

**FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**REPORTS OF  
STANDING  
COMMITTEES  
OF SYNOD**

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

**Convener: Rev. Neil M. Ross**

## **Introduction**

THE CHURCHES in Britain were distinctively Churches of the Reformation, but their once strong identity as Reformed Churches is becoming increasingly fragile. Their Biblical foundation has been all but totally undermined by Protestant scepticism. Roman Catholic ritualism, which is promoted by subtle and effective propaganda, is seen by many as an attractive and satisfying option. When the light emanating from the Protestant churches is so very dim, and the authority of the Word of God is rejected, then the effect on society is not moral and spiritual light but darkness. During the past year the darkness has increased, as this report indicates.

## **RELIGION**

### **Roman Catholicism**

While visiting Latin America last year, the Pope launched a verbal attack against “Protestant sects”, as he described them. It appears that there is a massive exodus from Rome in this historically priest-ridden part of the world, much to the chagrin of the Pontiff. The ecumenical movement is promoted by Rome just so long as everyone moves towards her. Any move in the opposite direction will always meet with denunciation and anathemas.

While losing ground in certain parts of the world, where once her authority was undisputed, the papal system nevertheless inspires awe in many Protestant countries. In spite of convincing historical evidence of the brutality and corruption of Rome, her benediction is sought, for example, by members of the Royal Family and parliamentarians. The fact that scandal is becoming almost a weekly feature of the system does not appear to dampen the enthusiasm of those queuing for her favour. They ought to see that the credibility of the system is in tatters when they consider the reports of bishops running away with their lovers, priests’ children being identified, priests in considerable numbers accused of child abuse, and some of the victims of abuse having to be compensated from official church funds in an endeavour to keep them silent about their ordeals.

Archbishop Carey, however, whose authority as an ecclesiastical leader is “nonexistent”, according to a senior Vatican spokesman, still insists on courting fellowship with the Pope. The same spokesman has also said that those Roman Catholics who have recently joined the Church of England are guilty of “apostasy”. What will it take, we may ask, to convince some people that Rome has not changed, and will not change?

Viewing the national situation in the UK, we can see that we are in grave peril. Since the appointment of a papal ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1982, Rome's boldness has been on the increase in the constitutional, civic and religious affairs of the nation, which is evidenced by her issuing a guide for her five million followers at the polls. The overt political interference of Rome in other countries is nothing new but in Protestant Britain it is an alarming development. Also, the possibility of having a Roman Catholic prime minister, who would be involved in appointments within the Church of England, is not too remote, when we consider that Roman Catholic Chris Patten has been spoken of as a possible Conservative leader, and that Tony Blair is personally too close to Rome. Mr. Blair has not only been attending mass with his Roman Catholic wife but also has participated in the mass on one occasion, although prohibited since then by the Roman hierarchy.

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

Within the national church of Scotland there are no significant signs of a return to its historic Reformed faith, but rather the reverse. After a quarter century of having women in its pulpits and ecclesiastical courts, it is thinking in terms of having its first female moderator: a novelty that would be symptomatic of its increasing departure from specific biblical directives and historical Reformed principles. The seriousness of the situation is indicated by one minister, regarded as Reformed, who stated that he envisaged the day when men like himself would be "kicked out of the Church." There would simply be no place for them in the Church of Scotland.

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

The Free Church has had a period of unwelcome publicity in connection with the Professor Macleod affair. Claims and counter claims continue to be voiced and indicate internal division. Some ministers are of the mind that their church has entered "a new era of people power." If this means that the membership is going to usurp the authority which is scripturally in the hands of the eldership, the situation is serious. We see evidence within the Church that the conservatives are discredited and debilitated by the opposition to such an extent that their hope of gaining the high ground within the denomination has evaporated. Also, lack of decisive action in the past seems to have produced a situation in which it appears futile for those wishing to preserve orthodoxy within the church to take any action to gain the initiative. The dilemma of some within the Free Church is understandable, but the question arises, When are the conservatives in the Church going to take the bold stand which the situation demands? If they consider one of their professors, for example, to be guilty of heresy, what action are they going to take? Professor Macleod's readiness to approve of a marriage between the Prince of Wales, who has admitted adultery, and Mrs. Parker Bowles, is clearly in conflict with the Scriptures which teach that a divorced person who has committed adultery during his or her marriage is not permitted to remarry, and that such a marriage is adulterous.

### **The Church of England**

The Church of England has witnessed more departures from her ranks to Rome, in most cases because of the ordination of women, which continues to cause widespread division.

The charismatic movement has made progress in the Church because of the doctrinal vacuum. In line with this trend, an internal report on combatting racism in the Church encourages the clergy to introduce “African drums” and “the Brixton sound” into their worship services. With regard to doctrine, the General Synod of the Church issued a report in which eternal, conscious punishment for the damned was denied. This report received overwhelming support from the General Synod. Sadly, some who are regarded as Evangelicals in the Church, including John Stott, also supported it.

It is reported that the Queen, as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, has been considering the possibility of the disestablishment of the Church. Although many Church leaders are opposed to disestablishment, it could possibly remove difficulties for the Prince of Wales, considering that he is a supporter of the concept of multi-faith religion. He has recently called for a greater understanding of Islam, and has taken the unprecedented step of appointing a committee to advise him on the subject. Some of his public utterances indicate that he has also imbibed notions rooted in Buddhism, Hinduism and the New Age movement. An official of the Church of England, expressing the concerns of others about the theological thinking of the Prince, said that “he is all over the place.” His stated desire to become “defender of faith”, rather than defender of the historic Protestant faith, set alarm bells ringing in some quarters of the Church, but perhaps the future head of the Church of England is the product of the Church’s own confusion and ecumenical compromise.

### **Islam**

The fact that about 10,000 Britons have converted to Islam was one reason for an “Islam in Britain Conference”, at which church leaders were called to prepare their congregations to resist being converted to Islam. One speaker at this conference informed his hearers that in one area of Huddersfield where there used to be eleven churches, there were now only three, the others having been converted into mosques. In the light of the growing demands by Islamic groups to have their religious and educational requirements recognised by local authorities, and that mosques are applying to register for performing marriages, the introduction of legalized polygamy in this country is a real danger. Moves are afoot to have Moslems classified as an ethnic grouping, which would make any criticism of Islam an offence under the Race Relations Act. In practical terms, Christian ministers would be forbidden by law to expose the errors of Islam.

While Islam flourishes in so-called Christian Britain, Christians are subject to persecution in countries like Iran. There, Protestant worship is forbidden,

Protestant churches are being destroyed, the Iranian Bible Society has been closed down, and ministers have been murdered and imprisoned under, it would seem, Iran National Security Council's plan to eliminate as many Protestant church leaders as possible. The intention is to bring all remaining Protestant churches under the control of the Armenian Orthodox Church, effectively eliminating Protestantism. It is already reported that the Brethren denomination has now officially ceased to exist there. There are similar happenings in other Muslim countries. In the Indonesian town of Situbondo, five people died and eighteen Christian church buildings were burned down, after thousands of Muslims went on the rampage. In Afghanistan and other places the same spirit is active. It is surely time to enquire if there is really any fundamental difference between Islam in the East and Islam in the West. We ought to note that one group of British Muslim militants claims to represent 1.5 million Muslims in this country.

### MORALS

Long ago Rowland Hill illustrated the method used by the Devil to lead sinners to destruction by the way pigs were brought to the slaughterhouse. It would be difficult to drive them there but they were easily led by dropping a trail of beans in front of them. Most of us would find it difficult to define the thought-patterns of the day, yet we are all more or less affected by them. Here are a few of what we may call "the Devil's beans", by which sinners are led happily to the place where happiness never enters.

Post-Modernism arises from disillusionment with, and rejection of, the modern way of seeing things and rejects the very possibility that absolute truth exists. Ethics are relative and image is everything. The authority of the Bible and the very concept of absolute standards are undermined in society.

Evolution, which teaches that our present situation results from repeated mutations and the survival of the fittest, is cordially welcomed because it may be used to "hold the truth in unrighteousness", Romans 1:18. God and our responsibility to Him are thus kept at a distance.

New Age ideas provide a substitute religion in which the religious nature of man is to be satisfied by the worship of Mother Earth, and religious activity is seen as preserving the earth by, for example, saving trees from being cut down in the path of a new road development.

Humanism makes man the measure of all things and puts its faith in man. With its slogan, "Onward and upward", it dismisses God and offers faith in the future, based on the general evolution of society towards better times and brighter days. When a century which has already witnessed two World Wars is setting in a blood-red haze over Central Africa and the former Yugoslavia, one can only be amazed at the tenacity of Humanists. A human being is indeed a wonderful creature with great potential, but it is a potential for good only where the sinner makes Jesus Christ his measure, and faith in Him the means of his salvation.

## **Abortion**

When the 1967 Abortion Act was brought in there was more than an element of sleight of hand in the way it was advocated. All children would be “wanted children”, it was claimed, (because, of course, all others, as unwanted, would be destroyed before birth) and the whole procedure would be surrounded by legal safeguards which would be carefully applied in each case, so that the scale on which abortion would be practised would be strictly limited. With the reported rise in cases of child abuse the first element, “all children will be wanted children”, is certainly in question. The degree to which the public have been deceived by the second element, legal safeguards, was illustrated by the outcry over the abortion of a healthy twin so that the 28-year-old mother in comfortable circumstances would be spared the trouble of having to bring up two children. What had been obvious for years to those close to the abortion scene was now obvious to all: abortion is there for the asking. For some, it is there even when they do not want it. Dr. Rex Gardner, a retired consultant obstetrician, writes, “It has been made clear to every doctor who sees abortion requests that a number present themselves or are brought against their will. The first necessary step is to get the over-powering mother or partner out of the consulting room.”

Abortion also featured in the public press in the past year when, following a scare about the safety of the contraceptive pill, there was an increase in the rate of abortions in order to deal with the subsequent increase in unwanted pregnancies. This is social engineering with an alarmingly casual attitude to the life of the unborn child. It is ironic that an age imbalance is anticipated in Western society in the early decades of the next century, which may well bring social hardship to the elderly, while those who could redress this imbalance are being destroyed in the womb.

The In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) programme received adverse publicity when the five years allowed by law for the retention of fertilized embryos expired and 3,000 embryos, representing potential human life and many hours of expensive, skilled, medical and nursing work, had to be destroyed.

It was only when Israel kept God’s Word that others said, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people,” Deuteronomy 4:6.

## **Euthanasia**

The world’s first voluntary euthanasia law came into force in Northern Territory, Australia, in July 1996 and two lives were terminated under that legislation. Five more are reported to be waiting to take similar advantage of this law. The Lower House of the Australian Parliament has passed a law which would quash this legalisation, but it cannot come into effect unless and until it is passed by the Upper House.

In Britain the Voluntary Euthanasia Society has produced a draft bill, called “The Physician Assisted Suicide Bill”, for the use of any member of parliament who might wish to introduce it in Parliament as a private member’s

bill when an opportunity would arise. The British Medical Association has opposed any such legislation, and in 1994 the House of Lords Select Committee on Medical Ethics unanimously rejected a change in the law saying, "It would be next to impossible to ensure that all acts of euthanasia were truly voluntary and that any liberalisation of the law was not abused." In 1990, euthanasia was performed on about 3,000 people in Holland and in 1,000 of these cases it was not voluntary. It was this "slippery slope" phenomenon in Holland which helped the Lord's Select Committee to come to the conclusion noted above. However the Euthanasia Society is not looking to legislation in the first instance but rather to individual doctors taking the initiative, then courts failing to convict, and finally a law despised becoming a law effectively dead. Only then would it expect legislation which would make euthanasia legal.

Professor Findlay, a professor of Palliative Medicine at the Marie Curie Centre in South Wales, says, "I feel very strongly that the pro-euthanasia pressures come from the philosophy of despair and from ignorance. Although, when we first see them, patients quite often talk of death and wanting to have control, I've never, in looking after 10,000 patients, had a persisting request for euthanasia. The law, as it stands, protects us from the worst side of ourselves."

