

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

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**REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND
MORALS COMMITTEE
Rev. Neil M. Ross, Convener**

Introduction

ONE CLEAR SIGN of our national forgetfulness of God and abandonment of biblical Christianity is the *growth of other religions*. Islam is attracting many British people (10,000 have "converted" to it during the past ten years, according to the Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Wales), and no fewer than one and a half million people in this country, or 2.7 per cent of the population, are Muslims. It was disturbing to note that the Prince of Wales visited a new £8 million mosque in London, donned traditional Muslim cap and white shawl, and told the white-robed leaders: "You are a splendid example of how I would like to see our respective cultures learn about each other." The Mormons in Britain have increased from 6,500 in the '60s to the present figure of 170,000.

Another sad sign of our moral declension is the *breakdown of traditional family life* as based on biblical principles, with an associated great increase in the divorce rate and in the number of single-parent families. Even in the Scottish Highlands, where the Gospel flourished for longer than in most places, we believe that as many as half of the children in some schools come from broken homes.

The increased divorce rate not only causes untold misery in thousands of homes and millions of hearts, but also scars untold numbers of children — many of them for life. Scripture asks the question: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" It hardly seems possible, but the answer is: "Yea, they may forget." Today, many fathers, and mothers too, are so selfishly bent on fulfilling their adulterous desires that they do forget their children, in that they inflict traumatic, deep and painful psychological wounds on them.

It is with genuine sadness that many loyal subjects see the *breakdown of marriage in the Royal Family*. It seems that the marriage between the heir apparent, Prince Charles, and Princess Diana is now to end in divorce. Both parties are guilty of adultery on their own admission, and the implications of their conduct are very serious. The higher the position a person holds, the more heinous are the sins he commits; therefore a very bad example has been set to the nation. The blatant unfaithfulness of the Prince from an early stage in his marriage raises serious questions as to his suitability to assume the responsibilities of kingship, to be faithful to the Coronation Oath and to honour the promise to uphold the Protestant Reformed religion. Furthermore, if the Royal divorce takes place, neither party will be able to remarry without violating the Law of God because any such remarriage would be adulterous.

Another alarming sign of the times is the *decreasing respect for human life* in our nation. Last year one in five pregnancies was unnaturally terminated —

a total of more than 160,000 abortions. The pressure for legalising euthanasia is mounting and we fear we shall soon be like Holland where euthanasia, although technically illegal, is widely practised because no prosecution is mounted in certain circumstances. A commission there ascertained that in more than 1,000 cases, doctors had ended life without an explicit request. Mr. Schalkin, lecturer in criminal law at Amsterdam Free University, stated: "From dossiers and from personal contacts, I know how many mistakes have been made concerning euthanasia. . . ."

With regard to the work of the Committee during the past year, among other things it wrote to Her Majesty the Queen about her intended attendance at a Roman Catholic service at Westminster Cathedral. The reply from the Palace was quite unsatisfactory, as will be seen later in this report.

With regard to the publication of obscene magazines for young girls we wrote to the Chief Constable in Inverness and to MP Peter Luff. As one may see below, the Government has taken some steps to combat this evil.

We protested against the proposal put to Inverness District Council that it should lift its ban on showing the blasphemous film, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. We were greatly relieved to learn that the Council voted to maintain the ban.

RELIGION

Roman Catholicism

Unity under Rome. In an encyclical that took both his own and the Orthodox Churches by surprise, the Pope said that "full unity in legitimate diversity" was his aim, and that on the "threshold of the third millennium we are seeking the re-establishment of communion". This means, in our opinion, that the Anglican Churches, the Eastern Churches, and certain other Churches, when they become united to Rome, will at first be permitted to retain their separate identities. but this will be a meaningless privilege when they are under the authority of the Vatican.

One of the many moves in the directions of a Church unified under the papacy is the present attack on the Oath of Allegiance. Every newly ordained diocesan bishop of the Church of England, in pledging his allegiance to the Queen, must state: "No foreign prelate or potentate has any jurisdiction in this realm." There have been suggestions that this clause, which like many others in our constitution was intended to preserve our kingdom from the interference of the Vatican, be removed or modified. It is argued that the statement is an anachronism because of the power which the European Union exercises in the life of our nation. The real force behind the calls to remove this clause is the false ecumenism of our day, and to remove it would make way for the removal of other clauses of a Protestant nature and pave the way for the universal primacy of the Pope of Rome in a united Church.

The Vatican and religious freedom. The Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe, on the proposal of its Vatican delegate, is to have a two-week conference in October to discuss "constitutional, legal and administrative aspects of freedom of religion with the aim of harmonising them". This is sinister when we consider that the Roman Catholic Church, regarding herself as the only true Church, sees Protestantism as erroneous and heretical, requires (to use her own words), "that legal existence be denied to error", and has never disannulled her persecuting tenets. As the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* says: "Heretics may be not only excommunicated, but also justly put to death." We wonder what might be in store for those Churches which continue to witness against Romanism, and refuse to compromise with her.

The Pope, during a recent visit to South America, denounced the drift of Roman Catholics there to Protestant Churches. He described the Protestant leaders as "ravenous wolves . . . causing disorder and division in our communities", and referred to growing Protestantism as "spreading like an oil stain". What kind of religious freedom is this? The conversion of souls from popery to Protestantism, is evidently not what the Vatican calls "legitimate diversity". It is also clear the "religious freedom" in the mouth of the Pope means freedom for popery alone.

Roman Catholic influence in the European Union. In a recent lecture, Dr. David Samuel pointed out that the idea of a united Europe was not a new one but the reviving of an old aspiration by the Roman Catholic Church in union with the power of Germany, and that the forming of the European Union (EU) is an attempt to revive the Holy Roman Empire. He observed that the concepts of solidarity, the single market and the social chapter stemmed from Roman Catholic social thinking, and that the strong Christian Democratic Party in Germany, which is a Roman Catholic party, is a tremendous force in moulding social and political thinking in the EU. Nicholas Ridley warned the nation of the ambition of the German leaders, not merely to lead, but to dominate Europe. Sad to say, many leaders in our nation anticipate this prospect with indifference. Dr. Samuel noted that Rome, seeing the Church of England as discredited and marginalised, recognises its present opportunity.

Politicians and the Cardinal. The spectacle of leading politicians vying with one another in currying the favour of the Roman Catholic hierarchy is now becoming a common sight. The Rt. Hon. Ian Lang, the then Scottish Secretary of State, entertained Cardinal Winning at his official residence in Edinburgh. What they were discussing for two and a half hours we are not entitled to know, it would seem. The visit was described by the Secretary of State as a private one. The Cardinal said it was a social visit and added that Mr. Lang was one he "could do business with".

The second paragraph of the Bill of Rights (1689), a central pillar of our nation's constitution, states that "the government of our nation in the days of James II, by the assistance of divers evil councillors, judges and ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion and laws and liberties of this kingdom". We have reason to fear that

this is happening today when ecumenism thrives and members of our Government give a high profile to Roman dignitaries.

The Vatican and men of violence. A representative of the Vatican has met Colonel Gaddafi of Libya, and there is talk of Gaddafi visiting the Vatican this year. This would fly in the face of international sanctions against Libya for terrorism.

This is not the first time that the Vatican has been seen to be associated with murderers. Apart from its culpable unwillingness to excommunicate IRA terrorists, we recollect its wartime history. As the world remembered the holocaust of fifty years ago, the part played by the then Pope, Pius XII, was again the subject of some media attention. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that when there were moves in the Vatican to canonise the wartime pontiff, a monk called Alberic Stacpool, a prominent historian and former senior lecturer at Oxford, objected to the moves, saying that Pius XII had particular knowledge of the whole development of the extermination of Jews in 1941-45, but did not lift a finger to help their cause. Stacpool referred to these moves to canonise Pius XII as "turning tragedy into farce".

Perverting to Rome. The number of British people who adopted Roman Catholicism as their religion in the past year is reported to be 5,000. Among them are members of Royalty and 250 Anglican clergymen. "The glamour and continuity of the Church of Rome are attracting eminent and fashionable converts," said the Press. "The priests who have led the converts to Rome move at high altitude with a manner that is at once socially acceptable, holy and conspiratorial."

As a nation, we are largely left by God, like Ephraim of old, to go after our idols. Nevertheless it is encouraging that the eyes of some in our own land and beyond are opened to see the true nature of the papacy. A Guatemalan convert from Romanism described the recent papal visit to South America as "a part of Satan's deceitful plan". When will our leaders recognise that the plan is being implemented in Britain?

The Royal Family and the papacy. For the first time in Great Britain since the Reformation a Roman Catholic priest has been appointed as Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen. This reflects the increasingly friendly relationship between the Throne and Romanism. The Chaplain's title is said to be purely honorary, but he will take part in the Armed Forces' religious services attended by members of the Royal Family.

The Queen attended a Roman Catholic service at Westminster Cathedral last November on the 100th anniversary of the building of the Cathedral — the first reigning monarch since the Reformation to do so. This is being regarded in Romanist circles as "the single most important act for the Catholic Church in England since the Catholic Emancipation Acts of the last century". At her coronation, the Queen swore to maintain to the utmost of her power "the Protestant Reformed religion established by law". How sad that the warnings against Rome, embedded in our constitution, are thus set aside, in order to fraternise with a modern and dangerous papacy.

In answering a letter to Her Majesty from this committee, a member of her staff wrote that because the service was of an ecumenical nature it was good for her to be there. We were told that she had attended ecumenical services in the past, from which we understand that a precedent had been set which Her Majesty believes it is now legitimate to follow. Surely the principle guiding the Monarch of our land, in her role as a Protestant Queen, should not be such a precedent but rather the Protestant nature of the constitution. It is almost certain that this visit will be the precursor to future attendance by Royalty at Roman Catholic services.

This fraternising with Rome brings into the heart of our kingdom, an organisation so detested by those who knew its tyranny that they wrote its detestableness into our constitution. They stated: ". . . every person and persons that is, are, or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with the see or Church of Rome, or shall profess the popish religion, or shall marry a papist, shall be excluded and be forever incapable to inherit, possess or enjoy the crown and government of this realm. . . ." We are justified in fearing that the consequences of this increasing Royal recognition of the papacy, will encroach upon the constitutional status of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement.

The Church of England

The Archbishop of York stated that people do not treat seriously the doctrine of hell today. Rather than use his function as a professed minister of Christ to rectify this popular misconception he has lamely said: "We all must die in order that others may live." Another bishop speaks of the doctrine of hell as being "sadistic". These comments are in support of a recent Church of England report, *The Mystery of Salvation*, which is intended to clarify its doctrinal position. The report states that hell is not eternal torment but annihilation. This manifests an appalling indifference to the eternal destiny of souls and a disgraceful despising of the doctrines of Scripture.

Everlasting punishment is spoken of in the Scriptures as the only possible end of those who obey not the Gospel, and the Saviour spoke of a lost eternity as a "fire that is not quenched". The fact that annihilation is not the end of the lost soul is shown by the words, "their worm dieth not" (Mark 9:44), and "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). The case of the rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell, "being in torments" (Luke 16:23), defies any to interpret the doctrine of hell as annihilation.

Some sections of the Press are rightly critical of the moral weakness of the Church of England. They see the abandoning of the doctrine of hell as the abandoning of a deterrent for criminals. It is worse than that. The Church is effectively deluding and destroying souls, and is contradicting the pronouncements of God in His Word.

Charismatics

"Have we Gone Mad?" This is the title of an article in the *Banner of Truth* magazine. The writer was prompted to ask this question, having observed a

service where the leader was a proponent of the Charismatic "Toronto blessing". The leader spoke of the Most High in language most unbecoming to His high and holy name. People began to behave in a very extraordinary way, some shaking violently, others falling over and as they did so being told that "the sweet heaviness of Jesus was descending upon them". Yet others bounced about, while some danced or ran swiftly on the spot. Others barked like dogs or howled like wolves. How deplorable that this bizarre behaviour is masquerading as the Christian religion.

MORALS

Family Law Bill

The Family Law Bill, previously the Divorce Reform Bill, which applies to England and Wales, continues its progress through the legislature against stiff opposition. The trend in law has been to make divorce more easily obtained by extending the grounds for divorce beyond what Scripture allows. Despite the statements of good intentions from the Lord Chancellor, the Bill, with its provision for "no fault" divorce, is a further and great departure from the scriptural standard. The Bible allows only two grounds for divorce, adultery and wilful desertion (Matthew 19:8-9; 1 Corinthians 7:15), but as the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) asserts, ". . . the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage . . ." (WCF 24:6).

The concept of "fault" therefore should be retained. Distasteful as it may be for lawyers to have to examine evidence of adultery, it is necessary if God's Law is to be honoured and innocent parties are to get justice. A society which wants to rid itself of various evils and all the misery connected with them must make its laws follow the Law of God. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear" (Psalm 2:10-11). "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

The attitude of the public is revealed by a MORI poll carried out for the Lord Chancellor's department which showed that 60 per cent were against divorce on demand. It is to be deplored that the response of the Churches to changes in divorce law has been weak. As it has been pointed out in the past, "historically, there has not been any attempt, by the Church of Scotland at any rate, to enforce a doctrinal line".

The *Daily Telegraph* editorial of 1st March, entitled "Drop the Bill", says that the Bill is an "ill judged, ill argued, intellectually incoherent document which would entrench and extend the damage inflicted on society by family break up. . . . Those who wish to divorce will need only to apply to a court, and accompany their application with a formal statement that the marriage has broken down irretrievably. The process will be stripped of any moral implication. At the end of one year divorce will be granted. . . . The

Government should drop this Bill now, and then step back and consider how the panoply of law — on tax and benefits, for example — could be used to bolster marriage as an 'honourable estate', rather than just a contract dissoluble upon the receipt of 12 months notice." There is much sensible advice in this comment which the Government ought to note. Social benefits should not be geared to encourage, but rather to discourage, divorce and cohabitation.

Sexual Perversion

Those who are under the enslaving power of sodomy and such abominable practices become more bold and shameless in their demands for freedom to commit these sins. Health officials of Camden and Islington Community Health Trust, North London, recently published a book on homosexuality, *Colours of the Rainbow*, aimed at children as young as five. The book, already used in 30 schools, is opposed by parents who describe it as "dangerous and disgusting". The health officials, however, insisted that the book "will encourage youngsters to be more tolerant".

The Government is to be blamed for having given way to these perverted pressure groups by legalising homosexual practises in the '60s and, more recently, by lowering the age of consent. This has opened the door to a host of evils, and the Government only has itself to blame when, for example, it recently had difficulties with homosexual activists who were seeking a lifting of the ban on homosexual practices in the Armed Forces.

Last year, the High Court upheld the ban on having homosexual and lesbian personnel in the Armed Forces but the decision was marred by Lord Justice Brown's unhelpful remarks about the tide of history being against the MoD. A recent internal MoD report showed that the overwhelming majority of service personnel would not tolerate homosexuals among them. It is a pity that the Government is not as careful to protect the rest of society as it is the Armed Forces.

Those who are given to these sins should not be encouraged to continue in them as though sodomy were a natural, instead of a vile and unnatural practice. Rather, they should be encouraged to seek repentance, forgiveness from God and the grace to overcome their sin. Such grace has been given to others (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The Immorality of Roman Catholic Priests

Rome's insistence on a celibate clergy inevitably leads to immorality in many cases. An appalling number of cases of indecency committed worldwide by Romish priests has been reported in the recent past. Priestly celibacy is not a mere matter of priests choosing to be celibate; it is the law of Rome. While this celibacy is not required by the Law of God, it is demanded by Roman Catholic Church law. What a strange arrangement when the laws of churchmen are not only contrary to the Divine Law but are regarded as superior to it! These Church laws of Rome can be conveniently adjusted as

required, of course, as in the case of the married Anglican clergy who were allowed by Rome to enter its fold by the granting of a papal dispensation.

Obscene Magazines for Girls

Many parents are unaware of the sexually explicit content of certain magazines, such as *More*, *Mizz*, *Bliss*, *19*, *Sugar* and *Seventeen*, which are targeted at young teenage girls, and are on sale throughout the country. When we spoke to staff in an Inverness bookshop about the sale of *More*, a particularly filthy publication, we were told that it is a very popular magazine with some teenage girls.

As these magazines are in breach of the law we asked the Chief Constable of Northern Constabulary to investigate the matter and place it in the hands of the Procurator Fiscal. He replied: "Notwithstanding the fact that I fully share your concerns regarding the content of the magazine and that it has the potential to corrupt, I am inhibited from taking any definitive action on advice from the Procurator Fiscal that he would not be prepared to institute proceedings under the Act, as he is of the opinion that the magazine is no more pornographic than many others openly for sale throughout the country. I therefore regret that, despite my own deep concerns regarding this whole matter, I find myself unable to take any official action." The Chief Constable's hands were tied.

Conservative MP, Mr. Peter Luff, raised the matter in the House of Commons by a Private Member's Bill. The Bill received all-party support. In his speech, Mr. Luff quoted Mr. Daniel Wright, of the Medical Research Council's Medical Sociology Unit, who expressed concern about the magazines and said that girls were given the impression that they were being left out if they did not engage in sex.

Some teenagers interviewed by the media said they felt threatened by the magazines. The response of the publishers, in saying "they were providing important information about growing up", was despicable. Catherine Brown, editor in chief of *Sugar*, had the audacity to say that she was very offended by people calling her magazine pornographic! These disgraceful magazines are educating young girls in sin and should be banned outright.

It is encouraging that the Government is already speaking to publishers about the matter, and that the Churches, the Commons and the Press are united in their condemnation of this trade. Parents and others who are concerned should urge newsagents to refuse to stock the magazines instead of continuing to profit from them. They should also write to their MP to bring pressure to bear on the publishers, and parents in Scotland should write to their local Procurator Fiscal.

Children's Education

We feel that the school environment today is morally and spiritually impoverished. Human nature will much more readily cleave to the ways of sin than walk in the paths of righteousness. Our society has become so secular,

Christian teachings and conduct are so devalued, and peer group pressure is so great, that the task of Christian parents in bringing up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" becomes more difficult by the day. We have great need to be praying that our children may be kept in this "wicked and adulterous generation", and especially that they would be converted. Perhaps, also, it is time to consider alternative methods of educating our children and providing a more wholesome school environment for them.

