

# What Kind of Nation?

How Christianity contributes  
to the future of Scotland

scotland  
evangelical alliance  
together making Jesus known





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## How Christianity contributes to the future of Scotland

10 years ago, we produced *What Kind of Nation? Manifesto for a Future Scotland*, our contribution to the public discourse and debate surrounding the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. It was a foundational document which framed much of our advocacy work for the following decade.

A lot has happened in the past 10 years, to put it lightly. The church has remained a constant throughout Scotland's uncertain constitutional future; the Covid-19 pandemic and changes in political leadership. Now is the time to reflect on the role we as Christians can play in the future of our nation.

So what is this report? It is many things, but it is at least three:

1. A reflection on where we are as a nation.
2. A framework for how and why we as evangelical Christians engage with political life.
3. An encouragement for Christians to keep reflecting and sharing Jesus – seeking the best for Scotland in everything.

If you're a policy maker, we hope this report will help you to both understand our community better and give you greater confidence in engaging with us and working with us on issues that matter the most for the future of Scotland.



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# Our renewed vision

In 2014, our vision was to create a space for the church to engage with the independence referendum and to contribute to the national debate at the time. It offered a values-based alternative vision, speaking into the founding values of the Scottish Parliament – wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity – with their roots so clearly based in the influence of Christianity in Scotland.

10 years on, we want to build upon this vision.

We want to show policymakers how the influence of faith can make a hugely positive difference to policymaking. We know from the response to our previous reports; *Stories of Hope* (2020) and *Stories of Hope: Addiction Recovery* (2022) that the Scottish Government values hugely the role of churches and Christian charities in supporting the most vulnerable in society. What this report seeks to set out, is the difference we can make to all aspects of governing, to make Scotland a more just, more thriving, dynamic and diverse nation than it already is.

Jeremiah in the Bible recounts instructions God gave to His people while they were suffering in exile in Babylon. He commanded them to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you” (Jeremiah 29:7). This was a radical and unexpected call. God’s people had been victimised, persecuted and scattered, and yet they were called to radical love and commitment to those who had oppressed them. This is the heart of the gospel – radical love that changes relationships and cultures.





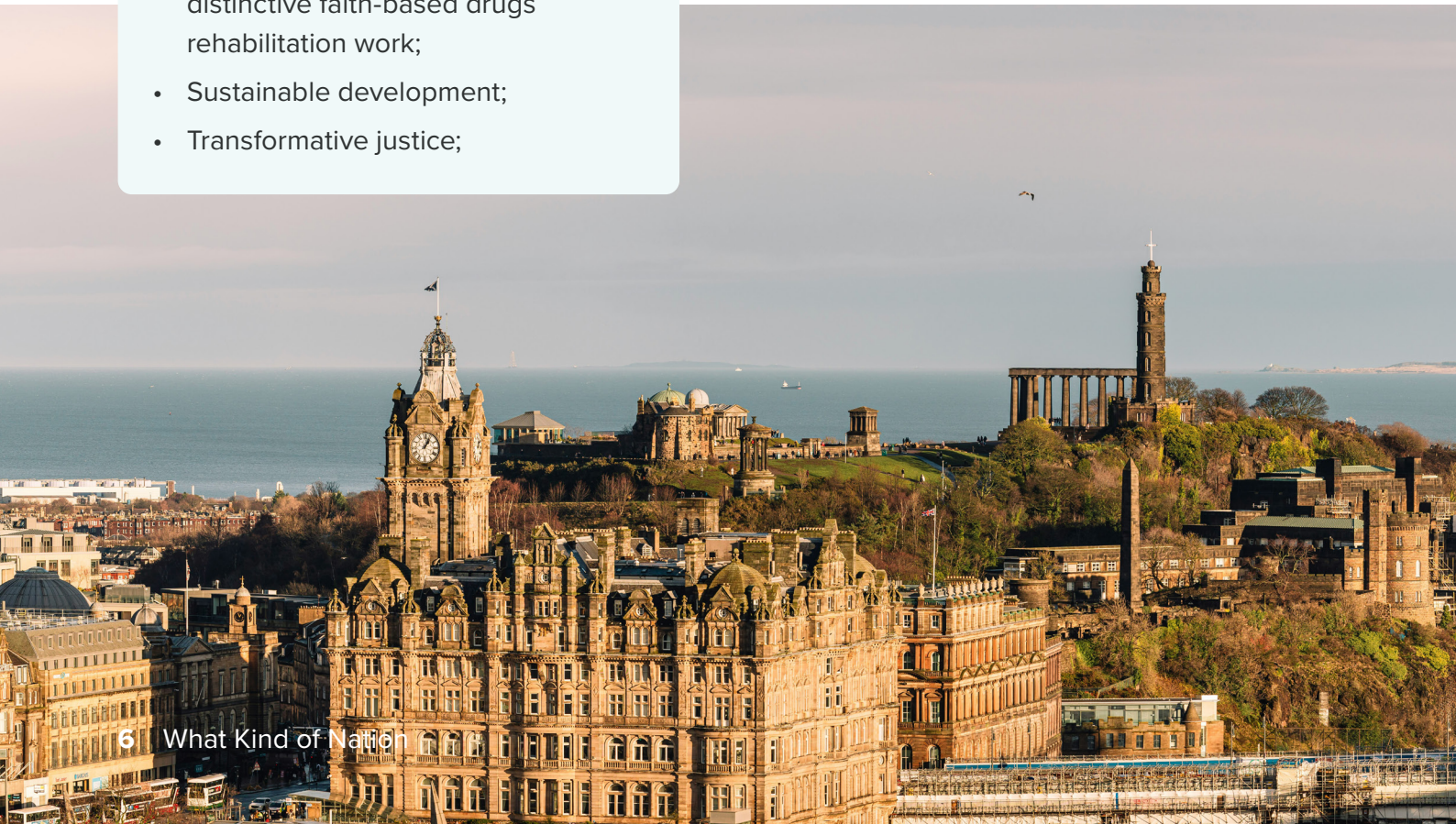
# Where are we?

