

**FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**REPORTS OF  
STANDING  
COMMITTEES  
OF SYNOD**

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# **REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE**

**Convener: Rev. W. Weale**

## **INTRODUCTION**

IT is probably fair to say that, while within living memory there has been little in the sphere of the religion and morals of our nation to cheer our hearts, this is especially so over the past number of months.

As a people, our sins in Church and State, as brought out in this Report, cry out to heaven against us, and the pattern emerging in our land is very similar to that seen time and time again in the days of the Judges when a forsaking of the Lord was followed by His rod coming upon Israel in the form of a hostile power. Surely no one with any discernment can deny a connection between our departure from the Lord as a nation and the rise of militant Islam in our midst.

May we see these things as a challenge to us, as individuals, to repent of every known sin and to seek to “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world”, and also as a Church, to boldly continue to speak out against sin as well as to cry out to the God of heaven that He would “arise, and have mercy upon Zion” . . . that “the time to favour her, yea, the set time”, would come.

## **RELIGION**

The majority in our nation are nominally Christian, but the force of evangelical Protestantism has been greatly blunted, and “our enemies among themselves at us do laugh and flout”. The voice of true Christianity is almost disregarded, and almost the only public voice heard in matters of public morality is that of the Roman Catholic Church. Evangelical churches, including our own, are invited by Westminster and Holyrood to give their opinions on certain matters of religion and morals, as if what they will say will be part of the ultimate input but, in reality, in the last analysis, they are cynically disregarded. The Free Presbyterian Petition regarding the sanctity of the Sabbath was, however, successfully presented to the Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament on 15th November 2006 by Rev. Hugh Cartwright, and spoken to by himself and Mr. Ally Maclean. This was seen and heard by many, and for that we are glad, as were quite a number across Scotland. If only our voice could be more extensively heard, we believe that it would help leaven public opinion more for good.

### ***The Roman Catholic Church***

The Vatican is a sovereign state demanding all the privileges of a temporal kingdom, and at the same time showing its religious face to further its ambition of being supreme in the world, in both spheres. Henry VIII broke off diplomatic relations with the Roman Catholic body in 1534, and Great Britain

had no diplomatic relations with Rome until 1914. In 2005, Irish-born Francis Campbell was the latest ambassador to be appointed to the Vatican, and *The Tablet* states that the Foreign Office “has been scrupulous in stressing that religious affiliation played no part in the selection”. Campbell began training as a priest, and later studied at the Roman Catholic university of Louvain in Belgium, where he gained a Master’s degree in European Integration. Inter-faith relationships seem to be his mission, seeking dialogues between professing Christians, and also between Roman Catholics and Muslims.

### ***The Church of Rome and Ecumenism***

The March 2006 issue of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* reports that the Pope, when speaking to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, stated, “When Christian churches and communities are willing to admit that their members may have offended or misrepresented the teachings of others, they make important contributions to Christian unity”. This was prompted by statements put out by such as the Presbyterian Church, USA, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America, to the effect that creedal statements of the 16th century, with regard to the Roman Catholic Church, do not reflect the present-day opinions of these churches. At home a minister of the Free Church of Scotland went so far as to state on the website in 1999 that 75% of its ministers do not accept that the Pope is the Antichrist. Compromise over the practice of the mass and the doctrine of Justification by Faith has helped to blur many of the lines of distinction. The World Council of Churches has a membership of 347 churches in over 100 countries, representing approximately 550 million Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant “Christians”. The World Council of Churches too, has come to resemble the Vatican in its desire for political power. When the Gospel, which justifies a church’s existence, is left behind, the vacuum has to be filled with something, so worldly matters and politics become of more importance than spiritual matters in their agenda. The WCC now urges its members to hit Israel’s economy by a process of selective disinvestment from companies linked to the “occupation” (*Scottish Protestant View*, March/April 2005).

The *Evangelical Times* of July 2006 reveals that Inverness Old High Presbyterian Church intended to have Cardinal Keith O’Brien, Scotland’s most senior Roman Catholic churchman, and Rev. Fergus Macdonald, a past moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, conducting services during the summer months. This will only be the second time in four centuries since the Reformation that a cardinal has preached in the oldest church in the Highland capital. Cardinal Thomas Winning preached there in 1999.