### **HIV and AIDS**

The reason for the appearance of the HIV virus is not known, but theories include mutation from a similar virus in monkeys or from another human virus. AIDS was identified in 1983 in the USA and in sub-Saharan Africa. In the USA and Europe, its spread is predominantly by homosexual practices, though its spread among heterosexuals is increasing. Some infected persons are now surviving with the use of drugs costing £900 per month per person. In Africa, spread is predominantly among heterosexuals, which is also true of the epidemics now developing in the East. The World Health Organisation estimates that 26 million people will be infected with the HIV virus by the year 2000, 90 per cent of whom will be in developing countries, where economic restrictions preclude the use of the expensive drugs mentioned above. HIV is a pandemic which, being relatively new, remains dynamic, unstable and volatile, and its greatest impact is yet to come.

The organisation Christian Aid sent out a resource pack for World AIDS Day (Sabbath, 1st December). Though the end state of the individual AIDS sufferer — commonly thin, weak, young and dying — would call sympathy out of a stone, yet, in addition to being promoted on a day already spoken for, the Lord's Day, the pack made no mention of national repentance or a return to Biblical standards of morality. There was a strong appeal to understand homosexuals, but we say that Jeremiah's call to understanding is the only credible call for the hour: "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgement and righteousness in the earth," Jeremiah 9:24.



### **Cloning**

In February a scientist in Scotland reported that, after 10 years work, a sheep has been bred which is genetically identical to its genetic mother. The scientist is quoted as saying that with further work the same technique could be used to produce a human clone. Already homosexual groups in America are saying that it is their right to use this technique if they so desire. Though this work no doubt has useful applications in animal husbandry and medical research, the idea of cloning a human being is abhorrent. It is encouraging that figures of authority in Britain, America, France, Germany and Japan have spoken in support of banning research into human cloning.

What is the relationship between the genes and the person? It is interesting that two unrelated males from anywhere around the globe have 99.9 per cent of their genetic material in common. We start off from very nearly the same genetic position in any event, while physical and social environment play a significant part in what sort of persons we turn out to be. This detracts not at all from the sad fact that we are sinners, and the glorious fact that the Spirit of God is able to make sinners “new creatures in Christ Jesus”, who therefore ultimately “shall be like Him” when they “shall see Him as He is”, 1 John 3:2.

The Bible requires that human procreation should take place only between a man and his wife. In this context (and in what other context have we a right to consider it?) cloning of humans is immoral. Yet again, our knowledge exceeds our wisdom and, yet again, the area is genetic engineering.

### **Greed and Poverty**

Greed has many faces, none of them attractive. The captains of industry appear in some cases to be receiving exorbitant incomes and huge bonuses even when their company loses money and their workers lose their jobs.

The UK National Lottery appeals to the spirit of greed. Camelot, the company running the lottery, earned £51.1 million after tax this year, while the number of the poor and vulnerable who have succumbed to gambling addiction has increased. A Gamblers Anonymous spokesman said, “The lottery is undoubtedly addictive. We have members who spend £100 to £150 a week on the Draw and Scratch Cards.”

Meanwhile, the health gap between rich and poor grows wider. Over the past 20 years mortality in social class 1 (which includes, for example, directors and leading administrators) fell by 36 per cent while in the same period mortality in social class 5 (which includes, for example, building labourers and other manual workers) increased by 2 per cent. This is equivalent to a five-year gap in life expectancy at age 20 years.

“The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it,” Proverbs 29:7.

### **Child Abuse and Child Chastisement**

Cases of child abuse continued to be reported throughout the year, with some of the most distressing cases involving children in the care of local authorities.

These accusations culminated in allegations being brought against 30 homes in Wales arising from 650 cases and involving 80 staff. These allegations stretch back over many years and 10 of the alleged victims are already dead, most by their own hands. A tribunal has now been set up which is expected to last 12 months and cost £10 million.

In contrast a father who slapped his unruly 12-year-old son was held in jail for 15 hours and barred from visiting his home for two months at the instigation of social workers. The father, a teacher, is quoted as saying, "Other parents should beware. Political correctness has gone mad in this country."

### **Drug Abuse**

During the past year, the results of a survey of drinking, smoking, and drug use among 7,722 teenagers throughout the United Kingdom was published. It made alarming reading for both the present and future health of our nation. On average 40 per cent admitted to having tried an illicit substance, but the figure for Scotland alone was much higher. The figure for regular users was around 4 per cent. Quite apart from the personal effects – spiritual, mental and physical of these drugs, the social effects are widespread and deeply damaging. Recent research shows, for instance, that 70 per cent of the serious violence which occurs in the United Kingdom is related to the use of drugs and alcohol. The effect on family life, employment prospects and the lives of children are painfully obvious.

"Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?" Ecclesiastes 7:17.

## **CONCLUSION**

Present-day Christianity has to a large extent lost its preserving influence in the world. The "salt" has "lost its savour". "It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men," Matthew 5:13. The truth is not only absent from the mainstream churches, but also is seen to be absent. Therefore, the surge of false religion continues to rise. To stem declining church attendances, a more palatable Christianity is provided. How transparently weak and false are the ideas of modern Protestantism when they lead to imbuing worship services with the spirit of the world, and producing a supposedly radical, but visibly carnal religion. The sad result is that "truth is fallen in the street", Isaiah 59:14. The visible Church has lost sight of the inalienable prerogative of the truth to command the consciences of all men, however bold they may be in their opposition to it. Nothing will generate the respect which the church ought to command like the clear proclamation of divine truths in the face of all opposition. Nothing will establish a strong and influential Church but the bedrock foundation of divine truth.

The remedy lies not only in the truth being preached from the pulpits, but also being lived out in the lives of professing Christians. By showing the

character and principles of true, Biblical Christianity by their lives, believers should have a correcting and preserving influence upon communities, and eventually upon the character and principles of the world. The Saviour said; "Ye are the salt of the earth," and, "Ye are the light of the world," Matthew 5:13,14. Nothing is more injurious to the moral and religious wellbeing of a nation than scandals within the professing Christian Church. What great need we have of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon us!

The low state of religion and morality today is a result of those atheistical tendencies of the last century which were strongly opposed by, for example, those who separated from the Declaratory Act Free Church in 1893 and formed the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The false ecumenicism and compromising spirit in the Protestant churches today emphasise the continuing need for our separate position. May the Lord return to our nation in the person and power of His Holy Spirit, and turn us again to Himself!

"Turn us again, O Lord our God,  
And upon us vouchsafe  
To make thy countenance to shine,  
And so we shall be safe."

(Metrical Psalm 80:3).

## **SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. K. M. Watkins**

ALTHOUGH there are several things that happen in a year of a Committee's operation, only a selection of issues can be addressed.

### **Sabbath Trading in the Highlands**

The Committee deplors the opening of the Eastgate Centre in Inverness for public trade on the Sabbath Day. The sin of Sabbath breaking, and particularly this kind, is clearly spoken against in the Word of God. Nehemiah warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes. . . . There dwelt men of Tyre also therein which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath" (Nehemiah 13:15-18. There were claims in the Press that the Manager of the shopping centre received a considerable number of "hate-mail" letters from the public.

Though no one can condone the use of that kind of attack, it ought to have been very clear to the Eastgate Centre authorities that they had by their proposals stirred up a very strong feeling of resentment among some of the people. It would also be interesting to know how many polite but faithful letters were interpreted as hate-mail.

### **The Government, the European Court of Justice and the Lord's Day**

*The Sabbath preserved by a dubious friend.* A most alarming event in the past year was the clash between the United Kingdom Government and the European Court of Justice over the Lord's Day. Those who love the Sabbath watched with dismay as news came in that our Government had sold our people's right to keep the Sabbath Day holy for a political mess of pottage. In 1994, the British Government opened the door for Sabbath trading by the Sunday Trading Act. Before then, however, in 1992, the European Parliament had issued a resolution to tighten up "Sunday working" legislation. Its aim was to secure for every worker throughout the Community at least one day off in every working week, in order to spend time with family and friends. This being possible only if everybody is off work on the same day, the Resolution expected measures to be taken to ensure that no work would be done in general on Sabbaths. The subsequent Directive of 23rd November 1993 (Number 93/104/EC), states in Article 5 that there should be a minimum rest period of 24 hours, and that that rest period should in principle include "Sunday". This legislation included, as its principle part, the imposition of a maximum working week of 48 hours.

When the British Government, with all its sovereign authority, challenged the imposition of this legislation, its challenge failed before the might of the European Court of Justice. However, the Court did make a concession and granted the British Government exemption from the obligation to have the "Sunday" rest-day. This concession would have made it very difficult for any person who did not wish to work on the Sabbath in the United Kingdom. The Lord's Day Observance Society expressed their fears in a Press release in this way: "This ruling annuls the provision inserted in the original proposals . . . that Sunday be set aside as a rest day throughout Europe and, more alarmingly, removes from any worker the right to 'rest' from his employment on the Lord's Day."

Thankfully, Mr. David Hallam, Member of the European Parliament, was awake to the implications, and immediately announced his purpose to attempt to reverse the decision of the Court. Having the support of some other Members of the European Parliament, he was successful, and the concession was repealed. As a result the European Court now requires all Member States to remember that they have a responsibility to the religious and social needs of their people.

What have we come to? Our Sabbaths are being defended by a foreign Court! What are we to understand by the Lord in His providence overthrowing our sovereign authority before this Court? One cannot but wonder at the

sin-discovering providence of God in this whole affair. The loss of British sovereignty, of national dignity, and the exposure of our shameful apostasy, are so palpably evident in this “granting of concessions”, and then the sovereign withdrawal of them, by the European Court of Justice.

It is wonderful that our Sabbath was delivered in this instance. But is no one asking why we are losing our authority to govern our own affairs? Why are we being bullied about by a foreign power? Why have we become so helpless in standing up for ourselves? Part of the answer lies in the very body of this whole matter: our Sabbath breaking. The Lord once countenanced this land and was her Helper, but now the tangible signs are that He has in a very large measure left us helpless, at least in part because of our increasing disregard of His fourth commandment. One is reminded of God’s warning to backsliding Israel: “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger . . . I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath” (Isaiah 10:5-6).

We have reason to be thankful that the readiness of our leaders to sell the Lord’s Day for profit was on this occasion overturned. But we are afraid that the sovereign power placed in the European Court of Justice is no friend of our Protestant heritage. Although good came on this occasion, unless we repent as a nation, much ill we fear is to follow. Our great need as a nation is that we return to the Lord of the Sabbath; and that our leaders, when considering the Lord’s Day, would study the policy of Nehemiah rather than the supposed gain to the economy by desecration of God’s Day.

#### **British Summer Time Resolution**

The Committee gave consideration to the need for renewing the Synod’s resolution with regard to British Summer Time. This resolution in various forms had been made by the Synod in 1917, 1942 and 1965. It was felt that this important resolution was overdue for renewal, and a separate resolution is before the Synod.

## **JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE’S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. John MacLeod**

THE COMMITTEE has, over yet another year, given its attention to all matters relating to our Church’s foreign missions activities — routine and otherwise — which have come before it. With the passing of the years the volume of work has increased. The matters to be dealt with have become more numerous and varied. The recruitment and appointment of staff, in order that our hospitals and schools continue to function efficiently, and the wise stewardship of the resources available to us takes up a lot of the Committee’s

time. The Clerk visited Kenya in May/June and as well as attending to spiritual duties exercised his skills as a physician and that help was much appreciated by the nursing staff. On his way home to Raasay, he sustained a heart attack at Inverness and was hospitalised. He has now, thankfully, recovered. The Convener and Mr. Ian MacLean, a member of the Committee, visited both Zimbabwe and Kenya in September. Mr. Donald MacDonald, CA, also visited these countries to review financial records.

### **Zimbabwe**

Our mission work in Zimbabwe is, of course, long established, and we have now African homes where the worship of the one living and true God has been conducted for three or four generations. The Committee feel very much for the ministers who have to carry very heavy burdens and with Mr. Ndebele at present unable to fulfil his duties, Mr. Mzamo and Mr. Mazwabo are under even greater pressure. We hope and pray that the Ingwenya minister will soon be back at his post.