Our advocacy in Scotland over the last 10 years has focused on parliamentary recommendations we categorised into four key pillars: **economy, family, society, and environment**. We are encouraged that the Scottish Government has enacted or is enacting the following which were recommendations in that report:

- Commitment to support fostering and adoption;
- Community empowerment to tackle poverty;
- Community land reform;
- Community-based rehabilitation;
- Ecology and biodiversity;
- Local relational welfare provision;
- Recognition of the role of churches;
- State support for effective and distinctive faith-based drugs rehabilitation work;
- Sustainable development;
- Transformative justice;

*What Kind of Nation? Manifesto for a Future Scotland* created a framework for a better future whether the vote for independence was yes or no. 10 years on, there are timeless policy proposals within it that apply directly to our current context, which we will explore within this resource.

The debate continues around the question of the future of Scotland. Our members will be on both sides of any constitutional debate, but they are united in their faith in Jesus – it is our desire to see the gospel shared, and disciples made across every corner of Scotland. The implications of our faith for policymaking are such – that we engage in the public square, and we live out our faith by doing justice. This provides an opportunity to share with our fellow Scots the new life they can have in Jesus.



# Why engage?

We believe that it is vital that we represent the work of our membership to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. We want to tell good news stories, share what God has done and allow decision-makers to see the value of faith in our nation.

However, we also believe that the Christian worldview of hope, mercy, justice and redeeming love has something to say in every area of society. We believe it is part of our calling to seek to bring to bear the God story into the conversations about the wellbeing of our nation. We seek to be a voice for the voiceless and the marginalised. The Christian worldview has informed a huge amount of the principles we take for granted across our policymaking, whether it is socio-economic equality, justice for the most vulnerable (often in the Bible collectively titled – the widow, the orphan, the immigrant) or freedom of religion or belief. Therefore, together with prayer, faith and engagement, the people of God long to see a transformed Scotland.

We are already encouraged by the many ways in which our member organisations and beyond are affecting change and tackling some of the big policy issues facing our nation today:



## **Poverty and cost of living**

Welfare support, housing and homelessness, drugs and alcohol policy, education



## **The Economy**

Economic growth, business and community, depopulation, family and community



## **Justice**

Church, community and prisoner rehabilitation, violence against women and girls, racial justice, immigration, refugees and asylum seekers



## **Life, health and Equality**

Health and social care, freedom of religion or belief, disability, assisted suicide and abortion, ending conversion practices



## **The Environment**

Climate change, energy, transport, rural affairs



## **The Constitution**

Scottish independence, UK further devolution, the ever-present church

# Poverty and cost of living

## Our call as a membership: welfare support

Absolute poverty shouldn't exist in Scotland. We have the resources to tackle it. We support measures the Scottish Government has introduced such as the Scottish Child Payment, a starting point to provide for the absolute essentials in life and the basis for beginning to eradicate poverty. The Scottish Government must find ways to continue supporting those who experience poverty, in particular meeting their needs in helping them to make the step back into work. The Torah and Sermon on the Mount teach us so clearly the importance to God of supporting the socio-economically marginalised in our communities. As the church we put this into practice daily<sup>1</sup> and more support from the Scottish Government to do so would be truly transformative.



## What our members are doing:



### CAP

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) equips UK churches to serve their community, empowering them to provide financial education, job clubs, and support through award-winning debt help and community groups. Alongside providing face-to-face support for people facing debt and financial difficulty, CAP works to address the drivers of poverty.