On Saturday, 2nd April 2005, Pope John Paul II died at the age of 84, after 26 years in office. Hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and people of many diverse backgrounds, flocked to pay their respects during a three-hour long funeral mass. Present were presidents, prime ministers, monarchs and princes. Many were hailing him as John Paul the Great, and even urging that he be put on the fast-track to

sainthood. His coffin had a large “M” on it to signify his reliance upon the intercession of Mary. Billy Graham and his son Franklin insisted that, despite some doctrinal differences, John Paul preached the same Gospel as they did. The truth is that he promoted the extreme form of Marian worship. His successor, Ratzinger, was in 1981 appointed Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly the office of the Inquisition). President George W. Bush hails him as “a man of great wisdom and knowledge”.

### ***The Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church***

It may seem surprising to some that the Church of England, despite its many Anglo-Catholic priests, and Rome, have not yet come together, but there are still too many obstacles to union. Forty years ago, Archbishop Michael Ramsey met with Pope Paul VI in an effort to bring these two churches together, and recently Dr. Rowan Williams, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, met the Pope to continue talks and co-operate on practical issues. The Pope expressed his disapproval of women priests and an openly gay bishop in the Anglican Church, and called these serious obstacles to union.

### ***Rome and Islam***

Both of these are antichrist, but it is the Man of Sin who resembles the angel of light, and who is mistakenly accepted in the nominal Christian world as leader. The Pope made a speech some time back in which he spoke of the aggression of Islam. It may be that he was testing the waters, to see if Islamists would accept such, in the same way as the so-called Protestant churches meekly accept strictures made upon them by the Papacy. If so, then Rome could seek to gather them in as it has gathered many heathen groups in, in past days, by embracing and baptizing many of their traditions and idols.

The Roman Pontiff used his annual Ramadan message to build bridges with Muslims after they reacted with anger to what he had said. He urged the necessity of urgent dialogue between the two faiths, and their need to unite against terrorism. His visit to Turkey was in the balance as many Turks demonstrated against him, and the Prime Minister said he was too busy to meet him. However, Pope Benedict poured a little Vatican oil on the wounds he had inflicted, saying he supported Turkey’s application to join the European Union, and then became only the second Pope ever to enter a mosque, where he removed his red papal shoes. He also spoke of Islam as “being peaceful and affectionate”. We wonder. Union with Rome always means being incorporated by Rome. Can Rome perform this “miracle” before a mesmerised world? If so, then Christians and Jews will undoubtedly be persecuted.

### ***Muslim persecution***

Thomas Schirrmacher, director of the Religious Liberty Commission of the German Evangelical Alliance, speaks of at least 55,000 Christians being put to death each year for religious reasons – Christians in India, Indonesia and

Pakistan running the highest risk of losing their lives. Rome is strangely silent about these matters, although some of these losing their lives must be Roman Catholic. Rome acted in the same way during the time of the Nazis, for its real aims are political rather than religious, so she will gladly suffer the loss of church members for the sake of political gain.

### ***The Roman Catholic Church in Britain***

A study by Tom Horwood and Anthony Spencer, entitled *The Future of the Catholic Church in Britain*, indicates that over the past four decades attendance at mass has dropped by 40%, baptisms by 50%, Catholic marriages by 60%, and confirmations by 60%. In 1991 attendance at mass in England and Wales stood at 1.3 million, compared with 960,000 in 2004. Deaths among congregations rose by nearly 40% between 1963 and 1991, reflecting the growing elderly profile of congregations.

The current scandals in the Roman Catholic Church involving child abuse have meant that fewer men are entering the priesthood, and there is the prospect of men from Eastern Europe and Asia being brought into the British priesthood. Ireland, which yielded an abundance of priests, is suffering badly through lack of priests. The fact that the Roman Catholic authorities were moving offending priests to other stations, rather than having them properly disciplined, has given a shattering blow to the moral status of the Roman Catholics in Ireland. The average age of priests today in Ireland is somewhere in the sixties. It is reckoned that if present trends continue there will only be about 500 nuns in Ireland in 13 year's time compared to 11,000 in 1999.

The moral authority of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain has also indirectly suffered through the revelation that the Archbishop of Warsaw, Mgr. Stanislaw Wielgus, was involved with Poland's hated Communist-era secret police. It had been widely taught and believed that the Church was bravely opposing the Communist regime. He has stepped down after initially denying the truth of the accusations. The fear of schism made the Pope step in to make him confess his criminality, and to resign his post.

### ***The papacy and politics***

At home, the political party called the Christian People's Alliance intimated that it would be addressed by Scotland's youngest Roman Catholic bishop, the Right Rev. Philip Tartaglia, Bishop of Paisley, in September 2006. This party is allied to the Christian Democratic parties across the European Union, which is simply the Roman Catholic – indeed Jesuit inspired – political party in the EU. The CPA has raised finance to run candidates on all of Scotland's regional lists, and intends to focus on the Scottish Parliament election in May 2007, under the claim of promoting the voice of the Gospel in politics.

