



## ALL CHANGE AT THE INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERY



Meet Alec & Rhoda Grant – Mr. & Mrs. Moderator, to the International Presbytery. At its recent meeting in Rome, last year's Moderator, Alec, passed on the Moderatorial Bible and responsibilities to his wife Rhoda, elected as this year's Moderator! They're both elders in the Brussels congregation, and both have served in the Presbytery of Europe for many years. What's more, Rhoda was suffering from a minor ailment as the Presbytery got down to business – so the moderatorial duties were shared between them throughout the weekend meeting!

That business included the final detailed arrangements for taking the International Presbytery Act to this year's General Assembly in May. The man who will introduce the Act is the Convener of the Council of Assembly, Rev. Grant Barclay, and he was in Rome to take part in the Presbytery's discussions. The Act will mark the coming of age of the International Presbytery – currently designated the Presbytery of Europe, but already with churches in three continents – and it's the culmination of three years of work by the International Presbytery Working Group (IPWG).

When the Act is passed, it will bring the International Presbytery – up until now a “child” of the World Mission Council, overseen by its Europe Committee – to the same status as all other Presbyteries, sitting in a direct relationship with them and with the General Assembly. It also means the churches of the International Presbytery will share the same rights and privileges as other Presbyteries, including the calling of ministers, and will contribute significantly more to the core work of the Church of Scotland.

Grant Barclay told the Presbytery that the IPWG had done its work well, but he recognised that there were real challenges ahead for the international congregations – particularly in a year when the Presbytery will have no less than nine vacancies among its fifteen full charges. “A year of change, challenge, but also opportunity” he said.



*...Grant Barclay in Rome...*

For the new Presbytery, there will be a new flag at this year's **Heart & Soul 2016** celebration in Edinburgh – and, as the Assembly discusses the future, a chance to tell its story to the whole Church. It's a story of:

- **international ministry** – in 14 countries and 3 continents
- **innovation** – the Youth Presbytery concept was invented here!
- **mission** – the Presbytery has a strong track record in mission, reaching across the world and with a particular recent focus on migrant and refugee mission
- **diversity in Christian unity** – most of its congregations are truly international in makeup; some have over 40 nationalities and denominations represented!



*The IP's new flag...*

## MISSION PROJECTS...

### 2016 PROJECT...

The Presbytery's current Mission Project is "**Beyond Crisis**" – aiming to help refugees in Budapest, Hungary, in association with St. Columba's Church. It's run by the Kalunba Social Services Association, and aims to help refugee families to re-establish themselves, through housing, school integration, and vital psycho-social services. Rev. Aaron Stevens said "It's miracle money that bridges the gap."

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### MISSION PROJECT 2016



### THE 2015 PROJECT...

Word Made Flesh Romania's Earthship, made from earth-filled tyres, houses an aquaponics garden, in which fish, marine and plant life sustain food growth. The project is for vulnerable children and young people, and it involves them in construction and operation. We raised well over €6,000.

[www.wordmadeflesh.org/Romania](http://www.wordmadeflesh.org/Romania) [www.vimeo.com/130732709](http://www.vimeo.com/130732709)

### FAREWELL...

At a time of real change within the Presbytery, members said "farewell" to four ministers, and two associated congregations – Turin and Regensburg, where Church of Scotland ministers had formerly led the work, but are no longer in post.

**Rev Ian Manson:** Ian left Geneva for Beaulieu, near Inverness, in February. Elder Mary Couper spoke of his three passions: "Football, chocolate, and MISSION!" She told how his ministry – and Roberta's – had transformed church life there, whether it was leading mission trips to Malawi, or preparing haggis for 80 people. At his induction to Beaulieu, one member said she had looked up Geneva on Lonely Planet, where she found it described as "Sleek, slick and cosmopolitan – a rare breed of a city. Beaulieu", she concluded, "is absolutely none of these things!"



*Ian & Roberta welcomed to Beaulieu – sleek and sleek it is not!*



*Jim Cowie celebrating Communion*

**Rev Jim Cowie:** Jim will retire from the Scots Kirk in Paris in May this year. During his time there, Jim has guided the congregation's responses through terrorist attacks in the city. Elder Dorothy Nitsche said "During his whole ministry with us, he gave so much of himself. We learned to sing a new song to the Lord – we even danced and clapped in church! And we'll never forget the sight of Jim, in his kilt, striding through Notre Dame Cathedral at a Remembrance service!"

**Rev Dr Rhona Dunphy:** Rhona, associated with the Lutheran Chaplaincy at the University of Regensburg for over 20 years, was ordained by the Church of Scotland to ministry there in 2005. Within the Presbytery, she has served as Moderator, Prayer Co-ordinator, and Convener of Education & Training. She's also celebrated as the lady who offered sweets and cuddly toys to those who got their prayer requests in on time! She's taking up a post as a Pastoral Support Officer with the Ministries Council.



*Moderator Rhona (centre) welcomes Trinidad to the international Presbytery – Amsterdam, 2013*



*Willie in his pulpit...*

**Rev Willie McCulloch:** Willie has been minister of St. Andrew's, Rome, since 2002, and is due to retire in July. Elder John McGhie recalled that Willie preached for the charge on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2001: "Four days later the world changed. And when Willie then came to us, he also transformed this church in this new world. He listened. He engaged. He inspired us Sunday by Sunday from the pulpit and in his actions every day of the week. And so we're open every day, we feed hundreds of migrants, and Rome's poorest; we host others in worship, and we welcome the world to this place of faith. Mission is in Willie's heart."

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**Presbytery in session...**



**...Rev Derek Lawson on the shape – and cost – of the future ...**

**...and united in worship with the congregation ...**



**...Moderator Rhoda Grant leads...**

**When in Rome...**



**...members of this thoroughly international congregation tell us about their ministry and mission: 500 meals a week to Rome's refugees and poorest... the Kirk's "Batmobile" taking succour where other vehicles can't go... a central role in "Churches Together in Rome"... mission work to Bosnia and India... Rev Willie encouraging people to develop skills they never knew they had... a church open every day of the week...**

**Let's eat...**



**...Sunday lunch together on the church roof terrace, overlooking the city...**

**Checking out the neighbourhood...**



**...the evening view from that terrace – that's the Vatican down there...**



**FAREWELL ROME...**

**...SEE YOU ALL 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER  
IN LAUSANNE**

