

1. INTRODUCTION

No individual or congregation can predict with any degree of certainty how things will be in the future; only God knows that infallibly. Nevertheless it is important to plan ahead as far as we are able. As a gospel congregation we ought to have a vision and a strategy as to how best we can carry out our gospel mandate to take the Good News of God's salvation in Christ to the whole world. While an organised approach like this is necessary, this should not in any way curtail the personal, ongoing, and often unseen witness of individuals belonging to the congregation in our communities.

This Vision and Mission Plan for the congregation, with particular emphasis on evangelistic outreach to people of all ages in all districts of Point, has been considered and approved by the Kirk Session. It is now being made available to everyone in the congregation so that each person can consider what the aims are and decide what they need to do towards meeting them. Many of the items listed are already being carried out, to some extent at least, but drawing it all together like this helps us to focus our minds on what our objectives and resources are, so that we can then be better able to carry out the actions required in using the resources in order to meet the objectives. This is why the Plan is set out in terms of objectives, resources and actions.

In formulating a vision and mission plan, some use has to be made of statistics immediately relevant to the situation we are in, taking account of trends inside and outside of the congregation. Some of these trends will be of a positive nature (such as the number of people living in Point), but many will be negative (such as the fewness of baptisms and professions of faith compared with the much higher figure for deaths). The vision and plan seeks to address these trends meaningfully while at the same time realising that statistics themselves are not a gauge by which to measure blessing and spiritual life..

Nothing in this plan can be allowed to obscure the fact that the power of the Holy Spirit is of paramount importance in bringing change and growth. Having all the details in a vision and strategy plan implemented does not mean that even the primary objectives will be realised. *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord."* That said, however, the attitude that thinks only minimum effort and action are required on our part is without basis in Scripture. We need to depend as much on God's power as if we could do nothing at all ourselves; yet we need to be as active in the gospel as if we could achieve everything by our own efforts. In the balance between these two is the way to gospel success.

Coupled with the emphasis on the need to depend upon the Holy Spirit is the related emphasis on prayer. As can be seen in the following sections prayer must be given priority or else all our good efforts will have little impact and success.

"Let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to their children....and establish the work of our hands upon us." (Psalm 90:14-17)

2. STATISTICS

2.1 Internal to Congregation (statistics for April 1997-April 2008)

Category	Numbers
Child Baptisms	24
Adult Baptisms	1
Professions of Faith	17
Joined from Other Congregations	12
Transfer to Other Congregations	29
Deaths (members and adherents)	96

2.2 Internal to Congregation (as at August 2008)

District	Homes	Individuals (incl. Children)	Not Attending Services
Aignish	3	8	2
Knock	11	20	2
Swordale	7	17	5
L. Bayble	19	41	8
U. Bayble	16	37	9
Garrabost	19	46	7
Shader	8	18	2
Sheshader	7	18	7
Aird/Broker & Portvoller	25	49	14
Flesherin	11	21	2
Portnaguran	8	15	4
Stornoway	5	9	4
TOTALS	139	291	67

2.2 External to Congregation (statistics from 1999 community appraisal)

Attend Church	Bayble & Garrabost	Aignish, Swordale & Knock	Tiumpan	Total
Once a week	199	149	158	506
Once a month	38	30	36	104
Occasionally	98	69	97	264
Special services only	43	47	60	150
Housebound	20	16	24	60
Never attend	149	75	153	377
No reply	61	30	76	167
TOTAL	608	416	604	1628

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 To evangelise people in all districts of the Point peninsula, which will include:

- ✓ those who have never had any connection with a church or experience of the gospel's message;
- ✓ those who have a connection with the congregation but no meaningful participation in its life at present;
- ✓ all age groups from children through to the retired.

3.2 To incorporate those evangelised into the congregation, with a view to:

- ✓ seeing the unsaved converted and entering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ;
- ✓ having those converted coming to profess their faith in Christ;
- ✓ strengthening the work and witness of the congregation;
- ✓ bringing everyone more fully into the life of the church in addition to regular attendance at services.

3.3 To have professing Christians steadily built up in knowledge, faith, assurance etc together with zeal for evangelism.

