CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - MINISTRIES COUNCIL

STUDY LEAVE - REPORTING FORM

1.   Name: **The Revd Derek W. Hughes**

2.   Address: **Church Manse, 4 Pollock Street, Motherwell, North Lanarkshire ML1 1LP**

3.   Charge: **Dalziel St. Andrew's Parish Church, Motherwell**

4.   Year of ordination: **18th June 1990**

5.   Presbytery: **The Presbytery of Hamilton**

6.   Type of Study/activity: **The European Christian Internet Conference**

7.   Dates when Study Leave was taken: **from 2nd to 15th June 2014**

        Number of Weeks taken: **Two weeks**

8.   Venue (where this was not your own manse): **Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Geneva, Switzerland**

9.   Was there any external supervisor involved? If so, please give his/her name: **Not applicable**

10.   Narrative: Please give an account of the content of your study leave, and the main lessons you learned. (Please continue on separate sheets if needed.) This should include responses to the following questions;

> **10.1.   To what extent the three outcomes specified in your application were met;**
> **10.2.   What aspect of ministry have you been encouraged to focus on in the next twelve months as a result of your study leave;**
> **10.3.   How has your understanding and practice of ministry developed as a result of your study leave;**
> **10.4.   What aspect of ministry has this activity helped you to appreciate more deeply;**
> **10.5.   Any other comment, which you may find appropriate.**

11.   **Signature: Derek W. Hughes   Date: Friday 13th June 2014**

12.	I give consent for this report to be available for other ministers, either	**YES**
	electronically or in hard copy	
13.	I do not give consent for this report to be available	
	Please tick **either** section 12 or section 13.	

STUDY LEAVE REPORT

NAME : The Revd Derek W. Hughes, B.Sc., B.D., Dip. Ed.

ADDRESS : Church Manse, 4 Pollock Street, Motherwell ML1 1LP

CHARGE : Dalziel St. Andrew's Parish Church of Scotland, Motherwell

DATES : 2nd – 15th June 2014

1. MAIN OBJECTIVES

In the past two years, through the installation of an advanced audio-visual system in our sanctuary, we have been trying to maximise our use of the advantages provided by the digital revolution. We film and live-stream our worship service every Sunday and upload it to our Church YouTube channel in order that people can watch it at any point in the weeks that follow. We have also been extending our use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram) to try our very best to share the Gospel message outwith the walls of our church building. This has resulted in a total of 40,000 views in 24 months, along with reaching over 100 distinct nations around the globe. The feedback we have received has been wonderfully positive from people of all ages and nationalities.

My specific aims would be:

a) To meet with likeminded Christians from around the world and share experiences on how best to use the advantages afforded the Church by the digital revolution

b) To learn more about the opportunities and pitfalls that are emerging for Church in the 21st century as we engage with the Internet

c) To reflect on how we, as a local congregation in Motherwell, can work together with other congregations of God's people throughout the world to better fulfil The Great Commission and The Great Commandment of Jesus Christ

2. REPORT AND REFLECTIONS   Link = http://www.ecic.mobi

While those attending the 19th European Christian Internet Conference came from England, Ireland, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, I was the only person from Scotland. Nevertheless, it was interesting to hear how a Church of Scotland minister, the Revd Iain Morrison, helped to set up this annual conference. Almost twenty years later, having met in a range of European countries, the original vision remains fruitful. ECIC is not an organisation *per se*, but a network of people with common interests and a desire to maximize the use of digital media for the good of the Gospel and advancement of the Church. Through website, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and an annual gathering for conference, its members share resources, mutually encouraging one another to fulfil the Great Commission. This objective was obvious from the outset. For example, it is the first conference I have attended wherein everyone was actively encouraged to share what was going on via social media with those inside and outwith the room, even while each keynote speaker was giving their address. Initially, I felt some uneasiness about this, looking on it as impolite. But, I soon realised that it actually enhanced the experience and ongoing discussion for everyone as we went along, as well as opening the subjects up to the wider world. Many who were unable to be physically present, were actually following events via Twitter and Facebook. There was a large screen Twitter wall, which received tweets from those attending, as well as those further afield. One of our church members in Motherwell tweeted during a session and it appeared on the wall for everyone to see and read.

