

Reaching the Young - with help from the Australian Church

Speaking tour by **Murray Norman** and **Nathain Secker** from Presbyterian Youth – the youth work ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

For Ministers, Youth Workers and Youth Leaders: these meetings are not youth rallies, but rather seminars for those with a vision for integrated youth work. There are also **youth evenings** at Kirkmuirhill and Dingwall.

Seminars for ministers, youth workers and youth leaders:

SATURDAY 1ST NOV - GLASGOW
Chryston Church Hall, 10 am – 12 noon

WEDNESDAY 5TH NOV - EDINBURGH
Holyrood Abbey Church Hall, 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm

THURSDAY 6TH NOV - DINGWALL
Highland Theological College, 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm

Youth evenings:

SUNDAY 2ND NOV - KIRKMUIRHILL Parish Church, 7.00 pm

FRIDAY 7TH NOV - DINGWALL Castle Street Church, 7.30 pm

It would be very helpful to have an indication of numbers.

Further details from Alistair Donald (01771 644216)

Forward Together is an organisation for evangelicals within the Church of Scotland.

Our stated aims are honour the name of our Lord Jesus Christ by obeying his commission to reach the people of Scotland and the whole world with the good news that he is Lord and Saviour.

Membership is open to anyone actively associated with a Church of Scotland congregation, either as a member, adherent or regular attendee. There is a basis of faith which all members must subscribe to.

The annual subscription is £10, or £5 for the unwaged, due each May to coincide with the General Assembly. Kirk Sessions can join en bloc for £50.

Application forms can be obtained from our web-site at
www.forwardtogether.org.uk



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**An organisation for evangelicals in the Church of Scotland.
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008

TOP DOWN BOTTOM UP! by FT Chairman

We don't like being told what to do. We know that we need government, but not a 'nanny state'. Authority is regularly challenged in our society. Politicians, rather than leading our nation, seek out 'grass roots' opinion. We no longer have experts on radio programmes, we have phone in times when any and every opinion can be freely expressed (well nearly every opinion).

Increasingly the same is true in the church. We resist the authority of church courts; we are suspicious of initiatives that are sent down from the heights of 121. In seeking a direction for the church our Councils are scouring the land for any grass roots opinion that might be worth trying. Down on Animal Church the sheep are being taught to chant 'Top down bad; bottom up good'. (Once you get started on the George Orwell allusions ...)

The reforming of the church will happen from the top down **and** from the bottom up.

In local congregations as the word of God

is preached and Jesus Christ is followed as Lord so the life of the church will grow strong and vital in the hand of God. Scotland will not be evangelised by decisions of any General Assembly or Presbytery. As congregations grow strong in the word of God and prayer so our Presbyteries and General Assemblies will be shaken for the glory of God.

In the continuing reformation of our church our General Assembly and our Presbyteries do have a role to play. As we see these courts of the church reformed by the word of God the gospel will sound from our church with a clarity and confidence that at present is not known. A reformed understanding of our Presbyterian system of church government will result in local congregational ministry and mission being resourced and supported by 'superior' courts that recognise their calling is not to lord it over congregations but to serve the ministry and mission of the church.

If we leave off the reforming of the top until we've got the bottom right we won't ever get started. Once again there is no either/or, we have a both/and. Let's work and pray for the reforming of the church from the top down **and** from the bottom up.

Training for Ministries

One of our principal concerns at this year's General Assembly was the decision of the Council of Ministries not to approve the International Christian College (ICC) as a provider of academic training for ministers of the Church of Scotland.

Members of the FT Steering Group were pleased to accept an invitation to meet with senior staff at the ICC last September and to work with them since then in preparing for this debate at the General Assembly. It is good that we record our appreciation of how well Alan Dunnett presented the counter-motion and in particular his concluding comments at the end of the debate and also those former students of ICC who spoke so well during the debate.

In our disappointment at the outcome of the debate we can note the positive way the Council of Ministries engaged with us in preparing the counter-motion and look forward to working with the Council and the ICC in the hope that we might return to this matter soon and find the General Assembly willing to approve ICC as a provider for academic training. Please do continue to pray for this outcome.

We have all been distressed at the unfortunate comments of a commissioner during the debate. I'm sure we are all grateful to Graham Finch, the Convener of the Council of Ministries, for his apology to the Assembly following this matter in which he assured the church of the Council's recognition of the very high academic standards achieved and implemented by the staff at ICC.

Change of Office-Bearers

At the committee meeting on 10th September the following office-bearers were appointed:

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| General Secretary: | Rev Gordon Kennedy |
| Chairman: | Rev Alistair Donald |
| Vice-Chairman: | Rev Jim Stewart |

All appointments are for the period up to the 2009 AGM, in order to give time for prayerful consideration of the appointments for the long term; it was specifically agreed that Gordon would not hold office after that AGM, as we felt that Forward Together should not be tied to one person.

The Well

Asian Information and Advice Centre

In June members of the FT Steering Group were delighted to accept an invitation from the Mission and Discipleship Council to visit The Well in Glasgow.

Established in 1992, The Well is a drop-in information and advice centre where Christians can meet their Asian and African neighbours. A place where barriers can be broken down and cross-cultural friendships formed. Staff and volunteers at The Well aim to serve the Asian community holistically with Christian love and compassion and to enable cross-cultural understanding in an ethnically diverse city.

We found this to be an exciting project, which if it did not exist would need to be set up! The Well offers a good model of partnership between the Mission and Discipleship Council, the Presbytery of Glasgow and local congregations. Not only is The Well a meeting place for cross-cultural friendships, but is also a meeting place for the three layers of our church in effective mission.

We visited The Well at an exciting time; on the 2nd of June the keys of the next door property were received. This new property will enable the staff and volunteers to greatly expand and enhance the service they are offering to the local community. With any increase in opportunity comes an increased need for support and we hope to share with our members news about a part of this project we might financially support.

The Well is indeed a well of living water and we should remember to pray for the staff and volunteers at The Well.

More information can be found at www.thewell.org.uk or by visiting The Well, 48-50 Albert Road, Glasgow, 0141 424 4523.

Two short videos about The Well can be viewed on our own website.