**“We are on a mission to work in a passionate, compassionate, united and Christ-centred way to release people across the UK from poverty, to enable churches to help end poverty through their communities, and to encourage people to live with faith, actively served by their church. CAP won't sit back and let poverty destroy lives.”** – Juliette Flach, senior policy and public affairs officer

<sup>1</sup> [eauk.org/news-and-views/msps-set-to-debate-stories-of-hope](https://eauk.org/news-and-views/msps-set-to-debate-stories-of-hope)



## Our call as a membership: housing and homelessness

We believe the scale of the housing and homeless problem has reached a stage where a full-scale national mission to end homelessness and the housing crisis is required. A substantial increase in budgetary support from the Scottish Government is required for both social housing and local authorities to refurbish properties to rehouse those on waiting lists alongside enhanced support for those within our membership who are directly supporting those who need it with supportive living arrangements.

### What our members are doing:



### Glasgow City Mission

As Glasgow City Mission approaches its 200th anniversary in 2026, the first ever City Mission in the world continues to support those affected by homelessness, poverty and addiction in Glasgow.

**“We have three projects; City Centre Project, a Child and Family Centre in Govan and the Glasgow Overnight Welcome Centre which opens for four months of the year, to ensure nobody has to sleep rough in Glasgow on a winter’s night.”** – Jack Geddes, head of fundraising & marketing

### Bethany Christian Trust

Bethany Christian Trust is a national charity working across Scotland to change the story of homelessness.

**“We run 30 key services from Stornoway to Edinburgh, supporting over 7,000 people each year. From our fleet of care vans delivering a warm meal and a chat to people in need, to community employability drop-ins and supported housing, we are here to support individuals at any stage of their journey out of homelessness. We seek to put Christian love into action and demonstrate the transforming impact of the gospel in all that we do.”**

– Bethany Christian Trust



## Our call as a membership: drugs and alcohol addiction recovery

Drug-related deaths are higher in Scotland than anywhere else in Europe.<sup>2</sup> We acknowledge that the Scottish Government has acted to lay the groundwork to reduce this number in the future, but a holistic policy approach across different government departments is required to make substantive progress in this area. The Scottish Government could specifically provide a huge increase in resource provision for addiction recovery services and rehabilitation spaces with a relatively small amount of money compared to the budget as a whole.

### What our members are doing:

#### Glasgow City Mission

In response to those in addiction Glasgow City Mission deploys a Rehab Pathways Team, which works with guests who are in addiction. The team makes initial connections and supports guests into and through rehab. Once the rehab programme is completed, the team continue to work directly with guests as they take the positive steps into a fuller life.



#### Life Housing (Scotland)

Life Housing (Scotland) is a charitable Christian organisation committed to providing supported housing for individuals facing homelessness, mental health challenges, and other vulnerabilities. Operating across Scotland, the charity offers tailored support to residents seeking to move towards independent living. The approach is person-centred, ensuring that each individual's needs and aspirations are addressed through personalised support plans.

The organisation's housing projects include 12 one-bedroom, self-contained flats, with on-site staff providing support and encouragement with daily life skills, a time management plan, and social integration. Life Housing collaborates closely with partner organisations and similar charities to ensure that residents receive comprehensive support across the spectrum.

**“In addition to our housing services, we offer spiritual support that assists individuals in matters of faith and prayer and what it means to explore these things. Tenancy sustainment is at the heart of what Life Housing does, but providing a Godly, Christian element to their support allows residents, that express an interest, to seek a different path from what they had previously followed.”** – Brian Reid, manager of The ARCH Resettlement Centre, Glasgow

<sup>2</sup> [eauk.org/news-and-views/drug-deaths-remain-unacceptably-high-in-scotland](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/drug-deaths-remain-unacceptably-high-in-scotland)

## Our call as a membership: education

Education is fundamental to social mobility, economic growth and preparing our children for entering the world of work and making their contribution to Scotland's future. It's where our future generations are also given space to grow and develop in their values and worldviews, learning to live alongside others as one community and society.

There needs to be improvements made to the provision of how religion, faith or belief is taught in schools, which would contribute to a better understanding of the role of faith in public life. We have engaged on the Scottish Government's plans to change relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education<sup>3</sup> and will continue to strive for the curriculum in this area to be taught, discussed and shared in respectful and age-appropriate ways.

### What our members are doing:

#### Christian Values in Education Scotland

Christian Values in Education Scotland continue to network, equip and resource adults going into Scotland's schools. Their Chaplaincy Project and events, in person and on-line equip schools workers and chaplains to sensitively teach the Christian message, in line with the guidelines of Education Scotland.

