



# Covenant Fellowship Scotland

## Winter Newsletter

### Looking back and looking forward

In our summer newsletter, we included a piece which focused on the need to engage with the church and the world as a distinctive biblical voice and, drawing from the story of Nehemiah, to work to build and rebuild the church “at our own front door”.

This engagement needs to have two aspects if it is to have value and effectiveness:

- It should be focused on correct, relevant, topics
- It should be authentic

Over September and October, we held four gatherings for supporters in different locations across Scotland. At each gathering there was time for praise and prayer, time spent reflecting on the Word of God, and an update on the work of Covenant Fellowship Scotland.

At the three meetings I was able to attend, a part of my Director’s update was to reflect that, as individuals and as an organisation, we need to hold on to that well known acronym IOU but to assign it a different meaning. It has nothing, in this instance, to do with debt or finance but instead reminds us that God wants us to look in three different directions. (I)nward, (O)utward and (U)pward.

**Inward** to examine ourselves and our relationship with God and His Word. This can encourage and challenge us as we recognise the extent of God’s reach and power and allow Him to change us.

**Outward** at the world around us; society with all its challenges and opportunities, where the expressed desire for tolerance at times rebounds and actually restricts freedom of speech, and where it is becoming increasingly difficult to be “in the public square” and hold views which are at variance with an ever stronger secular voice. **Outward** also to the church of which we are part and which we long to see renewed.

**Upward** to God, surely the most vital of the directions. It was good, at the gatherings, to have Ian Murdo Macdonald, Hector Morrison, Mark Malcolm and Andrew Barrie reflect on the common theme of “Glorifying God and Enjoying Him Forever” and to remember that it is from God our Heavenly Father that we draw strength and inspiration.

From speaking with those who attended the gatherings it is clear that there are a number of issues which concern our supporters and which need authentic, relevant engagement:

- How to urge the Church as a whole to live its life and make its decisions based faithfully on God’s Word and not to be diverted or distracted by a desire to be “in step with society”. How to engage and participate in the decision making processes within the Councils and Committees of the national Church.
- How to raise these issues within Kirk Sessions and congregations where there is apathy or even a disregard for the place of Scripture.
- How to raise the profile of Covenant Fellowship Scotland within the church across Scotland.
- A real desire to have specific prayer points available throughout the year.



As well as the gatherings, we have encouraged supporters to participate in the Church of Scotland "On The Road" roadshows and we will continue to seek to influence the processes of planning for the future.

We have noted the Moderator's signing of the "St Andrews Declaration on a Shared Humanity" in September with some concern and are registering that concern and seeking clarification from the Church centrally.

We have been in conversation with PCANZ (Presbyterian Church in New Zealand) with information and encouragement for them in the run up to their General Assembly where, thankfully, the biblical view of marriage was reaffirmed.

As Director, I was a panellist on a discussion on Trans World Radio UK about Freedom of Speech - particularly with regard to speaking out about our faith (the recording is available on our website at [http://covenantfellowshipscotland.com/attachments/article/59/TWR\\_19th\\_November\\_Freedom\\_of\\_Speech\\_discussion.mp3](http://covenantfellowshipscotland.com/attachments/article/59/TWR_19th_November_Freedom_of_Speech_discussion.mp3)), and we have highlighted the publishing of a new document from the Evangelical Alliance and the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship entitled "Speak Up".

As we look forward to 2017, we are aware of areas where there is a need for prayer and involvement:

- Those congregations who are experiencing a sense of hurt in the aftermath of division over decisions at the General Assembly - we would be pleased to come and speak to Kirk Sessions or congregations with a view to...
  - ⇒ ...giving evangelicals in the Church of Scotland a sense of community, unity and purpose
  - ⇒ ...encouraging evangelicals in the Church to become involved at every level
- Issues potentially coming to the General Assembly in 2017 including the theology of same-sex marriage, transgender issues and interfaith issues

We will continue to use our website ([www.covenantfellowshipscotland.com](http://www.covenantfellowshipscotland.com)) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/covenantfellowshipscotland/](http://www.facebook.com/covenantfellowshipscotland/)) to communicate and inform. Please get in touch with us with ideas or concerns over the coming months.

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## Specific Prayer Points

- **Raising the profile of CFS so that evangelicals within the Church of Scotland might be aware and encouraged to engage with and support what we do**
  - **Opportunities to speak at churches across Scotland**
  - **Guidance for the Director and Trustees as they consider**
    - ⇒ **A response to the Theological Forum's report on same-sex marriage expected to be brought to the 2017 General Assembly**
    - ⇒ **Engaging with the whole area of transgender issues in a loving, constructive, biblical way**
    - ⇒ **Responding positively to interfaith initiatives against extremism while maintaining faithfulness to the uniqueness of Christ**
  - **Andrew McGowan and Mike Goss as they fulfil their roles in the Council of Assembly and Ministries Council respectively**
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Please feel free to contact me about any item in this newsletter or if you would like someone to come and speak at your local church.

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