

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
PLENARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF  
SCOTLAND  
HOLDEN AT EDINBURGH 18th NOVEMBER MMX

*At Edinburgh and within the Free Assembly Hall  
the 18th day of November 2010 years at 6 o'clock evening*

**1 Assembly constituted** Which day the Ministers and Elders, Commissioners from Presbyteries appointed to meet this day in terms of Act I, May 2010, were convened, and after sermon by Rev. David C. Meredith, Moderator of last General Assembly, who preached from John 16: 1 – 15, the General Assembly was constituted.

**2. Roll of Assembly - not published.**

**3 Assembly Arrangements** The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Committee on Assembly Arrangements, which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Convener, who addressed the Assembly thereanent.

***Finding:***

It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report of the Assembly Arrangements Committee and thank the Committee.
2. The General Assembly approve and adopt the programme recommended by the Committee and authorise the Committee to meet at a suitable point between sessions of the Assembly if adjustments to the business are required.

**4 Assembly Arrangements: Supplementary Report** The General Assembly then called for the Supplementary Report of the Assembly Arrangements Committee which was submitted in the following terms:

The Committee met on Thursday 17th November to make final preparations for the Plenary Assembly due to open later that day. The Committee was presented with an amendment to their report from Rev. Alex J. MacDonald in the following terms:

1. That Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Standing Order No. III.4 be deleted and replaced with the following paragraph 4 (paragraph 6 to be renumbered 5, and the reference in III.4.2 be changed to Standing Order No. III.4.4):
2. That when there are three or more motions concerning the same matter before the House, there shall be a vote between the three or more motions, each member casting their vote only once. The motion gaining the lowest number of votes will fall. This process shall be repeated as necessary until there are only two motions before the house, when the procedure shall be as in Standing Order No. III.4.3.

The Committee noted that Standing Orders for the Plenary Assembly had already been set by the Assembly in May 2010, as stated in their report, and that there was a measure of uncertainty over whether these could now be

adjusted by amendment. The Committee decided that they would present this Supplementary Report recommending that the amendment be received and requesting that the Assembly itself decide the matter.

DOUGLAS MACKEDDIE, *Convener*

Rev. James Maciver addressed the General Assembly thereanent.

**Finding:** It was moved, seconded and agreed that

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Supplementary Report of the Assembly Arrangements Committee and thank the Committee.
2. The General Assembly receive the amendment from Rev. Alex J. MacDonald and approve the Committee's recommendation that the amendment be put against the Committee's Proposed Deliverance.

**First Motion:**

Following upon the preceding finding it was moved and seconded that:

The Standing Orders as in the print be taken as the Standing Orders of this Assembly.

**Second Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that:

Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Standing Order No. III.4 be deleted and replaced with the following paragraph 4 (paragraph 6 to be renumbered 5, and the reference in III.4.2 be changed to Standing Order No. III.4.4):

That when there are three or more motions concerning the same matter before the House, there shall be a vote between the three or more motions, each member casting their vote only once. The motion gaining the lowest number of votes will fall. This process shall be repeated as necessary until there are only two motions before the house, when the procedure shall be as in Standing Order No. III.4.3.

On a vote being taken between the Second Motion and the First Motion, the First Motion was declared carried by a majority.

**Finding** Wherefore –

It was agreed that Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Standing Order No. III.4 be deleted and replaced with the following paragraph 4 (paragraph 6 to be renumbered 5, and the reference in III.4.2 be changed to Standing Order No. III.4.4):

That when there are three or more motions concerning the same matter before the House, there shall be a vote between the three or more motions, each member casting their vote only once. The motion gaining the lowest number of votes will fall. This process shall be repeated as necessary until there are only two motions before the house, when the procedure shall be as in Standing Order No. III.4.3.

The Report was adopted.

**5 Board of Trustees** The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Board of Trustees, which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by Mr Iain K. Macleod, who addressed the Assembly thereanent.

**First Motion:** It was moved and seconded that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Trustees, and thank the Chairman, members of the Board, the Chief Administrative Officer and his staff for their work.
2. The General Assembly, recognising the divisive nature of the issue dealt with in this Report, affirm their commitment to unity and urge officebearers and members to find ways of continuing in unity after the Assembly has determined the issue.
3. The General Assembly, recognising that the majority of Kirk Sessions have not been persuaded by the

arguments presented for change and therefore either support the current worship practice or have no desire to move from this practice, affirm that the practice of the Free Church of Scotland in public worship shall be to avoid the use of uninspired materials of praise and of instrumental music.

