



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

7th March 2009

Edinburgh

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from *Advices and Queries* 42 reminding us that we do not own the world and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome 2 attenders to this GM. We also welcome as a visitor Andrew Rollinson of the Baptist Union of Scotland.

The total numbers of all present have been recorded as follows:

East Scotland	10
South East Scotland	15
North Scotland	3
West Scotland	<u>8</u>
Total:	36

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Alyson Buchan from East Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask South East Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

Min. 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Joan Basford (N)
Joy Townell (E).

We record the following death since our last meeting:

Peter Burgess (SE).

Min. 5 Tabular statement 2008

We note the following numbers of members at 31 Dec:

	2008	2007
East	109	113
West	223	226
North	126	122
South East	269	262
TOTAL:	727	723

Min. 6 Suggested dates and venues for 2010-11

West – 13 March 10 (already agreed)

North – 5 June 10

South East – 11 Sept 10

West – 13/14 Nov 10

East – 5 Mar 11

We ask AM clerks to consider these dates and for GM to confirm them in June. The dates do not clash with scheduled meetings of Meeting for Sufferings.

Min. 7 Northern Young Friends Summer Gathering

Ruth Taylor, joint coordinator of this event, has given us a report of the progress of the residential summer gathering for 11-16 year olds, to be known from this year as Summer Shindig. The name was chosen by a working group of the young people.

The event caters for about 70 young people with about 20 staff. The young people have an increasing involvement in helping to plan the event, and they proposed the theme for this summer – Freedom. Relationships that are formed at the event can last a lifetime, and the Quaker ethos that runs throughout the event is much valued. A group of six young people has been formed and they are working to arrange increased participation by young people including helping with workshops and discussion groups.

Ruth has answered questions about the planning and organisation of the week, and we are impressed by the commitment and energy of all those involved with the event. We thank Ruth for her presentation.

Min. 8 Theology in the Public Square

Philip Bryers has described to us this new project initiated by Graham Blount of Edinburgh University to develop theological perspectives on public issues as a resource for the Scottish Churches. Graham is asking for responses to his consultation paper from each of the Churches, and is hoping to form a group to work on the project together. He has invited support and involvement from those connected with the Churches with a view to identifying policy areas where there is a need for theological resourcing.

Possible topics include: Criminal Justice, Family Matters, Climate Change, Land Reform, Poverty and Social Justice, Personal Debt, End of Life Issues, Future of Nuclear Weapons, Scotland's Future.

We have also received a Minute from West Scotland AM asking us to consider appointing one or more Friends to participate in this work. We support this initiative in principle and will bring forward names to attend the initial meeting on 25 March later today.

Min. 9 Book of Members and Attenders

Margaret Peacock has introduced a discussion of alternative ways of publishing the Book of Members and Attenders. We could aim for a mixture of paper and electronic availability, with attention to sustainability.

Margaret has reported discussions between herself and our Administrator Bronwen Currie about various options for the future. We agree to ask Margaret Peacock, Bronwen Currie and Beryl Milner to consider the options, to consult with others as required, and to report back to a future GM. A discussion paper will be published in *Scottish Friend*, and comments to any member of the group are encouraged. We hope that this will also be considered in due course at local and area levels.

Min. 10 Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Alison Douglas

Alison Burnley has read to us the testimony to the grace of God in the life of Alison Douglas, forwarded to us by South East Scotland AM.

Min. 11 The place of Function Groups

The clerk has reported that a review of the Function Group structure is to be undertaken. There will be a meeting of Central Committee on 28 March which will discuss this further. In the meantime any comments or suggestions from Meetings or individuals would be welcomed and should be sent to the Clerk.

Min. 12 Report from Representative Friend

Pamala McDougall has reported on some of her recent activities. In January she attended a Church of Scotland conference "Towards Wholeness". This included aspects of conflicts within a congregation and the place of mediation in their resolution. Pamala feels that we can both benefit from and contribute to this ongoing discussion.

There has been good progress with the development and refurbishment of Scottish Churches House. A meeting took place there with MEPs on a range of topics.

A group exists to consider plans relating to the Ury Estate near Stonehaven. The proposed development has been delayed.

Min. 13 Appointments and Representatives

We agree to appoint the following:

1. ACTS Church Life Network
Hugh McQuiston Jan 2009 to Dec 2011
2. Representative to the Church of Scotland General Assembly
Margaret Mortimer 21-27 May 2009
3. Representative to the Methodist Spring Synod
Janet Garner 28 March 2009
4. Extension of appointment as Trustee (to bring into line with appointment as
Convenor)
Philip Bryers March 2010 to Dec 2010
5. Representative to the Scottish Episcopal Church Synod
Barbara Davey 11-13 June 2009

6. Theology in the Public Square
Elizabeth Allen, David Turner (subject to consent), Martin Mansell (stc), Mary Alice
Mansell (stc), Marjorie Farquharson (stc) (see Minute 8)

Min. 14 Sustainability

We have been pleased to welcome Alastair McIntosh to our meeting today. Speaking to the broad title of 'Sustainability', he has encouraged us to look beyond scientific information about climate change, to look further than lifestyle issues like recycling, and to consider what we as Friends can bring to the world today.

If the spiritual imperative is to feed the hungry, it is vital that we attend not only to the physical hunger in the world, but to the spiritual hunger that exists. The former has many agencies attending to it. It is in the latter context, spiritual hunger, that he sees a role for Quakers.

The global crisis is a spiritual crisis. We need to overcome our reticence about speaking of these deep truths, but we come from a tradition which gives us strength to resist conventional expectations and speak openly and honestly of our fundamental convictions. Alastair has challenged us to speak out on matters of spirituality that today cause embarrassment in the same way that discussion on sexual matters was embarrassing to generations in the recent past. Alastair believes that to overcome the consumerism that has penetrated all our lives and move to sufficiency and towards sustainability, we need to connect the outer aspects of what we have with inner meaning, a meaning that will endure.

All our lives are riddled with contradictions. It is important to acknowledge our complicity while continuing to try to live in such a way that is both wholly human and wholly divine. Alastair has provoked our thinking. We thank him for talking with us today.

Min. 15 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to South East Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Glasgow on 20 June.

Robin Waterston
Clerk

FOOTNOTE

Alastair McIntosh came to this meeting today immediately after attending a service of thanksgiving for the life of Marcella Althaus Reid, a Quaker who was professor of contextual theology at New College, Edinburgh. As a feminist and liberation theologian with personal roots in Argentina, she wrote extensively on 'Indecent Theology' with a depth of inclusiveness, wholeness and holiness.