISLEY OVERTURE DEFEATED

(Continued from page two)

Ministries Council Reverend Graham Finch said he appreciated the Presbytery bringing important issues to the council's attention, but said there was a "lot of unreality" in the overture's proposals and that the suspension of presbytery plans would inevitably lead to more vacancies.

During the debate, Reverend Alastair Cherry, Presbytery Clerk of Greenock and Paisley, said the grassroots of the Church of Scotland did not know about 20:20 Vision nor what would happen if it carried on. Former Moderators of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Very Reverend Bill Hewitt and Very Reverend David Lacy also backed the overture.

Reverend Lezley Stewart, who steps down this Assembly as vice-convenor of Ministries Council, said the "same old model" was no longer fit for purpose and voiced her alarm at numbers coming forward to train for ministry with only 85 people accepted over the past five years.

The minister of Currie said if current trends continued and the Church did not adopt something more dynamic, she would be "the minister for half of Edinburgh in 15 years".

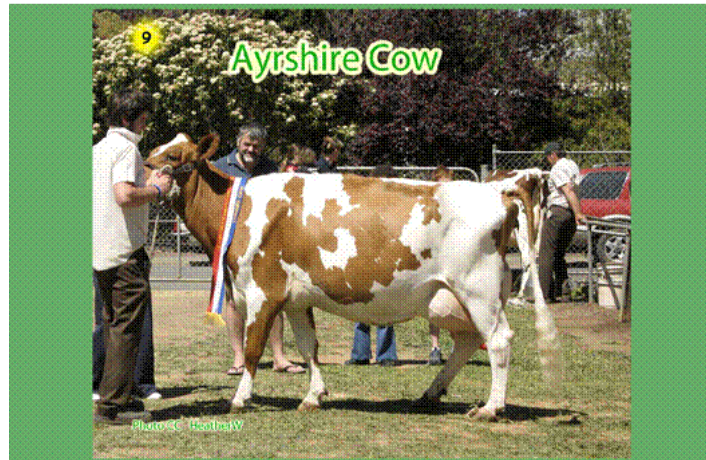


Above: Reverend Graham Finch

Council of Assembly convener Reverend Alan Greig also backed the 20:20 Vision scheme, saying that the proposals were challenging and visionary.

The General Assembly was asked to vote for five deliverances from the Ministries Council report or the overture, the majority was so clear for the council that a card vote was not required.

BOVINE INTERVENTION AS AYR OVERTURE PASSES



Above: Part of Ayr Presbytery's presentation

COMMISSIONERS moo-ved in favour of the Presbytery of Ayr's overture after an amusing presentation from representatives.

Presenting the overture, Reverend Alastair Symington used a variety of maps to make the case for the presbytery to be redefined as urban-rural in geographical weighting, but also included photos of green Ayrshire fields and residing mammals.



Above: Reverend Alastair Symington

The Assembly didn't think the Presbytery of Ayr was milking it and backed their case – although they were not seeking to increase the current number of posts in the current presbytery plan.

Officials from the Ministries Council will now beef up their classification of presbyteries.

KIRK'S SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED



Above: Safeguarding convener Ranald Mair

THE first safeguarding conference for the whole Church of Scotland will be held in the autumn, it was revealed today.

Convener of the Safeguarding Committee, Ranald Mair, made the announcement this morning as he presented their report to the General Assembly.

Mr Mair also confirmed that Right Reverend David Arnott, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will be in attendance.

More details will be available on the Church of Scotland website (www.churchofscotland.org.uk) in due course.

The Assembly also instructed Kirk Sessions to observe all of the requirements of The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 as now implemented, with particular emphasis on the new Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme.

TOMORROW'S BUSINESS:

	Ministries Council (continued)
General Trustees	Central Services Committee
Pension Trustees	Theological Commission announced
Nomination Committee	Closing ceremony