4. The General Assembly stipulate that public worship occurs when a Kirk Session or a superior court of the Church call God's people to assemble to worship him, in contradistinction to meetings called for testimony, fellowship and other purposes.
5. The General Assembly repeal Act I, Class I, 1910 and Act V, Class II, 1932.
6. The General Assembly amend paragraph 2 of Act V, Class II, 1905, by inserting therein (a) immediately after the word "enjoin" the words, " in respect of worship," and (b) immediately after the word "period" the words, "the practice then observed being to avoid the use in public worship of uninspired materials of praise and of instrumental music."
7. The General Assembly ordain that Act V, Class II, 1905 as thus amended be reissued as a new Act of this Plenary Assembly and that this new Act be given the status of a Class 1 Act.
8. The General Assembly encourage Presbyteries to focus on promoting improvements in congregational praise and in the quality of praise leaders.
9. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to organise a day of prayer within their own bounds, at a suitable date after the Church has determined the matter, to focus on maintaining the unity of the Church.

**Second Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that the following addendum be added to the First Motion:

10. The General Assembly instruct the Psalmody Committee to investigate, collect and, if necessary prepare from within the resources of the Church appropriate portions of Scripture, other than the 150 Psalms, in a form which accurately renders the thought of the original and is suitable for singing in public worship. The Committee is empowered to seek the cooperation of others with the requisite linguistic, theological, literary and musical skills and is required to report progress to the 2011 General Assembly.

**Third Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that the following Addendum be added to the First Motion:

10. The General Assembly do now recall their 2009 endorsement of the Board of Trustees view that 'the debate as to practice should be conducted in a free and open way where the expression of views on either side of the debate is entirely permissible'. The General Assembly declare that it is divisive and therefore disruptive to the unity and peace of the Church to promote views which are contrary to the position reaffirmed in the amended Act V, Class II, 1905, anent Public Worship.

The General Assembly further call on all ministers and office-bearers to assert, maintain, and defend the practice as reaffirmed in the amended Act V, Class II, 1905, which practice the Ordinand pledges to observe when signing the Formula, and to avoid following any divisive course of action in the matter for the sake of the peace and unity of the Church:

**Fourth Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that

The following Addendum be added to Paragraph 4:

However, even at such meetings and indeed at all times, any act of worship must always be offered in the light of the definition of worship stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 21, namely that worship consists of any one or any combination of the following: prayer, the reading of Scripture, sound preaching, conscionable hearing, singing of Psalms, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments besides religious oaths, vows and solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions.

**Fifth Motion:** It was also moved that:

Paragraphs 3 to 8 of the Deliverance be deleted and replaced with the following paragraphs (paragraph 9 in the Deliverance to become paragraph 11):

3. The General Assembly, recognising that, after consideration of the Biblical and theological questions and widespread consultation throughout the Church on the question of the form of worship presently practised, there are equally conscientious and Biblically grounded but differing views on the subject, ordain and enact in the following terms.

4. The General Assembly hereby repeal Act V, Class II, 1932; Act I, Class I, 1910; Class II, 1910; Act VI, Class II, 1910; Act VII, Act V, Class II, 1905; Act of Assembly, of date 31st May 1883, entitled “VII. Act anent Instrumental Music (No. 4 of Class II)”; and resolutions authorising and sanctioning the use of uninspired hymns, of dates 3rd June 1872; 27th May 1881; 26th May 1896; and 24th May 1897.

5. The General Assembly declare that purity of worship requires that every aspect of worship services, including sung praise, be consistent with the Word of God and with the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith approved by previous Assemblies of this Church.

6. The General Assembly ordain that every service of congregational worship shall include the singing of Psalms.

7. The General Assembly ordain that, with regard to the sung praise of congregations in worship, each Kirk Session shall have freedom, either to restrict the sung praise to the Psalms, or to include paraphrases of Scripture, and hymns and spiritual songs consistent with the doctrine of the Confession of Faith; that each Kirk Session shall have freedom whether to permit musical accompaniment to the sung praise in worship, or not.