### ***Roman Catholic Church and the Bible***

At the end of 2006 the Pope made a major speech in which he condemned homosexuality as deviant. Then he went on to state that the Italian people

should support and defend traditional marriage, and oppose “other forms of union”. He said that the Church should say “yes” to authentic love, to the reality of man as he was created by God. The only snag is, that in the same month, October 2006, in which he made that speech, we are told by Ruth Gledhill, writing in *The Times*, that the hierarchy of the Church now teaches that some parts of the Bible are not true, including the first eleven chapters of Genesis. As it happens it is in that very portion we find the origin of marriage and God’s blessing upon it. Why then are we now told that this portion of the Bible cannot be “historical”? At most, they say, it may contain “historical traces”. This comes from a teaching document issued by the RC Church called *The Gift of Life*. Only a century ago, Pope Pius X condemned Modernist Catholic scholars who applied critical methods of analysing ancient literature, to the Bible itself. So much for the Church which prides itself on never changing!

The speech went on to condemn fundamentalism for its “intransigent intolerance” and to warn of significant dangers involved in this approach. What the Pope was really trying to convey is that the Word of God must not be our supreme authority in which we exercise faith and trust, but rather the Roman Catholic Church, which claims to give the Bible an authority derived from Rome itself, and therefore elevating itself above God’s Word – and even God Himself.

“Similarly,” says Ruth Gledhill, in *The Times* of 18th December 2006, “they refute the apocalyptic prophecies of Revelation, the last book of the Christian Bible, in which the writer describes the work of the risen Jesus, the death of the Beast, and the wedding feast of Christ the Lamb.” We understand why they are sensitive regarding the death of the Beast of Revelation 19:20, who is spoken of as being cast into the lake of fire, and why it is classed as untrustworthy, for it seems to speak of the Roman Catholic Church itself. The text of Genesis 2:21-22, which explains the woman’s origin from the rib taken from Adam’s side, is classed as untrue. Now indeed, it all boils down to either taking the Word of God as our supreme authority in faith and morals, or the Pope of Rome. You cannot logically hold to both.

The situation is even more confusing when we remember that in 1816 Pope Pius VII had a Bull issued against Bible societies in which he speaks of them as “a pestilence which must be remedied and abolished; a defilement of the faith, eminently dangerous to souls”. The Trinitarian Bible Society pamphlet, *Ecumenism and the Bible Societies*, shows that the Roman Catholic Church nowadays participates in the actual work of Bible Societies. This leaves us thankful to the Most High for the Trinitarian Bible Society, which remains faithful to its origins, and which will have nothing to do with Rome, or Liberals, who tamper with God’s inerrant Word.

### ***The Church of Rome and child abuse***

Pope Benedict is accused of obstructing justice after it emerged that he had issued an order ensuring the church’s investigations into child sex abuse

claims be carried out in secret, and that the evidence be kept confidential for up to ten years after the victim reached adulthood. Ratzinger is accused by lawyers representing victims of abuse of wrongdoing, in issuing a letter in which he states that the “Church” can claim jurisdiction in cases where the abuse has been perpetrated with a minor by a cleric. If these crimes are kept secret for ten years plus the number of years the victim takes to reach adulthood, as he desires, it is possible that it may take twenty-eight years for some cases to come to light, and by then many of the criminals, and some of the victims, will have died. How can a “church” act in such an evil manner?

Cristina Odone, who edited the *Catholic Herald* in the 1990s, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, on 22nd of February, stated that the Roman Catholic “Church bans birth control, but the majority practise it; condemns divorce while allowing annulment; forbids homosexuality, but shields paedophiles within its ranks”.

### ***The Anglican community***

Archbishop Rowan Williams, who is looked up to by the world-wide Anglican community, desperately attempts to mend his public image. He has shown himself to be a liberal who has published a paper defending sodomites, as well as ordaining such. He has spoken in contemptuous terms of God’s holy Word. It seems that more people attend Muslim mosques regularly than attend Church of England services, and on the world-wide scene the Anglican community threatens to break up over the long-running row over the consecration of homosexual USA Bishop Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire, as well as over the Church in Canada’s blessing of same-sex unions. The Scottish Episcopal Church is in turmoil over these matters.

