

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF
SCOTLAND
EAGLAIS NA H-ALBA**

Special Commission on Same-sex Relationships and the Ministry

The Remit

The General Assembly of 2009 has given the Special Commission this remit:

“A Special Commission composed of nine persons, representative of the breadth and unity of the Church, to consult with all Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions and to prepare a study on Ordination and Induction to the Ministry of the Church of Scotland in the light of the issues (a) addressed in a Report welcomed by the General Assembly of 2007: “A challenge to unity: same-sex relationships as an issue in theology and human sexuality”, and (b) raised by the case of *Aitken et al v the Presbytery of Aberdeen*, and to report to the General Assembly of 2011.”

The membership

Rev John Chalmers, Pastoral Adviser and Associate Secretary (Ministries Support and Development), Ministries Council

Mrs Ruth Innes, advocate, member of Palmerston Place Church

Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting, former Moderator of General Assembly; Secretary & Ecumenical Officer, Ecumenical Relations Committee

Rev Dr Donald MacEwan, Minister of Largoward linked with St Monans, secretary of the working group which produced "A Challenge to Unity"

Rev Dr Angus Morrison, Minister of Stornoway St Columba, immediate past Convener of Mission & Discipleship Council, also a member of the working group

Rev James Stewart, Minister of Perth: Letham St Mark's, with experience of a previous commission

Rev Professor Allan J Torrance, Professor of Systematic Theology, University of St Andrews

Miss Kim Wood, Student at St Andrews; a youth representative commended by the Moderator of the Youth Assembly

The Hon. Lord Hodge (Patrick Hodge), Convener, Court of Session Judge; former Procurator of the Church

Rev W Peter Graham, Clerk, former Clerk to the Presbytery of Edinburgh

Our proposed method of working

We will prepare a short consultation paper which will invite Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to express their views on the questions which we consider arise from our remit and the divisions in our Church which have led to our appointment. We are considering using the Church's website to make available documents to supplement the consultation paper.

In order to inform the consultation document, and in particular to enable us to express accurately the competing views within the Church and the views of other Churches, we are engaged in a pre-consultation exercise of obtaining current statements of such views. The aim is to enable us to summarise those views accurately in the consultation paper.

We hope to send out the consultation paper by the end of February 2010 and to have a consultation period until the end of May 2010, during which we will expect every Presbytery and Kirk Session to hold a special meeting in order to prepare a response. We will spend the latter part of the year in analysing the responses and preparing our report for the General Assembly of 2011.