We are understaffed at our Hospital, and also at the John Tallach Secondary School, and the Committee would appeal to any suitably qualified young people to consider practising their skills in Zimbabwe. Both Miss MacAulay and Miss MacLean were home on furlough in 1996, the former returning to her post in April and the latter in September. We are grateful to Miss Isobel MacCuish, Inverness, for going out to Ingwenya to exercise once again her teaching skills there. This was during the period of Miss MacLean's absence. Miss Graham was home on a private visit during the school holiday in August/September. Dr. Hak was on sick leave for about two months in Spring. Miss Anne Zekveld went on furlough in March and returned again to help her colleagues in September. She has now returned to Canada and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking her for all her devoted service over the years. Miss Margaret MacAskill and Miss Louise Leiper were also home on furlough, both of them returning to their duties in February of this year. To these ladies, at Ingwenya and Mbumba, the Committee expresses anew its appreciation of their labours and devotion to duty. We would likewise express our appreciation of the way in which Mr. B. Mziya continues to carry out his duties as Administrator/Treasurer and also Mr. James Mpofu in his role as Building and Transport Manager. It is hoped that Mr. Ian MacLean, now that the building work at Sengera has been largely completed, will be able to spend about four months in the year in Zimbabwe and this, we trust, will ease the heavy burden which Mr. Mpofu has to carry.

### **Malawi**

In Malawi, Mr. MacGrath, a Blantyre businessman, keeps an eye on our Mission House in Blantyre and is responsible for paying the watchman's remuneration. Mr. MacGrath, a professing Christian, met with the Committee when he was in Scotland two years ago, and has been a very useful and helpful friend over the years.

## **Kenya**

Mr. Ian MacLean, accompanied by his wife and family, arrived in Kenya in January to take up his duties as our Mission Administrator. Within the space of a few months and largely as a result of his skill, drive, and efficiency, houses were erected, at minimum cost, for the newly-recruited nursing staff and then for the minister and doctor. A handsome two-storey multi-purpose building was also erected and a Child Welfare Clinic, to the cost of which the Dutch Embassy contributed, has recently been completed. The Rev. John Goldby, with his wife and two of his daughters, duly arrived and was inducted to his charge on 25th September. Dr. de Jong arrived about a fortnight afterwards with his wife and family. The work which Dr. de Jong is able to do is much restricted on account of the lack of an operating theatre and the Committee hopes that sufficient funds will soon become available in order that this very necessary facility may be provided. Miss Jessie Coote, the Matron of our Hospital (or Omerembe Health Centre as it is officially known), returned from furlough in February 1996 to resume her duties with her usual zeal. Miss Truus Ringleberg, and Miss Celia Renes continue to attend faithfully to their duties and are to be commended for the progress they have made in language study, having almost reached the point of fluency. Miss Peta van der Ridder arrived at Sengera in August after having helped out at Mbuma for about three months. She is, however, still waiting for her work permit to arrive. The same is true of Miss Henriette Burggraaf. It is rather frustrating for these two highly-skilled nurses to have to wait so long for permission to work and especially when the need is so great. Miss Hanneke Terloun has also been a great help, although not officially a member of staff nor on our payroll.

The education of the children within the Sengera Mission compound has, from the very outset, been a matter of concern to the parents resident there and also to the Committee. The distance learning course which was originally adopted has proved to be unsatisfactory and the Committee is now in the process of appointing Miss Catherine MacKenzie, Laide, as a teacher and she is at present, while waiting for a work permit, engaged in looking at tuition material suitable for use at Sengera.

The Committee would this year again express its deep appreciation of the help received from our friends in Holland.

Our chief aim, in Zimbabwe and in Kenya, is to bring the Gospel to the ears of poor perishing sinners and it must ever be borne in mind that the setting up of hospitals and schools are subordinate to that end. The Committee take the view that there should be no further extension of our mission fields, in either country, until we have sufficient Heaven-sent ordained missionaries for the work.

Those who perseveringly labour on the mission field would be encouraged to know that they were being remembered in prayer at the Throne of Grace.

## **REPORT FROM ZVISHAVANE**

**Rev. Z. Mazvabo**

THE CLOCK has turned round again, and once more it is time to look back at the events of the past year. It is a very humbling experience to notice that so much time has gone by, yet so little has been done in the Lord's vineyard. We prove to be unprofitable servants by the Master's talent hidden in the ground.

All along, the people of Zimbabwe have cried by reason of famine. The years of general famine in the country, as a whole, the Lord has brought to an end. There are people who are hungry or whole communities that have not had enough rain to sustain crops, such as the Beit Bridge area, or others whose crops have been washed away by floods or have failed because there was too much rain for the maize crop to grow. I noticed during the Ingwenya Communion (which is usually held at the end of March, but was this year brought forward to the middle of March so that Rev. J. Goldby would assist, before he returned to Kenya after attending the Presbytery), that the crops in those areas had actually wilted. But the country as a whole has enough food to cater for its ever increasing population. Today the people of Zimbabwe are crying by reason of death through pestilence. Wherever one goes throughout this vast country one will meet with death and funerals. When a person dies the relatives try to make burial arrangements rather hurriedly so as to finish with one funeral before another starts. Still it is not uncommon for a small community to have two funerals going at the same time. The main cause of death is AIDS. Only the Lord by His Spirit will convince a people of sin and bring them to repentance.

Although he was not a member of our Church, Chief Negove, of the district of Mberengwa, had become very friendly to us, he sometimes came to hear the preaching of the Gospel. He died early this year. One day toward the end of his life, Smart Zhou, of the congregation of Chiwara, was brought to his court for refusing to subscribe to the god of Matopo. On hearing that Smart was a Free Presbyterian the chief declared: "Leave these people alone, I know that they follow the true teaching of the Bible — as for the other denominations, which have always subscribed to the god of Matopo they will continue as they did before." With this Smart was dismissed. His son, who took over from his father, long before his father died, instructed his kraalheads not to trouble "these people (meaning the Free Presbyterians), otherwise you will quicken my father's death". It is customary among the Shonas to allow a few days of mourning after every burial, but this practise had to be stopped because of the number of deaths. The chief was only allowed one day instead of three weeks, as was done for his predecessor.

It is sad to note that superstition and witchcraft are still rife after so many years of Christian teaching. Ritual killing — that is killing for the purpose of using parts of the body to enhance one's business — is also very common. So that for us it is, not that "ye were sometimes darkness" — but ye *are*



darkness. Wednesday is a day set aside during which no work is allowed in reverence to Vudzijena, a messenger of the god of Matopo, who is supposed to have died on a Wednesday. Now everything odd is blamed upon those who do not observe a Wednesday. A lack of rain, or floods, or strong winds, or lightning and thunder — all is said to be caused by those who do not observe a Wednesday.

The Munaka Congregation had their first Communion in April 1996. There was a good gathering of local people, although no doubt many came out of curiosity to see and to hear what these “babblers” had to say. Normally, because of lack of labourers, I would have been alone, but this being the first Communion at the congregation, Rev. Ndebele was assisting. We pray that the seed sown will grow and give fruit. We are preparing for another Communion at Munaka and hope that the Lord will give us grace and strength to declare the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Bulawayo Congregation, which is mainly composed of young people who come to seek employment in this western city, were pleased to have Rev. J. Goldby preach on the Sabbath before the Presbytery meeting. The work is the Lord’s and He will send labourers of His own choice to work in His vineyard in His own time.

The congregation of Inyathi is well situated midway to the Shangani Reserve, with a good sized population drawn from the new resettlement on the neighbouring tribal trust land. Although it was wet during their Communion, still a good number were present in their newly-built place of worship. The elders came from Ingwenya to assist at the Communion, but on the Sabbath I was alone with one elder and together we managed to serve the table. Afterwards we drove through flooded streams to Ingwenya to conduct the evening service.

We are very thankful to the elders for keeping the doors open at the different stations. Mr. E. Zikhali and Mr. B. Mziya keep the doors open in Bulawayo. Mr. B. Mziya visits Binga once a month and during that week Mr. Zikhali brings the congregations of Nkulumane and Lobengula together. Mr. P. Moyo, Mr. Manzini and Mr. Nxusani help to keep the doors open at and around Ingwenya. It is pleasing to notice that Mr. Ndebele, who was involved in a car accident in September 1996, is making good progress toward recovery. Meanwhile, with Communions and the different stations to care for, we are kept quite busy. I am thankful that my sight is not worse than it is, though it is definitely deteriorating and I find it difficult to read in public and it is painful to me not to be able to recognise people. I am intending to investigate what artificial aids are being offered in the newsletters of the Low Vision Centre in South Africa. Only the Lord knows if I will be able to successfully prepare another report. But, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Matthew 11:26).

## **JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Marion Graham, Headmistress**

THE YEAR 1996 was one in which we faced many trials. However, we are thankful now to be able to begin a new year which we hope will be less traumatic.

Perhaps the most difficult experience for all of us has been Mr. Ndebele's serious accident. Even the pupils seemed very subdued by it. As I wrote in November: "My return from a short private visit home in September was shattered by the news that our Minister, Mr. Ndebele, was critically ill in hospital after a bus passing on the wrong side had thrown him to the ground as he stood on the grass beside the passenger door of his car!

"In the kindness of the Lord he is making a slow but steady recovery and last week managed to take a short service once more. He can still only walk slowly and is not fit to drive but his memory and powers of concentration seem to be returning bit by bit. We are delighted to see him about the Mission again and asking questions and showing some interest in what is happening."

It was good to have a visit from Rev. J. MacLeod, though he had the traumatic experience of being with Mr. Ndebele at the time of the accident. However, it was a support to us and the elders to have him here, especially at the Communion which followed shortly.

In March, as I finish off this report, he has progressed enough to take a small part in the Communion services last weekend, which were held early so that we could benefit from the preaching of Mr. Goldby who was on a brief visit from Kenya.

The elders take the services here most of the time, but Miss MacAulay, Miss MacLean and I take worship and sing psalms and read a story to the boarders on Sabbath evenings as the men have gone home. We would welcome a man to help with this as with morning worship, one or two Sabbath schools and services to attend, it is a very full day. The two old elders, Mr. Mazwi and Mr. Sobantu, who died early in the year within two weeks of each other, have been sadly missed by us all.

I have mentioned before that we are beginning to meet up with problems which in the past we associated with overseas education. This year we have been forced to face them head on!

Term 1 saw us striving to deal with serious bullying by senior pupils of the small Form 1 boys. After this, however, life seemed to settle back into a normal routine of work and sports. We later discovered, however, that the big boys were very resentful at the erosion of their supposed authority and were determined to retaliate. They were mortified to discover that the new Boarding Master was not going to allow his authority to be disregarded.

In September, after Term 3 started, there was a spate of vandalism and outbreaks of planned misbehaviour, when it became obvious that a group of boys were determined to make trouble. In the end we had to take disciplinary

action against a number of them. Most disappointing was the discovery that the senior prefects were among the instigators. Unfortunately a newspaper got hold of the story and wrote a very inaccurate account of it, making the issue much worse than it was. Though our investigations were hampered by a policy of non-cooperation on the part of the boys generally, it is likely that the disaffected group amounted to about 15 or less out of a total of about 275. Some parents too were less than helpful, making light of such things as bringing beer into the dorms. "What did it matter," said one, "if the boys still manage to pass their examination?"

Since the term ended on the 4th December we have had another trial to face. A fifteen minute storm of wind and rain blew roofs off and broke windows, trees and even a huge electric pole, causing at least £5,000 worth of damage. As no one was hurt we have nothing to say, though the men were retrieving large sheets of iron from at least 100 metres away.

Our new school year started on 14th January and by that time the dormitories were in use again, though the painting and electrical work was not complete. A number of smaller but costly items of damage are still being discovered but we expect the insurers to share the costs.

During 1996 we again had a lot of "water" problems. Eventually our original borehole, dug in the early '60s, had to be replaced, though the recent practice by even major firms of sub-contracting work meant that some parts of the job were not well done. This has also happened with our scheme to get cleaning water from a nearby dam, though after investigations and straight talking by Rev. J. MacLeod and others, the scheme is now just awaiting final checks and adjustments by the main firm. However, both ourselves and the firm lost out because of cheating by one of their managerial staff.