Meanwhile the *Evangelical Times* of July 2006 informs us that the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Right Rev. John Gladwin, has been told by the Archbishop of Kenya, the Most Rev. Benjamin Nzimbi, that his official visit to Kenya has been cancelled because of his belonging to a pressure group campaigning for homosexual rights. Archbishop Jensen of Sydney, Australia, believes the fellowship of Anglican churches will break up over the issue of human sexuality. He said that the biblical ideal of sexual relationships specifically excludes same-sex relationships, and that this is clear both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Nick Howard, the son of Michael Howard, the former Conservative party leader, has been turned down for ordination by the Church of England because of his unambiguous evangelical beliefs, and unwillingness to listen to other viewpoints. He has his theology degree, but his strongly held beliefs on homosexuality and multi-faith worship marked him out as a troublemaker, even though they reflect official Anglican doctrine.

In July 2006 the Anglican General Synod resolved “That this Synod welcome and affirm the view of the majority of the House of Bishops that admitting women to the episcopate in the Church of England is consonant with the faith of the Church as the Church of England has received it, and would be

a proper development in proclaiming afresh in this generation the grace and truth of Christ.”

### ***The papacy and the crown***

The Church of England’s chief lay official, General Synod Secretary, William Fittall, is adamant that, if Prince Charles becomes the reigning monarch, the service will not be a multi-faith service as desired by Prince Charles, and it has been pointed out that a multi-faith service would undermine the monarch’s position as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and that the Prince’s duty would be to defend the historic faith of the church. There would be huge obstacles to a multi-faith coronation service, and the constitution would unravel if the prince had his way. Strangely enough, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey of Clifton, calls for a multi-faith approach to future British coronations.

Cardinal Keith O’Brien, leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, states that he would be happy to see Scotland become an independent country. When Pope John Paul kissed Scottish soil in 1982, O’Brien says that this was intended to remind “the world that Scotland is a nation among nations”. He speaks of the vibrancy of the Celtic tiger in the Republic of Ireland. He desires to re-make Scotland in the Irish image. He denounces the United Kingdom’s Act of Settlement as “state sponsored sectarian discrimination”, and a barrier to attempts to tackle discrimination and bigotry. The Act of Union between Scotland and England stipulates that the Union is automatically dissolved if a Roman Catholic mounts the throne. Rome longs to have a Roman Catholic on the Scottish throne. O’Brien shouts a lot about bigotry against Roman Catholics in Scotland. It is all part of the propaganda. An examination of his own ordination vows and those of Presbyterian ministers, would show where bigotry and sectarian hatred lie. He wants Catholics to report to him all the sectarian abuse they can so that he can compile a list to present it to the First Minister. He omitted to ask Protestants (or “non-Catholics”, as he would call Protestants) to submit a list of sectarian attacks against themselves from Roman Catholic sources.

### ***Religious hatred***

A true child of God loves his enemies. David Blunkett has said that he wants to “outlaw religious hate”. Surely then we should seek to end the blasphemy addressed at the Saviour Jesus Christ, day and night for 365 days a year, when His name is spat out as a profanity in what is shown in the cinema and on TV, as well as among so-called Christians.

In 1921, Roman Catholic schools became part of the state-funded system of education, and were allowed to retain their religious identity. In 1870, the Free Church of Scotland was persuaded to hand over all its schools into the keeping of the state in return for a promise that “religious instruction” (understood at that time to mean the religion of the Bible, or the basic truths of the Christian faith) would continue to be taught – a promise blatantly ignored over the last

two generations. Meanwhile the Reformation is blatantly attacked, and John Knox is airbrushed out of history textbooks, and never commemorated, despite being one of the greatest sons Scotland has been privileged to have, if not the greatest.

### ***Political correctness***

We have recently seen strife over the exhibiting of religious symbols. British Airways, which has a British flag logo on the tails of its planes, made up of various British crosses, had forbidden an employee, who has worn a tiny cross on her neck for seven years, from wearing it anymore outside her clothing while at work. A girl pupil too was told not to wear such to school. The Word of God forbids us to make or use images in the worship of the Lord, and in the early Church such things would not be found. Until recently such things were merely ignored, as are the many religious symbols of other creeds around us, but things have changed. As expected, Cardinal Keith O'Brien led the charge in support of the lady, but of course his church has "Adoration of the Cross", an idolatrous service carried out on "Good Friday" consisting of prostration before the cross and prayers addressed to it, as well as other idolatrous services.