The format was similar on each of the four days, with time for prayers, speakers and workshops. Each element emerged out of the overarching theme for this year, which was **“Open Internet, Open Church, Open Source.”** I also found invaluable the opportunity to chat with others during mealtimes and at coffee breaks. This offered a rare and helpful insight into what is happening across the church in different European nations, and in a range of denominations.

DAY 1
A time of travelling to Geneva from Edinburgh meant that the conference did not begin formally until the opening service at 4:30pm. This was held in the small chapel at The Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches in *Chateau de Bossey*, some 20 kilometers outside of Geneva.

Pastor Martin Hoegger, ecumenical officer of the Reformed Church in the Canton of Vaud, led our opening worship. Web link to his full text = http://www.ecic.mobi/content/jesus-open-person

Martin spoke about how truly open Jesus was, both to His Heavenly Father and to people. This was seen at its fullest during the crucifixion when words from the cross showed His openness to God, but also to the thief alongside whom He died. We were reminded, even with all of the channels we have open these days, how the greatest medium for communication is our humanity – *“media are made for the person, not the person for media!”* We were also challenged to think of how the Holy Spirit can make us increasingly open people – open to God and open to others.

Our opening worship was followed by a welcome and time of introductions, before heading off to the *Hexagone*, a large room, which was well equipped for the needs of all at the conference who had brought smartphones, tablets and laptops to take notes and access the Internet.

The evening session was given over to our first keynote speaker, before making ready for dinner. **Roger Schmidt** (Executive Director of Digital Encounters, a Geneva-based non-profit organisation that partners with churches and ecumenical organisations to develop and implement digital strategies for meaningful encounters and joint action of Christians in different parts of the world). Roger spoke on the theme, **“Open internet, open church? New community structures in the global church.”** Link = http://www.ecic.mobi/content/open-internet-open-church-new-community-structures-global-church

Roger posed a few key questions – viz. **How can we be more meaningfully connected to the global church? What is the church, and what does the church do? Are we taking account of the *“freedom traps”* digital media bring? Is it possible to move towards a vision of the church as *“Para-local”*?**

He employed the phrase, **“here comes everybody”** to press home the thought that, in using digital media, everyone can participate, not just the experts. In a sense, everything is connected, down to the possibility of my refrigerator ordering milk for me when I am running low! However, alongside the positive advances comes the possibility of **“freedom traps.”** Whilst using digital media, we give away a lot about ourselves, and can even be *“mapped”* by those in authority, or targeted by commercial interests. Here’s an interesting example: http://christianmediamagazine.com/whats-new/theyre-selling-secrets/

In asking questions about the nature and function of church, Roger spoke about kerygma (preaching), leitourgia (worship), koinonia (community) and diakonia (service). These four offer a summary of what the church is and does in any and every generation. But, the world has changed with the inception of the digital age. Whereas, in the past, missionary letters and global meetings where people were brought together formed the main focus for sharing in the global church, now the Internet and social media much more easily and immediately connect us. We now find amusing the boast of John R. Mott, who said, **“Organising the global church has never been so easy. You can be anywhere in the world in three weeks by steamboat.”**

Roger also spoke about the need to move towards a *"Para-local"* church model, where we live and worship together on a personal level, but remain closely connected with the wider world church. Rooted and serving in a local context, we are still connected to the universal church. This is when we remember, *"we are wholly church, but not the whole church."*

DAY 2
Began with breakfast at 7:30am and prayers at 9:00am –
link = http://ralpe.eu/post/87909184099/god-loves-me-regardless-of-my-klout-i-am

The reflection for today introduced a website I had not heard of before – **KLOUT.**
It seems that this offers an assessment of a person's influence based on the use of digital media.
The question was posed as to whether we allow such things, along with LIKES and SHARES on Facebook, as well as RETWEETS on Twitter, to determine our level of self-esteem and acceptance. Are we as Christians not more responsive to the intrinsic value God places upon us in Christ?

From 9:30am we enjoyed our second keynote speaker. This was **Karsten Gerloff** (President of the Free Software Foundation Europe, a not-for-profit organisation seeking to promote freedom in the information society through free software).

Karsten addressed the theme, *"Free Software: the idea, the values and where it's going."*
Link = http://www.ecic.mobi/content/free-software-idea-values-and-where-its-going

Free software sometimes has a cost, but it is there to use as you see fit. Open it up, analyse it, and gain insight into how it works. You also have the right to pass it on for use by others, and even to change the code. **Use, study, share and improve!**

Free software is a societal and political issue, not just an economic one.