The small dam on the Jikijani river, which provides water for a "stand-by" well nearby, needed a lot of attention after a flash flood filled it up with silt. During the year the pupils had an enjoyable time digging out parts of it! However, we will have to get hold of a proper digger in order to get it fully functional again.

After the bullying problems in Term 1 we decided to put burglar bars, screens and new locks on the dorms, so that they can be locked from the inside by the prefect and unwanted visitors kept out as well as keeping the dorm-mates in! The dorms actually look much smarter because of this.

The new classrooms, for which we received a partial grant, are almost ready for use and are much needed as there is still a number of teachers without their own rooms. Both will function as ordinary classrooms, though one is mainly for maths and technical drawing and the other eventually will be for business studies. For the last few years we have allowed a few of the less academic pupils to sit Pitman's Numeracy Course, with minimal success. This year, however, five pupils managed to get a Stage 1 Certificate; one actually getting a Grade 1 or distinction.

We are still awaiting our new direct dial telephone system though the radio mast and lots of wires are in place. We, with Council permission, moved our

boundary fence to enclose these new installations, thus gaining a very welcome additional piece of ground just beside the girls' dorm. We still have not found a satisfactory internal system to link up the new phones. The one already investigated overseas may yet turn out to be the best.

In school the 1996 O Level results arrived recently and despite our fears after our problems during the time of sitting these examinations, the percentage pass of 77% is better than the previous year. Twenty-four pupils got five As or better, one boy getting nine As and six getting eight As. From the few reports we have heard, this seems to be among the top passes. In 1996 there were just under 600 pupils in the school and as well as an allowed establishment of twenty-three teachers the school paid for an assistant teacher to help reduce teaching loads. Mrs. Sibanda, the Boarding Master's wife, has learnt to run our school library very efficiently and the expertise of Mr. Sibanda himself, as an ex-policeman, has been exceedingly useful, especially as we had to deal with some instances of theft in the dining room at school.

While there are certain officials in the Ministry of Education who are very critical of our methods and feel that our "undue strictness and lack of understanding" of the boys' problems caused the difficulties we had last year, we feel that our good results — even the ringleaders passed well — vindicate the way we run the school. As a Christian school we must maintain right standards in behaviour and discipline, despite this being unpopular with some people. Thankfully as a staff we are quite agreed that this is the stand we wish to take and as a private school we are not compelled to keep or take children who do not wish to fit in.

Like teenagers all the world over, many of our youngsters today are antagonistic to any restraints on their behaviour and hence to the Gospel. We realise that only a work of the Holy Spirit can change this and it is our prayer that He would come among us in power.

## **MBUMA CHURCH REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

IN THE KINDNESS of the Lord we saw another year come to an end still spared and enabled to give testimony on the side of the great Redeemer of elect sinners — the testimony of repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church work was carried on as in past years. Church services on the Lord's Day were conducted every Sabbath in our main preaching stations, although in some preaching places services were held fortnightly — due to shortage of manpower. The elders continue to supply different congregations, some taking prayer meetings on the weekdays. Without the Church elders taking services and sitting at Church courts our work would not be what it is.

I should have mentioned in my last year's report the death of elder David Ndlovu. Mr. Ndlovu was a faithful man who did not spare himself in the Church work and in mission work in general. He worked to the very end of his life in this world.

We ordained two men as elders, namely Mthandazeliva Dube and Elijah Mpofo. We also ordained Manford Mloyi and Milton Ndlovu as deacons. May the Lord use them in the advancement of His Cause. The sacraments of the Lord were administered during the year, twice at Mbumba and once at Somakantana. Baptism was also administered to adults and infants.

The Binga project is now in the hands of the Bulawayo Kirk Session.

I have a Bible class on Mondays from 6 p.m to 7 p.m. This class is open to all, male and female, professing and non-professing, and to all who belong to other denominations. The enrolment was small, but is now increasing.

I conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to all in the home Church and to our dear Dutch friends for their support of the mission work in Zimbabwe.

“Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).

## **ZENKA CHURCH REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

I HAVE TO REPORT the death of three elders in this past year, namely Sydney Siso of Matetshaneni, Josiah Zikhali of Katasa and Keyi Masina of Nkayi. The death of these three men has caused a problem in keeping regular Church services at all preaching places. We had to combine the Zenka Congregation with the smaller Mabayi Congregation who now come up to Zenka on Sabbaths and weekday prayer meetings. Also we have combined Katasa with Gwampa, the congregation of which goes to Katasa on Sabbaths and weekday prayer meetings. With this arrangement there is regular supply. Two of the elders at Zenka are in very poor health and there are no suitable professing male members who could be considered for eldership.

Since the return home of Mr. James Mpofo, the Church work at Nkayi is going on well, congregations have increased in numbers and attendance is regular at the means of grace, in spite of the loss of the two elders as mentioned above. I have ordained two professing young men here into the office of eldership.

The sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism were administered at Zenka, Nkayi and Donsa.

The need of faithful ministers and elders is increasing. May the Lord of the harvest send labourers of His own choice into the vineyard. Let us remember the Cause of Christ in our prayers at home and throughout the world. The day is dark and full of evil.

## **MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT**

**Dr. J. Hak**

THIS YEAR has been extremely busy due to the outbreak of malaria from March to May. In the top month (April) 248 new patients were seen on average each day, which is a record in the history of the hospital. This brings the average for the whole year up to 83 outpatients and 71 inpatients a day. It will be clear that we do not have enough staff to cope with such numbers. However, the hospital was helped out by the assistance of some qualified nurses who were sent by the District Hospital during those very busy months.

Later Peta van de Ridder came to help us out before she started her work in Kenya, and Jessie Coote from November 1996 to March 1997 to relieve one of the staff who went on leave. Anne Zekveld decided to leave the Mission in February 1997. She also had stayed on to relieve one of the staff who was due leave. Remaining are three qualified staff members.

### **Building/Transport/Communication**

The accommodation for the gatenen was thought to be inadequate, so an extra room was added on and a shelter for cooking provided.

The antenatal dorm is being extended with funds and labour provided by the Ministry of Health (from a donor fund).

The ambulance had been out of use for most of the year due to another road accident and difficulty in getting spare parts.

There seems to be some progress in the work on the telephone lines. They hope to complete the project in 1997.

### **Statistics**

Included are the health statistics which more or less speak for themselves. Tuberculosis and HIV infection and AIDS are still on the increase, as is reflected in the increasing number of deaths, of which more than 50% are due to AIDS or HIV related infections. The fact that most of them are young people gives a sad picture in the wards. The aim of the Ministry of Health is "home based care" projects, to relieve the congestion at hospital level. But this is difficult to achieve because many of them need hospitalisation for treatment of TB or for other treatable conditions.

### **Future**

The whole health system is going to be radically changed over the next few years. There is a decentralisation programme starting in 1997 which more or less means that the hospital will be run by members of the local community. Seemingly it all has to do with requirements of donor agencies, without whom the health system in Zimbabwe cannot function adequately. It is not known how this is going to affect the running of this hospital. We hope it will exceed our expectations.

We would like to thank everyone for their continuing support in various ways. The interest in mission work seems to be declining, especially for established structures, but the need is not less! Prayer is necessary that a burden would be given for those among whom we work in their immense spiritual need. So many still live in darkness!

### STATISTICS

<b>Admissions</b>	
General .....	2,756
Maternity .....	605
T.B. ....	75
<b>Discharges</b>	
General .....	2,619
Maternity .....	609
T.B. ....	53
<b>Bed Occupancy</b>	
General .....	18,653
Maternity .....	3,074
T.B. ....	4,038
<b>Deaths</b>	
General, including neonatal deaths .....	120
Maternity .....	2
T.B. ....	10
<b>Outpatient Attendances</b>	
New cases .....	24,768
Total cases .....	30,230
<b>Confinements</b> .....	
Live Births .....	485
Still Births.....	6
Neonatal Deaths (first month).....	11
Caesarian sections .....	0
<b>Antenatal Clinic Attendances</b> .....	3,810
<b>Child Welfare Clinic Attendances</b> .....	5,675
<b>Major Operations</b>	
General .....	1
Maternity .....	1
<b>Minor Operations</b>	
General .....	176
Maternity .....	133

**X-Ray**

Number of patients .....	526
Number of films taken.....	717

**Ambulance**

Number of trips (referrals only) .....	229
Distance covered in kilometres .....	53,695

**Five Major Health Problems**

*In the age group below 5 years:*

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

*In the age group of 5 to 14 years:*

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

*In the group of 15 years and over:*

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

**ZIMBABWE MISSION TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Mr. B. W. S. Mziya**

IT IS OUR WISH, in 1997, if allowed, to embark on the following Budget items, according to priority, the Lord willing:

1. New House at Ingwenya.....	\$200,000 (1995)
2. Teachers' Cottage at Mbuma .....	\$100,000 (1996)
3. Ambulance for Mbuma (Holland) .....	\$100,000 (1996)
4. New Pick-up for Minister (i) .....	\$170,000 (1997)
5. Computer for Town Office .....	\$30,000 (1997)
6. Teachers' Cottage at Ingwenya Primary School.....	\$100,000 (1996)



7. Mphakama and Binga Church rebuild.....	\$40,000 (1997)
8. X-ray Processor — Mbuma Hospital .....	\$60,000 (1997)
9. Photocopier for Town Office .....	\$55,000 (1997)
10. Computer for Mbuma Hospital .....	\$30,000 (1996)
11. New Pick-up for Minister (ii).....	\$170,000 (1997)
12. Renovate Cottage at Zenka.....	\$50,000 (1997)

The following should prove of interest as far as the handling of last year's budget went:

**Lorry**

The old lorry was sold for \$200,000. It was five years and ten months old. It had been purchased in November 1990 at a cost of \$140,570.44. It had depreciated to a value of \$81,999.40. The new lorry, bought early in the year, cost \$609,555.

**Three Classrooms — Zenka Primary School**

It is interesting to note that this school and the other schools like Lutsha and Mphakama do not seem to exist as capital items in the books of accounts. This includes the manse, the church building and teachers' cottages, etc. Therefore, the additions have formed a base on which to start a fixed assets register for the compound. The budgeted amount of \$50,000 for this item has ended up at \$198,004 at the end of 1996. The project, being undertaken by a constructor, T. S. Karimanzira, is still ongoing. The plumbing, painting and glazing are expected to bring the cost to something in the region of \$250,000 when the project is finished, hopefully in 1997. Basing on this, the insurance value for the compound can safely be put at \$4,000,000.

**Two Classrooms — John Tallach**

This project was undertaken by a constructor, Lancelot Sanyanga and completed within reasonable time. The budget amount was \$80,000, but has cost us so far \$191,301, and is ongoing.

**Fencing of the Boys' Dormitories — John Tallach**

As far as these are concerned, it was later decided that it would be cheaper and more useful to fit burglar bars at the dorms. This worked out at \$10,526.40 instead of the \$15,000 budgeted.

**Teachers' Cottage — Mbuma; Extra Boys' Dormitories; Teachers' Cottage — Ingwenya Primary School; Headmistress's House — John Tallach; Store Room to become Bookstore; Changing Rooms at Dining Room — John Tallach**

These projects were left in abeyance until the 1997 budget, when some of them would therefore be reconsidered for inclusion.

### Storms

It would seem that storms are now here to stay. The storm damage at the school has cost \$64,723.49. Affected were the following:

- (1) Girls' Dormitory — Repair to asbestos roof and internal ceiling sheets.
  - (2) Matron's House — Repair to asbestos roof.
  - (3) Electric Workshop — Corrugated iron roof to be repaired with salvage iron sheets.
  - (4) Boys' Dormitory — Entire roof affected. New sheets supplied.
  - (5) Laundry (Boys') — Damaged asbestos roof replaced with salvaged corrugated iron sheets.
  - (6) New toilet — Roofed with salvaged corrugated iron sheets.
  - (7) School Assembly Hall — Stains on the ceiling.
  - (8) 2,000 gallon tank — New but dented and punctured — repaired.
- Items 1, 2 and 3 were accepted in the sum of \$7,164.27.  
Items 4, 5 and 7 were accepted in the sum of \$15,005.20.