The truth of the matter seems to be that a new religion of political correctness is being promoted in our land, which aims at destroying Christianity, and what purports to be Christianity. A sham political amalgam of religions is taught in schools in which absolute good or absolute evil is no longer to be taught, to avoid religious confrontation. The law of respect or political correctness, with its own commandments, is meant to displace the Ten Commandments and the Gospel. Scripture gave commandments, and to break any of these was called a sin. The State gave commandments, or laws, and to break one of these was called a crime. The distinction between crime and sin is no longer counted valid, for the State rules in all matters. This is nothing new. The Devil has tried this before. The State has become the parent, and political correctness impinges on deeds, words and thoughts. We see it reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of 14th February 2007 that, despite being the fourth richest nation, our children, regarding their moral condition, are in the twentieth place among the twenty-one best-off nations.

The case of Stephen Green highlights the above. He was arrested for protesting with banners against homosexuality. The banners quoted the Word of God and showed the way of salvation. He was charged with using "threatening, abusive or insulting words", but the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was insufficient evidence as the quotes were all from the Bible, and also in the light of previous cases.

### ***Homosexual rights and adoption***

A raft of new homosexual rights laws were supposed to go before a vote of MPs by the end of October, but it is thought the earliest they will reach Parliament is April 2007, after the government was deluged by hostile

responses to its consultative document, *Getting Equal*. Its aim was meant to be to protect homosexuals from being denied “goods, facilities and services on the basis of their sexual preferences”.

It will be an offence to refuse to rent a room to a homosexual couple, or for printers to decline orders to produce homosexual advertising or magazines. Northern Ireland has already been made a test-case region in January 2007. The Christian lawyer, Andrea Williams, said, “There are substantial concerns that these regulations may be contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights on freedom of thought, conscience and religion”.

The Roman Catholic Church runs almost a third of the voluntary adoption sector, finding homes for about 230 children each year, but it has threatened to stop adoption work, and even close homeless shelters if it is not allowed to discriminate against those who are gay or lesbian. Even if the law banning discrimination is passed in its present form, we can hardly see the Roman Catholic Church doing as it threatens, for it is desperate to have some control over children. The Roman Church already refers homosexual couples, who apply, to other non Roman Catholic agencies. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, Vincent Nichols, told Channel 4 News: “What we are not objecting to is the legal right of same-sex couples to adopt children.” The logic of all this is that the Romanists will look after their own, and plant these children in Catholic homes, while Protestant, or other children, can be handed over to homosexuals. On the other hand, true committed Christians, who express their convictions, have little chance of adopting children and introducing them to biblical Christianity. The point has to be made that the abysmal conduct of many of her priests in abusing children and adults, and also the cover-up of the Roman Catholic Church regarding these matters, must be a contributory factor towards the very existence of homosexual unions and the cry of these people for such rights.

In December 2006, the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill was overwhelmingly passed in Scotland. The Executive said Scots wanted homosexual adoption, yet consultation documents revealed that 90% of Scots were against it. Roseanna Cunningham stressed that no couples, including homosexual couples, had absolute rights in adoption, and that the debate should be about the children’s rights, and theirs alone. She stresses that those who supported the Bill were in the business of saying that nature had got it wrong, and that adding a further burden to children deprived of their natural parents only risks producing a generation of emotionally damaged children. It seems that sodomites must be appeased at all costs, but the same God who wiped out Sodom and Gomorrah is still on the throne, and it is to Him we cry to have mercy upon our nation.

### ***Religious observance in schools***

The Scottish Executive has been redefining religious observance in schools as “community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community”. It is no longer mere political correctness

but religious correctness. A chaplain at three schools in Renfrewshire says that Christianity has been removed and that there is but a sense of vagueness, with no reference to the Christian faith. What has gone wrong with the Scotland of John Knox?

### ***The Church of Scotland***

At the Reformation the people of Scotland embraced Scripture as the inspired and infallible Word of God. The Word itself declared that its authority was that of God, unlike the Roman Catholic Church which declared that the Word's authority is that given it by fallible men. Today we weep when we see what our national church is reduced to. You can hold the highest office in the Church of Scotland, reject ninety-nine per cent of the Bible, and not be disciplined, but rather feted. When the Roman Catholics fight so strenuously for spiritual and political privileges, the Church of Scotland has lost its way, and many in the church of John Knox seem unable to sound the glorious trumpet of the Reformation any more but, on the contrary, seem ashamed of its origins.