**“We are eager to help pupils reflect on the moral and spiritual aspects of their choices. Our Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Project has listened to feedback, analysed existing resources, produced activity plans and suggested alternative resources. These are for all teachers, whatever their religious and philosophical beliefs and aim to help them consider how to ensure the language, resources and activities they use are objective and inclusive of pupils who have religious beliefs. They also alert them to potential parental concerns. Training events for teachers and advice for parents and churches are ongoing.”** – Megan Patterson, chair of CVE Scotland



3 [eauk.org/what-we-do/advocacy/relationship-and-sex-education](http://eauk.org/what-we-do/advocacy/relationship-and-sex-education)

# The Economy

## Our call as a membership: economic growth

Economic growth is fundamental for the provision of public services, tackling poverty, increasing funding for local authorities and supporting those in need abroad. Christians disagree on the route to getting there (eg low or high taxes, lower or higher-funded public services, more or less intervention into markets,) but what is clear is that economic growth should not just be for its own sake, perpetuating socioeconomic inequalities.

Scotland's geographical diversity is key to its growing economy. In cities and urban areas, we can support service-based and digital businesses to collaborate and grow. In towns we can support shared working spaces and localised small businesses to thrive. In rural communities we can support agriculture, energy and manufacturing sectors to be catalysts for community renewal. In island communities we can simultaneously support crofters, fishermen and other community and locally based businesses. We also have huge opportunities to be at the forefront of exploratory technologies, such as developments of the space sector in the Shetland Islands. Wherever God has placed us across Scotland, we can be salt and light, helping to make a difference through our work.

## Our call as a membership: business and community

As Christians, we follow the example of those recorded in the Book of Acts, and how followers of Jesus provided for themselves, their families and their communities at the same time as sharing Jesus with others. As Christians, we should be the most reliable employees in our workplace and also known for how much we contribute to our communities.<sup>4</sup>

Chris Dowling is Joint Managing Director of the Cairngorm Group and co-pastor of King's Inverness Church, he said:

"I was recently challenged when describing myself as a bi-vocational pastor, as it implies that I have more than one vocation. I think the person was right, as for all followers of Jesus, we all have one vocation which is played out in different settings. The reality is that leading a church and a business in 2024 is very similar. In both organisations, helping people with issues around stress, anxiety, alcohol, drugs, health and personal debt often take up more time than dealing with the 'day job'. The challenges facing people sitting in our church pews are the same as those sitting in our work canteen and the answer is the same. I have also seen an explosion of opportunities for the church to partner with government and businesses due to the ongoing challenges of the public finances and a drive for businesses to participate in the Scottish Government's fair work agenda which is exciting."

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<sup>4</sup> [eauk.org/resources/what-we-offer/reports/living-for-jesus-at-work](http://eauk.org/resources/what-we-offer/reports/living-for-jesus-at-work)



## Our call as a membership: depopulation, family and community

Depopulation is the biggest public policy problem in Scotland that is not given the attention it is due. The problem is especially acute in parts of the Highlands and Islands, but across the whole of Scotland birth rates have declined for years. This means that in future we will have a disproportionately smaller working age population compared to children and retired adults, which creates huge socioeconomic problems.

The Scottish Government's depopulation action plan is a start,<sup>5</sup> but we need to do much more to make it as easy as possible to have and raise a family in Scotland (including increased childcare provision) at the same time as welcoming migrants from abroad. Christians also make a huge difference through fostering and adoption, and we urge the Scottish Government to do all they can to fulfil the Promise and support families in changing the lives of young people across Scotland for the better.

### What our members are doing:

#### Home for Good

Last year in Scotland almost 3,000 children entered the care system, many due to neglect or abuse. With 9,500 children in care in Scotland, there simply aren't enough suitable homes to meet this need. Home for Good is a Christian charity working to inspire and equip individuals, couples and families to explore opening their homes to children in care, and to mobilise the church to wrap around those who do so.

**“We're building a movement of change in Scotland that sees fostering, adoption and supported lodgings firmly established on the agenda of local churches. Over the next three years, our ambition is to enable 20+ church-based support groups for carers, journey with 220+ people as they explore opening their homes and activate 500+ churches to play a part for some of the most vulnerable in Scotland.”** – Tamsyn Radmall, Scotland lead at Home for Good

5 [gov.scot/publications/supporting-enabling-sustainable-communities-action-plan-address-depopulation/](https://gov.scot/publications/supporting-enabling-sustainable-communities-action-plan-address-depopulation/)

# Justice

## Our call as a membership: church, community and prisoner rehabilitation

Prison provides one of the best opportunities for offenders to reflect on their actions and to make changes to their lives – there is so much we can learn from how Jesus interacted with others in the gospels and prison ministries live this out in many amazing and transformative ways today. Local churches can be places of welcome, support and encouragement for ex-offenders and those seeking to build a new life. As the church, we can be places where change can happen, and support the work of prisons to enact justice and reduce reoffending.