The National Lottery

The National Lottery is a far bigger success than anyone anticipated. In moral terms, however, the lottery has been a far greater disaster than anyone feared and the nation has been smitten by a gambling fever akin to a gold-rush. Worse still, deregulation plans for the whole gambling business, we are informed, will "revolutionise our freedom to gamble". The economic benefits of gambling are stressed: increased revenue for the Government; large grants for various bodies. We have become a nation of gamblers. What message are we sending to young people? We are encouraging a spirit of greed, covetousness and misuse of resources.

A Treasury adviser, Professor Congdon, has rightly analysed the National Lottery when he pronounced in March that it cheats the poor and is little more than legalised fraud. He said the lottery "constitutes disguised taxation, redistributes from the poor to the rich, undermines savings and trivialises the state".

Those who protest against this prodigal waste are told that "puritanical" objections are untenable because large sums go from the Lottery Fund to good causes. The income of charities has fallen in fact because many possible donations are channelled into the lottery. A survey in January (when lottery ticket sales soared) showed that the number of people giving to charity has dropped from 30 per cent of the population to 11 per cent.

The Bible exhorts us to labour, working with our hands the thing that is good that we "may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28). Instead of being encouraged to help good causes by giving, people are now encouraged to gamble. Ninety per cent of the population have obeyed the Prime Minister's pathetic advice to "have a flutter". Surely we shall reap as we have sown.

Drug Abuse

The "drugs problem" continues to grow apace. Young people are losing their lives by taking illegal drugs despite stark warnings, and the pleas of the grief-stricken, bereaved parents of some who have died. Schools are plagued with the problem.

According to the *Times* health correspondent, the Government says that drug taking by young people is now so widespread that it must be considered the norm. Surveys show that 60 per cent of pupils under 16 have been offered drugs. Cannabis and other drugs have been tried by up to a third of 15- to

16-year-olds. In Glasgow, according to another recent survey, nearly 70 per cent of people between 16 and 30 have dabbled in drugs, while more than half have taken them in the last six months.

The adult suppliers of dangerous drugs often receive sentences of only six months or a year and in some cases no custodial sentence at all. Such punishment is not a realistic deterrent, especially when prison regimes are liberal. It is a measure of the evil activities of drug dealers that despite the many successes of customs officers in preventing drugs entering the country (they seized a record 55.6 tonnes of drugs last year, with a street value of £457.6 million), drugs continue to flow in.

IRA Terrorism

The horrific explosion of the IRA bomb at Docklands, London, signalled the resumption of the IRA's murderous atrocities. We feel for the victims and their families, who have suffered from this evil and callous attack. The bombing took place when the "peace process", according to some reports, was making progress. This demonstrates that the IRA has no desire for peace and that it was using the ceasefire to regroup and to replenish its finances and arms.

It is morally indefensible for our Government to be holding talks with men who continue to support covertly the murderers of men, women and children. One wonders what the all-party talks can possibly achieve when the IRA is clearly not prepared to accept the result of the ballot box. If the IRA fails to forsake violence permanently then the Government must cease to use half measures and proceed to defend our citizens with whatever force may be necessary.

CONCLUSION

Two main facts are underlined by this report. First, the influence of Romanism in our nation has increased greatly in recent times. Some professing Christians naively think there is no need now for a Protestant polemic by the Church, nor for Protestant organisations to be witnessing against Roman Catholicism. However, when an unprejudiced comparison is made between the character of the papacy of history and that of the "antichrist" and "man of sin" of Scripture, one cannot escape the conclusion they are one and the same. It is therefore clear from Scripture that it is incumbent on the Christian Church to pray for the downfall of the papacy and for the liberating of the millions of souls it holds in bondage. The "wound of the beast" has healed since the Reformation; it is our duty to pray that God, in His great mercy, would effect another reformation.

Secondly, we see that the children and young people of this generations are being specially targeted by Satan. It is tragic to see so many of them not knowing their right hand from their left in spiritual and moral matters. They

are being launched on a stormy sea without chart or rudder. Nationally, we have been rejecting God over the last few generations, and we are still seeing the fulfilling of the solemn warning, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third or fourth generation". Must we not pray that this rising generation will be visited by God in mercy, and that He will pour out His Spirit upon our young people to make them His own children by faith in Jesus Christ, and may we not hope that this will be so?

The signs of the times show clearly the need of the hour to be a great spiritual awakening by divine power; nothing less will suffice to cure our ills and raise us from our low state. Let us pray that God would mercifully send a mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon His Church and upon all men. How few see this to be our pressing need! May we ourselves realise it and humbly plead with the Lord that He would fulfil His promise: "And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessings" (Ezekiel 34:26).

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. J. Goldby, Convener

Sabbath Ferry Sailings on the Minch

The car ferry "Hebridean Isles" continues to sail on the Sabbath from North Uist to Skye in the summer months. Thankfully there are still no Sabbath sailings from Tarbert, Harris, and we hope that this will remain the case. We fear, however, that it may be the company's policy to begin Sabbath sailings from Stornoway in Lewis to the mainland.

A minister in Australia entered the ferry sailing debate by declaring in the *Stornoway Gazette* that the Lord's Day was a day *for believers alone*, and that there were no grounds for compelling unbelievers to keep it. He appeared to be saying that there were no scriptural grounds for the Church to deny the unbeliever the convenience of Sabbath sailings. If that is the case, what is "Remember the Sabbath Day" doing in the bosom of the Ten Commandments, which summarily comprehends God's Law for all men?

It appears to be necessary to the kind of argument this correspondent was using, to say that the term "The Lord's Day" refers to the New Testament day of worship, and that the "Sabbath Day" referred to the Old Testament day of worship. We do not differentiate between the terms in that way. The first term has respect to the Person whose resurrection is now commemorated on one day in seven, the second refers to the Law which governs that day — "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy". The Saviour referred to the New Testament day for the observance of the fourth commandment as the Sabbath Day: "Pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath day" (Matthew

24:20). The Lord was referring to the time when Jerusalem was to be destroyed, which was to take place about forty years after the Jewish Sabbath was changed.

The same correspondent told the Island readers that the Sabbath Day was *a Jewish institution*, given first at Sinai with the ceremonial law. We are to understand that as such, the Sabbath is exclusively Jewish, and that it was abrogated with the ceremonial law. But we read that after God had created all things in the space of six days that He rested on the seventh: "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:3). This does not mean that God made a Sabbath for Himself on the seventh day, as our distant disputant seemed to suggest, but that God sanctified it for man's use. "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27). This sanctifying of the seventh day took place therefore before the Jewish nation existed, and must be considered as an ordinance given at creation for all men.

The fact is that heathen societies have a notion of the significance of the seventh day. Turretin, a successor of Calvin at Geneva, quotes Clement of Alexandria (180-201 AD): "Not only the Hebrews, but also the Greeks hold each seventh day to be sacred." He says that Clement proves this from Hesiod, Homer (writers of the 8th century BC) and other Gentile Ancients, by whom the seventh day is said to be held as sacred. If these tribes and societies had this notion of a sacred seventh day they did not borrow it from the Jews, for they and their religion were despised. The observance of a special seventh day must, in that case, be explained by the fact that it was a Creation ordinance, the observance of which was transmitted, however vaguely, to other nations by successive generations, from the beginning of time.

It is, moreover, plain from the Scriptures that the Sabbath was observed before the Law was published at Sinai. While in Exodus chapter 20 we read of the Law being given to the children of Israel; in chapter 16:23 we find that the Sabbath Day was already observed.

It is therefore evident, that the Sabbath Day was given to mankind at the dawn of time and not to the Jewish people exclusively. As Dr. Kennedy said: "There was a Sabbath long before there was a Jew." As such it is to be observed by all men, perpetually.

Extended Sabbath Opening of Licensed Bingo Clubs and Casinos in Scotland

The Bingo Association for Great Britain has submitted representations to the Home and Health Department at the Scottish Office saying that there is now a genuine demand for Sabbath afternoon openings of premises for betting. These premises already open on Sabbath evenings. The representations claim that social attitudes have changed, and that the demand for this facility should be met. The Committee has made suitable representations to the Scottish Office against any such extension. The national guilt of trifling with the providence and sovereignty of the Most High at the altar of chance is aggravated by the sin of doing so on the Sabbath Day.

The Protection of Children at Work

The Education and Industry Department of the Scottish Office proposes to amend the provision in the 1937 Act that contains the restriction on Sabbath working for children. The change is not designed to protect our children, but to comply with a directive from the European Community. The proposal is to increase the number of hours which children may work on the Sabbath Day. At present children aged 13 upwards are permitted by the law of the land to work two hours on the Lord's Day. The Sabbath Observance Committee wrote to the Scottish Office stating the great detriment to our children involved in this proposal.

Spiritual detriment is inevitably involved in unnecessary Sabbath work. We have a responsibility to care for and consult our children's best interests at all levels, not least their spiritual interests. If we cared for our children we would do nothing that would interfere with their attendance at the means ordained by Christ for their spiritual good, the public and private worship of God. This proposal sets before parents suffering pecuniary hardship a temptation to send their children to work on the Sabbath and keep them from attending the means of grace.

Sabbath Trading

It was reported that the state of legislation regarding Sabbath trading is now such that, "Legislatively there is no further to go". Nothing now remains, but slightly shorter hours, to show that for over two centuries there was on the statute book a law protecting the Sabbath Day from the covetous nature of men. The Prime Minister is reported to have argued that the legislation regarding Sabbath trading is old-fashioned, out-of-date, patronising, and that it should go.

It is now proposed to allow ministers to change the law without bringing primary legislation before the Parliament. This opens the way for the scrapping of whatever restrictions remain at present in place. A writer in our magazine notes that "our nation is now fast accelerating down the slippery slope and only divine, sovereign (and) merciful intervention will rescue it from the fearful destruction that — in the absence of repentance — lies ahead."

A former leader of our nation, Winston Churchill, spoke of the Lord's Day as a "Divine and priceless institution, the necessary pause in the national life. It is the birthright of every British subject, our responsibility, privilege and duty to hand on to posterity." How quickly and how grievously the nation has degenerated from such a view of Sabbath observance! May the Lord of the Sabbath yet arise and plead this cause which is His own.

**JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS
COMMITTEE'S REPORT
Rev. John MacLeod, Convener**

THE JEWISH and Foreign Missions Committee has continued, over another year, to give its attention to those matters which concern our Church's activities on the African mission-field. Almost ninety-two years have now elapsed since the Rev. John B. Radasi, with very meagre resources, established the work at Ingwenya. At the present time, with our sphere of labour vastly extended, even across national frontiers, it is not the lack of material resources that gives us most concern, but the lack of ordained ministers of the Gospel. Year after year we draw attention to this in order that the praying people of the Church, at home and abroad, may become all the more importunate in petitioning the Lord of the Harvest to send forth labourers and thus supply the need. He is bound to answer in His own good time. We are thankful that our highly-valued ministers in Zimbabwe have, hitherto, been sustained in body and soul and that they continue to labour in their respective congregations. The Rev. John Goldby and the Rev. James R. Tallach went to Kenya as deputies in 1995, the period covered by these visits was from July to October. In September, the Rev. Neil Ross visited Zimbabwe and then came to Kenya where he was expected to remain for six weeks. As there was no suitable person to take the services and the Committee being reluctant to leave the nursing sisters on their own, a request was made to Mr. Ross to remain at Sengera until the arrival of Mr. Ian MacLean. This Mr. Ross agreed to do and we are grateful to him and to his wife and, also, to the Dingwall congregation and the Northern Presbytery, for helping us over this difficult period.

Zimbabwe

In recent times, the Ingwenya congregation has been bereft of two of its elders — Mazwi Sibanda and Cecil Sobantu — men who, in their own sphere, did their utmost to extend the bounds of Christ's kingdom in their midst.

The John Tallach Secondary School continues to enjoy a high reputation as an educational establishment and this in great measure is to be attributed to the professionalism and devotion to duty of our Headmistress and staff. Most of us have no conception of how heavy their work-load is over the hours of the school day, not to mention the many extra-curricular duties which fall to them and which they cheerfully discharge. We are deeply grateful to them. Miss Marion Graham was home on furlough from April to September and Miss Katie Mary MacAulay is, at the time of writing this report, home in Breasclate, but is due to return to Ingwenya at the end of April (D.V.). Miss Norma MacLean is due home soon to enjoy her well-earned furlough. Mr. Dame Sibanda has taken over the onerous duties of boarding master in place

of Mr. James Mpofu, who has taken over the responsibilities which were shouldered so willingly by the late Mr. David Ndlovu.

At Mbuma, the medical and nursing staff have continued to run the hospital with customary efficiency. Dr. Hak continues to exercise her medical skills to the benefit of people living in the Mbuma area. In the summer, her brother spent some time at Mbuma and, by all reports, proved to be a very useful, versatile member of the mission community over the period of his stay. More recently, we believe, her parents paid a visit to Zimbabwe. Miss Ann Zekveld's furlough is due to start in May and we hope that she will, later in the year, see her way to resuming her work at Mbuma with renewed vigour. Miss Lia Terlouw was home in Holland for four months towards the end of 1995 and Miss Louise Leiper is now well into her second year at Mbuma. Miss Margaret MacAskill, the Hospital Matron, was home on a private visit for a few weeks at the beginning of the year.

Mission administration continues to be centred at 9 Robertson Street and, by all accounts, Mr. Mziya and his staff have their hands full. In August, Mr. Donald MacDonald, C.A., visited Zimbabwe and his expertise in accountancy was put to good use while there. His help is much appreciated. Transport and building matters, as already stated, are now in the capable hands of Mr. James Mpofu.

At Thembiso we continue to do what we can to help children whose lot in providence is such that they need help and care from infancy. Some are orphans and we believe that in this environment they receive the love and affection which under normal circumstances they would receive from parents. Mr. Edward Sayi Moyo is now the Superintendent.

Malawi

In accordance with the decision of the Synod last year, our Mission activities in Malawi were brought to an end. There was some difficulty in effecting the proposed settlement with the men concerned, but the Rev. J. R. Tallach and the Rev. N. Ross saw to it that the agreement was put into a legal form which was signed by all parties. The house in Blantyre remains in our possession. The young man, Nedson Banda, mentioned in previous reports, has now applied to the Zimbabwe Presbytery to be received as a member and also as a student studying for the ministry. We understand that this application has still to come before the Presbytery.

Kenya

In June, 1995, shortly after the Hospital had begun to function, Dr. Christine MacDonald again succumbed to malaria and typhoid and it was necessary to bring her back to the UK, to be admitted to the London Hospital for Tropical Diseases. We are glad to report that she has fully recovered, but her resignation together with that of her husband was tendered in June, 1995, although Mr. MacDonald continued to work until September. The Committee is grateful to the MacDonalds for all the work which they did. In the Lord's

providence, Miss Jessie Coote had by that time settled in, having arrived from Zimbabwe to take up the Matron's post, and her long experience of running the Mbema Hospital was now invaluable in these new surroundings and at a time when difficulties were being encountered. The nursing sisters, Celia Renes and Truus Ringleberg ably assisted her and, without doubt, these women were instrumental in saving lives.

The Rev. James R. Tallach agreed to go out to Sengera in August as Church deputy, but also in the hope that the Kenyan authorities would permit him to work as a doctor in the hospital and thus help the hard-pressed Matron and nursing sisters. The authorities agreed, and the help given was much appreciated. Mr. Ian MacLean, Daviot, who is a builder to trade, offered his services to the Committee and he went out in January, 1996, to take up the duties of Administrator/Treasurer. Mr. MacLean was accompanied by his wife and three young children and the family appear to have settled down well. A Field Committee has been set up to deal with the day-to-day affairs of the Mission. Its constitution is similar to that of the Zimbabwe Field Committee.

The Committee would express its gratitude to our friends in Holland who so generously continue to provide financial support. We believe that there are many throughout the Free Presbyterian Church, at home and abroad, and also in Holland, who take a prayerful interest in the work and that is not only a source of encouragement to us, but, above all, to the hard-working, self-denying men and women who are labouring on the mission-field and bearing the burden and heat of the day. The Master has a word of encouragement for them: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. Ndebele

THE YEAR 1995 will long be remembered as a the period of fearful droughts throughout the South Africa region. According to the law of supply and demand used in economics, the food prices, especially on very essential house items, kept on rising to unprecedented heights. These measures meant that the poor of the country had it hard. However, one's thanks in this regard must be to the Lord who made the world community nations donate famine relief to help our Government to supply free food to the desperately needy and also to introduce the grain loan scheme to the able-bodied.

Churches as voluntary organisations also helped very greatly so that the cases of deaths due to famine were minimised. We would like to express our sense of thankfulness to the Church in Scotland who have helped greatly in our need.

My visit to Canada in April was an eye-opener to me as regards the great need of ministers of the Gospel in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The Canadian Church desperately need a settled minister there among them. Mr. Schuit is to be thanked for his usefulness to the cause in that country, but as a man and at his age, his usefulness is very limited. It is true, of course, that the Lord uses what He wills and it has been the weak things of the earth that He has chosen to use to confound the things which are mighty.

While in Scotland, we were highly impressed with the interest in our Mission which the Dutch friends have. When thousands gathered on a Mission Day to support the Mbuma Zending, one felt ashamed of one's unthankfulness to the Most High for raising up so much support for an African cause which, I believe, lies in the hearts of our Dutch friends. May the Lord in His mercy grant them all His grace to the salvation of their immortal souls.

In Britain we were greeted with great hospitality in the home of the Rev. Keith Watkins, where we spent the weekend. It was a pleasure to preach to the London congregation which has signs of growth. The work is the Lord's and it will grow to His own measure and ours is to be up and doing while it is day.

In Scotland we spent a day or so with the old friends in the manse of the Rev. and Mrs. MacLean at a meeting there with the young of the congregation. We felt happy to answer questions regarding the Mission during our travels to the North of Scotland and the Islands. One great need was more and more being expressed in the atmosphere — and that is that there is need of Gospel ministers. At the Synod our need as a Church was expressed most loudly.

We also would like to thank all the friends who extended their kindness to us in the Church in Scotland. At Ingwenya, one of the brightest times in the congregation was the visit in September of the Rev. Neil Ross, his wife and their two daughters, at the communion services when many people attended. The Bulawayo congregation did well to augment the numbers. It was said by many who attended the services that it was one of the happiest times in their lives.