Rev. Sheilagh Kesting, who is moderator-designate of the Church of Scotland in May 2007, proclaims that homosexual couples should have their relationships blessed in church. She indicates that she would be happy to bless such unions and recognise same-sex partnerships. The national Kirk has already, at assembly level, approved the idea of blessing civil partnerships in principle. The majority of the Church's presbyteries have not endorsed this principle. She will be the second female Moderator of the Church of Scotland after Dr. Alison Elliot, who is an elder. The Bible is the supreme standard, and forbids such, but those who think they are wiser than their Creator, and overrule His law, therefore making God's Word a lie, only reveal that the light which is in them is really darkness.

The *Stornoway Gazette*, of 2nd October 2006, reports that Miss Kesting is secretary to the ecumenical SCIFU (Scottish Churches Initiation for Union), and that she is involved in continuing talks with the Free Church, and also joint-secretary of the Joint Commission on Doctrine between the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church.

### ***Atheism***

In the census of 2001, 72% of the people called themselves Christian. In Britain between 1979 and 2005 the number attending church on the Sabbath halved. The *Free Presbyterian Magazine* for January 2005 states that surveys carried out by ICM Research reveals that 90% of all adults owned a Bible in 1954, but the figure in 2005 had come down to 65%. Belief in the paranormal has increased 10% since 1954. Last year the Summer solstice drew 21,000 to Stonehenge. We are sinking back into heathendom as the true preaching of the Gospel, and Christian witness, wanes. Atheism too is very militant among us and we are attacked by intolerant evolutionists. An ambitious campaign to spread this Gospel of darkness was launched by the Christian-hating writer Richard Dawkins, with his latest book entitled *The God Delusion*.

Should we then wonder when the Lord punishes our nation in permitting Muslims to come among us in such great numbers? If so much hatred is shown by them to each other in opposing factions, what can Christians expect? It is time our nation was realistic about false religions, for there is but one way of salvation, and that is through Christ. There is no doubt that this is one of God's rods upon our country, and the terrible thing is that we do not know that it is such. Mohammed seemed conciliatory to Jews and Christians to begin with, but when rejected by them he became confrontational. The break-up of the Russian empire has released many Muslim groupings, and recent happenings in the Middle and Far East are but warnings to the Church of Christ that the roaring lion is out to devour. May the Lord give us, as a people, to turn in repentance to Himself!

"Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries" (Psalm 81:13-14).

## MORALS

### *Alcoholism*

This has been an increasing problem over many years in Scotland, especially among the young and sadly among the under-age, many going out in the evening with the express purpose of getting drunk. The country, once renowned as the Land of the Gospel, has now become notorious for alcohol abuse. NHS statistics for England show that more people than ever are being admitted to hospital as a result of misusing alcohol, more than doubling in a decade, reaching 35,400 in 2004/5. Death rates linked to alcoholic liver disease increased by 37% between 1999 and 2004 to over 4,000. Professor Ian Gilmour, of the Royal College of Physicians, described the figures as "shocking". He pointed out that alcohol is too cheap and too readily available. Recent figures released by the Scottish Executive disclosed that there was a massive 85% leap in fatal cases of alcoholic liver disease. The disease killed 7,150 people between 1997 and 2005. The number was 527 in 1997 but in 6 years had jumped to 976. Deaths among women more than doubled during this time from 161 to 338 and men increased from 366 to 638. Aberdeen Royal Infirmary had 207 deaths, going from 9 in 1997 to 32 in 2005. Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, was even worse with 241 deaths over 8 years. Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, reported 120 deaths during the same period.

A report in late 2005 by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland offered more evidence of sharp rises in alcohol-related diseases, costing Scotland £1.4 billion per annum including £1 million to the NHS. A separate NHS study showed alcohol related deaths had soared by more than 250% in 25 years to 2,052. Children as young as 8 were referred to children's hearings for drink and drug problems. Drunkenness accounts for about half of all incidents of violent crime and results in much sexual misconduct. Experts say it is the result of 20 years of liberal drinking laws, an increase in the number of public

houses and off-licences, and the easy availability of alcohol, which is 54% cheaper in relative terms than in 1980. Despite the increase in alcohol addiction in society, the Scottish Parliament has further relaxed the law, allowing some pubs and clubs to open 24 hours a day.

Most people in the society in which we live lack a solid foundation for their lifestyle. What a need there is for a return to biblical truths: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). But the saddest and most solemn fact is that those who die as impenitent drunkards are shut out from heaven: “Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:10).