8. The General Assembly advise that, notwithstanding the foregoing, no Kirk Session should agree to a change in sung praise or musical accompaniment against the wishes of the minister of the congregation, and that a visiting minister, presiding at a service in a congregation where the aforementioned freedom to use uninspired materials of praise and musical instruments has been exercised, may exercise that freedom or not as he sees fit.

9. The General Assembly ordain that in meetings of Church Courts the use of uninspired materials of praise and of instrumental music shall be avoided.

10. The General Assembly appoint a Special Committee (using consultants as required) to investigate the feasibility and desirability of producing a recommended list of paraphrases of Scripture and hymns and spiritual songs consistent with the Word of God and the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and whether the Free Church ought to produce a praise resource supplementary to the Psalter, and to report to the 2011 General Assembly.”

**10. Adjournment** The General Assembly did then adjourn to meet again in this Hall on Friday at 9.00 o'clock forenoon, whereof public intimation having being given, the sederunt was closed with prayer.

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Continued below.....

*At Edinburgh and within the Free Assembly Hall, the  
19th day of November 2010 years at 9 o'clock forenoon,*

**1 Assembly constituted** The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with devotional exercises, when the following took part at the request of the Moderator:

Rev. Alasdair Macdonald, Dr Ian Maciver, Rev. Dr Fergus A. J. Macdonald, Dr George M. Coghill, Rev. Angus J. Howat, Rev. John H. MacLean, Mr B. MacLelland, Rev. Iain Macaskill, Mr Iain A. Macdonald, Rev. Roderick Rankin, Mr Joseph MacPhee, Rev. James Maciver, Rev. David Karoon, Rev. Dr Peter Wallace, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Rev. Calum I. Macleod, and Mr David Jones.

**2 Minutes** The minutes of the previous day's sederunts were read and approved.

**3 Board of Trustees** The General Assembly resumed consideration of the Fifth Motion. The Motion was seconded.

**Sixth Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that:

Paragraph 3 – 7 inclusive of the Proposed Deliverance be deleted, and that the following be inserted as paragraph 3, the remaining paragraphs to be re-numbered 4 and 5 respectively:

The General Assembly, recognising that there is lack of clarity in the provisions of Act V. 1932: Act anent Requirements at Ordinations and Inductions, hereby amend those provisions in the following manner:- By inserting after the words 'Purity of worship as presently practised in this Church' the following:- "which expression is to be taken as meaning for each Congregation the services ordinarily held on the Lord's Day and all the services of Communion Seasons, all of which are opened with a Call to Worship and closed with the pronouncement of a Benediction."

If passed by the General Assembly, the Act would then be passed down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, and would read:

"The General Assembly enact *ad interim* that at Ordinations and Inductions the presiding Minister shall, prior to putting the appointed questions to the Ordinand make the following intimation, namely: "It is my duty to explain to you, and also to the Congregation here present, with reference to that part of the question which will be put to you as to 'Purity of Worship as presently practised in this Church' which expression is to be taken as meaning for each Congregation the services ordinarily held on the Lord's Day and all the services of Communion Seasons, all of which are opened with a Call to Worship and closed with the pronouncement of a Benediction; that in 1910 The General Assembly reaffirmed the legislation of the Church as to uniformity in public worship going back to the year 1707, and in accordance with that legislation, it is the present practice of the Free Church to avoid the use in public worship of uninspired materials of praise as also of instrumental music. Such present practice determines the purity of worship to the maintenance of which the Ordinand pledges himself."

**Seventh Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that:

Paragraphs 3 to 8 of the Deliverance be deleted and replaced with the following paragraphs (paragraph 9 in the Deliverance to become paragraph 7):

3. The General Assembly recognise that, after several years' consideration of the biblical and theological questions and widespread consultation throughout the Church on the question of the form of worship presently practised, differing views remain each of which claims to be biblically grounded.

4. The General Assembly hereby repeal Act V, Class II, 1932, Act I, Class I, 1910, Act V, Class II, 1905, Act of Assembly, of date 31st. May 1883, entitled "VII. Act anent Instrumental Music (No. 4 of Class II.)" and recall resolutions authorising and sanctioning the use of uninspired hymns, of dates 3rd June 1872; 27th May 1881, 26th 1896; and 24th May 1897.