Mistakes happen everywhere, but free software gives a chance to fix it. In contrast, it is not always in the financial interests of proprietary software producers to get it right first time. However, the motivation for writing free software may not be financial, but fun in solving problems.

Amazon, Google and even APPLE iOS basically run on a free software platform with a veneer of proprietary code they keep confidential.

Karsten also offered some thoughts on the politics of technology. He suggested that tech could, of course, be used as an enabling tool. For example, social media can be used in challenging physical situations to pinpoint problem areas, or to alert folk to the presence of shelter and clean water. However, tech can also be threatening - the increased use of drones, which are remotely piloted and used to spy or fire on targets. Also, surveillance in the USA and UK has increased, with governments watching every time we use Skype, make a hotel reservation or flight booking.

If the definition of privacy is secrecy, anonymity and autonomy, then these three are definitely challenged as a result of the openness of Internet and social media. Karsten also asserted that if you are using Google analytic for your website, you are basically facilitating surveillance.

The TWITTER wall on large screen in the lecture room was quite active during this session, along with a tweet from one of our church members in Scotland. **This caused me to think about the possibility of using such a tool at future events locally – which software is available?**

Morning coffee was followed by a choice of three workshops:
        1. How to conceptualize a virtual seminar
        2. Church websites for parishioners
        3. Open source software in a church context

I attended *"How to conceptualize a virtual seminar,"* led by Roger Schmidt.

The Internet is increasingly becoming a space for training, encounter and joint learning. **This workshop explored basic principles for using the Internet programmatically,** and worked on concrete examples offered by participants.

Three things are important in designing digital events:
a) getting and finding information
b) employment of social media
c) training seminars, games, conferences, etc.

It is crucial to:
a) set specific goals
b) decide upon a target group
c) conceptualise design
d) evaluate, reflect and re-design

Aim for:
a) good quality video presentations
b) quizzes to check understanding
c) reflective questions with chatting tool
d) paper to be handed in - peer review
e) co-present and ask for comment/seek engagement

Live stream needs to be more hybrid/interactive or may be boring

Engagement:
a) social components - pic of person appears on screen
b) important to take on board multilingual aspect and use something like Google translate
c) don't forget those who may have hearing impairment – use subtitles

Gamification:
a) feedback to help people stay on track and interested
b) points for knowledge or rewards, for collaboration, for outreach

Scarcity of time: Encouraging people to respond in a set time frame

Sustainability: Reporting back - Reminders and questionnaires - Connecting offline and online

To what extent should we be inventing our own digital platforms or using those already there - YouTube, etc.?

NB = Have a look at GPS based mobile game www.tourality.com

Following lunch, the afternoon was devoted to several *"Tell your story"* sessions, whereby different folk attending the conference had been asked to share some reflections on the range of work they were involved in through their home and work situations.

These sessions comprised a series of presentations from ECIC members detailing innovations, developments and web strategies. Thirty minutes was allowed for each presentation, including discussion as follows:

	Hexagone	Salon Vert	Salon Jaune
14.00 - 14.30	"The Retreat on the Net and Mobile Apps easily and fast" Juha Kinanen	"Alone. Now – Pastoral care with the divorced through social media, web & user fellowship " Chistian Grund Sorensen	**"Daily Lectionary -Readings for every day online" Mika Aspinen**
14.30 - 14.45 break			
14.45 - 15.15	"Church Web Project - better web sites for parishioners by co-operation" Marjukka Laiho	**"Towards on Online Congregation" Peter Reimann and "Successful blogging" Claus Grue & Anna-Karin Olsson**	"DEON.pl - a community of the Church, in the World" Krzysztof Nowak
15.15 - 15.45 coffee break			
15.45 - 16.15	"Presens with Pictures - how we in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden use Instagram and Pinterest" Martin Garlöv	**"Jesuits; Helping Souls in a Digital World" Ruth Morris**	"KirkeWeb: How to Digitalize the Church" Nikolai Lengefeldt
16.15 - 16.30 break			
16.30 - 17.00	"Oikoumene GPS: Find Out Your Priorities - The application that can help you locate where you stand on a multitude of issues related to ethics and spirituality" Tiziana Conti	**"Online Counseling in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark" Poul Sorensen**	"Digital theology-GlobeTheoLib" Stephen Brown

I attended those, which are highlighted in **<u>BOLD</u>** type above.