### ***Gambling***

This evil is now rife throughout society with new forms coming continuously before the public. The Government plans to make the UK the world capital for Internet gambling, despite the USA passing a bill banning most forms of Internet gambling. Russia’s interior ministry recently closed three casinos in Moscow because of links to organised crime, the city’s Deputy Mayor stressing that Moscow has no intention of becoming the Las Vegas of Russia. In November 2006, Professor Mark Griffith, of Nottingham & Trent University, who is Europe’s only Professor of Gambling Studies, said millions of children face becoming addicted to gambling because ministers are “naïve” about the dangers of slot machines. In a submission to the Culture Department’s consultation process on how the Gambling Act in 2007 will be implemented, he said gambling addictions start on the low stakes machines.

With Government Ministers proposing to establish the UK as the world base for Internet gambling, the Christian Peoples Alliance says that the burden will fall on local Councils who will have to prepare for more broken homes, rising mental illness and other social problems linked to debt.

Another of the Government’s misguided schemes is to have a Las Vegas style super casino in the UK with strong bidding for it from London, Manchester, Blackpool and Glasgow, amongst others. At the end of January 2007, the Casino Advisory Panel’s decision was announced to award the super casino to Manchester. Up to 1,250 unlimited jackpot gaming machines will be housed in the project. In addition a further 16 smaller casinos are to be built with one being allocated to Dumfries and Galloway, the prime candidate being Stranraer. While thankful that the Glasgow bid failed, it is deplorable that this massive expansion of gambling facilities is planned for the near future, in breach of the 8th Commandment, which requires the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others (the Shorter Catechism, Q74).

### ***Murder***

Newspaper reports (6th November 2006) show that Scotland has the third highest murder rate in Western Europe according to a United Nations report.

The homicide statistics, fuelled by a “booze and blade” culture, puts Scotland on a par with troubled countries such as Israel, Iran and Azerbaijan, with Scots three times more likely to be killed as those living in Italy and Denmark. A total of 130 people were murdered in 2004, which is equivalent to 2.56 homicides per 100,000 population, with England and Wales in 7th position with a rate of 1.62. This is a fruit of abolishing the God-given death penalty for murder in the 1960s; thereby bringing divine displeasure upon the nation with restraining grace being largely removed, leading to mass murders by serial killers such as Neilson, Sutcliffe (the Yorkshire Ripper) and Dr. Shipman (the Manchester Doctor) who slew possibly over 200 of his patients. The most recent incident involved 5 prostitutes being murdered in Ipswich in a period of 6 weeks, the killings only ceasing when a suspect was arrested.

### ***Adultery***

This sin is rife from the highest to the lowest in the land. More than 40% of children born are from single mothers or cohabiting couples. In the election for a new leader of the Liberal Democrat Party (the previous leader was forced to resign because of alcoholism) it was revealed by the Press that two of the candidates were guilty of homosexual practices. One of these who betrayed his wife and children described his depraved conduct as “an error of judgement”. The other expressed the view that in a few years’ time his lifestyle would be regarded as perfectly normal and would prove to be no impediment in seeking political office. The former withdrew from the ballot but the latter continued as a candidate. It was gratifying to notice that he lost the election.

The Deputy Prime Minister was exposed by the press for adultery and marital infidelity, which not too long ago would have brought about instant resignation from office, but he was allowed to continue with his salary and the perks that go with it being retained; his only demotion was loss of some of his previous responsibilities.

### ***Political correctness***

Christian pensioners, Joe and Helen Roberts, were interrogated by the police in their own home because they telephoned their local council to complain about its promotion of homosexuality. After quizzing them on their Christian beliefs, the two officers said that they were “walking on eggshells” and in danger of being jailed for seven years, which is untrue, according to Mr. Colin Hart, Director of the Christian Institute, there being no such law. The Christian Institute was supporting Mr. and Mrs. Roberts in the legal action that they were taking against the Lancashire Police and the Wyre Borough Council. A leading constitutional lawyer has argued that what happened was police harassment. A judge decided that the issues were so important that he allocated a five-day hearing in the High Court in January 2007.

In December 2006 both the police and the Council backed down on the case with a full apology to Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, paying them their legal expenses, together with £10,000 in compensation, which they were going to donate to a

Christian charity. It is a cause for thankfulness that this case was a victory for free speech and religious liberty.

Exeter University Christian Union: The Christian Union (CU) at Exeter University has been temporarily suspended from the official list of student societies, has had its Student Union bank account frozen and has been banned from using Student Guild premises or advertising events within Guild facilities because the Student Guild claims the CU constitution and activities do not conform to its recently-introduced Equal Opportunities Policies. Christian students are now threatening legal action against the Student Guild and Exeter University if they do not support their rights as Christians to the freedoms of speech, belief and association.