Our Mission very much felt the pains of death among the African members of our workforce. To mention a few, these included Mr. D. Ndlovu, A. Ndaba and S. Mlilo — the painter and the cook at the boarding school kitchen. Following very closely that shade of sorrow has been the removal by death of two of our old elders at Ingwenya. Both, once or twice, were members of the Synod. Mr. Sobantu was three times a member of the Synod and Mr. Mazwi once. Both were eighty years plus. May the Lord raise up some in our congregations to take the places of the departed.

This year has began with promises of good harvests and as a rule our congregations should find it easier to fulfil their Church obligations. We would give thanks to the Lord for the rain and may the downpourings of His Spirit be experienced among us. The preaching of the Word in all our stations with the usual communions went on well during the year. Brethren pray for us.

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. Ndebele

THE BULAWAYO POPULATION is growing rapidly and so are the populations of most of our city centres. Statistics reveal that there are over a million people living in the lower density and the outskirts of the city. Having this number, facts would spell out the Gospel needs of our towns.

Many religious activities are carried out in full in the towns of our countries, but our problem in this regard is the spread of the false religions which are very active in the cities. The country people as a rule do not change their religion as readily as the townspeople. The menace in Africa is the advent of false teachers advancing their false doctrines. Among the false teachers that are a pest to us in Zimbabwe are the Pentecostals in their various groups, like the Assemblies of God, and among the Africans new groups are formed almost daily. For any little correction as to doctrine or behaviour, the guilty will immediately form a new group that will agree with the evil. As a result, there are crowds of organisations known as the Assemblies of God who correspond to the witch doctors, diviners and all the species of the old heathenism that has kept the African people perpetually as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Ours, friends, is a vicious circle of falling from one religious evil to another. As for the coming among us of the Holy Spirit of God to enlighten Africa, Zimbabwe and Bulawayo city are to be considered fortunate. On driving from Ingwenya on Sabbath to the Church in Bulawayo one bumps into Sabbath breaking and religious heathenism of every type and kind. Our cry is that the Lord in His mercy would send us converted ministers who would preach the soul-saving Gospel.

Brethren pray for us.

THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT

Rev. A. B. Ndebele

OUR PRIME INTEREST in this social institution is to teach the children given to us at a very early stage the whole Word of God. Our secondary interest is to provide a home for many children whose parents have either died or cast them away and left them as orphans with nobody to care for them. Applications for a place or places brought by the police or by some organisation are considered by the staff on the spot.

Connected with the Ebenezer Scripture Mission is the Reformed Bookroom, which is selling religious books of our own persuasion. Bibles in the vernacular have been in short supply, but demand has been great. In our last meeting it was agreed to increase the Ndebele, Shona and Zulu supplies. No

doubt it is most encouraging that there is much demand for Bibles. It is a step in the right direction.

There is also a man specially employed to supervise Bible instruction in the various study groups in the Western suburbs of Bulawayo. With that assignment we hope that many people are reached by the Word of God.

NEW CANAAN REPORT

Rev. Z. Mazvabo

WHEN AT FIRST I came out to start the work of preaching the Gospel of Christ to the people of Mashonaland, in the latter part of the year 1982, the Presbytery kindly appointed two elderly men, both of whom came from Ingwenya Mission, to serve as assessor elders in the new field. They were Mr. Cecil Sobantu and Mr. Joseph Mazwi. It is with deep sorrow of heart that I now have to record here that the Lord hath taken both of them away by death into the world of spirits. They followed each other very closely, as if one could not do without the other. Surely we are "like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth" (Psalm 90:5-6). After the very first service which was conducted under a tree, in the heat of that exceptionally hot spring, I was going to Ingwenya by invitation to their communion — and who came to supply but the late Mr. Cecil Sobantu and he preached in the home of the Moyos who were kind to us and to the cause for a long time. May the Lord remember Mr. Moyo and his family. His daughter lives in the town with her children and earns a living by selling vegetables at a local market.

The late Mr. Cecil Sobantu always made it a point to see her and reason with her whenever he came to Zvishavane. Her repeated excuse is that the Psalm singing reminds her of her late mother. Mike Moyo, who was the means of bringing the Church to New Canaan, is married with three children and teaches at the mine school. I notice that he goes to the African Reformed Church. Kindly remember him at the throne of grace. How I often wish that this invitation would be blessed to him: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you, come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" (Numbers 10:29). And verse 32: "And it shall be if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." There are three other girls in the family who are happily married and three other boys whom I shall not be able to mention one by one. May the Lord yet gather them all. In his early days the late Mr. Sobantu was an oxen driver, which was no small post in those days. The oxen drew wagons laden with asbestos from Shabanie to the small town of Selukwe (which you might be able to connect with Mr. Ian Smith), where the asbestos was loaded on to railway wagons. The point is that during this time the late Mr. Sobantu acquired a bit of the Shona

language which he now revised and applied in the preaching of the Gospel and in meetings of the Kirk Session, making him most useful above his fellows in this part of the Mission. On one occasion, when I had again gone to assist at another communion, the late Mr. Joseph Mazwi had come to supply and, there being no means of transport available, Mr. Mazwi walked the fifteen kilometres to New Canaan and walked back in the afternoon. These two elderly men worked tirelessly and contributed greatly to the planting of the Church in Mashonaland. We now have four elders, three at New Canaan and one in town. The town congregation is still small, but steady. It is hoped that as soon as a suitable place of worship is obtained the congregation will grow.

For a long time now the rod of famine has been upon our backs. Perhaps for people in distant and well watered lands it might not be easy to understand how cruel a famine can be. It just upsets every avenue of life and brings misunderstanding in an otherwise peaceful home. Father begins to think that mother is wasteful, while mother and children think that father is not doing enough to provide for the family. Young boys and girls have to move away from home early in search of employment — so that not only is their social life affected, but also their religious life. This last year the Government lent food to the people. I think that was well thought of and it achieved the goal of relieving the hungry and inspiring hope and confidence to the desperate. Happily the Lord remembered us this season and gave us most welcome rain. We have every reason to be thankful unto the Lord for the rains.

The second Sabbath of April will be the communion for our Chibi congregation, God willing. Chibi is the name of the district in which the congregation is situated, but it has been agreed that the congregation be called Munaka congregation, after the mountain near which the Church is built. "Munaka" means "beautiful". One of the men who was regular in attendance in the congregation died recently. He had desired to see the Kirk Session at New Canaan in January, but the Kirk Session preferred to see him and others of that congregation during their own communion in April, but he was removed before then. He was well spoken of. Mr. Chitera was a Zionist and left to join us. Without consulting anybody he sent away the younger and second wife. There were no children in the marriage.

My sight does not get better and I do not expect it to be better, but it is much better than I expected it to be at this time and I must say I am surprised and really thankful. I have no reason to complain at all. The Lord Himself gives encouragement: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT

Marion Graham, Headmistress

LOOKING BACK, 1995 seems to have gone very quickly but, in fact, with drought and famine always hovering over us, the months passed very slowly. The year must have been one of the hottest and driest years Ingwenya has ever experienced, yet in the Lord's kindness we managed to keep going in school right to the end of the year.

The increase in costs is enormous. It's hard to believe that ten years ago a term's fees were about \$100, whereas now they are around \$1,000 — and this is much less than many other private schools charge. The Government should give us \$10.00(!) per pupil per term, but this has not been received for many years. The only payments made are salaries for teachers, which effectively makes them Government employees who can be transferred at a moment's notice, and grants to the Mission in place of salaries for Missionary teachers. These grants are the lifeline we use to subsidise the fees for day school pupils, many of whose parents have neither ready cash nor, in the past year, crops with which to feed them — let alone provide other necessities for themselves.

In the past two years a lot of money and energy has been spent by us paying and assisting a firm, Hubert Davies, who were to provide us with additional water supply. We fulfilled all our commitments, but they have defaulted time and again, promising to come to complete the work and then turning up only to look at it and go away again. Now because of deterioration the whole matter is in the hands of our insurance company and we are very doubtful about seeing it completed!

During Term 2 I went on leave and Miss C. M. MacAulay expertly kept the school organised and running with the help of Miss N. MacLean, and for a short time, Stephen Ramsbottom from England, who was gaining experience before entering teacher training. A short time thus spent, with *an interest* in children and *teaching*, can give invaluable help in such a situation, as there are so many extras to be dealt with in a boarding school situation. Teaching is only a small part of the work for those organising, no matter how heavy a timetable he or she has.

Staff changes tend to be quite a problem and this year was no exception as teachers were promoted or left because of marriage. One huge change for us was that Mr. J. B. Mpofo, who had been a teacher and boarding master in the school for over twenty years, retired. He, as a Church elder, had also set the tone for the religious side of the school, had assisted us in Sabbath School, and been Mr. Ndebele's regular support in preaching, precenting and interpreting. We cannot emphasise too much how we have appreciated him over the years and what a blank was left when he went, even though his expertise is still being used by the Mission.

In the kind providence of the Lord we were eventually able to appoint Mr. Dame Sibanda, a policeman who was on the point of retiring, but is still quite

young and very fit. Mr. Sibanda was a pupil in this school in the late '60s and though not a Church member, is a very attentive hearer and is willing to help us with worship in the Boarding School. Though he has had a few teething problems, he is showing that he can exert a good influence and firm control among the pupils. He is also able to act as a driver and to supervise many facets of the school organisation. His knowledge of police law, etc., has already been invaluable to us in certain rather tricky problems we have had to deal with. His wife, who has also come with their young son to live here (so that we have the added bonus of another family home on the Mission), is also very helpful. She is able to assist us in the Sewing Department and is learning to take over responsibility for the Library. From almost despairing to find anyone suitable, we can only be thoroughly grateful to the Lord for giving us a couple who fit in so well and have so many qualities which are of value to us. Their cheerful, willing co-operation in everything is an added bonus and blessing from the Lord.

Although the school was not directly affected, the staff especially were very sad at the passing of our two senior elders, Mr. Sobantu and Mr. Mazwi. We are, of course, missing their interest in our work and also I am sure their prayers for the welfare of pupils and teachers.

The exam results this year were a bit lower than previous, though the top pupils did better than usual; thirty of them achieving the coveted five (or better) As in their subjects. Three of our pupils, two girls and a boy, got nine As. The lower average is caused because over the years we have broadened the base for taking pupils into school. Nowadays probably a quarter are not really fit for sitting the Cambridge Examination, but as there is no other course they can take, they just have to do it, if they are to remain in school.

We still need the assistance of overseas members. Graduates do not need to have done teacher training, but must have teaching subjects in their degrees. In a recent inspectorial report it was recommended that we raise "the academic level" of our staff. This is difficult to do, as graduates here are always on the promotion ladder and practically all graduates we have had here have been promoted — even this week our Resource Room teacher, after being permitted by us to take leave to do a two-year graduate course at University, has with a week's notice been promoted to lecturer and removed!

However, this gives us a lever if any overseas graduates wish to apply. The work is routine and takes all one's energies, but when we do see "end products" like Mr. Sibanda himself, and some of the young teachers who have returned to teach for us, we cannot but feel it is all worthwhile.

MBUMA CHURCH REPORT

Rev. P. Mzamo

FIRSTLY WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE the kindness and the longsuffering of the Lord towards us in our poverty and unworthiness. We are still on mercy's ground, where His arm is not shortened to save and His ear is not heavy to hear. Oh that we would be given grace to cry the cry of the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The Church work continued as in past years under the Head of the Church. Church services on the Lord's Day were regularly conducted throughout the year. People of all ages came to hear the Word or came under the preaching of the Word. Weekday prayer meetings were regularly conducted. Church elders continued to show unabated diligence in the work, being out every Lord's Day as the Lord gave them a measure of health and grace in the soul. On other Sabbath Days some were out as early as 9 a.m. and back home at 4 p.m.

The seven communions in the year, between Mbuma and Zenka, when the Lord's Supper was administered, attracted large numbers who came under the preaching of the Gospel of the Son of God. We need the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the hearers and the speakers so that there would be those would say like the apostle Paul: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew and to the Gentile."

In the good old days, our Church deputies to the Mission field took several weeks visiting different schools, taking services, shaking hands with school-children and talking to adults. They returned home with full knowledge of the extent of the work in each district. Now that there are many congregations, which are far more important than schools, it would be very good and more profitable to our congregations, if our present-day Church deputies could visit as many as possible. They would return home with full knowledge of the Church work of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Zimbabwe. These flying visits done in our day are not much appreciated by our people.

This year we are indeed blessed with plenty of rain which should be the means of providing enough bread throughout the country, even at Binga. When I see crops of different kinds ripening in the fields, my thoughts are on the nearness to each other of these two petitions in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us our daily bread" and "Forgive us our debts". Here there is a need of pardon of sin in order to eat our daily bread to the glory of God, the Giver — not to eat to the glory of the devil and self, which will be to our damnation.

The famine was biting severely in some families, but it did not claim a life. There was generous support from the home Church and the Government gave loans of maize to many families according to the size of each family. The Welfare fed children and gave old people maize. All these came in good time and continued. Our sincere thanks are due to you all.

My special sincere thanks are due to all our Church people, throughout the Church and to our dear friends in Holland for the continuing generous support to the work in the Mission field.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

ZENKA CHURCH REPORT

Rev. P. Mzamo

THE CHURCH ELDERS kept the congregations together in the midst of wolves in sheep's skins. The Church services and prayer meetings were regularly held, including prayer meetings at Zenka and Nkayi on Thursday. The illness of two Church elders at Zenka and two at Nkayi, thus reducing the numbers of elders, increased the amount of work on the remaining elders. They now have to be all out every Sabbath Day.

The coming home of Mr. James Mpofu from Ingwenya is a big help, not only in the Nkayi area, but even to nearby areas. He is also a great help at Church courts and administration.

People of all ages continue to come under the preaching of the Gospel. We are encouraged by the Lord: "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." Let us continue asking for the Holy Spirit. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers unto his harvest. For indeed the harvest is great, but the labourers are few."

Binga Project

The following congregations continue to supply Binga monthly: Mbuma, Ingwenya, Bulawayo, Zenka and Nkayi. The pole and mud places of worship at Cemenda and Senka fell down during heavy rains in January. At both places, worship is now held in a school. There is an urgent need of putting up permanent buildings at these places. We have Church sites at both places and pay yearly rents for these to the local Government. Funds are much needed to continue this work to completion. We appeal to all who have the Cause of Christ at heart to give generously to this work.

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. J. Hak

Staff

WE WERE VERY SAD about the death of Mr. David Ndlovu in April, after a long illness. He has left an empty place among us.

Mr. Manford Mloyi had been appointed as a catechist at the hospital. He actually started the work officially in January, 1996. We hope that his work among the patients may be blessed. We are glad to have Louise Leiper on the staff since January, 1995. However, with the present numbers of SRNs it is still difficult to cope. May it be said once more that *more qualified nurses* are needed. A suitable clerk to take over more administrative duties presently done by the "sisters" would be of great help. Also required is a qualified laboratory technician to assist Sister Terlouw in the laboratory. In short: too much has to be done by too few people and staff get overworked. Another advantage of having more staff would be that we would have more time and energy to learn the language, which is a real drawback at the moment.

Building

Two cooking shelters for relatives of the patients have been replaced by some nicer structures, at a different site. A shelter has been built to accommodate the old grinding mill from Ingwenya, which will still be useful at the hospital.

Transport

The ambulance which was involved in an accident in January had to be replaced by a new one, which was bought locally.

Statistics

The overall picture is much the same as compared with 1994. There is a considerable drop in the number of admissions. The main reason for that is that there was not so much malaria as the previous year. Malaria is not even among the five major health problems, while it took the second place in patients of five years and over, and the fourth place in children under five years. There were also no other major epidemics.

The number of HIV cases are clearly increasing, which means that we are much more selective with testing. We do not test all patients because it is so time-consuming. The result is that most patients are tested to confirm clinical diagnosis, which means a higher percentage of positives. The total number of tests do not accurately reflect the number of patients we see.

Communication

We have had no radio contact with Bulawayo for years. However, there are plans for a telephone line at Mbuma (via a French company). The prospect is that this will be ready by June 1996, but seeing is believing!

Conclusion

It would be impossible to run the hospital without assistance from overseas. There is hardly any income from hospital fees, so we still rely on Government grants and on donations from overseas. We would like to thank you all for your contributions in whatever way. What we need most, though, is the blessing of the Lord, without whom the work will all be in vain. We are longing for a spiritual revival in the Church and in the community. May the Lord send more labourers into His vineyard.

STATISTICS 1995

Admissions	
General	972
Maternity	606
T.B.	51
Discharges	
General	1,223
Maternity	600
T.B.	40
Bed Occupancy	
General	13,158
Maternity	2,564
T.B.	3,046
Deaths	
General, including neonatal deaths.....	72
Maternity	0
T.B.	0
Outpatient Attendances	
New cases	14,765
Total cases	18,795
Confinements	490
Live Births	490
Still Births.....	5
Neonatal Deaths (first month).	10
Caesarian sections	1
Antenatal Clinic Attendances	3,573
Child Welfare Clinic Attendances	5,775
Minor Operations	
General	229
Maternity	156

X-Ray	
Number of patients	508
Number of films taken.....	715
Ambulance	
Number of trips (to Nkayi or Bulawayo).....	213
Distance covered in kilometres.....	53,668

Five Major Health Problems

In the age group below 5 years:

1. Acute respiratory infections
2. Skin disease
3. Diarrhoea
4. Eye disease
5. Nutritional deficiencies

In the age group of 5 to 14 years:

1. Acute respiratory infections
2. Skin disease
3. Injuries
4. Eye disease
5. Diarrhoea

In the group of 15 years and over:

1. Acute respiratory infections
2. Sexually transmitted diseases
3. Dental conditions
4. Skin disease
5. Diarrhoea

ZIMBABWE MISSION TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. B. W. S. Mziya

I THOUGHT THIS YEAR I would try and familiarise some of the people that might have no idea of what 9 Robertson Street Office is all about. I have heard visitors coming to this place say: "I never knew this place was like this. My, you are busy!"