"Daily Lectionary - Readings for every day online" Mika Aspinen

This was an explanation of putting together an online lectionary, which took several years.

Questions were raised about a physical book versus an online version. Is there a social aspect? Are there opportunities for online discussion? A space where folk can make requests for prayer?

**"Towards on Online Congregation" Peter Reimann and
"Successful blogging" Claus Grue & Anna-Karin Olsson**

These two subjects offered thoughts on the opportunities and challenges in creating and engaging with an online congregation, as well as the benefits of BLOGGING in the Church of Sweden.

Many mainline churches no longer maintain physical presence across nation, so are creating intentional online communities in USA – e.g., the United Church of Christ, especially in Cleveland

Needs that could not be served locally can often be found online. For example:
http://www.i-church.org/gatehouse/
http://darkwoodbrew.org
http://www.lifechurch.tv

What is focus of online church - preaching, pastoral care, praise, SACRAMENTS, and fellowship?   What is the online equivalent of offering plate?   What does MEMBERSHIP mean online?

NB: Is it possible for Dalziel St. Andrew's Parish Church of Scotland to broadcast live into some vacant and geographically isolated congregations? I would love to discuss the possibilities with someone at 121 George Street, Edinburgh!

BLOGGING = the diocese of Lund (pronounced loont) in Church of Sweden: a young female Priest, Bernice - writes about firsts in ministry, but also shares personal stuff. Dares to provoke. Light on theological language. She has become third most read on national blog platform out of 120 separate church blogs. What impact outside the church framework?

Dare to be personal, up to date. Get links from other blogs. Use pictures and movies. Encourage comment and always respond. Repost to Facebook. Use links. Use humour. Find unique name. Be persistent. Find a crowd. Element of surprise. New angle on a subject. Go for it. Be real. Spontaneity. Expect criticism and negative feedback

"Jesuits; Helping Souls in a Digital World" Ruth Morris

Ruth reflected on the important process British Jesuits have gone through on their way to re-designing websites for the particular target groups they are aiming at engaging.

www.jesuit.org.uk

Image focused and aimed at attracting more young people
Identifiable colours and images
Break away from jargon - pedagogy, Ignatian spirituality etc.

www.thinkingfaith.org
www.pray-as-you-go.org

Created their own APPS.   Send out a twice-weekly e-zine

Each piece of web content in several languages.

Also do market research for feedback on presentation and content.

www.seeingmore.org
= Dutch Jesuit doing reflections on various YouTube clips.

Pray as you go - English version used more by non-Catholics than by RCs!!!

"Online Counseling in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark" Poul Sorensen

Poul spoke about the long journey towards helping the church in Denmark appreciate the possibilities of offering online pastoral support to those in need.

"The church needs to be where people are, and not where we want them to come."
                                                                    They are on the Internet

Some important considerations:

a) Online counseling for ordinary people with religious and/or existential crises - it is for people who *"have sorrow in their soul"*

b) Chat only, or conversation and video?   c) Personal security
d) Staffing needed?   e) Only pastors are to be counselors - importance of professionalism

f) Need for ongoing supervision, education and networking sessions
g) Ladder of trust   h) Budget?

What about setting up www.BOAB.org.uk
(Bearing One Another's Burdens - Motherwell, Lanarkshire, Scotland)?

Anonymity? How do we ensure that online - avatar? Can we offer a video facility?

Prior to dinner, the evening of a very busy but rewarding day was brought to a close with another **keynote speaker** – *Julia Maria Koszewska* (has done research on the role of information in modern society, particularly on access to information and information management as prerequisites for a participative and democratic society. Currently, she is preparing a PhD on collective memory practices and national identity building at the University of Warsaw. In 2012, the President of the Republic of Poland awarded the Silver Cross of Merit to Julia).

Julia addressed the subject of *"Open internet? Signs of the times."*

Highlighted the difference perceptions of Internet with capital I or with small i.

Use with a small i is a sign of times - more natural and part of our reality these days.

Things we do on internet are noticed and may be used against us in the future, including petitions we have signed. Julia showed various pictures of how social media have exposed news that was happening at a local level, which may not have made it on to our TV screens (e.g. Ukraine).