## Our call as a membership: violence against women and girls

Women and men are created equal in the image of God. Therefore, it is completely unacceptable that it is legal for men to purchase sexual access to a woman's body. We have campaigned for years for a change in the law in this area – to move the responsibility for change to men who contribute to prostitution, human trafficking and inequality between men and women by purchasing sexual services.<sup>6</sup> This is a mostly hidden problem where advertising has tended to move online, and as a nation we shouldn't accept it. We must speak up for

those trapped in prostitution who have no voice or agency themselves.

In all areas of society we as Christians continue to advocate for an end to violence against women and girls<sup>7</sup> and we look forward to engaging with the Scottish Government's planned legislation on misogyny.

### What our members are doing:

#### Christian Police Association

Founded in 1883, the Christian Police Association (CPA) is a charity and staff support association operating within Police Scotland, and in most police services in the UK. The CPA maintains links with similar groups overseas through the International Christian Police Fellowship (ICPF).

**“The CPA aims to provide a national voice for Christians in policing; to encourage and support Christians in policing, to communicate the Christian faith in word and action to colleagues and communities served and to build bridges between the Christian community and the police, in order to reduce crime and improve quality of life. The CPA's founder, Catherine Gurney OBE, also founded the UK's Police Treatment Centres, which remain an essential part of the care provided to police officers and staff today.”** – Graham Alder, branch leader and trustee, Christian Police Association (Scotland branch)

<sup>6</sup> [eauk.org/news-and-views/calling-for-an-end-to-commercial-sexual-exploitation](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/calling-for-an-end-to-commercial-sexual-exploitation)

<sup>7</sup> [eauk.org/news-and-views/series/violence-and-abuse-against-women-and-girls-vawg-five-part-editorial-series](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/series/violence-and-abuse-against-women-and-girls-vawg-five-part-editorial-series)

## Our call as a membership: racial justice

The vision that shapes our sense of racial justice is rooted in a biblical theology of tribes, nations and languages worshipping together. The church is where racial justice should be naturally modelled and embedded because it is the hermeneutic of the gospel.<sup>8</sup> The reality is that we aren't where we could be and still have a lot of work to do in this area, but we all have the potential to help Scotland grow both in intercultural understanding of the church and in equality and justice. The future growth of the church in Scotland may be driven by migrating witnesses who come to Scotland from different cultures, nations and backgrounds. This is a beautiful foretaste of what Heaven will be like.

Rev Israel Oluwole Olofinjana is director of One People Commission (OPC) at the Evangelical Alliance and founding director of the Centre for Missionaries from the Majority World:

“The UK can be described as a postmodern multicultural multi-ethnic society and therefore requires an intercultural missionary movement that can engage all the complexities of a contested space. OPC as an intercultural ministry is seeking and working towards catalysing such a movement!”

## Our call as a membership: immigration, refugees and asylum seekers

One of the clearest themes that encompasses justice in the Bible is treatment of the “other”. This is why Christians are



at the forefront in supporting immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers to settle here and to have their needs met, and to help them integrate into Scottish society well. Nobody should be treated differently because of where they are from. That is why our member churches and charities seek to support those who have sought sanctuary in Scotland from the world's most difficult circumstances.

Rev Nathan McConnell is the minister of Downfield Mains Church, Dundee, he said:

“When Matthew records Jesus' words, “...when you did it to the least of these, you did it to me,” Jesus tied our eternal salvation directly to how we treat the stranger. Today, this responsibility takes the form of advocacy for refugees – in our case, the Ukrainians arriving in Scotland. Personally, our family has had the privilege of housing a mother and daughter through the Home for Ukraine scheme. As a church community, we shipped supplies, taught ESL and worked to refurbish an unused manse for those from Ukraine. By not only providing physical provision, we have now witnessed refugees grow in faith and begin the process of assimilating within our communities.

Jesus' words in Matthew 25 have eternal implications for those who call themselves Christian. The question to answer is, “Lord, when did we see you a stranger...and did not minister to you?” (Matthew 25:44). When we answer this question correctly, we declare to the world our allegiance to Christ's teachings and His kingdom here on earth.”

<sup>8</sup> [eauk.org/what-we-do/networks/one-people-commission](http://eauk.org/what-we-do/networks/one-people-commission)

# Life, health and equality

## Our call as a membership: health and social care

We all know that the NHS is under incredible pressure and the workforce are working as hard as they possibly can. As the church, is there more we can do in the community to ease this strain? For example, could we

do more in incorporating community and family care alongside the NHS? Could we support each other more towards better mental health? And could we explore creative ways together to provide community-based social care?