This is the nerve centre of the Mission in Zimbabwe, the administrative centre where all the paperwork is done. We are situated about ten minutes' walk from the city centre in a house with two bedrooms and a lounge for use by Mission staff when in town, visitors when in Zimbabwe, and a recent development has been when some patients and schoolchildren have been accommodated here! Three other rooms are reserved for the assistant book-keeper and I have a den which I share with the Building/Transport Manager. It would be nice if we could have a room each. There are times when he is conducting interviews and I shouldn't be there — and vice versa!

The accounts are paid and kept here, the payments for the Hospital, general workers, local missionaries and some teachers are worked out and cheques written out here, the co-ordination of Mission activities is carried out here, the Field Committee and Thembiso Ebenezer Meetings are held here, some Kirk Sessions also meet here. In addition to all this, interviews of all kinds take place here; e.g., when the school wants to meet parents to discuss disciplinary cases, they meet here. When the Transport and Building Manager wants to interview someone for a building quotation, they meet here. Parents and children wanting information about examination results and school places come here. Parents wanting to meet their children from school and personnel travelling to the school and hospital wait here. Sales representatives of all kinds come here before going to Ingwenya or to Mbumba. On an average day, we see about fifty people on a variety of topics and on all sorts of errands.

The school truck comes at least twice a week to do orders for the school. At least once a week we expect a car from the hospital either with patients or with patients and orders for the hospital. There are times when the ambulance from the hospital turns up more than three times a week — especially when there is an epidemic. Right now we are in the middle of one — malaria is taking its toll. Sometimes the ambulance comes and goes during the night — and we only get a report through the watchman the following morning. We have someone here 24 hours a day to look after whoever turns up, even after hours.

I have a very conscientious, seasoned, hard-working and dependable team in the persons of Clifford Moyo (book-keeper) and Mrs. Constance Ncube (assistant book-keeper). Clifford's parents are both members in full communion in the Bulawayo congregation. He is a very keen listener himself. Mrs. Ncube and Trust Ncube, her husband, are also members in full communion in the Bulawayo congregation. He is a science and maths teacher at John Tallach Boarding School. With these two in the office I can afford visits to the various stations out of town — and indeed out of the country — and be confident the work will continue without any major disasters.

While Clifford's duties include entering transactions into cash books, the preparation of ledgers, books up to trial balance, etc., I dread to ask him to produce a balance sheet because he is already overloaded with other duties that come from the school and the hospital on a constant flow. It would save the Mission loads of money if the auditors would only come for the audit, but they end up doing some of the accounting as well.

Mrs. Ncube is kept busy with the payment of (creditor's) accounts, the remittance of monthly tax, the writing of the petty cash book, the banking of income (from the schools, the hospital and the Deacons' Courts), the preparation of wages and salaries, and the completion of P6 forms (Income Tax at the end of the tax year). She also willingly acts as clerk and receptionist.

We could also use the services of a filing clerk/receptionist, whose duties would include the filing of delivery notes, invoices, statements, bank pay-in slips, bank statements, presented cheques, etc., the receipt of monies, the

sorting of incoming mail (schools, hospital), telephone calls and the arrangement of appointments. Presently these duties are spread among the three of us.

My own duties vary between the supervision of the office staff, the signing and passing of cheques, the compiling of minutes (Field Committee and Thembiso/Ebenezer Boards), visiting the different outstations with or without the Building/Transport Manager, weekday prayer meetings in Bulawayo, Sabbath preaching in Bulawayo and occasionally in Binga, etc. I do my own typing.

Presently Clifford and I fight over one, almost ten-year-old computer — he needs it for his accounts, I need it for my reports, correspondence, minutes, etc. We have two photocopiers, older than the computer, with no parts in town and in a state of constant breakdown. We could use a second computer, with an updated package for Clifford's office.

What would do without good old Sibongile Moyo (Mrs. Ncube), who keeps the place spick and span and makes the tea for the office staff, prepares the meals and teas at meeting and also has the bedrooms ready for use at all times? Our visitors have also appreciated the presence of two trusty men's best friends — Scooby and Chummy, whose barks at night have assured all that the place is well guarded.

In the book of Joshua, chapter 1 and verses 1 and 2, we read: "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." While we still mourn the parting of a faithful, hard-working, dedicated, tireless son of the Church in Zimbabwe, in the late David Ndlovu, who went to be with his Master on 2nd May, 1995, we are given strength by the Master of the vineyard to continue in His strength, for: "God reigneth, let the earth be glad." One thing is true — the Lord lacks no resources. God has buried His servant David, but has not buried His work. What a blessing David was to Zimbabwe. What a great work he accomplished! It is a solemn time in the Church of God when godly men are taken away.

Inflation stands at about 30-40 per cent. Although amounts received from donations, Congregational Sustentation Fund contributions, interest, sundry income, school and boarding fees, hospital and ambulance fees, salary and expenditure grants, reveal an overall increment of approximately 30 per cent over last year's, we found ourselves busily occupied in more or less the usual capital expenditure, although at a much slower pace — as I reported we might, in last year's report.

The Imprest System of funding brought into operation during the year is working very well, because at no time have we found ourselves stranded for money.

So far we have been enabled, on advice, to restrict our capital projects to the amount of funds we have tried to save for that particular year.

The monies for the Sustentation Fund for one year overlap into the following year, thus deflating one year's funds and inflating another year's, therefore giving a wrong picture. This is sometimes the case, even with donations. We need to shift our deadline for receipt of Sustentation Fund to November of each year.

There is a reduction in the income of the General Fund, because we made no gain in the sale of fixed assets.

The Motor Vehicle expenses continue to be a cause for concern until proper effective control can be found in the use of Mission vehicles. The support of the different heads of departments is sought in this respect. Consideration should be given to the use of log books. Mbuma Hospital has had a hand in this and are encouraged to keep it up.

Impulse buying of items of furniture and fittings is on the increase and is another cause for concern. The same applies to the use of the telephone.

Because of the amount of rain received this year, we expect a decline in the amount of money set aside for Famine Relief.

May we be allowed once more to express our indebtedness to all who have given in cash and in kind to the Cause of Christ in these parts, the latest being an anonymous donation from Canada. We pray for strength and wisdom to become trustworthy trustees.

"Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isaiah 60:20).

BUILDING AND TRANSPORT REPORT

James Mpofu

WE HAVE EVERY REASON to be thankful to the Most High for enabling us to continue the work that is before us. I must say that we still feel the great loss of our dear friend David Ndlovu.

Building

The building part is going on slowly in all our stations.

Mbuma Mission Hospital. Maintenance has been done. The gateman's house has been fitted with bigger windows and a kitchen has been built for the sick relatives to use during the time they are in the Mission.

Primary School toilets have been built with tin vents according to the requirements of Health Inspectors.

The church at Singwangombe has been built and is now ready for use.

Zenka Mission. Not much has been done. We are in the process of making or moulding bricks to start a three-roomed classroom.

Ingwenya Mission. A few teachers houses have been made up to take more teachers or to have more bedrooms. A toilet has been made for the boarding staff.

Bulawayo. The church was renovated after cracks were found in parts of the building and some tiles needed repair as they were broken. All this has been done.

New Canaan. The project of storing water was done as New Canaan has water problems. The water was stored successfully this time.

Chibi church has been built and is nearly ready for use. We are finishing off at **Chiedza** with fitting of locks and hanging of doors.

Transport

The ministers' cars are still very good and roadworthy.

The Mazda used by the doctor is still in good condition. **The ambulance** is running well. **The old ambulance** can still be used in many parts of the country. **The small lorry** is very useful and does orders for Mbuma Hospital from town.

The Nissan used by me is doing very well and still has more years to see.

The Sierra and Nissan cars in Bulawayo are running very well.

The school bus, which does work for the boarding school, is still very good.

We thank the Most High for keeping us in health for another year in time. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12).

REPORT OF OMOREMBE HEALTH CENTRE, SENGERA, KENYA

J. A. Coote, Matron

AS WE LOOK BACK over the past year, we have much cause for thankfulness to the Most High for His goodness and longsuffering towards us here at Sengera. We were able to open the Health Centre in April and were quite surprised how busy we were, considering the problems in past years. At the end of the year we have a well established small institution running smoothly.

In the kind providence of the Lord the following people were on the staff at the beginning of the year: Rev. J. Goldby, Mr. Ian MacLean, Mr. Donald and Dr. Christine MacDonald, Sisters Celia Renes, Truus Ringelberg and Jessie A. Coote. We were all conscious of having been brought together from different parts, some with experience on the Mission field for fourteen, seventeen and twenty years. Our desire is that the Gospel will go forth amongst the Kisii people and be watered by the Holy Spirit and that fruit will follow in due time.

Sengera is only a small part of Kisiiland. There are two million Kisiis and about 50,000 live around Sengera. In the middle of the year, President Moi visited the area and the district was divided into two; Sengera falls in about the middle of the new district. Some of the local people were expressing interest in making our Health Centre into a District Hospital. Sengera is over 6,000 feet above sea level and the equator goes through Kenya just to the north of us. The terrain is hilly and the Mission is set on a hill overlooking hills and valleys which are green most of the year. There are two rainy seasons, which give two harvests, plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Because of over-population the land has been subdivided many times and most people have only a small piece to cultivate, so in providence with two harvests the people have enough maize, etc., for themselves and perhaps some to sell.

I think I am correct in saying that 1995 was the first year that any European staff were present at a New Year's Day service on the Mission. The service was held in the school and Rev. J. Goldby preached from Matthew 3:8 and on Monday, 2nd January, from Luke 24:32. While Mr. MacLean was busy working on the church and the Health Centre the other staff were busy with language study, fulfilling requirements for the Nursing Council of Kenya for registration, preparing the linen, making curtains, etc., etc. We also prepared an entrance test which included a Bible and general knowledge paper for the many applicants for posts at the Health Centre. Then there were the corrections, interviews and selections, etc. When we opened on 17th April we had the following staff:

- 1 Administrator
- 1 Doctor
- 2 Sisters (and 1 on furlough)
- 2 Trained Kenyan Nurses (KECHN and KEN)*
- 9 Patient Attendants (auxiliary staff)
- 13 Domestic (local married women doing P/T)
- 1 Clerk
- 1 Laboratory Technician
- 1 Laboratory Assistant

The Health Centre has two main buildings forming an "L" shape and consisting of an eight-bedded male ward and a ten-bedded children's ward, a kitchen with store and the laundry in one building. The larger of the buildings has the maternity department with four delivery beds, six post-natal beds and a small nursery with six cots, a female ward with ten beds and the out patients' department (which has a reception area with the clerk's office

* KECHN — Kenyan Enrolled Community Health Nurse. This is a three-year training including General Nursing, Midwifery and Community. KEN — Kenyan Enrolled Nurse. This is a two-year training. By the end of the month we had managed to employ four trained nurses and six by the end of the year.

and benches for the patients), two examination rooms, laboratory, injection/rehydration, dressing and minor operation rooms, sterilisation/linen room, then down the steps is the administrator's office and a small dispensary.

The following statistics show just how busy we were in the eight and a half months since we opened:

Admissions	
General	2,156
Maternity	394
Deaths	
General	115
Maternity	0
Deliveries	321
Out Patients' Department	
General	5,701
Antenatal Clinic	798

April to August seems to be the bad malaria season, with July being the peak, although there seems to be malaria throughout the year. Our death rate is high; malaria and anaemia being the main causes — often the patient has had treatment elsewhere before coming to the Health Centre and the treatment is often inadequate, or the wrong treatment is given. There are many small clinics in every village and market, some are staffed by junior or even untrained staff and also there are the traditional healers and local cures which are tried first — some of the remedies making the condition worse. In May we purchased a gas fridge so as to set up our own blood bank. Without blood we are unable to treat the many anaemic patients, which is a complication of malaria. When a patient receives blood a relative has to donate a pint of blood before the patient is discharged. This enables us to have a small stock on hand. All the blood is screened before donation. We have an efficient, though small, laboratory and hard-working staff who take turns of being on call at night, mainly for doing malaria slides, blood grouping and cross-matching blood. The first babies born at the Health Centre on the second night were twin girls and are appropriately called Truus and Christine after Sister and Doctor on duty!

There was a lot of staff movement throughout the year. Sister Celia Renes went on a well-earned furlough in February. Also at the same time Mr. Ian MacLean left us, having completed two months at Sengera. He had finished the church brickwork and roof, the alterations to the Health Centre, erecting the water tower, etc. We are very grateful to Mr. MacLean for his time, labours and expertise to the work of the Mission. At that time Mrs. Goldby and their three girls also left with Mr. MacLean and Sister Celia — the first of many trips to Nairobi that year. Nairobi is a six-hour journey from

Sengera, so we try to combine other business with comings and goings. Thus the pick-up that went was sold and a secondhand Mitsibitsi-Pajero returned with Rev. Goldby, Rev. and Mrs. D. A. Ross.

On Sabbath, 19th February, Rev. Ross preached the first service in our new church. Rev. and Mrs. Ross left the following week. Then Rev. J. Goldby returned home in March after labouring for six months as deputy with us. Sister Renes returned from furlough in June, a few days before Dr. Christine fell sick again and had to be air-lifted to the Tropical Diseases Hospital in London. It is with regret that we have to record that our Doctor is unable to return to Sengera and that Mr. MacDonald had to resign his post as Administrator. He left us in September. Our thoughts and prayers are with them in their trials, and we pray that the Lord will guide and direct in the way. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

At the end of August Rev. Dr. J. R. Tallach came out as a deputy for six weeks. We were very pleased to learn that Dr. Tallach had got a temporary work permit, which enabled him to work in the Health Centre. It is a great responsibility for the nursing staff to be working without a Doctor on the premises. The staff and the people are still talking about the time that Dr. Tallach was here with us.

At the end of September Sister Henriette Burggraaf, a midwife from Holland, joined us as a voluntary worker for six months. This enabled Sister Coote to go on furlough in October. Since coming to Sengera, Sister Henriette has applied to the F.M.C. and has been accepted to work with us. She is now waiting for the Nursing Council to process her papers for registration with the Kenyan Nursing Council. Rev. and Mrs. N. Ross and two daughters were met when Rev. Dr. Tallach left at the beginning of October. Rev. Ross had come as a deputy for two months, but was asked to remain until our new Administrator came early in January. We are very grateful to Rev. Ross for consenting to stay, as for many reasons it is unwise at this stage not to have a male European present on the Mission. We also have to thank Mrs. Ross, who did a lot of work in the office, which relieved the Sisters of extra work in the absence of the Administrator.

Some of the main problems we have are with our staff; corruption, stealing and lying are common practice throughout the country and we have had our share of it here. We need wisdom, understanding, the grace of patience, love and compassion in dealing with staff and also the patients and their relatives — who also try to deceive us and not pay their bill. The medical service is different from Zimbabwe — where the Mission Hospital is grant-aided by the Government and low income patients are given free treatment. Here all hospitals and clinics, apart from the Government ones, have to be self-supporting, so we have to charge fees. This causes many problems and is an extra burden on the Sisters as we have no one amongst our local staff that we could trust with large sums of money. We have started a "poor fund" and we try to help some, but in this also we have been deceived.

Worship is held morning and evening at the Health Centre, with a short address being given at the morning worship. There is also a service at 2 p.m. on Sabbath. When time permits a short Bible story with explanations and questions takes place in the children's ward in the evenings. One of the Sisters takes the Sabbath School on Sabbath afternoons with 60-100 children attending (as I write, this has increased to \pm 150 children). "The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

In conclusion we would like to thank all who have helped in any way in the establishing of the medical work here at Sengeru. We value the prayers of the Lord's people throughout the world, and our cry to you is to be crying to the Lord for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the work. To the young men and women we say — "Come over and help us".

REPORT ON VISIT TO KENYA MISSION

Rev. James R. Tallach

THIS VISIT took place between 23rd August and 6th October, 1995, and arose from the return of Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald in July, due to ill-health.

During my stay I kept the services and catechism classes as before, and morning worship at the hospital. The attendances (100-150) at the church were encouraging and there is, of course, a changing congregation of relatives and patients at the hospital.

The hospital was busy, with a high proportion of very sick patients, but not as busy as it had been at the height of the malaria season.

Towards the end of my stay I was asked to go down to Malawi to join Rev. N. Ross in order to speak with our Malawi "evangelists" who were having difficulties over the terms on which we, as a Church, were leaving Malawi. After discussion they expressed themselves satisfied and first steps were taken in dissolving the Trust Deed under which we have been operating in Malawi.

As far as Kenya is concerned, the opportunities to preach the whole counsel of God are inviting and the need for that whole counsel great. The hospital, with forty beds, is now established and we have a great deal to be thankful for in the quality, experience, and spirit of the staff that have come forward.

"Our handy-works establish Thou,
Establish them each one."

Psalm 90:17

REPORT OF DEPUTY'S VISIT TO THE AFRICAN MISSIONS

Rev. Neil M. Ross

AT THE REQUEST of the Foreign Missions Committee I left on 19th September, 1995, to visit Africa for ten weeks as a Church Deputy and to give help to our congregations there, especially in Kenya. In the event my visit had to be extended to almost nineteen weeks. Accompanied by my wife and two of my daughters, I flew to Bulawayo. There, we were warmly welcomed by Mr. Mziya, the Mission Administrator, Miss Norma MacLean, the teacher, and Dr. Hak and her brother.

Ingwenya

Miss MacLean drove us to Ingwenya where we had the pleasure of again meeting the other Scottish ladies, Miss Graham, the Headmistress, Miss Katie Mary MacAulay, her deputy, and Miss MacLean's mother. The Ingwenya communion season began next morning, and Rev. Z. Mazvabo and I assisted Mr. Ndebele. Another warm welcome awaited us from Rev. A. Ndebele and the elders whom I had met at Synod. Sadly, two of these elders, Mr. Joseph Mazwi and Mr. Cecil Sobantu, have passed away since we left Ingwenya. At the communion services, it was impressive to see so many people present (even although the boarding school children were away on holiday), and to hear the large volume of harmonious singing. It was refreshing indeed to be present at the solemn season, and to meet many of the Lord's people.

Mr. Ndebele also has the oversight of the Cameron, Gadade, Inyathi, Insiza and Insuza outstations, and he is responsible for looking after the Bulawayo congregation with its preaching stations, Lobengula, Nkulumane, Umguza and Thembiso. We need not wonder that the call from Zimbabwe often is, "Come over and help us".