3.4 To include as an important part of gospel witness a practical ministry to those in need.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 People

- ✓ Kirk Session committed to evangelism, outreach and prayer;
- ✓ Deacons' Court with gifts for engaging in social action in the helping of those in need;
- ✓ dedicated membership committed to evangelism, outreach, prayer, practical ministries and financial support of the gospel;
- ✓ supporting adherents committed to regular attendance, practical ministries and financial support of the gospel;
- ✓ committed Sunday School teachers and parents;
- ✓ enthusiastic young people;
- ✓ settled preaching and pastoral ministry;
- ✓ significant increase in number of young families joining the congregation during 2007-2008;
- ✓ Women For Missions group with emphasis on mission work;
- ✓ Point-2-Life group with emphasis on outreach to young people in Point;
- ✓ commitment to the doctrines of grace, including dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit for the conversion of the lost and for the building up of God's people in their spiritual life;
- ✓ unity and warmth of fellowship throughout the congregation.

4.2 Services and Meetings

- ✓ services in English (2) and Gaelic (1) each Lord's day;
- ✓ priority given to gospel message at Lord's day services;
- ✓ weekly meeting for prayer and biblical teaching;
- ✓ monthly meeting (7.30am on first Monday of each month) for prayer and praise;

- ✓ monthly meeting (6.00am on first day of each month) for prayer, with particular focus on evangelism
- ✓ modern English translation of the Bible used (ESV);
- ✓ modern version of Psalms (*Sing Psalms*) gradually being introduced into congregation's praise;
- ✓ crèche available during 10.30am English service;
- ✓ regular WFM, Emmaus, Point-2-Life, Sunday School, Psalmody, informal fellowships etc to accompany services of worship.

4.3 Buildings

- ✓ spacious, well-maintained church and hall at Garrabost with easy access for everyone;
- ✓ versatile hall and two large side-rooms at Garrabost, suitable for a variety of services, meetings and activities;
- ✓ modern and well-equipped community hall and facilities at Aird which can be utilised for meetings and activities outwith church premises;
- ✓ local schools available for use if required;
- ✓ manse with large rooms suitable for fellowships and similar.

4.4 Other

- ✓ regular literature obtained and distributed with ready access to local magazine for publicising;
- ✓ computer facilities and projector for use in presentations, DVDs, lectures etc when required;
- ✓ website, with audio sections for listening to and downloading of sermons, testimonies and services;
- ✓ recording of services on cassette tape and stereo quality CDs for distribution of tapes and Cds.

5. ACTIONS

- ✓ continue to give priority to prayer;
- ✓ minister and elders to regularly carry out visitation in all areas, including the non-attending and unchurched;
- ✓ all in the congregation to actively promote and recruit for the Sunday School and Point-2-Life meetings;
- ✓ the Deacons' Court to oversee a ministry of practical social care in the area, with the possibility of involvement in a specific work in the area of social ministry (such as *Road to Recovery*) with input from trained, professional personnel;
- ✓ hold programmes like *Emmaus* or similar at a time of most convenience to leaders and potential participants so as to maximise interest and attendance;

- ✓ continue WFM meetings on a monthly basis, seeking to involve more women in these meetings and in the work of the congregation; arrange additional Missionary Meetings to fit in with WFM meetings;
- ✓ continue to hold Evangelistic Services in November but regard these as part of the regular evangelistic work of the congregation;
- ✓ arrange regular services aimed at people invited to attend by those regularly attending;
- ✓ publicise services and activities effectively using *Rudhach* and other local media; appoint someone to oversee congregational literature, various magazines etc made available regularly, publicising the congregation's work etc, on a voluntary basis;
- ✓ carry out regular training days at which potential and acting workers in evangelism will be taught, pray, encourage each other, share experiences etc;
- ✓ maintain a congregational website with person(s) dedicated to oversee, maintain and update it;
- ✓ contact all newcomers to the district as soon as they are settled with a warm welcome and invitation to become part of the congregation; produce or obtain literature specifically for this;
- ✓ carry out regular distribution of gospel literature, items specific to the congregation etc in all districts; produce or obtain suitable gospel tracts or similar short messages and make these available at the church for people to hand out regularly;
- ✓ make more use of CDs for free distribution as gifts etc, especially at Christmas, with suitable message relating to the time of year; obtain attractive packaging for CD's, including sets, for use when distributing; appoint someone to oversee copying and distribution of CDs, including copies for those who order them from time to time;
- ✓ encourage people to hold district Bible Studies or similar meetings homes with a view to involving the uncommitted and unchurched as a "stepping-stone" towards involvement in church services and activities;
- ✓ hold special services at Christmas and Easter, followed by fellowship, tea, coffee etc in the hall and side-rooms of the church; obtain publicising literature for these from CPO or similar organisation;
- ✓ encourage people with Christian commitment to take up positions on School Councils, Community Councils and Associations, Youth Clubs, local committees and Western Isles Council.
- ✓ **"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)**