### What our members are doing:

#### Kintsugi Hope

One in four people in Scotland are affected by mental health problems in any one year.<sup>9</sup> You or someone you know might be one of them. This is the space Kintsugi Hope minister into.



**“At Kintsugi Hope, we believe that our churches should be places of hope and understanding. We offer safe and supportive spaces for people to explore their mental and emotional wellbeing. Our wellbeing groups, with structured but flexible content, provide tools for self-management in a facilitated peer support setting. We have programmes designed for adults, students and young people and provide training and all the resources required to run the groups. One participant said: “I felt accepted and loved and learnt techniques I could use in everyday life”. In addition, we offer Mental Health Friendly Church training days which explore the language around mental health, a theology of mental health and the role of the church in practically supporting those affected by mental illness.”** – Bec Raynes, Scotland national development manager

9 Chapter 2 Mental Health and Wellbeing - The Scottish Health Survey 2021 - volume 1: main report - [gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2021-volume-1-main-report/pages/7/](https://gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2021-volume-1-main-report/pages/7/)



## Safe Families

Safe Families is a national charity that offers hope, belonging and support to children, families and care leavers and has worked in Scotland since 2014.

**“Partnering with many churches in Scotland, Safe Families helps churches and community groups to be part of the solution to the increasing isolation felt by families and the high number of children going into care. Across the UK, Safe Families have supported over 21,000 children from 10,000 families and have helped to reduce the number of children going into care. Safe Families’ volunteers connect with people facing social isolation either as ‘family friends’, offering support when it’s needed or as ‘host families’, opening their homes to children for short stays to give parents a regular break. There are also ‘resource friends’, who can provide useful items or skills to a family.**

**In October 2019, we were asked to support a family in Scotland who were going through a difficult court case. The children were not attending school and were beginning to exhibit anti-social behaviour. Mum was incredibly stressed and depressed but didn’t want to see a GP for fear of losing her job. When the family were referred to us, they were at the point of breakdown. A Safe Families volunteer supported the youngest child regularly and our family support manager supported the mum and older daughter. A year on, a social worker pointed out that what has happened with the family since is “nothing short of a miracle”. The family has stabilised, come through the trauma of the court case and both children are now presenting with no concerns at school! We are so thankful for the amazing volunteers who are willing to come into a situation, which at the time looked hopeless.” – Andrew J. Murray, programme manager for Scotland**



## Our call as a membership: freedom of religion or belief

Freedom of religion or belief should be sacrosanct for all religions and beliefs, without exception. We must be constantly vigilant to make sure that when the state intervenes that a balance of rights and freedoms is securely kept. We continually engage with policymakers on behalf of our members to protect and uphold the freedom of religion and belief for all people in Scotland.

### What our members are doing:

#### CARE

**“CARE for Scotland has upheld freedom of expression and belief in Scotland by casting for our MSPs a better story on this issue. We believe that everyone has the right to practice what they believe and should show genuine tolerance towards others who disagree with them.**

**In 2016, we published with ResPublica the *Beyond Belief* report calling for reasonable accommodation for religious belief in the workplace. In 2020, we called on the Scottish Government to better protect places of worship from hate crimes as these incidents increased. We worked with MSPs during the journey and passing of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, challenging its contents, as well as responding to the Ending Conversion Practices consultation. We also participate in the Scottish Parliament’s cross-party group on Freedom of Religion and Belief. We have activated the Scottish church to respond to aforementioned legislation and we continue to resource and pray with the Scottish church to uphold our right to follow Jesus.”** – Stuart Weir, head of CARE for Scotland

## Our call as a membership: disability

Every effort should always be made to ensure that additional needs are catered for. Disabled people should never feel that they are being a burden through having additional needs. Churches should be places where this is modelled most clearly, since we believe that we are all perfectly made in the image of God.<sup>10</sup>

### What our members are doing:

#### Through the Roof

Through the Roof works together with churches and people across all disabilities to advance the Christian faith globally. They say: “Our Edinburgh network is one of several clusters of volunteer disability champions (Roofbreakers), actively sharing best practice and training, and providing mutual support. Networks make a positive difference by enabling disabled people to engage in church and communities across Scotland. One disabled beneficiary commented: “I find it useful to speak with other Roofbreakers and share ideas. This is the benefit of peer support – feeling that you belong, that everyone else in the room values disability inclusion. It is the only time I feel normal and the usual barriers and pressures to meet societal expectations fall away when I walk in the door”. Another disabled person has been strengthened by our online group run by volunteers in Stirling: “For me [these] events are my only fellowship time and it’s massively helped being connected even whilst I’m having to lie down due to illness”.