The Ingwenya Mission compound is surprisingly extensive. It contains the church, which can seat more than 900, the manse, numerous classrooms and other buildings of the John Tallach Secondary School, the primary school, the boys' dormitories at one end and the girls' at the other, several teachers' houses, and various ancillary buildings.

I greatly wished, before I left Ingwenya, to see Bembesi siding, where the First Free Presbyterian missionary, Rev. J. B. Radasi, died when he was struck by an incoming train as he waited to meet his new colleague from Scotland, Rev. John Tallach. Mr. Nxusani kindly took us there. It was with solemn thoughts that I stood on the spot where the faithful servant of the Lord was tragically killed.

I left Ingwenya after the communion service on Monday to preach elsewhere but I returned a week later to conduct a service for the schools. The pupils and teachers of both schools were present — more than 900 persons. The sight of that large gathering emphasised that our Mission has both a great

responsibility and a tremendous potential for helping those hundreds of children in their educational and spiritual needs. I was much impressed by the dedication of Miss Graham, Miss MacAulay and Miss MacLean. Each Sabbath they also have the additional task of teaching the Sabbath School classes in which there is a total of about 200 primary children. They are in need of more help from Scotland; we pray that some teachers will be given the mind by the Lord to devote themselves, even for a few years, to this worthwhile work.

The hospitality shown to us at Ingwenya by European and African alike was warm and generous, and we shall not forget their kindness. They were not slow to show their appreciation of having a deputy from the Church in Scotland visit them. It was not easy to part from them.

Zenka

When we left Ingwenya on that Monday, accompanied by my wife's cousin, Sister Margaret Macaskill, who had come from Mbuma Hospital to Ingwenya communion, we went to Zenka for an afternoon. Rev. Petros Mzamo, some elders and 150 people were waiting for us when we arrived a little late. After I preached in the bright, well-maintained church, the people gave us a welcome as warm as any Highland welcome. We were shown the massive tree under which the congregation met before the church was built in 1952, and also the classrooms and manse. Outside the manse I could not but think of its previous occupants from the late Rev. James Fraser, who was their missionary for five years until 1953, to the late Rev. B. B. Dube, who was their pastor from 1978 until his comparatively early death in 1991.

Mbuma

Mr. Mzamo kindly drove me to Mbuma Mission and we arrived there after sunset. It was good to be ushered by Sister Macaskill into the house she shares with Dr. Hak, to enjoy their relaxing hospitality, and to again meet Nursing Sisters Leiper and Zeckveld. Early next morning I preached to a large congregation in Mr. Mzamo's church on Hebrews 12:1. Mr. Mzamo has the care of more than twenty preaching stations as well as Mbuma and Zenka congregations. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

Mr. James Mpofo, now responsible for supervising all building and vehicle maintenance work, showed us round the compound. It is larger than most people realise and is surrounded by forest. It contains the seventy-bed hospital and clinic, some primary classrooms, staff houses, accommodation for relatives of patients, several other buildings, and the church and manse in the centre.

Zvishavane

After a relaxing two-day break in the Victoria Falls and Wankie Park area we returned to Bulawayo, and I proceeded to Zvishavane where we were

hospitably entertained by Rev. Zororai Mazvabo and his wife. At Chiedza we were warmly welcomed by Mr. Sisiba, the elder, and his wife. After my preaching there to more than 150 people, Mr. Mazvabo directed us home by way of Akori, Mware, and Isezu outstations. The following day, I preached at New Canaan to more than 180 people. Mr. Mazvabo also has Chiwara, Chitofa, Makoberi and Shuku preaching stations to care for. The growth of our Church in this area has been remarkable. Our prayer, and that of their pastor I am certain, is that the Lord of the harvest would raise up further useful men.

Bulawayo

On Sabbath morning, in Bulawayo, I preached at Imguza on the outskirts of the city to a congregation of fifty. The church at Bulawayo was full and some people were standing on the verandah when I preached there at 11.30 a.m. and again at 1.30 p.m. There appeared to be more than 270 people present, many of them young married couples with families. What great need they have of a pastor being set over them. After Rev. D. A. Ross, the first minister of the congregation, laboured there for more than seven years until 1980, Rev. Alfred Mpfu became their devoted pastor, but only until 1987, when he died at a comparatively early age. May the Lord raise up some young men who would be led by the Holy Spirit to say, "Here am I; send me", in response to the call, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?".

Malawi

My next duty was not an easy one — to go on to Malawi in connection with the formal suspension of our Mission operations there. I met Rev. Dr. James Tallach when he arrived from Nairobi next day. After settling Mission matters in Blantyre we flew to Nairobi.

Sengera

Next day (Friday, 6th October), I made the seven-hour journey by road from Nairobi to our Kenyan Mission at Sengera with my wife, daughters and a Dutch friend, while Dr. Tallach made his twelve-hour flight to Britain. Even although it was late evening when we arrived at the Mission compound we were greeted with much excitement and warmth by Nursing Sisters Truus Ringleberg, Celia Renes and Henriette Burggraaf and some African staff. Next morning I was on duty at 8 a.m. conducting morning worship and giving an explanation of the passage read, on the verandah at the Health Centre — or hospital, as it is often called, although strictly speaking it is not yet officially classified as such.

Preaching and Teaching

Having been helpfully briefed by Rev. J. Goldby and Mr. D. MacDonald before I left Scotland regarding the round of duties, and by Dr. Tallach when I arrived, I began on Sabbath morning by conducting the Catechism Class for

adults and young people at 9 a.m. in our Sengera church. I carried on from where Dr. Tallach finished by explaining the answer to, "What are the benefits which believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?". The questions asked me during class led to further explanations. (This was especially the case when later I was dealing with the Fourth Commandment. Our people there are surrounded by Seventh Day Adventism and are anxious to be clear about our teaching regarding the Christian Sabbath. We spent much time on this topic.) The class was followed by two services, the first at 10 a.m. and the second at 11.30. The congregation amounted to about 120 on that first Sabbath, but it soon grew to more than 200 as the weeks went by. After a brief rest I preached on the hospital verandah at 2 p.m. to about sixty people: staff, patients, their relatives and a number of other local people.

On some Sabbaths, instead of preaching at Sengera, I preached at Ogembo (about 25 minutes' drive from Sengera) to about forty people. On two Sabbaths I held a service at Maiga (more than one hour's drive away) in the afternoon where about fifty gathered and were very appreciative of our going there.

On some Sabbath afternoons I opened the Sabbath School. The 100 or more children are taught by Sister Truus Ringelberg, assisted by an interpreter, and occasionally by some others. She takes the class of younger ones (about sixty) at 3 o'clock and the older children at 3.45. We commend teachers and pupils to the prayers of the Lord's people, for it is especially these boys and girls whom we hope to see raised up as witnesses there. At the end of session we were able to present an Eke-gusii Bible to each child. The parents were most grateful. Many of them did not have a Bible in their home, and some of those who could not read now had the Bible read aloud to them from time to time by their children.

An ordinary day on the compound began with my conducting morning worship and giving a talk to Mission workers, hospital staff and patients. We worked through the Book of Acts, and then through most of the Book of Proverbs. I believe that those times of worship, by the blessing of the Lord, have proved useful to some. One Seventh Day Adventist member of staff, at morning worship, first understood the Scripture teaching about the Sabbath and now observes the Christian Sabbath. It was remarkable how, on some occasions, our reading in course tied in with circumstances on the Mission.

There is great need of further metrical Psalms being translated from English into Eke-gusii, to supplement the eighteen Psalms or parts of Psalms already in use. Much hard work was put into this translation, and any further translating would take a long time.

Not only is the Mission surrounded by the darkness of Seventh Day Adventism and Roman Catholicism, but also by many superstitious and sinful practices. Polygamy is common in the area. On New Year's Day, after I had preached on, "Upon this rock I will build my church . . .", I gave a lecture on Christian marriage. I was surprised and pleased by the number of questions which were asked; so many questions that we could have continued for much longer.

The Regions Beyond

We received many requests to conduct services, and in some cases to set up a clinic, in places in Kisiiland and beyond. Sometimes, offers of land were made if we would come to their area. Regretfully, we had to refuse for various reasons. However, I consented to conduct a service at *Geture* (about an hour's travel from Sengera). About thirty people were present when I preached about repentance and then answered questions afterwards.

Another place in which I conducted services by request was *Kuria*, beside the border with Tanzania and two hours' drive from Sengera. The background to our visit is that some people, representing a Church comprised of people who have come out from other Churches because of unscriptural teaching and practice, obtained a copy of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* and heard at the same time about the Free Presbyterian Mission in Sengera. They visited our Mission, attended the services, and requested services. In this Kuria group there are about ninety adults, besides children, scattered over quite a large area and divided into four little congregations, three of which meet in clearings in the woods. Three pastors and the director of their self-help group conduct the services each Sabbath. They seemed very willing to learn and had numerous questions to ask after I had explained our mode of worship. They asked to be taken under the wing of the Free Presbyterian Church.

One week before I was due to leave for home, Mr. Ian MacLean and his family arrived. It was with the greatest pleasure that we met them at Nairobi Airport. Tired as they all were, Mr. MacLean had to begin work right away, in order to take over from us and be briefed about the work. It lightened my load tremendously to have him with us, attending Field Committee meetings and giving helpful advice.

Mr. Ian MacLean accompanied me on another visit to Kuria, when we held a service and also gave a lecture on the principles of our Church. We had a lengthy discussion afterwards about points of doctrine, worship and practice. They again expressed their earnest wish to be part of our Church.

Administration

Much of my time was taken up with administration. The help of my wife in running the office every day was invaluable. She had to enter and balance the cash books, make up and pay salaries to almost sixty staff, deal with the deductions and remittances of income tax, national health insurance fund and social security fund, pay invoices, withdraw and bank monies, give petty cash payments, and do sundry other tasks.

In doing my administration duties, I had to attend also to correspondence, meet officials who called, interview the numerous callers who requested help of one kind or another, give directions to workmen, organise the completing of the well (recharge test, insertion of linings, fitting of the pump and laying of a water line from the well to the water tank under the clinic floor), attend

the Chiefs' meeting at Sengera, and visit various offices in Kisii. I made many requests to Kenyan Telecommunications to repair our telephone line. Even when they did repair it, another fault soon developed which cut us off for another lengthy period. Much time was taken up in chasing the Kenyan Electricity Company in Kisumu to finish the electrification of the compound. Despite many apparently genuine promises the work was unfinished when I left.

Rianyakwara Primary School

I was sorry that I was unable to devote more time to the concerns of the Government school in Sengera which we sponsor — Rianyakwara Primary School. One reason was the closure of the school for two months holiday during my stay there. However, I did visit the school a few times and also had a meeting with the School Council. The reputation of the school is such that at the beginning of the new term there were many applicants for places at all levels and the roll is now about 300. The school is packed with children, classes are overcrowded, teachers are in short supply and there is a great shortage of equipment and books.

Conclusion

There is very much Mission work to be done in Sengera and round about. More help is needed. A minister of the Gospel, working on the Mission there, would find himself fully occupied in teaching and preaching alone. I can see also that one person having to be both Administrator and Building Supervisor will quickly find that he has more work than he can efficiently cope with.

It was a great privilege to be able to visit our Missions in Africa, and to be enabled to give some help to our friends in Zimbabwe and Kenya. Their kindness to me was great. I am grateful also to all the interpreters without whose help I could not have communicated the truth to all my hearers. I thank my Presbytery for releasing me, Rev. John Goldby for taking the oversight of my congregation, my congregation for remembering me in prayer, and the ministers and men who conducted the services in my congregation during my absence. I wish to render thanks especially to the Most High for His help given to me day by day, and His care over us constantly.

From Rev. J. B. Radasi's becoming our first missionary in 1904 until the present time, the Lord has been mindful of us in our Mission work as a Church. We have reason to believe that He will bless us still, and we are sure that He will yet fulfil His word: "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross, Convener

WE CONTINUE TO FEEL THE LOSS of our former Convener, Rev. D. B. MacLeod, who so willingly led and contributed to the work of the Dominions and Overseas work and whose advice was much appreciated.

One of the many concerns of the Committee over the years has been the sending of deputies to our Churches overseas. Thankfully, since last Synod we were able to send two deputies to Canada, and one to Australia and New Zealand.

Rev. K. D. Macleod visited Chesley, Canada, last July, and Rev. D. Boyd in October. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered during the year, when attendances were good and a number of visitors were present. It was hoped that the Rev. Keith Watkins would supply Chesley for a period and hopefully Mr. Watkins will be able to do so in July. The Chesley congregation continues to hold regular services on Sabbath and weekday. It is no small burden for the elders to have to be regularly addressing the congregation from the Word of God. If any of our ministers are in a position to spend three Sabbaths, preferably more, in Canada, the Committee would welcome their assistance. Apart from one family having left the congregation, it remains as it was at the time of our last report to Synod.

There is no further development in the Vancouver situation. As is well known, the schism by the Associated Presbyterian Churches (APC), has left some of our people pastorless and without the regular public means of grace.

Rev. John MacLeod was able to visit Australia and New Zealand for six weeks. He, along with the Committee, very much wished that he could have stayed for a longer period, but his many other commitments made this impossible. We are very glad, however, that after a period of four years we have been able to send a deputy to these countries. One of our ministers from the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery says: "In our situation of isolation it is not only good but quite necessary to get someone out here with considerable experience so that he can be of help. . . ." We hope, therefore, that our congregations there will not have to wait for another protracted period for a visit by a Church deputy.

The Church is indebted to those ministers who give some of their valuable time and their services to our congregations abroad. We are indebted also to Presbyteries which, in the midst of their own supply difficulties, give permission for ministers to be released from their congregations; and to these congregations for patiently bearing the absence of their pastors.

Our congregations in New Zealand are much reduced, as has been noted in past reports, but despite this they are in good heart and seek to be steadfast in the work of the Lord. Thankfully Australia congregations have been spared the undermining operations of the APC, and continue witnessing, as the Church of Christ must, on the side of truth. Sadly, our student, Mr. Cassidy, is no longer on the roll of students.

Both ministers, Revs. E. Rayner and J. A. T. van Dorp, are extremely busy, and with a number of congregations being yet vacant in their Presbytery their cry to the Lord of the harvest is to send forth labourers into the harvest. The reports of these ministers and of visiting deputies will deal with other matters which I have not touched on.

The Italian group has had two visits; one from Rev. D. A. Ross last October, when he was assisted by Mr. Lucio Strata, and another from Mr. Strata himself in January, when he was able to conduct services on one Sabbath during a visit to his family home in Genoa. The conflict of loyalties in the congregation to our Church and the APC makes the work there extremely difficult. The hope for the future is that continual sound teaching will bring them to unreservedly cast in their lot with the Free Presbyterian Church.

The work in Eastern Europe follows the same pattern as that of other years. There is no progress in the form of any person there coming forward to fully embrace Reformed teaching. With the exception of very few Calvinists, most of the people contacted are of Arminian persuasion, but even those who are Calvinists in outlook lack a proper appreciation of scriptural doctrine, worship and practise.

In addition to there being a deficit of over £1,000 in the Eastern Europe Fund, there has also been a large drop in donations received. It is thought that the shortfall is due, in part at least, to the cessation of the former method of receiving donations. We hope and pray that sufficient funds will continue to come in to allow the present work to continue. The Eastern Europe and Italian reports, by Rev. D. A. Ross, elsewhere in the Synod Reports, give more details of the work.

There is much need that we continue to pray for our congregations abroad. We look to the Lord, who has established these places of worship in distant lands, to graciously prosper His Word there, and keep the Church faithful to Himself.

"They look'd to Him, and lighten'd were:
Not shamed were their faces."
Psalm 34:5

AUSTRALIAN REPORT

Rev. E. A. Rayner

THIS YEAR saw the passing of two elderly members in full communion. Sue Shaw, who was well known to many of our deputies over the years for her generous hospitality, died after a long and slow deterioration of her health with a distressing and painful form of arthritis. On the other hand, Vesta MacLeod died suddenly while doing her shopping. She moved to Grafton

after her husband Lewis, from the Isle of Lewis, died before the Rev. William MacLean became the minister of our Grafton congregation. She was most diligent in attending to the manse while Mr. MacLean was in Grafton. Her special interest was in the Trinitarian Bible Society. For many years she collected thousands of dollars and followed on from Flora Shaw before her. When the congregations are small these faithful women, like Dorcas of old, are sadly missed.

There were just two baptisms during the year. One in Sydney, that of Amy Van Kralingen and the other in Grafton, Grace De Bruin. May the Lord raise them up to be mothers in Israel like those taken by death. With the arrival of Rev. John MacLeod in November it was decided to hold a second communion for Sydney. There were two new communicants. No doubt reference will be made to this event in the deputy's report. There was one new communicant in Grafton, Mrs. Rita De Bruin, whose husband was tragically killed last year. Our prayer is that the Lord will enable them to endure unto the end, continuing steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord. We trust that the much appreciated labours of Mr. MacLeod's busy schedule in Australia will bear fruit for the progress of Christ's cause amongst us.

There was an election of office bearers in Sydney. Roland Van Kralingen was elected to be a deacon and John Marshall an elder. The congregation now has four elders and one deacon. The congregation has now paid off loans from Presbytery and will no doubt have in view the purchase of a manse. Application for money from the Presbytery Property Fund has already been applied for so that a property may be purchased at the appropriate time. Nor is there any urgent need without the immediate prospect of a minister. The congregation comprises of a number of young families and there are twenty children of all ages. As a result there are Catechism classes held before the Sabbath morning service. Likewise in Grafton there are three classes for the children. There is a good field of opportunity for a minister in Sydney not only to take oversight of the flock but for contact and expansion in such a large city. Concern has been expressed in the congregation that some of the children have grown up to become young adults without ever having the privilege of a minister of the Gospel to preach regularly to them.

In closing the report I wish to report with gratitude the continued loyal and encouraging support I have continued to enjoy over the nineteen years that I have been the minister in the Grafton congregation. One would like to be able to report more evidence of the Lord at work blessing the ministry to the conversion of many souls. Yet we must continue to plead that the Word would not return to the Lord void according to promise.