5. The General Assembly ordain that in public worship congregations use only inspired materials of praise, drawn from both the Book of Psalms and other suitable portions of Scripture, and that Kirk Sessions be

granted the freedom to permit musical accompaniment to sung praise in worship should Minister and Session so decide after due consideration.

6. The General Assembly instruct the Psalms Committee to produce a recommended list of faithful paraphrases of Scripture passages outwith the Book of Psalms appropriate for use in public praise and to report progress to the 2011 General Assembly.

At the request of the Moderator Rev. W. D. Graham engaged in prayer.

On a vote being taken between the Third Motion and the First Motion, the First Motion was declared carried by a majority.

On a vote being taken between the Fourth Motion and the First Motion, the First Motion was declared carried by a majority.

The Assembly then proceeded in accordance with their finding of the First Sederunt to vote between the First, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Motions when it was found members had voted as follows:

First Motion	84
Fifth Motion	98
Sixth Motion	2
Seventh Motion	4

The Sixth Motion accordingly fell. With permission of the Assembly the Seventh Motion was withdrawn.

The Assembly then proceeded to vote between the Second Motion and the Fifth Motion when with permission of the Assembly the mover of the Fifth Motion accepted the Second Motion.

***Finding:*** Wherefore:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Trustees, and thank the Chairman, members of the Board, the Chief Administrative Officer and his staff for their work.

2. The General Assembly, recognising the divisive nature of the issue dealt with in this Report, affirm their commitment to unity and urge officebearers and members to find ways of continuing in unity after the Assembly has determined the issue.

3. The General Assembly, recognising that, after consideration of the biblical and theological questions and widespread consultation throughout the Church on the question of the form of worship presently practised, there are equally conscientious and biblically grounded but differing views on the subject, ordain and enact in the following terms.

4. The General Assembly hereby repeal Act V, Class II, 1932; Act I, Class I, 1910; Act VI, Class II, 1910; Act VII, Class II, 1910; Act V, Class II, 1905; Act of Assembly, of date 31st May 1883, entitled "VII. Act anent Instrumental Music (No. 4 of Class II)"; and resolutions authorising and sanctioning the use of uninspired hymns, of dates 3rd June 1872; 27th May 1881; 26th May 1896; and 24th May 1897.

5. The General Assembly declare that purity of worship requires that every aspect of worship services, including sung praise, be consistent with the Word of God and with the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith approved by previous Assemblies of this Church.

6. The General Assembly ordain that every service of congregational worship shall include the singing of Psalms.

7. The General Assembly ordain that, with regard to the sung praise of congregations in worship, each Kirk Session shall have freedom, either to restrict the sung praise to the Psalms, or to include paraphrases of Scripture, and hymns and spiritual songs consistent with the doctrine of the Confession of Faith; that each Kirk Session shall have freedom whether to permit musical accompaniment to the sung praise in worship, or not.

8. The General Assembly advise that, notwithstanding the foregoing, no Kirk Session should agree to a change in sung praise or musical accompaniment against the wishes of the minister of the congregation, and that a visiting minister, presiding at a service in a congregation where the aforementioned freedom to use uninspired materials of praise and musical instruments has been exercised, may exercise that freedom or not as he sees fit.

9. The General Assembly ordain that in meetings of Church Courts the use of uninspired materials of praise and of instrumental music shall be avoided.

10. The General Assembly appoint a Special Committee (using consultants as required) to investigate the feasibility and desirability of producing a recommended list of paraphrases of Scripture and hymns and spiritual songs consistent with the Word of God and the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and whether the Free Church ought to produce a praise resource supplementary to the Psalter, and to report to the 2011 General Assembly.”

11. The General Assembly instruct this Committee to investigate, collect and, if necessary prepare from within the resources of the Church appropriate portions of Scripture, other than the 150 Psalms, in a form which accurately renders the thought of the original and is suitable for singing in public worship. The Committee is empowered to seek the cooperation of others with the requisite linguistic, theological, literary and musical skills and is required to report progress to the 2011 General Assembly.

12. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to organise a day of prayer within their own bounds at a suitable date after the Church has determined the matter, to focus on maintaining the unity of the Church.