The rest of the items together with the labour costs were agreed at \$21,112.41. Giving an overall total of \$43,281.88, but insurance will reimburse only \$20,610, calculated as follows: accepted claim \$43,282 x sum insured \$10,000,000 (grossly underinsured). Value at risk \$21,000,000.

Another storm occurred at Thembiso Children's Home on 26th December. The roofing sheets were ripped off one of the buildings. We are thankful to the Most High that no one was injured. This cost us the sum of \$3,942.80, which our insurance has gladly paid.

### Motor Vehicles and Fuel Costs

These are very high and this is evident from the financial reports from the auditors. Of interest are the following figures representing grants for Ministers' cars per year:

	<i>Granted</i>	<i>Spent</i>
Rev. P. Mazamo — Mbuma and Zenka.....	\$19,175.40	\$17,610.83
Rev. A. B. Ndebele — Ingwenya .....	\$8,461.76	\$10,594.71
Rev. Z. V. Mazvabo — New Canaan Mission .	\$20,885.76	\$26,376.12

It is to be noted that the amounts under "spent" were paid to the garage in respect of the ministerial cars because these came through our books here. I do not have the figures for fuel. These should be reflected in the congregational statements. It would be a sign of real growth in the Church here if congregations gave towards the maintenance and running of their ministers' cars.

### Log Books

I am going to try and insist on the completion of logs for each and every car on the Mission. This should give us a rough idea of whether the cars are being put to proper use and not to abuse. These logs will be submitted monthly, whether completed or "nil".

**Sustentation Fund**

The following figures for the year were quite pleasing:

Mbuma .....	\$3,000.00
Zenka.....	\$3,369.20
Ingwenya.....	\$3,000.00
New Canaan.....	\$3,300.00
Bulawayo .....	\$7,537.15

The minimum set by Presbytery for the year per charge was \$3,000. The congregations are encouraged to keep this up, and indeed improve on it. We will certainly not be the losers by giving to the Cause. This point cannot be over-emphasised. “And this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you” (1 Corinthians 9:23).

**BUILDING AND TRANSPORT REPORT**

**Mr. James Mpofu**

THE CHURCH BUILDING at Chibi is in use, though there are a few things to be done before finishing, such as painting. Maintenance has been kept up at other places of the Mission at New Canaan.

Bulawayo has had maintenance work done on the church at Lobengula and Nkulumani.

Wind broke some parts of the Thembiso Children’s Home and repairs were done.

The new classrooms at Ingwenya are complete and now ready for use.

There was much damage at John Tallach Secondary School to the children’s dormitory. The roofs of Form 1, the ironing room and some girl’s houses were all blown off and there was much work done to get the place ready before the school opened.

The store room was extended and a new roof put over it to enable us to store the furniture of the headmistress’s house during the rebuilding of her house.

The fence at Ingwenya was extended to take up the Zesa Pole, which was put outside the Mission with an open unlocked electricity box also without the fence.

The new classrooms at Zenka Mission are being painted now, together with three classrooms, gent’s and ladies’ toilets (which are water system) and the headmaster’s office.

Maintenance has continued at the Mbuma Mission on cracked walls.

A slab has been made joining all the wards on the way to the mortuary to make it easier for taking the remains to the mortuary.

Blailor toilets have been put up at Mbuma to be used during the day to save water used in toilets by all sick people during flushing time. The inside or flushing toilets can be used during the night only.

### **Transport**

Rev. P. Mzamo's Ford is still in good running order. Dr. Hak's Mazda is roadworthy, although it sustained a broken axle and half-shaft during the year.

The ambulance is back in use after a long wait for a steering-box. The old ambulance needs to be replaced as it is no longer roadworthy. It has many problems and is presently in the garage awaiting repairs.

The Triton Lorry is not in good condition because of bad roads. Land Rovers are the best for these roads. The Nissan used by the Transport Manager is still going very well.

Rev. A. B. Ndebele's Mazda is still roadworthy and is doing well. The Ventura used by the ladies at Ingwenya Mission is still in very good condition.

The new lorry is doing very well and covers all needs to every corner of the Mission. The School bus is still continuing with school orders and fulfils the necessary duties on the Mission.

The green Nissan is still doing well on good roads, but sometimes has fuel problems on bad roads. The Sierra is now very old and can only be used in town. This car needs to be replaced. Rev. Z. Mazvabo's Ford Sierra is still running well, although the roads used are very bad, necessitating servicing every month.

Thanks are due to the Lord for His everlasting Gospel and for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ — a gift to sinners such as we are.

## **KENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. J. Goldby**

WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE the Lord's mercy towards us all in Sengera. Satan has been busy but "hitherto hath the Lord helped us". Since our arrival in Kenya in July 1996 the congregation here has become established on more regular lines. As we are under the jurisdiction of the Zimbabwe Presbytery, Mr. Ian Maclean, the Administrator, was ordained as an elder of the congregation by the Interim Moderator pro tem, Rev. P. Mzamo, on Tuesday, 24th September 1996. The induction of the minister took place on the following day. We were saddened by the news that Rev. A. Ndebele could not attend owing to the serious injury sustained after being knocked down by a bus.

Sabbath services begin at 9.30 a.m. with a catechism class attended by thirty adults and children. The morning service, attended by 130-150 persons, begins at 10.30 am. The afternoon service is held at 2 p.m. at the hospital. Morning worship at the hospital with a short address takes place each morning at 8 a.m.

with a Bible study on Monday at 5 p.m. Occasional services are held at several other places as enabled. A number of the fifty-seven families in the congregation have been visited. We receive a warm welcome in all the homes we visit. So far all those visited, I am pleased to report, keep up a full family worship on a daily basis.

We officially sponsor one primary school which involves assisting them with a very small amount of money as enabled each year. This gives us access to hundreds of children to whom we can give instruction in the Bible and Catechism. We have had some involvement with another primary and secondary school where instruction in the Catechism has been continued for some time. I would like to see our relationship with these schools continue with a small amount of money being allocated to them each year. This sponsor relationship does not involve us in a great financial outlay or in the running of the school, but it gives us an excellent opportunity to bring the Gospel to hundreds of young people.

If a small vehicle could be set aside primarily for the use of the minister this would be a great advantage to reach the places (generally within half-an-hour to forty minutes' drive). Walking is fine for the near vicinity but is not practical for the greater distances.

On the side of finance I think it would be a great help to have the yearly budget for the purely spiritual side of the Mission separated so that the medical and other aspects do not proceed at the expense of the Gospel.

Our Deacons' Court is assisted by a Collection Committee which is responsible for all the Church collections. We are keen to encourage the people to contribute as much as they can towards the support of the Gospel among them. Progress in this regard has thus far been satisfactory. Total contributions for the year have reached £1,513 sterling, whilst door collections amounted to £335. A total of £274 was expended on poor relief during the year. We hope to use some of the Church collection money for the improvement of the church building. At present there are no seats or pulpit, or proper floor. Up to now the school has kindly allowed us to use their benches and table which are carried to the church each week. The walls need to be plastered, the floor concreted, and a ceiling fitted to bring the building up to a basic standard.

On 11th March the Zimbabwe Presbytery met. I was glad to have the opportunity to attend, representing the Kenya Mission for the first time. It was a matter for great thankfulness to the Lord that Rev. A. Ndebele after his severe injuries was sufficiently well to be in attendance. I assisted at Communion in Zenka and Ingwenya and kept services in various places during my visit to Zimbabwe. At Zenka I was introduced to MaNdebele, who was converted under the ministry of Rev. John Tallach in 1924, and at Ingwenya we met MaDonsa, a descendent of the famous Matabele king Lobengula, who remembers Mr. Radasi and who came to the service to "feed her soul upon the Word".

**REPORT OF OMOREMBE HEALTH CENTRE,  
SENGERA, KENYA**

**Dr. E. de Jong**

WE HAVE many reasons to thank the Lord for His goodness. In October 1996, already six months ago, we arrived safely in Kenya. The text of the last sermon we heard in The Netherlands was: "And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8). And we may honestly say that in many ways these words have proved to be true.

**Staff movements**

Sr. H. Burggraaf came in October 1995 as a voluntary worker. She applied and was accepted as a midwife from January 1996. Sr. J. A. Coote came back from furlough in March. Sr. A. N. Ringelberg went on furlough from March to July. Sr. P. van de Ridder arrived in August from Zimbabwe. Sr. Coote went to Zimbabwe in November to help out in their staff shortage.

As mentioned already, in October I arrived with wife and four children after being accepted by the Foreign Mission Committee in March to assist the Mission as a doctor.

**STATISTICS**

<b>Admissions</b>	
General .....	1,906
Maternal.....	300
Deliveries.....	225
Normal.....	205
Assisted.....	24
<b>Referrals</b> .....	40
<b>Deaths</b> .....	122
<b>Bed Occupancy, average per day</b> .....	16 (7-30)
<b>Laboratory Tests</b> .....	10.474
<b>Blood Transfusions</b> .....	624
<b>Minor Operations</b> .....	135
<b>Out-Patients</b>	
General .....	4,440
Antenatals .....	852

The overall picture is one of a considerable drop in out-patients as well as in-patients compared with 1995. In comparison with the eight months the clinic was open in 1995, there is a drop of about 45%.

When a new clinic is established, many people come to try the service which is offered. It is quite logical to expect a general drop in the first years. But another important fact which explains the drop very well is that in 1995 the malaria season was very bad!

Although our statistics are not very reliable as yet, the overall picture is very clear. About 75% of all cases seen in 1996 were malaria (plus anaemia) cases (in January, April, May and June up to 80-90%). Because malaria is very seasonal we have to expect fluctuations within a year and even within consecutive years.

### **Medical Report**

Undoubtedly the above reasons are the most important ones, but we are still looking to see if there are other factors influencing this general drop.

We have to accept that the mean bed occupancy will be relatively low.

Until now we have no real operating facilities.

When we consider that during the first week of arriving at Sengera we could have done five cesarean sections, we are missing a very important source of income.

Towards the end of the year the building of the Mother and Child Care Clinic was commenced. A donation from the Dutch Embassy was given for this.

In conclusion we have to say that it is an illusion to think that our clinic will be self-supporting, at this stage anyway.

### **Prospects**

Much requires to be done to educate our staff and to raise the standard of the untrained nursing and clerical staff.

We hope to start with outreach work (mobile clinics) and the Mother and Child Care Clinic. Concerning this Clinic there are difficulties in getting equipment which would normally be given free; e.g. a fridge and steriliser.

Another project we are starting is special care for AIDS patients by means of Community Education and house visits. Considering that about 20% of the population in our area are carriers of the AIDS virus, there is a great need in providing care for these poor people and in bringing them the Gospel.

It is our expectation that Sister Peta van der Ridder and Sister Henriette Burggraaf will finish the training to register as Nurse and Midwives in Kenya.

Concerning myself, I hope to get a more permanent licence to work as a doctor in this country. We hope and trust that it is our common prayer that the Lord will bless all our endeavours to the advancement of His Kingdom in Kenya.

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psalm 72:8).

## **KENYA MISSION ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Mr. I. MacLean**

THE YEAR that is past has been a very busy one for the Kenya Mission, but as we reflect we can truly say, "Our help is in the name of the Lord". Some may go "down to Egypt for help" but we trust we have learned Peter's lesson, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life".

Before I go into details, let me take the many people, who are unfamiliar with the Mission at Sengera, on a guided tour of the compound.

As we leave the tarmac road, after travelling six hours south west from Nairobi, we enter upon the final stage of our journey along a 3 mile stretch of dirt track road, carefully avoiding the pot-holes, until we arrive outside the big iron gates of the Mission compound. Joshua the guard hurriedly opens them and greets us with his welcoming smile.

Immediately through the gates, we see on the right the forty bed Health Centre known as "Omorembe", opened in April 1995. At right-angles to the main building and slightly downhill is the laundry, kitchen, children's ward and male ward. Just through the gates on the left is the guard's hut, manned twenty-four hours a day.

