



The Church of Scotland

Communications Department

## **GOOD NEWS GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:**

**MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2011**

### **CHURCH VOTES FOR MORE DIALOGUE**

THE General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has voted to continue dialogue on same-sex relationships and the ministry following the Special Commission report today.

After several hours of debate, commissioners voted by 351 to 294 to adopt deliverance 7B, which means a move towards the acceptance for training, induction and ordination of those in same-sex relationships for the ministry.

The Assembly also voted to allow ministers and deacons in same-sex relationships ordained before 2009 to be inducted into pastoral charges by 393 to 252.

A theological commission will be set up to bring recommendations to the 2013 General Assembly, as well as considering whether ministers should have freedom of conscience to bless civil partnerships and possible liturgy for such occasions.

As nothing has been formally enacted, the proposals do not need to consult the Kirk's 46 presbyteries under the Barrier Act, but it does mark a significant departure from the Church's traditional teaching, as acknowledged by the Commission's report.

Speaking after the debate, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Right Reverend David Arnott, said: "This direction is one that explores inclusion but the new theological commission will report in two years time on that matter and no decisions have yet been made.

"We as the National Church will continue to provide guidance and spiritual leadership for the people of Scotland.

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## CHURCH VOTES FOR MORE DIALOGUE



*Above: Right Reverend David Arnott*

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“Yesterday I had the privilege and pleasure of attending an event called Roll Away the Stone in Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh. This was a wonderful and happy occasion attended by thousands of people who celebrated and worshipped together in glorious sunshine.

“That is the true face of the Church of Scotland.”

And the Moderator made an impassioned plea for unity in the Kirk despite the contentious issue: “I am aware that many people will be hurting today and the Church of Scotland has a pastoral duty to look after these people and show them our love and compassion.

“We very much hope that people who disagree with what has been decided will nevertheless remain in the Church and work with us as we seeks to find a way forward.

“Today has been a challenging day for the Church of Scotland but our history shows that we are able to take on board many challenges and continue to be a clear voice in 21<sup>st</sup> century Scotland.”

Names for the seven-strong Theological Commission will be announced later this week.

## PRAISE FOR ROLL AWAY THE STONE



*Above: Thousands in Princes Street Gardens*

OVER 5,000 people flocked to Princes Street Gardens yesterday for the Church of Scotland's inaugural Roll Away the Stone event.

A host of passers-by and commissioners enjoyed the 67 different stalls, showcasing the best of the Kirk's life.

Although the weather was cloudy to begin with, by the end of the day crowds were basking in the sunshine, culminating in an open air worship at the Ross bandstand.

Today, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland thanked everyone who helped to make the event possible, and had a special word of praise for the congregation of St Cuthbert's.

Right Reverend David Arnott quipped: "The minister of St Cuthbert's said that they had over two and a half thousand people through their doors yesterday – which is just a normal Sunday for them."

### **TOMORROW'S BUSINESS:**

Social Care Council (CrossReach)

Church of Scotland Guild

Ecumenical Relations Committee

Church and Society Council