

The Church of Scotland

WCC 10th Assembly, Busan

1. The Church: Towards a Common Understanding

We have set up a small study group drawn from different departments of the Church to have a preliminary look at the consensus document, The Church: Towards a Common Understanding. This is with a view to briefing the delegates ahead of the Assembly. It is also so that we have preliminary thinking to take with us into ecumenical studies of the text. We are about to start looking at it in the Joint Commission on Doctrine (Church of Scotland/Roman Catholic Church). While we will each submit a response in due course to our respective body (WCC/Vatican) we also expect to submit a joint response to these bodies.

2. The Right Use of Money

Work continues on the follow up to the report of the Special Commission on the Right Use of Money. Delegates to the Busan Assembly will be briefed about how the discussion had been taken forward and what are the next steps.

3. The Environment

The Church of Scotland continues to encourage congregations and individuals to reduce their carbon footprint. It is home to the Ecumenical Body, Eco-Congregation Scotland and has assisted in the setting up of a similar organisation in Hungary. It is anticipated that the delegates will be briefed on the latest initiatives on this.

4. Just Peace

We contributed to the Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica through a presentation on living in peace with the environment. We also sent a delegate whose background is in working to eliminate domestic abuse, particularly of women. So we expect to have a good briefing on how to take forward the Just Peace Statement agenda. Peace will need to be a main focus of the Assembly – encompassing, as it does, so many aspects Christian witness, including inter faith relations (which we are not good at in the CofS) , tackling poverty (about which we have many stories to tell), addressing issues related to migration and human trafficking (which are never far away from our agendas) and our concern for parts of the world where there is continued fighting and entrenched violence.

5. Mission

We have been using the new Mission Statement in our Mission forum which is charged with bringing a statement on our understanding of Mission to the General Assembly of 2014.

6. Concerns

We have concerns about the constitutional changes that are being proposed in that it seems inevitable that more power for the direction of the organisation will rest in the hands of a smaller number of larger churches. We have had a preliminary look at the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bye-laws and will scrutinise them again more thoroughly in the weeks ahead.