NEW ZEALAND REPORT

Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp

ACCORDING TO A PRESS REPORT the Prime Minister of this nation, a Roman Catholic, as well as the Governor General and sixty-two Church groups, wrote to the American evangelist Billy Graham to invite him to conduct another religious campaign in New Zealand. Thus we see that the ecumenical machine, with its lowest common denominator approach, is rolling full steam ahead, with the aim of levelling every Church that comes in its path. It manifests itself on the local scene through ministers' fraternals attended by Roman priests as well as RCNZ and PCNZ ministers. In spite of previous Graham tours in this part of the world the religious decline here has accelerated to such an extent that there is no stopping of it except by the direct divine intervention through the expected outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Petitions for this event, together with the humiliation on account of our sins, were offered up this year on the 6th December. The practice here is to have a service in the morning and the usual weekly prayer meeting in the evening. As the Rev. John MacLeod, deputy, arrived in Auckland from Sydney on the 5th December, the congregation there were able to sit under the preached Word on this worldwide day of prayer.

The Auckland congregation have continued unabated in displaying the banner on the side of the truth in spite of small numbers. There was one baptism during the year and the two usual communion seasons were conducted with the assistance of Rev. E. A. Rayner. The two Presbytery meetings were also held during that time which, as all agree, is a far from ideal situation, but in the present circumstances it cannot be changed. The eldest elder in the congregation, Donald Beaton, has found it necessary to relocate to Hamilton, which is an hour-and-a-half's driving from Auckland. This is quite a loss to the congregation but was found necessary to be nearer the family. Quite a number in the congregation are now advanced in age, but it is heartening that there are also five young families with children attending. This has prompted enquiry among them for the recommencement of the Sabbath School. Cornell van Kralingen, one of the elders, has agreed to give the instruction which resumed on 1st October.

Sabbath School classes also continue in the Gisborne congregation, being conducted by two of the elders. I am also indebted to the elders for the conduct of the services when I am absent to supply Auckland, Wellington, or assisting in communions in Australia. The usual communions were held and there were two baptisms.

The separate position as a Church in the midst of much darkness, including ecumenical confusion, continues to be necessary. A letter from a Pentecostal pastor who participates in local ministers' fraternals, quoted Psalm 133 and stated: "We enjoy a degree of unity here in Gisborne as Churches but I believe it could be improved." The purpose of the letter was to break down

walls of division. The reply of the Session was as follows: "It is noted that your Church thinks of unity in terms of dividing the truth into absolutes and non-essentials. It is pointed out that the Scriptures know of no such division. As God's Spirit-filled living temple it is the duty of the Church to proclaim and make known the whole truth without addition or subtraction (Acts 20:27, Revelation 22:18-19, 1 Timothy 3:15).

"The Session are saddened that most professing Christian denominations, including your own, are continuing to pursue the nearly 100-years-old lowest common denominator programme of the modern ecumenical movement.

"The unity that is treasured within the bounds of this denomination is the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3) which is already present with the living body of Christ, which is characterised by the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and is distinct from the outward spurious union of denominations which have demonstrated no serious intentions of submitting to the authority of the Divine Word."

The Kirk Session therefore passed the following unanimous resolution: "That on the principles proposed by the Elim Church it would be dishonouring to the great Head of the Church, who is the truth (John 14:6), as well as destructive of true spiritual unity (Ephesians 4:3), to enter into the proposed discussions whether on a formal or informal basis."

The Session further advised the Elim Church to seek a better understanding of the truth by a careful study of the Reformation attainments as embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

The above approach indicates the kind of pressures the ecumenical movement exerts and the continued need for the separate witness in the midst of religious darkness.

That separate witness also continues in Wellington. Here there was also one baptism during the year and the Lord's Supper was dispensed on only one occasion. We are indebted to the sole resident elder, Mr. Neil Hicklin, for holding the Church doors open, but assistance comes from myself and several of the elders from elsewhere on a number of occasions during the year. When a minister is to conduct the services an advertisement is placed in the newspaper, which on the last occasion also included a contact phone number. This resulted in a phone enquiry from a Baptist person who wanted to know more about the so-called "Toronto blessing", which appears to have also made its way to New Zealand.

It would appear that the signing of the ECT (Evangelicals & Catholics Together) document in the USA last year has resulted in a heightened feverish activity to get local Churches to combine in certain ventures. The idea behind this seems to be the hope that such a united approach will result in winning the world for Christ. The Evangelism 2000 movement in this part of the world suggests that this can be attained by the year 2000.

Modern evangelicals have been drawn into this vortex and are fast making shipwreck of the faith once delivered to the saints. This is evident by the host of unscriptural practices and alliances that are engaged in under cover of

the ecumenical umbrella. But as their ship is foundering in co-operation with the Antichrist, the remnant Church, here also in New Zealand, sails on a straight course in the knowledge of the promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail".

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Dominions and Overseas Committee for making it possible for a deputy to visit these parts, in spite of the considerable pressures on the Church through the dearth of labourers. Surely we will never forget that we are indebted to ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland for not only bringing a pure Gospel to these shores, but also practices that are according to the Reformation standards contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Only too often we see people claiming to be Reformed and Evangelical, whilst at the same time giving the lie to this claim by unscriptural practices.

We trust that the visit from the deputy, the Rev. John MacLeod, to these parts, short as the visit was, will yet prove to have contributed to the stability and advancement of the Cause of Christ. May the little one soon become a thousand (Isaiah 60:22).

**REPORT OF DEPUTY TO AUSTRALIA AND
NEW ZEALAND
Rev. John MacLeod**

IT WAS A MATTER of some concern to the Dominions and Overseas Committee that no deputy from the home Church had visited Australia and New Zealand for the past four years and it was therefore agreed that I should visit them towards the end of 1995. Accordingly, on Tuesday, 13th November, I was among the passengers on board the Qantas flight which took off at noon from Heathrow Airport bound for Sydney. Following an overnight stop in Bangkok, I arrived safely on Australian soil at 8.45 p.m. on Thursday evening. There, at the airport, to welcome me, were Roland and Jane van Kralingen accompanied by their family. Jane is a daughter of the late Donald MacLennan, who, for many years, was our esteemed missionary in Dornoch, and Roland is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Ken van Kralingen of our Auckland congregation. On arrival my hosts immediately transported me to their home in Quaker's Hill, a Sydney suburb located about thirty miles inland. There I was to be most hospitably entertained over the period of my stay.

The Riverstone church, where our Sydney congregation worships, is only a short distance from the van Kralingen home and it was there, on the following Sabbath, that I began my labours in Australia. There were around forty souls present, morning and evening. The Kirk Session had decided that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper would be dispensed on the following

Sabbath and with this in view the interim Moderator, the Rev. E. A. Rayner, accompanied by his wife, motored down from Grafton on the Wednesday. The usual services commenced on Thursday, with the Lord's death being shown forth on the Sabbath and, we trust, that was done in the manner appointed by Himself. The names of two young women were added to the communion roll. The situation in Sydney is very much akin to that which obtains in Auckland and also in Chesley, Ontario: in all three places there are congregations largely composed of young families and there is the same crying need for ministers to be settled over them. In the absence of ministerial supply, the services are conducted by the elders, whose practice is to read sermons rather than offer a word of exhortation, which is commonly the case in the home Church. They also maintain a well attended Sabbath School. Over the period of my stay I visited most of the homes, including that of Mrs. Mary Shaw, the widow of Alasdair Shaw, who was much to the fore when the Sydney congregation was first formed. Mrs. Shaw lives in Hurstville, which is a considerable distance from Riverstone, but she was able to attend some of the services together with her son Peter. To them as to the van Praags, the MacKenzies, the Optlands, the Marshalls and, not least, the van Kralingens, I would express my gratitude for their kindness and appreciation of the manner in which they welcomed me into their midst. The opportunity was also taken of visiting Mr. and Mrs. Hall who live on the Sydney waterfront. Mrs. Hall is a daughter of the late Captain K. K. MacLeod who was one of the noted men of the past and whose memory is still fragrant in Lewis.

While in Sydney I was asked to visit Melbourne and take the midweek service in the Rev. E. S. Turnbull's church at Chadstone and, being persuaded that it was my duty to do so, I arrived at Melbourne Airport on Tuesday forenoon, where I was met by Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull. They took me to their home which is hard by the church building at Chadstone and about fifteen miles from the airport. Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull treated me with the utmost kindness and went out of their way to make my stay with them as pleasant as possible. That evening I took the prayer meeting and the atmosphere I found to be altogether congenial. Afterwards I met some of the congregation and the impression I got was that they very much appreciated receiving a visit from a Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland minister.

Early the following morning I was back at the airport en route for Rockhampton and I was heading for that destination as a result of a request made by a small group of people who are identified as the Covenant Presbyterian Church. They were adherents within our Church at the time that the Rev. George Bancroft was connected with it, but their attachment to us came to an end when Mr. Bancroft departed. They were now feeling their isolation and their desire now was to come back within the fold of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It was with a view to discussing the matter that I was asked to visit them and it was anticipated that I would be asked to convey their request to the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery. At Rockhampton Airport I was met by Mr. Alan Carswell and his wife who took me to the

home of Mr. and Mrs. James Busch where I was to spend the night. In the evening I kept a service in the basement of their home at which eight souls were present, including the two children of Stephen and Lillian Barton. On my last visit to Eastern Australia the Bartons were domiciled in Brisbane and it was with them that I stayed on that occasion. To these friends I would desire to express my gratitude for their kindness. The following day I departed from Rockhampton with this group's letter to the Presbytery in my bag. It is understood that the Presbytery gave consideration to it and have come to their decision.

From Rockhampton I returned to Brisbane. At the airport there I was met by Mr. Christopher Tuck, a student studying for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. He had expressed the desire to meet me as he was encountering difficulties in his own Church and felt much attracted to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Mr. Tuck very kindly drove me to see a Mr. Hugh Morrison, a native of Harris, who now lives, with his wife, in an apartment on the outskirts of Brisbane. Mr. Morrison is now over eighty years old but has not forgotten his roots nor, I believe, his Free Presbyterian upbringing. With some emotion, he showed me one of his most treasured possessions — the Gaelic Bible his parents had inscribed and given to him when as a youth he first left home. Mr. Tuck and I had worship with them, after which Mr. Tuck took me to his own residence, where I was introduced to his wife and children, and where I was hospitably entertained. Matters of common interest and concern were fully discussed with Mr. Tuck and I am grateful to him for all the help he gave me over the course of that day in Brisbane. Mr. Richard Shaw, son of Mrs. Mary Shaw, already mentioned, had hired a hall and I kept a service that evening. Afterwards Richard took me to his home on the other side of the city and went to great trouble to see to it that I had every comfort. It was a pleasure to be in his company and under his roof and his kindness will long be remembered.

Early the following morning Richard drove me to the Brisbane railway station and I boarded a train for Grafton, arriving there round about noon on Friday, 1st December. The Rev. E. A. Rayner was at the station to meet me and I was soon under the roof of the Grafton manse once again to enjoy the hospitality of our friends there. That evening I presided at the prayer meeting and the following Sabbath I took both the services in the church. It was a real pleasure to meet Grafton friends again. The congregation is stable and flourishing and is blessed in having so many of the Lord's people within it, some mature in years as well as in grace. In some of the prayers which I heard I thought that one could still detect the lingering influence of the Rev. William MacLean. We hope and pray that Mr. Rayner will continue to be maintained in health to continue his much appreciated ministry among them. On the Monday I travelled by plane to Sydney, where Mr. John Marshall, who had kindly taken me to the airport the week before on my departure, now thoughtfully met me on arrival, and transported me back to the van Kralingen home in Quaker's Hill.

The following morning I departed for New Zealand. Helpful, as always, Mrs. Jane van Kralingen, accompanied by her children, drove me to the airport and there, at the departure gate, I bade farewell to them. The flight to Auckland was uneventful and, after experiencing some delay on account of an air traffic controllers' strike, I safely arrived there in the early afternoon of 5th December. Ken van Kralingen and his wife Lydia were there to meet me. They welcomed me to their home and I am much indebted to them for their kindness over the days and nights that I was under their roof. The following day, being the day set apart by the Synod as a day of prayer, I preached twice in the Auckland church. On the following Sabbath I did the same and, in between, the congregational car being placed at my disposal, I tried to visit some members of the congregation in their own homes, including old friends Mr. and Mrs. Ted Christensen, Mrs. Jessie Christensen, Mr. Jan van Dorp and, also, visitors Mr. and Mrs. Tom Maton, Gairloch, in their temporary Auckland home. The Matons were in New Zealand to visit their two daughters, sons-in-law and their families living in the Auckland area. Eight of the children attending the services in the Otahuhu church come from their homes. It was encouraging to find young parents taking an interest in the Church and faithfully attending the services. Would that they had a pastor set over them! To express that desire does not imply any lack of appreciation of the work of the Auckland elders, who so faithfully endeavour to maintain Gospel ordinances week in, week out, Sabbath and weekday. They deserve to be encouraged by the home Church in their pastorless condition, more than perhaps they have been hitherto, and to that end more frequent visits from ministerial deputies would be of help. Mr. Donald Beaton has now taken up residence in Hamilton but he was present, accompanied by one of his sons, at one of the Otahuhu services. On the Friday, I drove to Whangerei, about 110 miles north of Auckland, to visit Samuel Morrison, who hails from Seilebost, Harris. He and his wife made me very welcome and, while in their home, I was to meet another expatriate Harrisman, a Donald MacLeod, who was brought up in a Free Presbyterian home in Stockinish. The Morrisons made me very welcome and pressed me to remain overnight with them, but that was not possible.

Having taken the prayer meeting in Auckland the previous evening, I departed for Gisborne on Tuesday, 12th December. As the air traffic controllers happened to be taking industrial action that day, passengers travelling to Gisborne were being taken, first of all, by mini-bus to Hamilton, a journey of about one and a half hour's duration, and then on to their destination by plane. At the Gisborne airport to welcome me were the Rev. Joh van Dorp, Mr. Jim MacPherson and Mr. and Mrs. Vermeulen. For the next six nights I was to be under the Gisborne manse roof and I am grateful to Mr. and Mrs. van Dorp for all the kindness which they showed me. The following evening I took the prayer meeting, and, on the Sabbath, the two services in the church. Mr. van Dorp went up to Auckland for the weekend to supply the pulpit there. Because of the brevity of my stay I was only able to

visit a few of the homes. Since my last visit Miss May MacLeod, a friend of long standing, had passed away, we believe, to her everlasting rest and one was conscious of the blank. The Gisborne congregation and, especially, Mrs. Molly van Dorp and Mrs. Heather van Dorp, showed great kindness to May in the evening of her day. On the other hand, a new family had arrived in the interim — Mr. and Mrs. Murray van Dorp. Mrs. van Dorp is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ross, Foindle. While it is a matter for thankfulness that there are still a number of young families in the Gisborne congregation whose attachment to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is firm and true, a cause of great sadness is that so many young people living in Gisborne have forsaken the Church of their parents and grandparents and now hold separate services under the auspices of that body known as the APCs. The APC ministers in Scotland who encouraged this schismatic activity in Gisborne as well as in Auckland have much to answer for! Miss Jocelyn Cox, who served our Church well in Zimbabwe for a number of years and now lives in Hastings, was a guest at the Gisborne manse over the weekend. It was a pleasure for me to meet her again as well as all the other friends in Gisborne who have a heart-attachment to the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

One of these friends, Mr. Dick Vermeulen, had come down to Gisborne for the weekend and kindly offered to transport me in his car over the first stage of my journey to Wellington, my next destination. Accordingly, we left the Gisborne manse on the Monday morning with the intention of reaching the main Auckland-Wellington highway at some point south of Hamilton where Mr. Tom Maton was due to collect me the following morning and take me on to Wellington. Mr. Vermeulen showed me round all those interesting and awe-inspiring natural wonders which are located in the Rotorua area and then dropped me off at a convenient motel on the inland highway before proceeding back to his own home at Tauranga, a considerable distance away on the east coast. I am very grateful to Mr. Vermeulen for all the trouble that he went to and for all the kindness which he showed to me.

Early the following morning Mr. Tom Maton arrived and we headed south, reaching Wellington around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Neil Hicklin had arranged accommodation for us in Tawa near his own home and also near to the church. It had been arranged that I would preach twice in the church — on Wednesday evening in English, and on Thursday evening in Gaelic. Because it happened to be a holiday period some of the regular attenders were away from Wellington at the time and this meant that the numbers were depleted. Three people with Lewis connections, however, attended on the Wednesday and on the Thursday seven others were present. Mr. and Mrs. Hicklin also entertained us in their own home and it was a pleasure to meet with them and their young, attractive family. Were it not for their self-denying devotion to the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, our witness in Wellington would have long since become extinct. Under ordinary circumstances, Neil, single-handedly, conducts the public worship in the

church, on Sabbath and weekday, and attends to all other congregational matters as well. We left Wellington early on Friday morning, heading north towards Auckland. As we had decided to visit Mrs. MacGrail at Wanganui, a detour had to be made. Mrs. MacGrail, a member in full communion, was born on the Applecross coast, well over eighty years ago, and is now living in a Residential Home in Wanganui. After engaging in devotional exercises with her, we resumed our journey and eventually arrived in Auckland about 6 o'clock in the evening. I am deeply indebted to Mr. Maton for the use of his car and also for all the help that he gave me over that particular period of my New Zealand stay. The following Sabbath I took the services in Auckland. The number present was increased as a result of the arrival from Scotland of the Matons' son, Thomas, together with his wife Catherine and their little son. On the Monday evening I conducted the prayer meeting and afterward, in prospect of my departure on the morrow, I bade farewell to all the Auckland friends who were present. Early on Tuesday I left the home of my kind hosts, Ken and Lydia van Kralingen. Ken drove me to the airport and we parted at the departure gate. The Qantas flight took off on time and three and a half hour's later, at 9 a.m., local time, I was in Melbourne. After a wearisome eight hours wait, spent within the terminal building, the flight bound for Singapore and London took off on time, around 6.45 p.m. It arrived in Singapore at around 10 p.m. local time and, having arranged to break my journey there, I disembarked and obtained a room in one of the transit hotels located near the airport.