As we move forward, we pass on the left the newly constructed Child Welfare Clinic, built with the help of a £4,000 donation from the Dutch Embassy. Directly in front of us we see the two-storey reinforced concrete building with its double garage and general purpose store on the ground floor, and after climbing the concrete stairs on the right we come to the first of four large rooms. This is the administrator's office where much of the compound can be seen from the four large windows. Next door is a medical store, then the night call staff's sleeping quarters, and the room at the end is where Mrs. Goldby teaches the primary school children.

On descending the steps we see the Mission canteen and pass the steel container that brought many kind donations from Scotland, before entering in through the gate to the European staff compound. On the right is the administrator's house with its recently constructed kitchen extension, and immediately left Sr. Jessie Coote's house and proceeding downhill we come next, on the left, to the newly built semi-detached houses of Sisters Henriette Burggraaf and Peta van der Ridder from Holland. We will not find them in at the present as Sister Henriette is helping out in Zimbabwe for three months and Sister Peta is doing training for Nursing Council Registration at Kisii Hospital.

Continuing downhill on our tour we see about 100 yards ahead two large houses with many children playing, but before going for a closer look we come to Sisters Celia Renes and Truus Ringelberg's semi on the right. They have been here the longest and this is discernible on hearing them speak the local dialect, Eke-gusii.

From here we get a good view of the two remaining houses, Dr. de Jong's on the left and Rev. J. Goldby's on the right. They are four-bedroomed, built



in brick, for a labour cost of £650 each! Beyond we can see the gardeners in the Clinic garden, busily planting after the heavy rains, and further beyond, the Kisii Hills where hundreds of tin-roofed houses reflect the equator sun and remind us of our Mission Field, where thousands of souls are still without a Saviour.

The church building is outside the compound 500 yards downhill.

### **Staff**

When I arrived with my wife and three children in January 1996 there were three permanent Mission staff at Sengera, and by the end of October the same year, this had increased to eleven adults and nine children.

Sister Burggraaf came on to the staff in January. Miss Hanneke Terluin came as a volunteer for one year in July. The Goldby family and Sister Peta van der Ridder arrived in August, and Dr. de Jong and family arrived in October.

In June we had a welcome visit from Rev. James Tallach as Church deputy. In September Rev. John MacLeod and Mr. I. G. MacLean from Scotland, and Rev. P. Mzamo and Mr. B. Mziya from Zimbabwe, came for the induction of Rev. J. Goldby.

Mr. Donald MacDonald was also with us for two weeks in October.

### **Building**

With the increase in staff there was a necessary increase in housing. As the previous local builder proved to be unreliable, we decided to engage the services of an outside contractor, and after getting suitable estimates, we began work in April with the construction of the two-storey store/garage/office building.

Twenty men laboured without machinery, digging foundations, mixing concrete and carrying materials to complete the job within four months for a labour cost of £1,700.

The same routine was used for the construction of the administrator's extension at £350, and doctor's and minister's houses at £650 each.

The nurse's "semi" and Child Welfare Clinic were built with local labour for a labour/material cost of £10,000 each.

Although local labour is very cheap (a tradesman costs £1.20 per day) the prices of materials by comparison are extortionate (one bag of cement is £6 and eight tonnes of sand £90).

Associated with the construction of the buildings were underground water tanks, fed by rainwater from the roofs. This water is pumped to header tanks, which in turn flows as cold water to the houses by gravity, and as hot water via woodburning boilers.

One of the highlights of the year was the connection of the Mission to mains electricity on 23rd June. The long wait was at last rewarded.

### **Transport**

Motor vehicle upkeep continues to be a major item of expenditure. The bad roads take their toll and the lack of a trustworthy and competent mechanic compounds the problem.

The Bedford lorry shipped from England seems to be a very sturdy machine and is used constantly for collecting firewood. The Land Rover ambulance has required a new gearbox and a rear axle since it arrived in August. The Toyota Hilux is at present off the road with a cracked cylinder head. The four-year-old Pajero, bought in September for £21,000 has proved reliable and is kept mainly for staff excursions and business trips to Nairobi.

### **Finance**

With the addition in European staff there is of necessity an increase required in funding.

The forty-plus Clinic staff and twenty-plus Mission workers are now receiving a monthly housing allowance which brings the monthly wages bill to £2,000. The income from the Clinic over the last six months has averaged £1,100 per month.

We are indeed indebted to our many friends throughout and beyond the Church, and especially to our friends in Holland for continuing to meet the needs of the Mission work at Sengera.

### **Rianyakwara Primary School**

We continue to support the Government school in Sengera, by providing text books and stationery, and are at present paying the salaries of seven teachers.

### **Conclusion**

We must ever bear in mind that the main purpose of our being in Sengera is the spread of the Gospel and our greatest need is the blessing of the Holy Spirit. For this we would crave the prayers of the Lord's people and in return we would assure them of our sincere gratitude for their continued support.

Above all, I must acknowledge the Lord's goodness to me personally in giving health and strength to enable me to carry out all my duties, for He says, "without me ye can do nothing".

"Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee" (Isaiah 55:5).

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE AND KENYA**

**Rev. John MacLeod**

DEPARTING on 4th September and returning on 28th September, my visit to Zimbabwe and Kenya was of short duration. It was, nevertheless, eventful. At Bulawayo Airport I was warmly welcomed by the Rev. A. Ndebele, Mr. B. Mziya, Miss Margaret MacAskill and Miss Norma MacLean. On arrival at Ingwenya Miss Katie Mary MacAulay was there to do likewise. Miss Marion Graham, the Head of the School, was in Scotland on a private visit but was due to arrive back the following week in time for the return of the pupils and the beginning of the last term of the School session.

On the first Sabbath after my arrival I took the services at Bulawayo. Around 400 souls were present in the church — men, women and children — and all attentively listening. This, it will be remembered, is a congregation that has been without a settled pastor since the death of the Rev. Alfred Mpofo and it is really a matter of great concern that we should have a flock of this size and not have a shepherd looking after it.

The Ingwenya Kirk Session had arranged for the dispensation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to take place on the following Sabbath, and with my time in Zimbabwe being so limited, it was arranged that I would visit Mbuma at the beginning of the week. Accordingly, Mr. Ndebele and myself, accompanied by Coleman, one of the workers at Ingwenya, left the Mission compound on Monday morning and got as far as Inyathi where we stopped in order that boxes containing some clothes from Holland would be deposited in a store within the church. It was while we were parked beside the road waiting for the return of Coleman, who had been sent for the key to the church, that Mr. Ndebele was hit by a passing bus. It was then a case of getting him to the nearest hospital as quickly as possible and then on to Mpilo Hospital in Bulawayo. For the next few days his life was to hang in the balance and it is a matter of thankfulness that he is spared and restored to the measure of health which he now enjoys.

The Ingwenya Communion was held as arranged, with Mr. Mazvabo acting as interim Moderator. With the pupils back at school, the number attending the services was over the thousand mark. Although Mr. Ndebele's absence was much felt, and the distressing circumstances in which he was placed hardly ever out of mind, the Lord's death was kept in remembrance in the manner prescribed by Himself and we can only hope that the seed then sown will yet bear fruit.

On Monday afternoon I left Ingwenya again for Mbuma. En route I held a service at Nkayi where the church building was filled to capacity, pupils and teachers from the local school swelling the number. From there it was on to Mbuma where I was glad to meet Dr. Hak, Miss Margaret MacAskill, the Matron, and Miss Lia Terlouw. Miss Louise Leiper had attended the Ingwenya Communion and was a passenger in the car that brought me thus far. The next

morning I held a service in the Mbuma church which was also full to capacity and later on I was shown round the Hospital by the Matron. In the afternoon I held a service at the Gampagalala school with the pupils assembled under a tree. On Wednesday I departed from Mbuma in the company of the Rev. P. Mzamo and after holding services first at Lutsha school, under the shade of a tree, and then at Zenka, where the church was full to overflowing, I eventually arrived at Robertson Street in the late evening. Having dropped off Ronald, my driver, near his home in the city, I then drove myself to Ingwenya where I met with Mr. Ian MacLean and Mr. Donald MacDonald who had arrived from Scotland that day. The next morning, together with Mr. MacLean, Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Mziya, I attended a meeting at the office of the Contractor responsible for laying the pipeline between the Ingwenya reservoir and the Mission compound, in the course of which certain difficulties which had plagued the project were resolved. Then, in the afternoon, we attended a meeting of the Field Committee where much business was transacted and problems, we hope, were resolved. The following morning, accompanied by the Rev. P. Mzamo, Mr. B. Mziya and Mr. I. MacLean, I departed for Kenya.

The Synod, in agreeing to the Rev. John Goldby's translation to Sengera, had indicated that some form of induction service would be appropriate. Accordingly, the Zimbabwe Presbytery and the Foreign Missions' Committee jointly arranged for the induction to take place on Wednesday, 25th September. As an account of the event has already been printed in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* it will not be necessary for me to write anything further on it in this Report. The Presbytery and the Committee also felt that it would be advantageous to have a ruling elder at Sengera, as well as a minister, and steps were taken to that end. Keeping as close to the normal procedure as was possible in the circumstances, Mr. Ian MacLean (Jnr.) was duly elected, and, having agreed to accept office, he was formally ordained and inducted on the 24th day of September. Both these services, especially the former, were well attended and stirred up a great deal of interest among the people. On the afternoon of the day following Mr. Goldby's induction, the Rev. P. Mzamo, Mr. B. Mziya, and I bade farewell to our friends at Sengera and, driven by the Rev. J. Goldby, we arrived at Kisumu at dusk. The following morning, after bidding farewell to Mr. Goldby at the Airport, a Kenyan Airways flight took us to Nairobi. In the late afternoon my Zimbabwean brethren departed for their own homeland and I, after having to spend wearisome hours in the Nairobi Airport terminal, also departed, at midnight, on a London-bound British Airways flight. After two further flights, safely preserved by the Keeper of Israel, I was back in Stornoway.

In concluding my Report I would like to thank all the Mission friends — black and white — in Zimbabwe and Kenya whose hospitality and kindness was much appreciated and not forgotten.

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

## **DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross**

MINISTERIAL SUPPLY for overseas congregations is not easily obtained, but a number of our ministers were able to help occasionally. It is no easy task for ministers to undertake extra duties when they are burdened with duties in their own congregations. The Committee is thankful that ministers are willing to help and that Presbyteries are willing to release them. Just as it is vital that vacant congregations receive ministerial supply in our own country, and that assistance be given at Communion seasons, so it is vital for congregations overseas. Our ministers and congregations overseas are much encouraged by our interest in them and our doing our utmost to send ministerial supply.

The Rev. Keith Watkins visited Chesley last July, and the Rev. Roderick MacLeod in October. Both enjoyed preaching in the congregation and visiting the homes of our people there, and we believe that the congregation found it to be profitable. The congregation is in good heart and was much encouraged by receiving a number of new communicants. The reports of Mr. K. Watkins and Mr. R. Macleod, who went as a deputies, will give a fuller picture of the situation.

Rev. N. M. Ross is to visit Chesley for three Sabbaths in April, D.V., and will conduct the services of the Communion season there. His visit, however, was not arranged by the Committee, but by the Interim Moderator, the Rev. Alex McPherson, and his fare will be paid by the Chesley Deacons' Court.

Sadly, there have been a number of deaths in our Australian and New Zealand congregations, but on the other hand, we hear encouraging reports about Communion services being well attended and young families regularly coming to the means of grace. It is hoped that the Rev. G. G. Hutton will visit New Zealand from March to April, and Australia from April to May, D.V. It is expected that he will assist at three Communion services and possibly four. His assistance is much looked forward to by the ministers, the Rev. E. Rayner and the Rev. J. van Dorp. It is well known that Mr. Rayner and Mr. van Dorp, more than any other of the ministers in our Church, have vast distances to cover in assisting at Communion services and attending meetings of Presbytery. Mr. Hutton's visit will cut down their travel between New Zealand and Australia for the occasion of the Communion services, which is much appreciated by them.