Edinburgh University: Student leaders here were the latest to appeal for the removal of Bibles placed in University halls as these could prove offensive to students professing religions other than Christianity. The students' President is quoted as saying that "the Student Association strongly believes in the importance of ensuring that students of all faiths feel at home in their University accommodation".

Leicester University: The University of Leicester NHS Trust considered banning Bibles from its bedside lockers in order to avoid offending other faiths. This move was opposed by Leicestershire's Federation of Muslim Organisations and the Sikh Chairman of the Council of Faiths. The Trust backed down after being attacked in the Press.

### *Homosexuality*

The readiness of some police forces to intervene when homosexuality is criticised is disturbing. A member of the public complained to police after author Lynette Burrows told a phone-in programme on Radio Five Live in December 2005 that she did not believe homosexuals should be allowed to adopt children. An officer contacted her the next day to say that a "homophobic incident" had been reported against her. "I was astounded," Mrs. Burrows said, "I told her this was a free country and we are allowed to express opinions on matters of public interest. She told me that it was not a crime but that she had to record these incidents. They were leaning on me, letting me know that the police had an interest in my views. I think it is sinister and completely unacceptable." A spokesman for Scotland Yard said "it was policy for Community Safety Units to investigate homophobic, racist and domestic incidents" because they were "priority crimes" yet admitted that no allegation of crime had been made.

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue: Nine Firefighters have been disciplined for refusing to hand out leaflets, containing advice on fire safety, to people attending a homosexual parade in Glasgow. A Watch Manager has been demoted with a £5,000 cut in pay. The others were given a written warning. Now the nine are to undergo "diversity training". This will presumably include instruction that what the Most High calls serious sin is perfectly acceptable and must not be opposed. Later the Watch Manager was reinstated but he and the

other eight remain under a final warning. The Christian Institute is pressing for all of them to be exonerated and disciplinary findings rescinded.

Sexual Orientation Regulations (SORS): These are intended to cover the provision of goods, facilities and services, and education applying to schools, businesses and voluntary organisations, including Churches, and have already become law in Northern Ireland. (A challenge by the Christian Institute has granted a judicial review in the High Court to be heard in March 2007.) SORS are expected to become law in the rest of the UK in April, recently being passed by the House of Lords by 199 votes to 66. Their declared purpose is to make it illegal to harass or discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The Word of God strongly condemns homosexual behaviour putting it on the same level as adultery, incest and bestiality (Leviticus 20:10-16). In the UK sodomy was criminal until 1967, but since then the law has been turned around in its favour and SORS takes a further step in this direction. The long-term purpose of the homosexual lobby, under guidance from the prince of this world, is to silence any condemnation of this sin. "On each side walk the wicked, when vile men are high in place" (Psalm 12:8, metrical).

### ***Conclusion***

The Psalmist, under divine inspiration, penned these words: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" (Psalm 94:20). The time could be near at hand when Christians will be prosecuted (fined and imprisoned) for daring to preach against these abominations. If that becomes the case they will need grace to say like Peter and the other Apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than men" and follow the example of our godly forefathers who were willing to resist evil laws even unto death.

In May 1953, when Rev. John Colquhoun was presenting his report on religion and morals to the Synod, he wrote: "One is constrained to look upon this world as a great battlefield between Christ and the Devil and between grace and sin. One of the things revealed concerning Christ's Kingdom is that 'He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth'. That shall take place but, in our day, outward appearances would indicate that the kingdom of darkness is carrying everything before it. Its forces are numerous, strong and well accustomed to their work; it has taken hold of the riches of the world, together with the brightest talents that are found among the children of Adam, and has taken full advantage of that propensity to evil, inherited through the Fall of man and which is found in every individual of the human race. The highest and most brilliant literary attainments, the power of the mightiest nations, the sciences and philosophies of the most advanced schools of learning, yea, the most of what passes for religion itself, seems to have but one goal, that is the serving and advancement of the kingdom of darkness. This report will show how true this is and how clear it is in our day that the prince of the kingdom of darkness is the god of this world."

He concludes his report on a more optimistic note when he writes: “Through the various Bible societies and agencies the good seed is being disseminated, and, although we may see very little fruit in our day, we must remember that it is the Spirit alone that quickens and that, therefore, we must look to him who says, ‘For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.’”

Let us also have this optimistic outlook – for the reign of the wicked shall be short – and be looking to Him of whom it is written:

“His name for ever shall endure;  
Last like the sun it shall:  
Men shall be bless’d in him, and bless’d  
All nations shall him call.”

(Psalm 72:17, metrical)