DAY 3
This was a bit different to the other days. Beginning with breakfast at 7:30am, everyone headed off by bus to the offices of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva. At 9:15am, we were welcomed by the staff and shared in prayers at the Chapel in the heart of the building before being given a guided tour of the Ecumenical Centre. It was interesting to see influences from 110 countries (uniting 500 million Christians) around the world, and to hear of how encouragement is being given to work together across the board for the common good.

More than an hour was spent listening to contributions from four panelists, who represented a range of ecumenical organisations - **Heidi Martinussen** (Head of Communications at the Lutheran World Federation since 2012), **Mark Beach** (Director of Communications at the World Council of Churches since 2007), **Estelle Marais** (Head of Communications at the ACT Alliance since September 2013), and **Peter Kenny** (Editor-in-Chief of Ecumenical News).

The theme was *"Sharing resources and forging a common identity via the web."* We were also allowed time for questions, and this was followed by the annual meeting of ECIC to report on the past year, elect a new board member, and indicate initial plans for the following year's conference. Lunch gave way to a walking tour of Geneva in the afternoon. Sadly, the weather was very wet, which limited the opportunities to view this great Reformation city. However, it did afford extra time for a visit to a coffee shop and an extensive chat with a young man from Sweden on life in the church there as well as the use of digital media. A festive dinner afforded further fellowship opportunities and sharing of ideas.

DAY 4
The final day of conference began with breakfast and prayers as always.

Worship was followed by an immensely insightful keynote presentation, given by **Evelina Ojala** and **Markku Tukiainen** (both from the University of Eastern Finland).

They spoke on the theme of *"Developing mobile services with the global community – perspectives on cooperation between church and university."*

Link = http://www.ecic.mobi/content/keynote-developing-mobile-services-global-community-perspectives-cooperation-between-church

I was amazed to hear that around 83% of 14/15 year olds in Finland attend confirmation training. They spend 6 months learning what it means to be a Christian, including attending a camp.

The Church in Finland **trained 2000 people in social media skills** - ask **Terhi Paananen**

Look at **Jubiili-app**, which has been developed to engage with the church in Finland.
Link = https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/jubiili/id723466574?mt=8

Look up research of Evelina on working with young people, and the trends towards spending a large proportion of their time on internet and social media.

With a break for morning coffee, next on the agenda was a time for review of the conference and looking forward. A panel of those attending the conference gave their own thoughts, followed by questions and comments from others, and some time was taken to reflect upon every element. The following are just some of the points that were raised and addressed:

1   *Importance of fellowship and sharing ideas paramount*

2   *Informal discussions at mealtimes crucial*

3   *Use of internet can become as much a ghetto as physical church walls!*

4   *Workshops aided diversity of interest*

5   *What is open data of our churches that we can share, use and develop?*

6   *How does outside world view/perceive church?*

7   *Is it possible for ECIC to appeal to more countries?*

8   *Talking about surveillance concerns is not just political, but prophetic*

The final act of the conference was to share together in worship. Ruth Morris (who works with the Jesuits in London) led this session and shared a *"journey blessing."*

ECIC 20 will be held in Finland from 9th to 12th June 2015.

QUESTIONS – QUESTIONS – QUESTIONS:

In conclusion, I find that I am asking myself (and perhaps the wider church) some questions that were raised for me by the conference as a whole:

Can we do better in using digital media nationally in the Church of Scotland?

What about the CofS training a large number of folk (as have Finland) in use of social media?

Is it possible to commission some APPS?
Suggest using   www.como.com   or   www.shoutem.com

Is there a place in church for digital games?
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/action-encounters-social-games-for-the-global-church

How can we reach the *"always on"* generation with the message of Christ much more effectively? Link to article addressing precisely that question: http://christianmediamagazine.com/social-media-2/5-ways-church-can-reach-always-generation/

What ought to be the balance between direct, face-to-face and personal interaction in sharing the Christian faith and finding a fruitful way forward to do this using digital media?

Along with other questions I mentioned along the way in my report, these are some of the issues I would like to look into further, and discuss with others in the Church of Scotland and beyond.

Finally, I would like to place on record my grateful thanks to the Ministries Council, the Presbytery of Hamilton, as well as the congregation and Kirk Session of Motherwell: Dalziel St. Andrew's Parish Church, for the opportunity and privilege of travelling to Switzerland to attend the European Christian Internet Conference.

Derek W. Hughes
Motherwell
Friday 13th June 2014