Much of the Saviour's ministry was itinerant. As He passed by, how many people He was pleased to bless with eternal blessings. Our prayer is that the visits of the Rev. Neil Ross and the Rev. G. G. Hutton, and others, though brief in those places, will be much owned by the Most High to the feeding of the Lord's people and the conversion of sinners.

As was decided at the last Synod, no deputy was sent to Italy. However, Mr. Lucio Strata endeavours to supply sermons on a regular basis. With the assistance of Mr. David Ayres who reads English sermons he interprets these onto cassette tapes which are then sent to the group in Fornaci di Barga. The future for the Church in Fornaci di Barga looks pretty bleak at the moment

because the hearts of the people, by and large, have been turned in a measure from the reformed worship and practice of our Church. May the Lord raise up a truly reformed witness in that land so utterly blighted by Romanism.

The work in Eastern Europe continues. It is cause for thankfulness that the financial contributions for this work have increased considerably during the year. It is also cause for much thankfulness that a group of people in Odessa, with whom we are in contact, have a sincere interest in reformed teaching. An Arminian bias prevails in the Churches with which we have had contact. However, this group wishes to identify with the Westminster Confession of Faith and with the Presbyterian form of Church government and practice. The Eastern Europe Report gives more detail about this group.

Finally we thank our people in the home Church for their evident and continuing interest in the work of the Gospel overseas. Without their financial contributions, the work could not continue. May the Lord be pleased to look down in mercy upon these various aspects of our work for the furtherance of His Cause among us and far beyond our borders.

“Look down from heav’n in love, behold,  
And visit this Thy vine.”

(Psalm 80:14)

## **AUSTRALIAN REPORT**

**Rev. E. A. Rayner**

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD people have read of the terrible Port Arthur tragedy when thirty-five people were slaughtered, young and old without reason or mercy when a young man gunned down so many tourists visiting the historic area in Tasmania. In *The Australian* it was reported: “This is Australia’s reality. Something terrible does lurk out there. . . . We ask ourselves, If there’s a God, why did six-year-old Alanah Mikac die behind a tree?” In Luke 13:1-5 Jesus spoke of a tragedy not unlike that of the Port Arthur massacre. Some people came to Him with the news that the Roman Governor Pilate had killed some of the local Galileans while they were in Jerusalem making their sacrifices and Pilate had mixed their blood with their sacrifices. When the Lord answered those who came to him he added another example where a building collapsed and killed eighteen people. Jesus rebuked those who came to him as hypocrites for being able to discern the weather but were unable to read the signs of the times. We like those of old are called upon to interpret the events of life, our condition before God, our moral and spiritual condition, where we are heading and the meaning of life.

It was well put in a tract issued by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria’s Church and Nation Committee that: “Around the country many ministers have

brought a message of sympathy, and that is understandable. But if this is all the Church of Jesus Christ has to offer then we are no better than psychologists. What we need at a time like this is not just psychology but prophecy. . . . It is no good preaching forgiveness and an open door to heaven unless we tell the people about the narrow door of repentance.” So Australia needs repentance.

People ask, “Where was God?” But God is forgotten in the lives of most Australians. People expect God to protect us from such tragedy or to help us in our time of need, yet at other times we do without Him, deny Him, pass legislation contrary to His law, and blaspheme Him, etc. The disaster took place on a Sabbath and the nation continues to trample God’s holy day under foot. Church attendance is at an all time low. Then we wonder why such events occur. Trading on the Sabbath has practically obliterated any difference from the rest of the week. Otherwise it is a day for sport or recreation. Then when tragedy occurs we have the audacity to ask if God exists. In our institutions of learning across the land the Christian point of view is denied and ridiculed. Unbiblical alternative lifestyles are commended, the New Age philosophy replaces true religion, and the multi-faith approach to religion is the politically correct way to think.

We have rejected God and His Word, we have rationalised sin and we expect to go on as usual. We ask why people are gunned down and yet we are murdering the unborn by abortion every day. Promiscuity, dishonesty and corruption in politics and the judicial system become increasingly evident. So Jesus reminds us that judgement will come. “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” Port Arthur is a warning of what must at last be far more miserable for us if we die in our sins.

The congregation of our Church in Sydney has lost two families over the past year. Roland van Kralingen, Jane and family, transferred to London and the Brown family has just emigrated to New Zealand for work. That family was present when I last supplied Sydney on the first Sabbath of December when there were sixty at the morning service which included the children. However, we are thankful that the Van Praag boys, Jacob and Peter, are now married and settled in their own homes adding two more families that regularly attend the Church in Riverstone. During the year there were three baptisms but no new communicants.

Both Sydney and Grafton Congregations have been helped financially with generous legacies from the will of Sue Shaw. George DeBruin’s widow, Rita, passed away during the year. After a long conflict with doubts and fears she gave evidence of knowing a measure of peace with God and of being prepared for eternity. Her two youngest boys have returned to New Zealand. During the year we have had a new family from the local community attending the Grafton Church. They left their former congregation because a new version of the Bible was used in the pulpit. There was just one baptism and no new communicants. At our October Communion there were a good number of visitors from Sydney and the Tuck family from Brisbane. Following the morning thanksgiving service a luncheon and presentation was arranged in a

local hall to commemorate my twenty years of ministry to the Grafton Congregation. What we need above all is a continued faithful ministry of God's Word in these parts with the Lord's blessing. So we must pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into the harvest for the harvest is truly plenteous but the labourers are few.

## **NEW ZEALAND REPORT**

**Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp**

IT HAS BEEN a trying year with the deaths of three members of long standing in our congregations in New Zealand. The Auckland Congregation were bereaved of Jesse Christensen and Jan van Dorp and the Gisborne Congregation of Elder Jim MacPherson. They were familiar figures in our services and prayer meetings and at our Communion seasons throughout the history of our Church in New Zealand and they gave ample evidence that they highly appreciated the Free Presbyterian testimony both in New Zealand and other parts of the world.

It can be said that this is true of all that adhere to our separate witness. It is never easy to maintain a stand in isolation from other professing Christians. That's why the apostle Paul warned so sternly against "any other gospel" (Galatians 1:8). The opportunities for alignment with lesser standards than the scriptural guidelines have never been greater. Even within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand there are those who call themselves evangelicals even though this large body of Presbyterians harbours some sodomite and lesbian clergy and members, obviously with the connivance of the Church courts. This indicates a serious failure of the essential ordinance of Church discipline and one is left to wonder whether in such circumstances there can be any value at all in the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. The late Rev. William MacLean, minister at Gisborne from 1963 to 1973, did not hesitate to deny the PCANZ the right to be called a Church any longer. At that time there was not even any mention of sodomites in any Church or organisation as that evil practice was then still a criminal offence. The view was entirely based on the lack of discipline in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. The following is a small extract from a Kirk Session Protest following the discharge from a charge of heresy against Professor Lloyd Geering in the Presbyterian Church published in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* in January 1968: "In the light of the base treachery shown to the Divine Redeemer by the decision of the General Assembly, the Kirk Session are of the opinion that the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand can no longer be regarded as a branch of Christ's visible Church on earth, but apostate from the faith once delivered to the saints, and that to those within her pale, the



exhortation also applies, ‘And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues’.” What a great evil the indiscriminate dispensing of the sacraments is.

In our congregations in Auckland and Gisborne the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was dispensed twice according to the long established practice in our denomination but it was not possible to have a Communion season in Wellington as I developed a chest infection at that time. The Hicklin family, however, were able to come to Gisborne on the occasion of our Communion in April as this sacrament occasion is always at the time of two public statutory holidays. We appreciate their interest, stamina and faithfulness and that of some others who have travelled long distances to be present at such occasions.

The sacrament of Baptism was dispensed twice in the Gisborne Congregation and once in the Wellington Congregation. With a number of young families in the congregations there is necessarily a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of the children growing up in our midst. The promise is: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). The vows taken at Baptism put parents under solemn obligation to do all they can by example and instruction to instil scriptural principles.

The weekly Sabbath school continues to be a regular feature and also the Scripture and Catechism exercises that regularly appear in the *Young People’s Magazine*. The lack of Christian education in the public school system is, however, a great concern. It is not easy to remedy this when the whole of society is gradually becoming secularised, or should we say heathenised. It is not only that there is no worship in the schools but the children are exposed to teaching and practices that are anti-Christian in curricula that are without Christian values by a majority of teachers who are without the least Christian understanding. Should we allow the young to be bombarded with evolutionary views and history lessons that are devoid of God’s providential dealings with His own people? The worst aspect is probably the efforts that are made to pervert the young with views of sexuality that definitely encourage fornication and sodomy as acceptable practices as long as “safe sex” is practised. I think parents of teenage children must shudder when they hear that their children are exposed to teaching and demonstrations that were described by a parent in the *Gisborne Herald* as a “mild porn show designed to allow young people the mental freedom to be sexually permissive or gay”.

In these circumstances it may not only be necessary but absolutely essential to enquire again whose duty it is to educate our young people and what is the purpose of primary education. John Knox in Scotland at the time of the Reformation approved of the State doing the education, but then the State school also taught children the Bible.

The result of the downward drift in morality is the increasing abortion rate. Since 1978 there have been 160,000 “legal” abortions in New Zealand. In pre-Christian New Zealand the Maori society did not have the sophistication of

today's culture and unwanted babies were disposed of by infanticide. When Christianity took root there was a dramatic improvement in the value placed on human life. With the serious erosion of Christian principles and their substitution with heathen world-views over the past twenty years we again see a serious devaluing of human life. Now, however, the malaise is affecting all levels of society, both Maori and Europeans.

The moral decline is evident in the proposed construction of a mosque on the outskirts of Hamilton city, about two hours' drive from Auckland. Other eastern religions are making inroads also in our multi-cultural society. The Tibetan Dalai Lama drew audiences of well over 15,000 people in a brief visit to this country. A radio advertisement recently drew attention to a programme in which the radio commentator proposed to enquire why so many New Zealanders turn to Zen Buddhism. What a commentary that is on the state of Christianity in this supposedly Christian nation! May the prayers offered up on the world-wide Free Presbyterian day of humiliation and prayer draw down spiritual blessings on the nations of this world. "Arise, O God, Plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily."

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA**

**Rev. R. MacLeod**

I LEFT Glasgow Airport for Canada at the beginning of October 1996. The purpose in view — to preach for three Sabbaths to our congregation in Chesley, Ontario, dispensing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the last. As the aircraft began its approach to Toronto Airport I realised what difficulties distances can cause in this vast land. From the advantage of being some thousands of feet from the ground one could see highways, remarkable for their untrammelled straightness, stretching into the distance. Being met at Toronto Airport by Mr. Gilbert Zekveld and his wife, I was conveyed along these seemingly endless roads to our eventual destination: the busy and happy dwelling of Mr. and Mrs. Rick Bouman and family. I met with a great deal of kindness not only from the Bouman family, but also from the other families of the congregation. One of the interesting features of this congregation is the number of young children. One cannot but feel for, and admire those who are determined to provide a biblical upbringing for their children in the midst of great temptations to swim with the world. Such we feel are the families of our congregation in Chesley. Our heart's desire and prayer for them is that they be saved.

During my stay there were fourteen or fifteen services taken in the Chesley Church. As well as the regular services on Sabbaths and weekdays, we had a harvest thanksgiving service and the services preparatory to the dispensing of

the Lord's Supper. These meetings were attended by around forty men, women and children. Appropriately enough for me, for I cannot but acknowledge the goodness of the Lord in this venture from its earliest stages to its last, the concluding service was the Monday thanksgiving service. My duties being over I was driven to the airport by Mr. David Schuit, accompanied by his wife and young family.

Although the general population of Chesley and its surrounding areas did not seem to value the witness of our congregation there, it was not unusual to have visitors at the services, some travelling greater distances than others. There are in Ontario some, perhaps many people, who are very dissatisfied with the doctrine and practice of the so-called Reformed Churches. One cannot but think that if the position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland was better known, there would be a considerable amount of interest in it. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA**

**Rev. K. M. Watkins**

IN JUNE AND JULY 1996 I had the pleasure and privilege of once again visiting our friends of the Chesley Congregation in Ontario, Canada. My wife and I received as ever a warm welcome from all the people. On this occasion, no journey was made to the United States of America to visit contacts there. All our efforts were concentrated upon Chesley itself. This included visiting all the families in their homes as well as conducting the usual services of divine worship.

