



Covenant Fellowship Scotland

Newsletter: January 2016

The Reformation of the Church

In the year since CFS was formed, we have been somewhat preoccupied with the General Assembly's decisions in respect of Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and now in same-sex 'marriages'. We have published briefing papers and spoken directly to many members of Presbyteries. We have also held public meetings and sought to co-ordinate the opposition to the proposals. We will continue to engage in this debate and will be holding a pre-Assembly gathering for commissioners to the 2016 General Assembly on Saturday 7th May from 11am – 1pm at Palmerston Place Church in Edinburgh.

Given our involvement in this 'presenting issue' within the Church, some might have been inclined to think that CFS exists simply to speak to this debate. Nothing could be further from the truth. From the beginning, the main purpose of CFS has been to seek the reformation, renewal and restoration of the Church by bringing it back into line with the teaching of Scripture. In the first phase of our work, we have been forced to respond to the same-sex issue but now we are focussed on the wider and long-term strategy of seeking the reformation of the Church. This will involve much prayer, not least for a movement of the Holy Spirit across our land. It will also involve hard work, as we seek to promote orthodox biblical Christianity.

Development Co-ordinator

In order to move into 'reformation' mode, the Trustees of CFS have agreed that the next step is to appoint a staff member to help drive forward our vision for what the Church should be and could be. This 'Development Co-ordinator' will be employed by CFS on a full-time or part-time basis (we are open to both options). Given the busyness of the Trustees in their own work and parishes, we need someone who shares our vision and will be able to co-ordinate all that we do and engage with the wider Church, not least through our web and social media presence. This will also involve organising various public meetings, making good resources available and generally working to restore the Church of Scotland to its evangelical and reformed heritage. If you are interested in the position, please email the chairman on: atbmcgowan@gmail.com

Financial Support

In order to make the appointment of a Development Co-ordinator possible, we are now asking for financial support from those who have indicated their support for the work of CFS. We have never had to appeal for money before but we need it now, in order to take our work to the next level. If you would be willing to give a monthly sum to CFS, or a one-time donation, please send it to the address below. If you are a tax-payer, please indicate your willingness to 'gift aid' your donation. If you have connections with companies, trusts or other sources of finance, please encourage them to give to CFS. Perhaps your congregation might make a donation, using funds which are able to be used in this way.

Gatherings for Ministers

The Trustees have agreed to arrange 24 hour sessions for Ministers in various hotels in different parts of the country. At these sessions, we shall look back to the Church of Scotland's roots in the Scottish Reformation and then look forward, asking what a Reformed Church ought to look like in the 21st century. We shall then try to chart a course from where we are now to where we want to be in ten years' time. If you are a Minister or Deacon and would like to receive an invitation to one of these overnight gatherings, please email to the address below.

Regional Gatherings

It is the intention of the Trustees to organise regional gatherings in late spring or early summer under the general title 'How can we reform the Church of Scotland?' This will enable many of our friends and supporters to have an input to our strategic decisions going forward. We hope that many members and adherents of the Church will attend these gatherings.

Positive Approach

It is our hope that we can make a positive contribution to the life of the Church of Scotland by making good resources available and by promoting an enthusiasm for biblical and theological thinking. We are loyal members and adherents of the Church and we do not wish to be viewed negatively as being always 'against' the Church. We love our Church and want only what is best for her. We would value opportunities to engage with the Courts and Councils of the Church and to offer ways of growing the Church and encouraging candidates for the ministry.

Theological Forum

Having said that, we must also say that we are ready to speak up when our voice is excluded. For example, we are disappointed that the Theological Forum of the Church of Scotland does not have appropriate representation from the evangelical side of the Church, despite our numbers as evidenced by recent debates and votes. We have twice raised this with the Convener of the Theological Forum but to no avail. That being the case, we have decided to form an 'alternative' Theological Forum, which will present an evangelical view on the matters affecting the Church. It is also our intention to draw in leading theologians from other denominations to assist us in this work.

Support Covenant Fellowship Scotland

It is now a year since CFS was formed. In that time, over 1,200 people have indicated their support for what we are doing but this is only a tiny number compared to the size of the Church of Scotland. Please encourage others to add their names to our list of supporters, by going to our website or emailing us.

New Chairman

Due to various commitments in relation to his business, some of which will involve him spending a significant amount of time in England, Mr Kenneth Mackenzie has stepped down as chairman of CFS. We have many reasons to be grateful to Kenneth. An Elder of the Church of Scotland, he led the work of revitalising Forward Together when it had become moribund, he then oversaw the merger into Covenant Fellowship Scotland and, since then, he has led the Trustees with wisdom, grace and sensitivity. In addition, his hospitality has been generous. Happily, he will continue to serve as a Trustee and will continue to host meetings of the Trustees when he is available. The new chairman is Professor Andrew McGowan.