



The Church of Scotland

Communications Department

GOOD NEWS GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

WEDNESDAY 25TH MAY 2011

ASSEMBLY REJECTS REFORM PROPOSALS

COMMISSIONERS have rejected proposals for presbytery reform by just 31 votes following the report of the Panel on Review and Reform.

After lengthy discussion, Reverend Rosie Frew, Presbytery Clerk of Kirkcaldy, tabled a successful counter-motion to sections 7-17 of the original deliverance – effectively dismissing two-thirds of the Panel’s report and keeping the status quo with presbyteries.



Above: Reverend Rosie Frew

Former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Very Reverend David Lacy said it was “the first time in 20 years” that this had happened, and gave a heart-felt thanks to the work of the Panel.

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ASSEMBLY REJECTS REFORM PROPOSALS

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Earlier in the session the General Assembly affirmed that local mission planning is a priority for the Church, and also noted with concern that many presbyteries were currently unable to fully comply with governance, planning and finance.

The Panel's convener, Reverend David S. Cameron, warned that the Church would be stuck with "the same old, same old" and that presbytery reform would be "lost for a generation" prior to the vote of 300 to 269.



Above: Reverend David S. Cameron

The winning counter-motion from Ms. Frew affirmed key functions of Presbytery as proclamation of the Gospel, strengthening and supporting the people of God, and supervision of the work of the Church within its bounds. It also encouraged Presbyteries to engage imaginatively with their neighbours, and thanked the Panel for their work.

Reverend James Redpath recorded his dissent at the decision of the Assembly, and urged "forward-thinking commissioners" to do likewise.

Following the vote Moderator Right Reverend David Arnott paid tribute to the work of retiring convener Reverend David S. Cameron, hailing his "enormous contribution" and "strong leadership" to the Panel.

ASSEMBLY URGED TO INVEST IN PEACE



Above: Very Reverend Dr Andrew McLellan

THE General Assembly was urged to “invest in peace” following the report of the World Mission Council today.

Convener Very Reverend Dr Andrew McLellan launched the “invest in peace” initiative on the floor of the Assembly, and commissioners were invited to donate money for special dove lapel badges. Proceeds will be used for peacemaking projects in the Middle East.

Other parts of the initiative include praying, reading reports from mission partners, joining an organisation like the Scottish Palestinian Forum or twinning with a congregation in the Middle East.

Sections of the deliverance from the Church and Society Council report relating to Israel and Palestine were also discussed this afternoon.

Convener Reverend Ian Galloway withdrew section 49 of the report, which instructed the Council to work with ecumenical and civil society partners to lobby for a UK ban of products from unlawful Israeli settlements.

Mr Galloway said that since the report had been printed, both Councils had learned of proposed legislation before the Israeli parliament which would pose a serious risk to operations in the Middle East if it was enacted.

TOMORROW’S BUSINESS:

Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty’s Forces

Safeguarding Committee

Ministries Council

Overtures from the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley and the Presbytery of Ayr.