

Statement about the coming General Assembly of 2009

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland meeting in May 2009 will hear an appeal against the decision of the Presbytery of Aberdeen to induct into a charge a minister who has openly declared himself to be living in a homosexual relationship.

If the Assembly votes to support the Presbytery of Aberdeen, it will publicly declare such behaviour as acceptable and honourable for a leader in Christ's church. This would mark a historic departure for our church from the teaching of the catholic Christian faith, and a radical deviation from the clear Scriptural pattern that recognises the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman as the only proper place for sexual intimacy—a pattern which our church has hitherto always publicly affirmed.

To now declare explicitly an active homosexual lifestyle as holy, something the Bible unambiguously calls sin, denies in the most public fashion the authority of the church's only Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Our church would thus position itself outwith the fellowship of orthodox, credal Christianity worldwide.

Such a decision, if made by the General Assembly, would be immensely damaging for the cause of Christ in Scotland and disastrous for the national church. As an unprecedented departure from both the Kirk's supreme standard, the Scriptures, and its subordinate standard, the Westminster Confession of Faith, by its highest court, this would inevitably force a crisis of communion. The majority of congregations of the Church of Scotland have no wish so to depart from orthodox Christian faith and practice, nor to be in fellowship with those who would so abandon the true Church of Jesus Christ.

We urgently alert all commissioners to the 2009 General Assembly to the extreme gravity of the situation. We urge the Assembly to support the position of those who stood to defend Christian orthodoxy in Aberdeen Presbytery, and ensure instead that the Church will apply and assert in practice its clear doctrinal position on all matters of marriage and human sexuality, by refusing to condone homosexual practice in general, and among its leaders in particular. We further urge all commissioners to support the Overture from the Presbytery of Lochcarron and Skye ([appended below](#)), that our General Assembly may make its will known clearly and decisively on this issue for the future.

We stand thus to publicly affirm our love, honour and deep respect for all our Christian brothers and sisters who wrestle painfully with homosexual temptation but fight faithfully to live lives of purity, following Christ Jesus as his true disciples. We assure them of all pastoral support, care and mutual encouragement as they, along with us, 'strive...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.' (Hebrews 12:14)

We further wish to affirm our continuing solidarity in fellowship with Christian churches worldwide who hold and maintain the historic faith, doctrine, and discipline of the one holy, catholic and apostolic church, once for all delivered to the saints in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

OVERTURE
ANENT MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

From the Presbytery of Lochcarron-Skye

Whereas:

1. the Church's historic understanding of the Biblical teaching on homosexual practice has been questioned in recent years.
2. a lengthy period of reflection has elapsed without a resolution of the issue.
3. it is undesirable that the courts of the church should be asked to judge on individual cases in advance of any such resolution.

It is humbly overtured by the Reverend the Presbytery of Lochcarron-Skye to the Venerable the General Assembly to receive the Overture set out below,

"That this Church shall not accept for training, ordain, admit, re-admit, induct or introduce to any ministry of the Church anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage between a man and a woman".

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. **Receive the Overture.**

OVERTURE ANENT MINISTERIAL CONDUCT.

2. **Adopt a further Overture, the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent in to the Principal Clerk not later than December 31st. 2009.**

The General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of Presbyteries, enact and Ordain as follows:

1. **No court or agency of the Church may accept for training, ordain, admit, re-admit, induct or introduce to any ministry of the Church anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage between a man and a woman.**
2. **The Acts and Regulations of the Church, in particular Acts IX 2002, VIII 2003 and X 2004, shall be interpreted in conformity with this Act.**