

THE SCOTTISH ORDER OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

Memorandum of the Foundation Edinburgh, 1995

Scottish Order of Christian Unity is an independent Foundation. Membership is open to Christians from all denominations, who are united by belief in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and uphold his commandments, particularly in relation to family life, education, and medical ethics. It is established under Scots Law as a non-profit making and charitable organisation. Its specific objects are:

(1) To encourage all who believe in Christ as God our Saviour to follow his commandments, to deepen their unity and communion with one other, without restricting their freedom of worship in the churches to which they belong, and without in any way superseding or reducing the authority of their recognised religious bodies.

(2) To encourage all Christian people to be faithful to the teaching of Christ, to uphold commitment to it with courage and love, and to realise and defend essential Christian ethics for the common good, especially in family life, education of the young, and medical care.

(3) To bear Christian witness in the community, to pray for people in need and to support them through Christian fellowship and compassion.

(4) The Scottish Order of Christian Unity shall not take any action in pursuit of these ends which cannot be referred directly to the Words of Christ.

The Scottish Order of Christian Unity is interdenominational. In the furtherance of its declared aims it is ready to join with any Christian fellowship or body which affirms belief in the Trinity, the incarnation, the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. We believe in the Bible as the Word of God, and we confess belief in the Nicene Creed.

The general aim of the Order is to promote unitary action among all who believe in Christ, and to develop and deepen their fellowship with one another. It is not concerned with inter-Church relations, theological matters, or with partisan and party-political issues. Its particular aims are practical: to uphold the teaching of Jesus Christ as it bears upon all interpersonal relations between men and women and children, particularly upon marriage as a life-long partnership between one man and one woman, the training of children in the home and in the school, the healing and preserving of human life, and concern for righteousness in the framework of community existence and activity. Members work together for:

The Christian Charter

We remember Christ's word: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest, and the first commandment. The second is like it. Love your neighbour as yourself.*" (Matthew 22: 37-39, REB). We recall the commandments indicated in answer to the question "*What have I to do to win eternal life?*" when Jesus said to him, "*You know the commandments: Do not*

commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not give false evidence; honour your father and your mother.” (Luke 18: 18-20, REB).

1. **We believe: It is essential to promote and defend Christian Education.** *“Let the Children come to me, and do not try to stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”* (Mark 10: 14, REB)

In Religious Education the Christian Faith seems increasingly to be replaced by a so-called ‘multi-faith’ and a secularised form of religious Education, which means that children may no longer have adequate opportunity to learn what Christ himself taught.

2. **We believe: It is essential to improve Christian Content in Press, Radio and Television.** *“Jesus himself sent out .. from east to west, the sacred and imperishable message of eternal salvation.”* (Mark 16: 8, REB)

It is essential for all Christians to increase their knowledge of, and commitment to, Christ’s teaching. Christian people should require from the media more accurate and faithful Christian information.

3. **We believe: It is essential to uphold marriage as a permanent partnership, and oppose unrestricted divorce.** *“Have you never read that in the beginning the Creator made them male and female? That is why a man leaves his father and mother, and is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh ... What God has joined together, man must not separate.”* (Matthew 19: 4-6, REB)

It is essential to encourage reconciliation attempts and, when a marriage has irretrievably broken down, to support those who may be penalised for trying to live according to Christ’s teaching.

A nation’s well-being depends on the integrity and quality of family life, but an increasing number of couples now live together without marriage, and an increasing number of marriages end in divorce. Violence, juvenile delinquency and some mental illness are often a direct result of broken homes.

4. **We believe: It is essential to provide sound sex education for school children.** *“If anyone causes the downfall of one of these **little** ones who believe, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone round his neck.”* (Mark 9: 42, REB)

This calls for guidance towards fulfilled relationships in marriage, based on the ideal of chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage. We ask for responsible sex education given by parental, medical and educational authorities, and not just the mechanics of sex.

We are opposed to commercially sponsored information, which extends the indiscriminate supply of potentially harmful drugs and contraceptive devices especially as supplied to young people, and gives no warning of the contraceptive failure rates, resulting in increased abortions, or of the practices which advance Aids, and venereal disease.

5. **We believe: It is essential to uphold the sanctity of human life. We oppose unrestricted abortion.** Christ said of all children, *“See that you do not despise one of **these little** ones; I tell you that they have **their angels in heaven**, who look **continually** on **the** face of my **heavenly Father**.”* (Matthew 18: 10-11, REB).

Life begins at conception, but in many instances today it is deliberately extinguished at a stage when, as medical evidence proves, unborn children can breathe, feel pain, and cry. Abortion also penalises many nurses and doctors required to administer it.

We call upon all parents, nurses and doctors to care for little children as God's little ones.

6. We believe: It is essential to give respect and consideration to every human life, and to provide caring services in every area of human need, especially in terminal illness.

“When you give a party, ask the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. That is the way to find true happiness, because they have no means of repaying you. You will be repaid on the day when the righteous rise from the dead.” (Luke 14: 13-14, REB)

In respect of terminal illness there is a clear distinction between responsible medical decision to use drugs which can relieve pain, as compared to practices which could lead to ‘getting rid of the unwanted’. This is clearly contrary to Christ's teaching. Euthanasia can become a terrifying prospect differentiating between who is fit to live and who is to die. Then the well-endowed could pay for survival, while the defenceless would be destroyed. We call upon all Christian people to oppose Euthanasia.

7. We believe: it is essential to maintain the dignity and worth of every human being. We rely on Christ's promise: *“I have come that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness”* (John 10: 10, REB). For all people of goodwill this is an indispensable ideal. We remember and are called to respond to the challenge of Jesus Christ. *“When I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat; when thirsty, nothing to drink; when I was a stranger, you did not welcome me; when I was naked, you did not clothe me; when I was ill and in prison, you did not come to my help ... Truly I tell you: anything you failed to do for one of these, however insignificant, you failed to do for me.”* (Matthew 25: 42-45, REB).