The New Zealand Report submitted by the Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp to last year's Synod had mentioned the visit of a group of Singaporean Christians and the impact which their visit made. They had been led by their pastor, Elijah Thomas Chacko. Mr. Chacko's name was already familiar to some of us as a result of certain of his tracts, particularly those written in defence of the Authorised Version and the *Textus Receptus*, coming into our hands, and I was anxious to meet him. The morning after my arrival I contacted him by telephone and he, accompanied by some of the young men of his congregation, came to the hotel and took me, bag and baggage, with them. It was a rare privilege to spend the whole day in their company. They took me to their attractive church building, the interior of which immediately reminded me of our own simple unadorned places of worship, with the pulpit centrally prominent, and then on to Mr. Chacko's home where I met his wife and children and where I was hospitably entertained. Also present were some of the other wives and before nightfall, on finishing work, more young men appeared. We discussed doctrine and practice and I was most encouraged to discover that they were almost of one mind with us, and that this had come about without any contact with our Church made it all the more wonderful in my eyes. It was most instructive to hear them acknowledging the Lord's dealings with them in bringing them from heathen backgrounds to the knowledge of the truth as in Jesus. It was only on the mode of Baptism and the Millennium that we appeared to have divergent views, but the impression

I gained was that they might well be still open to persuasion on these matters. Before leaving, we had worship together, singing from the Psalms of David and reading from the Authorised Version. The melodious, hearty singing of the company gathered in that Singaporean apartment lingers in the memory. Having bade farewell to Mr. Chacko, his family, and others present, three of the young men, whose names I cannot now with certainty recall, accompanied me to the airport and there, at the barrier, I bade them farewell. The flight to London took off at 11.45 p.m. and thirteen and a half hour's later we landed safely at Heathrow airport. Two further flights and I was, in the Lord's kind providence, back with my family in Stornoway.

In conclusion, I would like, once again, to thank all the Christian friends — too numerous to mention by name — in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, who showed me so much kindness. Also, the Dominions and Overseas Committee, the members of which encouraged me to undertake the journey, the Stornoway office-bearers, and, finally, my colleagues in the Outer Isles Presbytery, who gave me leave of absence and helped in supplying the Stornoway pulpit. Above all, I have reason to be thankful to the Keeper of Israel who preserved me in health of body and mind and carried me safely over the many thousands of miles which I travelled. May it all redound to His glory!

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA

Rev. Kenneth D. Macleod

THE CANADIAN TOWN of Chesley claims to be "the nicest town around". Our experience there from 28th June to 18th July certainly confirmed that it is a nice town. More to the point, the kindness of the Free Presbyterian congregation there is well worth recording, and there is no doubt that the presence of a deputy among them is very much appreciated.

During my three-week stay in Chesley I conducted the usual Sabbath services and prayer meetings, but on the second of the Sabbaths the Lord's Supper was dispensed and services were conducted on the other days of the communion weekend. Besides the usual congregation we were glad to have Mr. Jakob Schuit, a communicant member in Chesley, who drove up all the way from his home in Mississippi to arrive on the Friday of the communion.

One has to commend the effort made to attend public worship within the congregation by those who travel such great distances to be present. It is encouraging too to see such a large proportion of children at the services; it is a hopeful sign for the future. While we were in Chesley two babies were born in the congregation.

Possibly if the Lord would provide them with a permanent minister others might be added to the Church there. It is a congregation which specially

needs our prayers, isolated as they are from the rest of the Church. Canada as much as Scotland needs the unique witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. May the Lord hasten the time when the professing Christian Church throughout the world will submit to the whole counsel of God!

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA

Rev. D. M. Boyd

ON WEDNESDAY, 18th October, 1995, I took the early morning flight from Glasgow for a twenty-day visit to Chesley, Ontario. Mr. Gerrit Schuit, my congenial host for my time in Canada, met me at Toronto Airport and drove me to Chesley. The prayer meeting was the same evening at 8 p.m. (1 a.m. BST), reminding me that Paul preached until midnight and beyond. Twenty-three hours after awakening, I finally went to bed.

Before leaving Scotland I had arranged my schedule to make the most of this long-promised visit to the Canadian friends, whose acquaintance was first made in May and June 1981 when I spent six Sabbaths among them as a student for the ministry. I had agreed to give the congregation a series of lectures as well as the usual supply arrangements. Consequently in addition to the six Sabbath services, I delivered seven lectures on various subjects, ranging from surveys of the Old and New Testaments, to the Messianic prophecies, Effectual Calling, Church History, including Canadian History, Puritan Worship, the Regulative Principle and Free Presbyterian Principles. As these were illustrated by overhead projector, it was thought useful to video some of these lectures, which gives the congregation an opportunity to go over them again. The enterprising young person who suggested this also thought of putting a clipping on to the Internet to advertise the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland by this medium. The lecture notes and some sermons were put on computer by another diligent helper.

The Sabbath services were well attended by the core group of slightly over fifty people. There were visitors to these services and the prayer meetings, who travelled more than two hours to attend. The congregation consists of all age groups, with a good number of young people who were attentive and friendly. One of these services included the baptism of little Jacob Zekveld, which proved timely as it transpired that anabaptist doctrine was being promoted by some who once belonged to the congregation, which was unsettling to the congregation. From the reception given to this service, it appears that the congregation much appreciated the biblical explanation of infant baptism.

I held four prayer meetings, including a congregational meeting to call a minister to the congregation. We had arranged the first of two Kirk Sessions for the night after my arrival. The Kirk Session decided to recommend the

Rev. George Hutton, Bracadale and Strath, to the congregation, which the congregational meeting endorsed. Mr. Hutton had spent some time among them previously and seemed very well suited for their situation. The interim Moderator was immediately contacted and Mr. Hutton approached, but as I write this report I have just heard that after several months of prayerful consideration and heart-felt concern for the Chesley congregation, Mr. Hutton could not give them the encouragement they sought. This will be a disappointment for this active congregation which merits a pastor set over them, but I trust it will only make them more earnest at the throne of grace that the Lord will provide them with a pastor to feed their souls.

It was felt that the congregation could benefit from some deacons and so the second Kirk Session set in motion the procedure for electing more deacons. Time did not permit the whole procedure to be carried out during my visit, so matters were put in readiness for the next deputy to carry this through, D.V.

It was a busy schedule, not only for me but for the congregation. Attendances held up for a period of three weeks which involved evening meetings for three nights each week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the usual Sabbath services. I managed to visit most of the regular congregation as well as some others, but there was no time for sight-seeing, which was no cause for regret as I had an opportunity for this in 1981; besides, the weather was beginning to turn wintry.

However, an opportunity was found to visit the Canadian Headquarters of the New Tribes Mission which sends missionaries to new tribes around the globe, and which is the third largest mission of its kind in the world. It was interesting to learn about their four-year training course for missionaries, which included biblical and theological studies, Church planting, language study, mental and physical health checks and training in interpersonal relationships. Our guide informed us that the greatest cause of missionary breakdown is poor interpersonal relationships between the missionaries themselves. This results in some potential missionaries being advised against going to the mission field.

I also managed a visit to Larry Pierce, the person who produces the On-Line computer Bible programme which some of our ministers use. As he was just completing a CD Rom version which was made available in November 1995, I was persuaded to buy it and then to go Canadian window-shopping for a CD Rom player. I broadened my cultural experience when he took me out for lunch to a Chinese restaurant where I used chopsticks for the first time!

On the current affairs front, I followed with interest the Quebec referendum on separation from Canada. The "no separation" vote won by 50.6% to 49.4%. This subject is becoming a live issue in the UK, with the debate on European Union on the one hand, and the rising SNP vote for Scottish independence in Europe on the other hand. During my visit, Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel, was assassinated on 4th November, and on 6th November an armed intruder managed to enter the house where the Canadian

Prime Minister Jean Chretien and his wife were sleeping. His wife went to investigate a noise in the corridor and just managed to get back into the bedroom in time. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police suffered great embarrassment from this incident.

It was a full and enjoyable time in Chesley, in a close-knit congregation that I believe would be supportive of a minister who comes into its midst. This is its greatest need at present, and it would help to have a proper Reformed witness in this part of Canada. I was interested in enquiries from some outside the Church and to be able to respond to some of these. The families were friendly and hospitable, and I was glad to renew acquaintances and to make some new ones, especially among the young people. During my last Sabbath afternoon, I read a book on the death-bed scenes of young people. Its five sections contained the death-bed scenes of those: (1) who had delayed attending to the concerns of their souls; (2) who were openly profane or professed infidels; (3) who were newly converted to Christianity; (4) who were young people eminent for piety; and (5) who were young persons who had suffered martyrdom. At the Sabbath evening service I read extracts of it to the congregation and I pressed home its message to young and old. I hope that the young people will remember the Gospel preached in their midst and I trust that it will prove beneficial to all.

My hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Schuit, made my stay memorable and comfortable. Mr. Schuit is quite a historian and a good story-teller with a remarkable memory for dates. I managed to record much of the Chesley congregation's history on my new lap-top computer which I purchased for my deputation work. I was able to supplement this history with some of his own biography which will make an interesting story in due course. There was also the pleasure of viewing clippings of my deputation visit to Australia and New Zealand in 1988 among David Schuit's videos.

I am thankful to the Most High for travelling mercies, and for the health and strength to carry through this programme. It was not without cost to my wife, family and the Inverness congregation, whose self-sacrifice enabled me to fulfil this engagement. On returning safely to my wife and children, who met me at Glasgow Airport early on Wednesday, 8th November, 1995, I travelled the same day to Inverness. The next day it was business as usual as I visited a young person who had taken ill during my absence, and then began to attend to the 120 or so letters awaiting consideration along with the rest of the aftermath.

REPORT ON MISSION WORK IN EASTERN EUROPE

Rev. D. A. Ross

THERE IS A SIMILARITY about each year's report of work done in Eastern Europe, and this year's report follows the same pattern.

Regarding the two visits undertaken since the submission of the last report, Mr. Edward Ross accompanied me on the first and Mr. Alasdair MacRae on the second. We visited both Moldova and the Ukraine, distributing to certain needy Churches, homes and an orphanage. In addition to distributing through the normal outlets we now distribute medicines to the Kiev Cancer Hospital. It is with the assistance of the Independent Baptist Church, Kiev, and the Kiev Cancer Hospital that we receive permission to enter the Ukraine, and in return we give a small quantity of medicine to the hospital. There is, in fact, an acute shortage of certain medicines in the Ukraine.

Among the literature which we carried to Eastern Europe during 1995 were 1,390 Hungarian Bibles, 400 Russian Bibles, 360 Russian New Testaments, and 5,800 Russian Gospels of John; also 1,010 copies of the Shorter Catechism in Russian and 1,800 copies of *The Mother's Catechism*. We also distributed a large quantity of Scripture leaflets in Russian, which was granted to us by the Trinitarian Bible Society, and a considerable amount of literature in English (for English speaking people there), which was purchased from the Church Bookroom. The Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) also kindly gave 10,000 Romanian Scripture Calendars (*Golden Thoughts* and *Words of Life*), most of which were distributed through the President of an Orphanage Society in Moldova, to orphanages, schools, churches and homes for the destitute. The TBS also gave 5,000 Hungarian Calendars and 10,000 Russian Calendars, most of which were distributed in the Ukraine.

A considerable amount of clothing was also distributed; about 300 plastic bags of various garments carefully selected from a large mountain of donated clothing. As well as medicines, at a cost of about £1,100, we distributed food to the value of about £700.

During the year a large amount of literature was posted by Miss I. MacKenzie, to whom we are much indebted for her willing and efficient work. Miss I. MacKenzie posted 82 Bibles, 187 Shorter Catechisms, 148 *Mother's Catechisms*, and many tracts and leaflets. The Bibles posted are requested and much correspondence is involved in this work. I reply to these requests by letter, and where it is appropriate I explain and emphasise certain doctrinal points.

During our visits we preach in Borispol and in Kishinev, but a more settled and regular arrangement for preaching and teaching is not possible yet. One reason for this is that we do not have a permanent labourer in the Ukraine, and until that happens I do not suppose that we will have much success in this part of the work. We receive many invitations to preach in Churches but we decline and concentrate on the group in Borispol.

Churches, homes and orphanages to which we take literature appreciate deeply what the Church does for them, and I frequently receive grateful letters from the people, asking that I convey their thanks to the Church for its Christian kindness.

We trust that the Lord will bless this small work (and small work it is in comparison to the work other Missions do, and certainly in comparison to what requires to be done) to the ingathering of sinners to the Kingdom of God, and to the edifying of believers of God who receive our literature.

The Shorter Catechism and the tract *The Unknown God* are now in print. The tract especially has been well received in Eastern Europe. There has been a delay in producing the leaflet exposing the errors of the Jehovah's Witnesses, but it is now in print. We have improved the translation of the leaflet exposing the errors of Mormonism and it is in the process of being reprinted. These two leaflets are by the late Rev. W. MacLean.

Much thanks is due to all who help in this work by sorting and stamping and parcelling literature, donating clothing, and sorting and packing clothing. Thanks is due also to Lochcarron Garage for maintaining the vehicle, and also, not least, to those who contribute the money without which we could not possibly undertake the work of distributing the Word of God to those who, in many instances, would otherwise be denied it.

Above everyone, it is the Most High who is to be thanked for opening a door to Eastern Europe, inclining the hearts of some to support the work, granting safe travel over many miles in sometimes difficult and even dangerous situations. As yet, in the purpose of God, a door is open in Eastern Europe to distribute the Scriptures and to give necessary help in other ways. While it remains open, we pray that your Committee will be given wisdom, grace and strength to press on with the work, and that the Lord will bless our endeavours.

"The whole earth let His glory fill,
Amen, so let it be."

Psalm 72:19

ITALIAN MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

THE SMALL WORK in Fornaci di Barga goes on as usual and the Committee was able to send supply on two occasions since giving our last report to the Synod.

In August 1995, I and Mr. Lucio Strata were in Italy for about two weeks. Mr. Strata took the services on one Sabbath and I conducted the services on the other, and also held prayer meetings and Bible classes, with Mr. Strata interpreting. As was mentioned in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, one

person, a Roman Catholic who had no previous connection with Protestantism, attended some of these services. After our departure from Fornaci di Barga this person continued to attend the weekly gathering of the group as they read the Word of God together. Disappointingly, this person has had to move away from the district.

The second visit was in January of this year when Mr. Strata, who is a deacon in the London congregation, kindly gave of his holiday time to go to Fornaci di Barga. He conducted two services on the Lord's Day and two meetings during the week. The services on the Lord's Day were held in a rented room in the hotel. The weekly meetings were held in the home of the Campani family.

On this occasion Mr. Strata addressed the group instead of reading sermons. As was reported to myself, his addresses were appreciated and he addressed the people suitably on each occasion. As on previous occasions, controversial subjects came up in discussion, such as Bible versions, head covering in public worship, and the position of the Free Presbyterian Church in contrast with the Associated Presbyterian Churches.

Mr. Strata says of Bible versions: "The group generally use the Luzzi version which is similar to the American Revised Version. They had been encouraged to do so by the so-called Free Presbyterian ministers for twenty years. When we have visited them since 1990 we have insisted that they use the Diodati version, which we took to Italy for them. This is a sound version of the Bible, equivalent to our King James Version. Because it dates from 1604 the criticisms of it are very similar to those levelled at the King James Version — archaic and difficult to understand. The group did not appreciate being told that the Luzzi is based on unsound texts and that godly men were martyred for translating sound versions of the Bible. Sadly they are still rather reluctant to use the Diodati and only do so when we visit."

Mr. Strata goes on to say: "The situation in Fornaci di Barga continues to be a complex and difficult one. On the one hand the people welcome our visits and seem to appreciate our ministering to them. They are very isolated from sound teaching, have no regular ministry, no tapes in their own language and very little sound literature. There is no doubt that they desperately need much teaching in doctrine and practice. They contribute financially to our work there and show hospitality and kindness. However, they remain very attached to the APC ministers who continue to visit them from time to time, and years of APC-type teaching has had a profound effect. Doctrinally they appear to hold sound views, but they regard such matters as versions of the Scriptures, complete separation from Rome, Sabbath observance, public worship and externals such as dress and hair as being 'unimportant'. Despite numerous discussions over the last few years they seem unable or unwilling to conform to the teaching of Scripture."

The fact that Mr. Strata speaks Italian fluently enables him to discuss these matters with the group in an intimate manner. The group itself, however, appears divided over some of the above issues. One person from the group

wrote since the return of Mr. Lucio Strata, saying that she regretted that the Church took a long time to find out which version of the Bible they were using, and the form of worship used. She says also that she agrees with the Scripture teaching about head covering in public worship and also long hair.

The Church of God will always find itself in situations of division and disagreement about the teachings of the Word of God. As well as preaching the Gospel and all the related doctrines, the Church must also teach scriptural worship and practice. This we have endeavoured to do. In most Churches, biblical worship and practice is given a relatively low place, but these have their place in the Word of God, and in turn they must have their place in the life of the Church.

I believe that as long as the door of providence remains open in Fornaci di Barga we should press on, teaching scriptural doctrine, worship and practice, and looking to the God of mercies that He would give the increase, in His divine goodness and in His own time.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross, Convener

THE SCRIPTURE and Catechism Exercises scheme has now been in use for forty-six years. One wonders what useful spiritual impressions these Bible study exercises have left in the minds of those who used to do them. In some, perhaps little impression; in others, impressions of a more enduring nature but which proved to be no more lasting than the early dew. Yet others, we believe, have been spiritually benefited, in the mercy of God, by the Bible truths studied, which remain with them to the present time.

Your Committee continues implementing the Exercises scheme with the prayerful hope that many will truly benefit from it for time and eternity. Regretfully, there are a few who begin the Exercises but do not complete the course. During the last session, 185 began the Exercises, and 173 completed them. The standard of work is on the whole very good.

As in past years the burden of this work falls on the ladies who so willingly set the questions and correct the answers submitted by the young people. There were 360 submissions from Africa, 173 from the home Church, and 56 from overseas. The work involved in setting and correcting this number of papers three times in the year is considerable, and your Committee greatly appreciates the continued labour of the ladies in this important work for the young.

There is little progress to report about printing of books for young people because of the burden of other work on Committee members. It is expected,

however, that *The Life of Rev. J. B. Radasi*, by Miss Nicolson, will be in print shortly.

This year's Conference is to be held in Inverness, at the Dalneigh Hall of Residence, from the 9th to 11th April, God willing. There was a hope at one point that the Conference would be held in Portree, but the dates of availability of Portree High School did not suit our schedule.