<sup>10</sup> [eauk.org/news-and-views/belonging-how-the-church-can-create-community-and-connection-for-disabled-people](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/belonging-how-the-church-can-create-community-and-connection-for-disabled-people)



## Our call as a membership: assisted suicide and abortion

The biggest problem<sup>11</sup> with legalising assisted suicide is that rather than showing well-intentioned compassion, it creates two tiers of worth to the value of life. If it is open to one group, why should it not be opened to others? Legalising assisted suicide would fundamentally change the NHS, and pressurise individuals into considering an option that doesn't exist right now, putting additional undue pressure on NHS professionals and families.

We have significant concerns about abortion rates in Scotland.<sup>12</sup> The reasons are multifaceted and complex, but we believe that mums and families can be better supported by both their communities and the state from a holistic women's health perspective. We think that the time limit on legal abortions for babies with Down's syndrome should be reduced, and we should ensure that sex-selective abortions

aren't taking place. Legislation, policies and culture all have a role to play in combatting the narrative that a woman must be in a constant battle with her biology. When you're on the same side, both lives are enabled to thrive.

## Our call as a membership: ending conversion practices

The church historically has not demonstrated enough compassion when pastoring and supporting those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or struggle with their sex/expression of their gender.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, we think there could be significant unintended consequences with criminalising conversion practices if the wording is too loosely defined.<sup>14</sup> We think the publication of the *Cass Review*<sup>15</sup> should lead to a reconsideration of including transgender conversion practices within any ban, and we think the voices of Christians who are lesbian, gay and bisexual themselves and don't support potential legislation should be listened to carefully.

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11 [eauk.org/news-and-views/scotland-why-we-must-oppose-assisted-dying-proposals-in-scotland](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/scotland-why-we-must-oppose-assisted-dying-proposals-in-scotland)

12 [eauk.org/what-we-do/initiatives/both-lives](http://eauk.org/what-we-do/initiatives/both-lives)

13 [eauk.org/news-and-views/gender-recognition-reform-giving-evidence-to-scottish-parliament](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/gender-recognition-reform-giving-evidence-to-scottish-parliament)

14 [eauk.org/what-we-do/advocacy/ending-conversion-therapy](http://eauk.org/what-we-do/advocacy/ending-conversion-therapy)

15 [cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/](http://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/)

# The environment

## Our call as a membership: climate change

The Bible has great wisdom on why we should look after the planet. Our sense of responsibility for those most affected by climate change in the Global South should drive us to reflect on our responsibility as those who have historically contributed most to the problem. It is part of loving our neighbour to consider our consumption and how we can individually make choices that are better for the climate.<sup>16</sup> However, it is clear that the structural responsibility for addressing problems lies with states and multinational corporations.



<sup>16</sup> [eauk.org/news-and-views/there-is-no-planet-b](http://eauk.org/news-and-views/there-is-no-planet-b)

## What our members are doing:

### Tearfund Scotland

Tearfund are at the heart of climate advocacy on behalf of Christians in Scotland.

“At Tearfund, we work through the church to help people lift themselves out of poverty. In communities worldwide, we witness first-hand the devastating impact of the climate crisis on those who have done the least to cause it. Tearfund is there, equipping churches to reach out to those affected, helping them increase their resilience.

We’re also at the heart of communities when disaster strikes, helping families rebuild their lives. Recent Scottish Government funding supported our project in Pakistan, seeing women restore their livelihoods after devastating floods.

We’re passionate about helping the church in Scotland to love our global neighbours and build a fairer world that works for everyone. Our resources feature key Christian leaders in Scotland exploring issues related to faith and climate change. Our goal is to grow and learn together; inspiring conversation, action and prayer.

Together, we’re building a movement of Christians putting our faith into action – proclaiming hope to God’s earth and the people who live on it.” – Bee Roy, head of Tearfund Scotland



## Our call as a membership: energy and transport

It's clear that Scotland has significant potential to become a green energy global leader. Likewise, Aberdeen and the surrounding area need to see the benefits of the green energy revolution in a fully just transition with the many skills of workers there utilised fully. These moves would need to be consistent with creation care and justice for the vulnerable – in this case economic justice for the North East of Scotland.

If we are to reach net zero, we need to significantly support Scotland to use cars less in city centres. Policy should be focused towards those for whom public transport, for any variety of reasons, is less accessible to them, and to cater for them accordingly

(including car use in city centres). There should also be a national review of boat and ferry capacity for the Highlands and Islands with further subsidies extended to islanders who rely on transport for living essentials.

## Our call as a membership: rural affairs

There needs to be a reset in relationships between the Scottish Government and rural, remote and Island communities. We think it would be a great idea to have formal policy working groups for Scottish Government accountability in catering for the needs of rural living.<sup>17</sup> Farmers need to be much better supported, and this would mean that we can all live more sustainably with locally grown and sourced food and make agriculture more accessible in local communities.