We believe that these aims are all relevant to Christ's commandments. They give expression to his law of love in ways that provide safeguards for the common good and help to protect the weak.

Association With the Order of Christian Unity London

While the Scottish Order of Christian Unity is established as a charitable Foundation under the law of Scotland, and as such is independent of the *Order of Christian Unity* (established under the law of England and Wales), it nevertheless associates itself with the *Order of Christian Unity*, and shares its Objects and Aims formulated in its Memorandum Of Foundation. Differences in Administration arise which have to be taken into account in Scotland, but they do not affect agreement with the principles that govern the Nature, Purpose and Constitution of the Order of Christian Unity, as set out in the *Members Rule Book* (amended in 1986-87).

The Structure of the Scottish Order of Christian Unity

Membership. Members are required to pay an annual subscription.

Annual General Meeting. This will be held once a year, notice of which shall be sent to all paid up members at least two months in advance of the date of meeting. Members of the Order who are to be absent from an AGM may vote by proxy. Officers of the Order will be appointed for terms of three years or as will be determined by the AGM. They will serve in an honorary capacity and will be eligible for re-election. The AGM will have the Power to terminate the service of any honorary officer of the Order. Decisions are made on matters relative to the fulfilment of the Aims. The size of the quorum will be seven members. The AGM will be opened by a reading of Holy Scripture, followed by a brief prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of Members of the Order may be called by ten regular members, when the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Order shall preside, but any decision taken must command the assent of three-quarters of the members present.

The Executive Committee will comprise the President and Vice-President of the order, the Chairman, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Hospitality Convener, and General Members, as shall be determined from time to time by the AGM. Different church affiliations are represented. The size of the quorum will be five members. All officers and committee members serve in an honorary capacity, but travelling or other necessary expenses incurred in the service of the Order will be paid. In the prosecution of the aims of the Order the Executive Committee may appoint Sub-Committees for work in particular areas in which the Order is interested. Use may be made of working parties composed of people who need not be drawn from the Executive Committee or even from the General Membership of the Order, but each working party should be convened by a member of the Executive Committee who will report back to the Executive Committee, and through it to the AGM.

Ex Officio Membership. The chairman and other honorary officers shall be *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee and of any other committee.

Termination of Membership. The Executive Committee shall have the right for good and sufficient reason to terminate the membership of any individual provided that the individual member shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee before a final decision is made.

The Founder Patron. The Marchioness of Lothian, and the *First President*, The Very Rev. Professor T. F. Torrance, shall hold their position for life or until they resign.

The President and Vice-President of the Order may hold office for ten years until they resign, or are removed by the resolution of an Annual General Meeting. The Chairman of the Executive Committee may remain in office for five years, unless otherwise determined by the Annual General Meeting, or until they resign or are

removed by the resolution of an Annual General Meeting. The other honorary officers of the Order shall hold office for no more than three consecutive years, unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee at an Annual General Meeting.

Branches. The Executive Committee shall have the power to establish local branches of the Order when and where considered to be necessary with such powers as may be considered by the Order to be appropriate.

Finance. The Executive Committee shall determine the rate of the annual subscription of the Order, and will be responsible for all funds given by subscribers and received from donors. The Executive Committee makes regulations for the management of any property which may be acquired, and will appoint a Finance Committee to assist the Treasurer, who will have powers to operate a bank account, any two of its members being required as signatories for the withdrawal of funds. The Finance committee will rank as a Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee, and be subject to its control in matters of policy, but in other respects it shall be able to make final decisions. Any two of its members shall be entitled to operate the bank accounts. The Audited accounts shall be submitted at each AGM. The Auditor's appointment and fee will be determined by the Executive Committee. All funds will be used solely and exclusively for the Scottish Order of Christian Unity in fulfilment of its aims in accordance with its Constitution and Charter.

Dissolution. If the Executive Committee at any time decide that on the ground of expense or otherwise it is desirable that the Order should be dissolved, they shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the members for the Purpose.

If at such a meeting the members shall resolve that the Order be dissolved, the resolution shall have effect and the Order's affairs shall be wound up.

In the event of the Order being dissolved, any assets remaining after the discharge of any debts shall not be distributed amongst the members, but shall be given to another institution, or other institutions which have charitable objects; or shall be applied to such other charitable purposes, and in such proportions and manner, as the Extraordinary General meeting, whom failing, the Executive Committee shall decide.

Alterations to the Constitution. The Constitution may from time to time be altered by resolution of the Executive Committee, provided that no such alteration be effective if its effect would be to make the objects of the Order, or any of them, other than charitable; or enable surplus assets of the Order on a dissolution to be applied to other than charitable purpose. Any alteration affecting the Constitution shall take effect only upon its being confirmed by a resolution of the members of the Order in a general meeting.

Council of Reference. This shall be appointed from senior members of the Order who may be assisted by friends and well-wishers who need not be members of the Order.

The Executive Officers of the Scottish Order of Christian Unity:

The 1st President: The Very Rev. Professor Thomas F. Torrance

Chairman of the Executive Committee: The Rev. David W Torrance

Secretary: The Rev. William D. Brown

Treasurer: James Fiskien, Esq.

© Copyright 1996 The Scottish Order of Christian Unity
Recognised Scottish Charity

No. SCO 24330

Section 505 Income and Corporation Taxes Acts 1988

Section 1 (7) Law Reform (Misc Provs) (Scotland) Act 1990

Published by S. O. C. U