The topics and speakers at the Conference will be as follows:

1. Showers of Blessing

Religious Revivals in the Highlands.....Rev. G. G. Hutton

2. "Come Over . . . and Help Us"

An illustrated talk on Free Presbyterian Missions in AfricaRev. N. M. Ross

3. The Mode of Baptism

How Baptism Should be Administered.....Rev. K. M. Watkins

4. Contending for Scriptural Truth

The Church in Australia.....Rev. B. Wear

5. The Charismatic Movement

The Gifts have CeasedRev. K. M. Watkins

6. "Begotten Again Unto a Lively Hope"

Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Peter.....Rev. R. MacLeod

While the Word of God is relevant in every period of time, and important lessons are to be learned from historical subjects selected, we also select a topical subject or subjects for each conference. Our young people come with some expectation of getting answers to questions connected with the topics. We do not claim to be able to give all answers but at the end of each conference the conference members show their gratitude for the opportunity to be there, and for the benefit they feel it has been to them. Parents also often express their appreciation of the Conferences and are thankful for this endeavour on the part of the Church to help their children, who are surrounded with moral and spiritual uncertainty and error. Many parents regard the Conference as another method in the providence of God, for pointing out to our young people the good old paths of truth and righteousness shown in the Word of God.

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). While some of the young do not yet walk in these ways, others of them, by the grace of God, do so. We pray that they may all do so.

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Convener

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT for this year must necessarily be brief owing to the fact that we have had no students training for the ministry. After last year's Synod we were informed by the Zimbabwe Presbytery that Mr. Ephraim Thembo had terminated his studies.

In August of last year the Committee was informed by the Clerk to the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery that Mr. P. J. Cassidy, Gisborne, had been unable to prepare for his entrance to Divinity Examination and consequently could not come to Scotland to pursue his Divinity Course as prescribed by the Committee and agreed by the Synod of last May. More recently we have been informed that the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery have removed Mr. Cassidy's name from the roll of students.

We as a Church are in the solemn position once again of having no students, though there are several viable congregations at home presently without a settled pastorate, not to mention the fact that we have congregations in Canada, Australia and New Zealand in a similar situation. In addition to this, Synod members will be aware of doors of opportunity in Kenya and Malawi as well as the heavy burdens carried by the ministers in Zimbabwe. Was there ever a time in our history as a Church when there was a greater need to exhort our people to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest?

Last year, the Committee had with regret to cancel the Theological Conference. The basic reason for this was that ministers had too many commitments, some of them abroad, to allow them to give the necessary time to the preparation of papers. The Committee continue to regard the Theological Conference as a profitable exercise and appeal to all ministers and laymen for their support. A draft programme for this year's Conference has been prepared and it is hoped to present it to the Synod in May, God willing. It is expected that this year's Conference on an agreed date early in December and subject to Synod approval, will be held in Inverness, D.V.

BALLIFEARY HOME OF REST COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Alistair N. Macrae, Convener

WE ARE VERY THANKFUL that in the providence of the Most High the Home has completed another year wherein the Matron, Miss Tallach, and her staff have been enabled, most satisfactorily, to attend to all the needs of the elderly residents in our care.

We record with sorrow that in the year under review two residents passed away: Miss Annie MacLeod on 8th July, 1995, aged 93 years, and Mrs.

Margaret MacDonald on 28th November, 1995, aged 88 years. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to their relatives.

Throughout the year the Home has continued to operate at maximum capacity (twenty-four residents) with a waiting list of twenty-eight persons. One resident, Mrs. Elizabeth MacKenzie, was discharged from the Home, at her own request, on 1st June, 1995, and is now residing in her own home in Lochcarron and is believed to be managing well.

Worship is still conducted in the home every morning and evening and we are most grateful to those of our ministers, elders, deacons and others who assist with this all-important aspect of our work. We would like to encourage all of our ministers and elders who happen to be visiting the Inverness area to take part. They will be most welcome. The times of worship are: 10.15 a.m. and 6.15 p.m. daily; Sabbath 10.15 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. All the services conducted in the Inverness Church continue to be relayed to the Home. This facility, which is provided by British Telecom, at a cost, requires to be upgraded and this will be carried out during 1996, D.V.

The Residential Homes Contract between Highland Regional Council and the Home of Rest Committee has been finalised and is now binding on both parties. One aspect of this Agreement which is causing the Committee some concern is the stipulation that in the event of an emergency evacuation of the Home we must be able to accommodate the residents elsewhere. The Committee has written to Highland Regional Council for its advice regarding this matter and awaits its reply.

The inspections carried out by the Social Work Department and the Environmental Health Department both reported satisfactorily.

The Committee is pleased to report that after all the financial commitments for the year have been met there is an operating surplus of £14,373.40. This is particularly gratifying, considering that there were several non-recurring capital expenses, i.e. boilers replaced after twenty-six years use; two nursing beds and a computer at a total cost of £16,567.03.

The accounts for the year under review have been computerised and we hope, D.V., to have the wages computer programme up and running in time for the start of the new tax year in April, 1996. This will enable all wages to be paid through the B.A.C.S. system.

We are grateful to Miss MacCuish, Finance Officer, for her work throughout the year, and to Mr. D. Dunbar and Mr. A. MacKintosh for auditing the accounts. We thank also Mrs. Catriona MacLean for her invaluable help in connection with the computer.

The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the Matron and her staff for their most compassionate and efficient care of the residents.

Finally we commend the staff and those in their care to the Giver of All Good and wish them the Lord's richest blessing.

LEVERBURGH HOME OF REST COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. A. Morrison, Convener

WE HAVE MUCH REASON to be thankful to the Most High at the end of another year in the running of the Leverburgh Home. The residents continue to enjoy the devoted care and attention that the Matron and her staff have become so well known for. In spite of three members of staff taking unwell, two for a period of more than six months, the Home has continued to provide a much appreciated service.

During 1995 the financial situation in the Home was healthier than in 1994. Some of the reasons for this improvement are: (1) the Home has been running at a full capacity of residents for longer periods than formerly; (2) we are receiving a higher fee per resident from the local Council than before; (3) food and household budgeting was improved upon; (4) Council rates were lower; (5) during residential vacancies beds have been occupied by patients requiring respite care.

The Home was surveyed by a Pest Prevention Officer, who having thoroughly examined the premises gave a very favourable report. Though there is no danger to health or property from pests, we are, in the interests of maintaining a high standard of hygiene, now arranging for a regular inspection of the premises.

During the past year we drew up and approved two documents: *Rules and Code of Practice for Staff* and *Disciplinary Procedure*. The Committee is also drawing up a *Contract of Service* and a *Sickness Policy*.

Over the year (i.e. April 1995 to March 1996) five of our residents passed away. They were: Dolina Mackenzie from Laide who was aged 86 years; Christina Campbell, Leverburgh, 91; Joan Macleod from Kendebig, 85; Adina Mackay from Leverburgh, 89; Murdina Maclean, Hushinish, aged 74.

The Committee wish to express its gratitude to the retiring Convener who expended much labour on the Home during his Convenership; and once again to the Matron and all her staff for their untiring and efficient care, often beyond the call of duty. This is a worthy work, we commend it to your prayerful interest.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. G. G. Hutton, Convener

WHILE SEEKING new avenues and outlets through which the witness of our Church could be extended, we have had to content ourselves with supplying tracts and literature, mostly through the Bookroom, upon request. Although our activities have been limited to this, we are, however, glad to report a

sustained interest in this area so that our tracts are continuing to find their way to various parts of the United Kingdom and even further afield. It is interesting to note that the issues of *Protestantism* and *The Sabbath Day* are still engaging the minds of some so that our literature on these subjects is repeatedly requested. The informative pamphlet, *Which Church?*, which sets out the distinctive position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, among the denominations of today, has been well received and appears to be proving very useful.

The Committee is conscious of the major part which literature played in the success and development of the Reformation and in enlightening the minds of the people as to the great issues at stake, during crisis times in the history of the Church. We have therefore decided to investigate the possibility of putting the Church's literature on the Internet. In addition we hope to make our publications available to the general public at exhibitions and similar events.

Once again we ask for the prayers of the Lord's people that as the seed of the Word is sown here and there in providence, it would please our sovereign God to give the increase.

THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE REPORT

Rev. Neil M. Ross, Editor

IN AN AGE when the Gospel is rejected, and false gospels are being embraced on every hand, there is greater need than ever for Christian periodicals which unashamedly promote the Reformed Faith.

I seek to continue the magazine along the same basic lines as those of previous editors. It is published, as the first issue stated, "specially in the interests of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland". Therefore, it is an important element in the witness of our Church and is the only voice of our Church which many hear.

The positive presentation of the truth is an essential ingredient of the witness of the Church. Therefore we continue to publish articles, sermons and lectures which expound and apply the teaching of "the faith which was once delivered to the saints".

The witness of the Church must also be against the moral evils of the age, including false religions. Therefore we endeavour to deal with a current issue in an editorial from time to time; secondly, we report on Roman Catholic topics under the title "Protestant View" (which is a reviving of the earlier "Protestant Notes"); and thirdly, we make "Notes and Comments" as up-to-date as possible by having a later typesetting deadline for the printer than the deadline for the rest of the copy.

While some of our readers relish extracts from the writings of eminent ministers of the past, we believe that, on the whole, our readership looks for newly written items. We are grateful therefore to have received a few articles from some of our ministers; also, we have transcribed and edited some recent sermons by other of our ministers.

The *Gaelic Supplement* of the magazine, edited by Rev. John MacLeod, continues to be much appreciated by its Gaelic speaking readership.

I am much indebted to the Rev. John MacLeod and the Rev. Kenneth Macleod for editing the magazine during my visit to Africa. I also thank friends who have typed extracts and sermons, and those who have sent, or drawn my attention to, certain useful articles from other sources. We are grateful to the printers also for their prompt execution of good work.

It is not really possible for only one person, having other duties to attend to in a congregation and in the Church at large, to edit a 32-page magazine to a consistent standard month by month (as is shown by the number of persons known to be involved in the production of other similar magazines). I am therefore very dependent on help from my brethren in order that I may continue the work. I appeal to them to send articles to me as well as to be remembering me in prayer.

May the Lord bless *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* to all who read it, as it completes its 100th year of presenting the witness of the Church.

"The Lord of us hath mindful been,
And He will bless us still."
Psalm 115:12

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE REPORT

Rev. K. D. Macleod, Editor

THE MAGAZINE has been produced over the last year very much along the same lines as I have attempted to follow since I became editor. Circulation figures were much the same as in the previous year.

A significantly lower quotation for the printing of the magazines has led to a change of printers, to the Stornoway Gazette, and they have been very co-operative. Our thanks are due to them and to the previous printers, the Northern Times of Golspie. I am grateful for the improved computing equipment with which I was supplied at the end of last year. There is now no need to make a guess whether the amount of material available will fit the magazine exactly or not before it is sent to the printers; one can tailor the material to fit exactly, which is much more satisfactory. There are also cost savings, now that the copy no longer has to be typeset by the printers.

I wish to thank all who have sent in articles, though I feel bound to suggest that much more could be done in this line. Even to draw the editor's attention to potentially useful material is much appreciated, although it might not in the end be possible to use some of it. My thanks also to Dr. Mitchell for his help in checking the magazine for mistakes before it appears in print.

Especially we must ask for continued prayer that God would bless this aspect of the Church's work. We would express the hope that publication of *The Young People's Magazine* fulfils a spiritually useful function. There is certainly a need for sound reading material for young people. May the Lord give the increase!

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. Neil M. Ross, Convener

WE HAVE NOT made as much progress as was hoped because of the many other demands on our reduced manpower. However, we are glad to report that our flagship publication, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, continues to sell well. Indeed, at the end of last year it was necessary to publish another reprint — our thirteenth since 1960 — as a clothbound, hardback edition, retailing at £12.50.

The booklet edition of *The Westminster Confession of Faith* has been typeset again, using the S. W. Carruthers edition of the text (which is free from the misprints which had crept into other editions over many years), and incorporating all the Scripture references. This most useful 36-page publication, of convenient size, is now printed and in circulation, and is available in large quantities for use in study groups, whether in Churches or colleges. (It sells at £1.50, but a discount is available for the purchase of bulk quantities.)

With regard to forthcoming titles, we hope to go to press in the not distant future with the title, *The Tree of Promise*, the excellent work on the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament, by Alexander Stewart of Cromarty. Mr. Roy Middleton is preparing a new biographical introduction for it.

A selection of the writings of the late Rev. Donald Beaton is also under preparation.

The Committee, concerned about the diminished sales of some of our older titles in stock, initiated a sale of them at reduced prices. The sale, which was conducted by our Bookroom, was a success, and it is hoped to have another similar sale this Spring to reduce the stocks of a number of other titles and to generate some working capital.

We believe that our publications, especially *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, have proved to be a blessing to many. Our prayerful desire is that the God of truth will continue to bless our work and direct us in it.

BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Convener

THE COMMITTEE are pleased to report on another successful year in the Bookroom. Though sales were slightly down on last year the volume of sales continues to be satisfactory. The Committee find this state of affairs gratifying, especially in the view of the very select nature of the books we stock and sell. Many of our customers comment not only on the quality of the selection but on the fact that we confine ourselves to what is proven to be sound, Reformed literature.

It is encouraging in such an apostate age as ours to know that there is still a taste for the kind of books that we stock and that our reputation is established abroad as well as at home. One outstanding proof of this is the fact that *The Westminster Confession of Faith* is our best selling title for yet another year. Over 2,000 copies were sold in 1995. Further appreciation of the scriptural quality of the books is provided by the steady sale of books published by the Welfare of Youth Committee. It would be even more encouraging if a greater number of parents showed enough concern for the spiritual welfare of their children to provide them with scriptural literature in preference to the largely frothy religious publications which abound. We seek to be thankful that we are being enabled in some small measure to provide books for children which parents can rely on to be in line with biblical teaching.

As has often been stated, the Committee do not regard the work of the Bookroom as primarily a commercial venture, though we are pleased to report that it is now on a solid commercial basis. We continue to think of the Bookroom as an important and integral part of the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Through the Bookroom the particular testimony of our Church is spread to many nations and we would like to enlarge this aspect of the work.

As usual Saturday is proving a popular day for people to visit the Bookroom, and the men from the Glasgow congregation who so willingly give of their time to open the Bookroom on Saturday are again worthy of our thanks and appreciation. Much of the success of the Bookroom is due to the work done by Marion Morrison, our manager. In addition to her obvious capability and business acumen, we are often told of her helpfulness to customers and her pleasant manner to all who visit the Bookroom. The Committee would like to thank the people of the Church for their liberal contribution to the Bookroom collection. This is indeed appreciated. We would seek to thank the Most High for anything we as a Committee have been enabled to do to His glory. We would ask all who pray to plead with the Lord that the Bookroom would continue to be a faithful witness to the unchanging truths of God's Word as these are contained in the works of godly writers in the past and in the present.

**KENYA MISSION
ADMINISTRATOR'S/TREASURER'S REPORT
Mr. I. MacLean**

ON 10TH JANUARY, accompanied by my wife and three boys, I left Inverness, via London, for Kenya. On arrival at Nairobi, after a nine-hour flight, we were met by Rev. Neil Ross and his wife and after some business and rest we set out the next day on our 6¹/₂ hour journey to Sengera.

For myself, I had been conditioned as to what to expect by my two months' visit to Sengera the previous year, but for my wife and family all things were new. They were to see what was to be their home and who were to be their companions for as long or short as the Lord permits.

The peace and quiet, coupled with the fresh air and greenery of the Kisii hills, was very welcome after travelling through the hustle and bustle and — dare I say — smells of the towns and villages en-route from Nairobi. Sengera, where our Mission activities are centred, is a market village, 259 miles south west of Nairobi on the border of Masai Land. The main town of Kisii, which is also the name of the district, is 30 miles north west in the direction of Lake Victoria. It is to Kisii town that we go every week for the bare necessities of life, where pineapples can be purchased for 15p each, yet one bag of cement will cost the average weekly wage of £6.

For the first week I had the privilege of being brought up to date with events by Rev. Neil Ross who had kindly extended his stay until I arrived. It was obvious that he and his wife had put in much effort to arrange things for a smooth takeover. Having bid the Ross's "goodbye" on the 18th of January it was then that I set my mind to the duties conferred upon me with, I trust, my hope in the promise that "Our sure and all-sufficient help is in Jehovah's name". This was the strength of David the shepherd boy and David the king's faith, and if it be ours we will have nothing to fear.

Regarding the work of the Gospel, our main activities are concentrated at Sengera. Worship is held with a short address at the Clinic every morning at 8 a.m. Numbers vary, depending on how busy the Clinic is, but at the time of writing there are around 80 adults, many of whom will know nothing about sin and salvation. The Sabbath begins with worship at 8 a.m.; there is a catechism class in the church at 9 a.m. with 20-40 present; the morning service is at 10.15 a.m. (175-225); the Clinic service at 2 p.m. (100); and a Sabbath School conducted by the women at 3.30 and 4.15 p.m. with around 60 children at each. A regular service is held at nearby Ogembo at 12 noon. When time permits a service may be held at Maiga and Magenche. Some, eager to be at Sengera on Sabbath, walk from Maiga and Magenche — a journey of over 2 hours. A group from distant Kuria on the Tanzanian border, come frequently on Saturday and stay till Monday. They have come out from various denominations and meet regularly together to read the Word. They are very keen to have a missionary teach and direct them. The harvest is great

and the labourers are few and time is short, but may we be given faith to plead with the Lord of the harvest that He would send out labourers.

Regarding the Hospital, the Matron has given her report, but it remains for me to say that January this year was the busiest month since we opened in April 1995, with an income of 505,000 KS (£6,000).

With the expected additions to staff in the near future, D.V., there will be much building to do. The Dutch Embassy has contributed £4,500 towards the building of a Child Welfare Clinic. At the moment we are still powered by a diesel generator, but the connection to mains electricity is expected by July.

In conclusion may I say that as I travel around Kenya and experience the vastness of the country, it never ceases to amaze me that of all the places in Kenya, the Lord should choose to place our little Church on a hillside at Sengera. Surely we must say, "This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes". He is sovereign and He chooses in His providence where to place us, for if left to choose our own destiny we are sure we would not be here. We cannot but believe that the Lord has a purpose of mercy for the Kisii people.

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I will, both search my sheep, and seek them out" (Ezekiel 34:11).