Stephen Allison is the minister of Kiltarlity Free Church, he said:

“We are a congregation in a growing rural community, close to Inverness, comprised of a diverse range of people from different church backgrounds and different ages and stages. Our vision is to grow a vibrant, all-age community of followers of Jesus and over the last few years we have been privileged to see folk coming to church from our community and getting involved. Our church has a family atmosphere with around a quarter of our congregation being children and teenagers. We seek to engage them with the questions they are asking and show the relevance of the Bible to all of life. Being part of a church in a rural community provides lots of opportunities to get involved in the life of our community – for example I am the chaplain to Lovat Shinty Club, and this has allowed me to get to know and support a variety of people in our community who would never normally come to church.”

17 [holyroodsources.com/](https://holyroodsources.com/)

# The constitution

## Scottish Independence

As in 2014, we and our membership, do not take a view on Scottish independence. We represent the full spectrum of views on that question. We welcome the clarity in the *Building a New Scotland* paper series<sup>18</sup> by the Scottish Government that the role and status of churches would not change in an independent Scotland, but we are keen to hear much more.

If the Scottish Government has a mandate to achieve independence, we will press them to publish a religion and belief paper as part of the *Building a New Scotland* series. In an independent Scotland, we think there is an opportunity for a reset and expansion of the Scottish Government's Faith and Belief Engagement Strategy,<sup>19</sup> and as part of the process of establishing an independent Scottish state, we would very much expect faith groups to be a key civic body to advise ministers.

## UK further devolution

Should the focus of the next Scottish Government move away from independence, there should be a renewed focus on how faith and belief can contribute to ambitions of further UK devolution.<sup>20</sup> In this context, the Scottish Government should also work to raise the voices and profile of faith and belief representatives in Scotland in UK-wide policymaking, in areas such as immigration and equality law. We would also like to see further development of the recommendations of the *Bloom Report*.<sup>21,22</sup> We would recommend the Evangelical Alliance as a good starting point for beginning all of this engagement as a UK-wide membership organisation.<sup>23</sup>



18 [gov.scot/news/scotland/](https://www.gov.scot/news/scotland/)

19 [gov.scot/publications/faith-belief-engagement-strategy/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/faith-belief-engagement-strategy/)

20 [labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Commission-on-the-UKs-Future.pdf](https://www.labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Commission-on-the-UKs-Future.pdf)

21 [gov.uk/government/news/government-needs-to-better-understand-faith-independent-review-claims](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-needs-to-better-understand-faith-independent-review-claims)

22 [eauk.org/news-and-views/further-reflections-on-colin-blooms-faith-engagement-review](https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/further-reflections-on-colin-blooms-faith-engagement-review)

23 [eauk.org/what-we-do/advocacy](https://www.eauk.org/what-we-do/advocacy)

# The ever-present church

The Scottish Government can be encouraged that regardless of whether the future of Scotland is as an independent country or as part of the United Kingdom, the church will always remain – making Jesus known and doing justice for the most vulnerable through doing so.

Scotland benefits deeply from both the outworkings of the Christian worldview, and practically by our members and friends living this out in communities across the nation every single day. We care deeply for the welfare of Scotland, its people, its culture and its environment, and we hope this vision-casting has inspired you. Across all areas that

the Scottish Government has responsibility over, Christians have so much to contribute to the flourishing of our nation.

For policymakers, we hope this report has helped to crystallise the role and value of Christians for the future of Scotland and demonstrated the breadth and depth of our efforts to support our communities.

For Christians, let this report inspire you into thinking about how you can serve your neighbours and work for the good of all in Scotland over the coming years. Our faith inspires us to be the best citizens, community builders and justice doers that we can be – because of the grace we have all been given.



# Our engagement



## Engaging with members

We strive to keep our members updated with developments in the Scottish Parliament, and to create opportunities for them to make their views known. We are always open to hearing from our members, for you are the Evangelical Alliance. We also look to engage and work with the wider evangelical community on various issues.

## Engaging with policymakers

We represent our membership to policymakers in many ways. We are

members of the Scottish Government's Faith and Belief Representatives group, and we also seek to represent our membership in the media, and work on joint campaigns with others who share our perspective on various issues.

The next 10 years are uncertain – Scotland will face many challenges. However, God is faithful, He is not finished with Scotland yet. We believe that God has called us as His people to make a difference in every area of society. Scotland will be better because there are Christians here.



# Contact Us

It's our desire that this report starts conversations, leads to new thinking and creates new relationships. So get in touch to speak with us, or for us to connect you with someone else in our membership.

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## Inspired?

We'd love you to join our membership of churches, organisations, individuals and families across Scotland and the whole of the UK who together are making Jesus known. Scan the QR code.



With huge thanks to our researchers Jonathan Murnane and Thomas Dubberley.









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