**Dissents:** The following intimated their dissents from this finding:

Kenneth Stewart, William M. Mackay, Donald MacDonald, Farquhar Renwick, Rod Finlayson, David A. Topping, Kenneth Donald Macleod, Joseph MacPhee, I. T. Campbell, John Wagner, Alec Cowie, Christopher Redman, John Macintyre, Colin Campbell, Angus Macleod, Peter T. Rourke, Douglas MacKeddie, W. G. Lucas, K. M. Ferguson, D. A. Macdonald, Murdo Macleod, D. Mackenzie, James Maciver, Angus J. Howat, James C. Abernethy, I. Macsween, A. G. Mackinnon, M. Macleod, M. J. Macaulay, Donald Morrison, Donald Jack, Duncan Macleod, John Forbes, Donald Macleod, Andrew Murchison.

**Eighth Motion:** It was moved and seconded that:

The Finding of the Assembly be passed to Presbyteries under the terms of the Barrier Act, on the grounds that:

(1) The terms appointing this Assembly made no provision for its plenary composition to be regarded as an alternative to Barrier Act procedure;

(2) The constitutional position of the Church in legislating important laws gives no place to Plenary Assemblies taking over from Barrier Act procedure. If this were to be changed the Assembly would need to approve this after obtaining the view of presbyteries via the Barrier Act.

**Ninth Motion:** It was also moved and seconded that:

Bearing in mind the unity of the Church and the several years' discussion, debate and papers on the subject of worship, and taking into account the purposes of the Barrier Act of 1697 to ensure that no sudden alteration or innovation in either doctrine or worship be enacted without the more general opinion of the Church being agreed;

The Plenary General Assembly hereby declare that the decision of the Assembly as put forward by Rev. Alex. MacDonald has already fulfilled the purposes of the Barrier Act of 1697 and therefore does not require to be sent down under that Act.

On a vote being taken between the Ninth Motion and the Eighth Motion, the Eighth Motion was declared carried by a majority

**Finding:** Wherefore:

Bearing in mind the unity of the Church and the several years' discussion, debate and papers on the subject of worship, and taking into account the purposes of the Barrier Act of 1697 to ensure that no sudden alteration or innovation in either doctrine or worship be enacted without the more general opinion of the Church being agreed;

The Plenary General Assembly hereby declare that the decision of the Assembly as put forward by Rev. Alex. MacDonald has already fulfilled the purposes of the Barrier Act of 1697 and therefore does not require to be sent down under that Act.

**Dissents:** The following intimated their dissents from this finding:

Kenneth Stewart, Donald Jack, Kenneth Donald Macleod, John Wagner, Donald MacDonald, Farquhar Renwick, David A. Topping, John Scoales, Joseph MacPhee, Alex Cowie, Duncan MacLeod, Rod Finlayson, Christopher Redman, I. T. Campbell, Douglas MacKeddie, Colin Campbell, James Maciver, Angus J. Howat, John Forbes, Donald Macleod, Malcolm Macleod, Andrew Murchison.

**4 Appointment of Special Committee** In accordance with their earlier finding the General Assembly proceeded to appoint the members of the Special Committee to prepare suitable items of praise. It was moved, seconded and agreed that the following be appointed:

Rev. F. H. MacKenzie, Mr Evan Macdonald, Rev. D. M. MacDonald, Rev. J. M. MacPherson, Rev. A. J. MacDonald, and Mr Tom Muir.

**5 Thanks** The thanks of the Assembly were accorded to:

The Moderator and Clerks of Assembly; Mr Evan Macdonald, Assembly precentor; Mr John Scoales, Assembly Officer; Mr Ally Oliver, Miss Becky Robertson, Mr Andrew Fraser, Mrs Catriona Lamont and others who helped them with the sound system and screens; those on door duty; Mrs Sharon Fraser, Miss Louisa Young, and other Offices staff who were involved in preparations for the Assembly; the Deacons' Court of St Columba's for use of the Hall and other arrangements.

**6 Minutes** The Minutes of this day's Sederunt were read and approved.

**7 Closure** The General Assembly was closed with prayer, the singing of Psalm 72: 17 – 19, and the Apostolic Benediction.