It was two years since my previous visit, and time had made its mark in several ways. Sadly, two families, one of which had moved away to another part of Ontario, had left the congregation; their presence was much missed. On a happier note, two years is a long time in the life of the younger ones, and it was encouraging to see the many young people growing up in the midst of visible Church privileges; may the time be hastened when they might each be converted to the Lord by His own sovereign grace.

Attendances at the six Sabbath services and four mid-week prayer meetings were again encouraging. A number were travelling many miles to be at the public means of grace. We record our thanksgiving to the Most High, that there are yet some who are drawn to pure worship and sound preaching. In addition, three evening lectures were given on the topic of baptism, answering the following questions: how baptism should be administered; whether infants should be baptised; which adults should be baptised; and whose infants should be baptised. These lectures were well attended, and we had reason to hope from the discussions after each lecture that they were profitably received. It is

so important that the people of our Church, whether in Canada or elsewhere, be thoroughly grounded in the very important principles which distinguish us as a denomination. It was particularly gratifying to see at the lectures and some of the services a number of souls whose contact with the congregation has been interrupted for a number of years. The attendance of Mr. Albert Hembd from Indiana in the USA with some of his children was a great encouragement to all. We are glad to record that Mr. Hembd has since become a member in full communion.

This was my third visit to Chesley. It served to confirm me yet more in the conviction that there is a crying need for a resident minister there. The people of the congregation need a pastor and North America needs to hear the distinctive testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. There seems to be a number in Canada and the USA who are willing to hear that testimony. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

## **REPORT ON MISSION WORK IN EASTERN EUROPE**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

OUR WORK of spreading the Word of God in parts of Eastern Europe continues without too many hindrances. The amount of Bibles and literature taken there during the past year is similar to that of the previous year, but there is an increase in the number of Bibles and pieces of literature posted. Packing of Bibles and books for posting continues to be done by Miss I. MacKenzie, Laide, who gives ungrudgingly of her time and effort.

Yet again we have received a large grant of Scripture calendars from the Trinitarian Bible Society, 25,000 altogether, weighing one ton. The calendars are very much appreciated by Christians and others in Hungary, Romania, Moldova and the Ukraine. In many cases the calendars enter homes and institutions where the Word of God is not to be found.

We also received from the Trinitarian Bible Society a considerable grant of Russian New Testaments and Hungarian Bibles. If we did not obtain from time to time grants of Bibles from the Trinitarian Bible Society we would have great difficulty granting the many requests for Bibles which we continue to receive from Eastern Europe. We are deeply indebted to the Trinitarian Bible Society for their ready and valued help.

We have intimated in the March issue of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* our need for a larger truck because the volume of our work is on the increase. The present truck was purchased in September 1993 for £4,450, and was used for journeying to Eastern Europe twice a year as well as doing work in the UK in connection with the Mission. Considering that the hire of a similar truck for

one journey to Eastern Europe costs around £2,000, our present vehicle has paid for itself a few times over.

Because the amount of work is on the increase, it would be more practical to visit Eastern Europe three times a year instead of two, providing funds are available. Two visits could be made to the Ukraine and the third to Moldova.

Of the two visits made in 1996, Mr. Alasdair MacRae, Inverness, accompanied me on the first, and the second was made by the Rev. Neil Ross and Mr. Edward Ross. Our entry at border crossings and dealings with customs are not as difficult as in the early days, but we still meet with depressing experiences, when the grace of patience is much needed. Such experiences teach us to continue looking to the glorious One upon whose shoulder the government of the world rests, seeking that He would graciously continue to open up the way for the continued spread of His Word in Eastern Europe.

Of late there has been a new and interesting development in the city of Odessa which lies on the north shore of the Black Sea. In a suburb of the city Odessa a small group of people profess to be interested in Reformed doctrine and express the strong wish to belong to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The leader of this group, Igor Zadorozniy, who is a journalist, has left the Baptists and has embraced paedobaptism. He is intent on spreading the teachings of the Confession of Faith, and has requested 10,000 copies. He writes of many people asking for a copy of the Confession of Faith and who consent to the doctrine of predestination as well as indicating a readiness to accept Presbyterianism.

Only the Lord knows the heart of man, but as far as those of us who have had contact with Mr. Zadorozniy can judge he appears to be God-fearing, and sincere in his attachment to reformed doctrine. Having expressed the wish to belong to the Free Presbyterian Church he asks that our Church would receive him and the group which he presently leads. Much wisdom, patience and grace is needed in endeavouring to establish reformed doctrine, worship and practice among this people.

The printing of literature in the Russian language is an ongoing work. We have done a reprint of the tract *The Unknown God*, and have translated and printed two more of the Outreach tracts, *One Mediator Between God and Men* and *Law and Gospel*. We also reprinted the leaflet *Mormonism*, and hope to soon reprint the leaflet *Jehovah's Witnesses*. We are also in the process of preparing to print *The Confession of Faith* in the Ukrainian language, and hope to proceed from that to the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*.

The purchase of copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Russian is costly. The fact that we distribute free literature makes it all the more needful to cut costs by printing our own literature, and therefore we may be able to negotiate with those responsible for producing the Russian Confession of Faith for permission to print their edition. Failing this we would seriously consider translating and printing an edition of our own.

Clothing, medicines and food continue to be distributed to those in need. The burden of the work involved in preparing clothing for despatch falls

mainly on Mrs. Catherine Ross, but without the assistance of many other helpers it would be impossible to prepare for each journey. We are grateful to all who contribute clothing, food and medicine. However, the bulk of the medicines and food has to be bought, and although purchased at wholesale prices the expense is very considerable. There are others who help in ways too numerous to mention, some of them giving willingly of their time and transport to do work for the Mission. To each we express our sincere thankfulness. Without their help we could not possibly accomplish the amount of work done for Eastern Europe.

Apart from the aspects of the Mission mentioned already, there is considerable correspondence to attend to. As well as sending Bibles and literature, we endeavour to answer questions put to us regarding the Scriptures. We also commend the study of the Bible and the Shorter Catechism to those who receive them for the first time. Of 329 letters to do with the Mission, most were written to people in Eastern Europe in connection with moral and spiritual issues.

We look to the Lord to bless the work. Were we able to send out millions of Bibles and Shorter Catechisms and the correspondence connected with these, it would avail nothing apart from the Holy Spirit opening the understanding of the recipients. May many of them be of those to whom it is said "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). As we labour we are deeply conscious of this need, and it is the Lord's promise we plead:

"That man who, bearing precious seed,  
In going forth doth mourn,  
He doubtless, bringing back his sheaves,  
Rejoicing shall return."

(Psalm 126:6)

## **WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross**

THE NUMBER of children and young people doing the Scripture and Catechism Exercises continues to be the same as in the past number of years. The standard of work continues to be satisfactory, and our prayerful hope is that the exercises will result in spiritual fruit in the lives of the young people who do them.

We would not forget how much work is required of those who set and correct the Exercises. Do we remember them also in prayer? Our helpers need wisdom and perseverance for the work and we ought to remember them at the throne of grace.

Because of family commitments Mrs. Alison MacLean has to give up the setting and correcting of the Junior Section Exercises. The Committee is much indebted to her for years of willing, cheerful and efficient service for our young friends. We look to the Lord to graciously provide another suitable person. We give our sincere thanks to all the ladies also who continue with this essential and rewarding work.

The book, *John Boyana Radasi, Missionary to Zimbabwe*, by Miss Jean Nicolson, has been exceptionally well received at home and abroad, and three-quarters of the 2,000 printed last September have already been sold. The first record of Rev. J. Radasi's work was *The Life and Labours of Rev. J. B. Radasi*, compiled by the late Mrs. MacPherson, New Zealand, from extracts from letters of Mr. Radasi and others. The two issues of this interesting book have long ago sold out. Miss Nicolson's very readable book, on the other hand, is in narrative form. We are grateful to her for this service to the cause of Mission work and to the memory of this pious and able missionary and servant of Christ.

It is expected that *The Peep of Day* will be again in print within a few months. The reprint of this book for very young children is a joint effort by the Welfare of Youth Committee and the Foreign Missions Committee. We are much indebted to the Rev. K. D. Macleod for doing the time-consuming task of further necessary editing of the book and we believe that it will sell well.

Other books we have published for young people continue to sell reasonably well, as does *The Mother's Catechism*.

The venue for this year's Youth Conference is the Carlyle Halls of Residence, Suffolk Road, Edinburgh, and the Chairman on this occasion will be the Rev. N. M. Ross. Edinburgh has a rich Reformation history, and this is one reason why it is a very suitable venue. The subjects and speakers for the Conference are:

1. **“Moses the Man of God”**  
Lessons from the Life of Moses .....Rev. D. J. MacDonald
2. **“The Wonders Done of Old”**  
The Story of Some Scottish Revivals.....Rev. K. D. Macleod
3. **“To be a Pilgrim”**  
The Major Events in *The Pilgrim's Progress* .....Rev. A. McPherson
4. **Contenders for the Faith**  
A Historical Tour in Edinburgh .....Rev. S. Horne
5. **The Old Testament for Today**  
Its Continuing Relevance.....Rev. D. M. Boyd
6. **“That Precious Servant of Christ”**  
The Life of Alexander Henderson .....Rev. K. D. Macleod

We take this opportunity to publicly thank the speakers at last year's Conference, Revs. N. M. Ross, G. G. Hutton, K. Watkins, B. G. Whear and R. MacLeod, for their valuable help.

The choosing of conference subjects year after year is not an easy task. However, it has proved helpful to receive suggestions from the young people from time to time as to what subjects they would like to hear and discuss, and if we think the subjects are suitable we do our best to provide lectures on these.

After the division of 1989, when many of our young people were influenced by the APC movement to leave the Church, the Committee doubted if the number of young people who would gather for the Conference would be sufficient to make it viable. It is with thankfulness to the Most High that we record that the Conference from that time to this has been exceptionally well attended. Moreover, from our personal observation, the young people who gather now show a healthy interest in Reformed doctrine, worship and practice. For this we are thankful, and believe it is an encouraging sign for the future of the Cause of Christ.

Thanks are due to all those who in any way assist in the work of promoting the moral and spiritual interests of our young people. There are those who do this year in, year out, and who do it cheerfully. The reward they pray and look for is that our young people would be found in Christ and be faithful witnesses in the Church of God. A great reward indeed! "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4).

## **TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. D. J. MacDonald**

THE COMMITTEE were pleased to hear that at its meeting of 11th March the Zimbabwe Presbytery accepted Mr. Manford Mloyi as a student studying for the ministry of the Church. We trust to have fuller details of the new student in time to report to the Synod. In the meantime we can only express the hope that this is the beginning of better things for us as a Church in seeing the depleted ranks of our ministry built up again. To our faithful people who are earnestly pleading that the Lord of the harvest would send forth labourers into the harvest we can only say, "Continue in prayer".

Last year's Theological Conference was held in Inverness on 3rd and 4th December, 1996. The following papers were read:

**"Alexander Henderson"** .....Rev. K. D. Macleod  
**"The Church of Rome at the Bar of History"** .....Rev. John Macleod  
**"The Toronto Blessing"** .....Rev. K. M. Watkins  
**"Personal Piety"** .....Rev. A. McPherson  
**"The Need for Creeds and Confessions"** .....Rev. Donald MacLean



The Committee felt heartened by the attendance at the Conference and the ministers who prepared papers are due our thanks.

It is hoped to have a programme for this year's Conference ready for submission to the Synod in May, D.V.

## **BALLIFEARY HOME OF REST COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Alistair N. MacRae**

WE ARE greatly indebted to the Lord for His wonderful care over us and the Home during the past year. The Matron, Miss Tallach, and her staff have ministered to the needs of the residents and have often gone far beyond the call of duty thus creating the homely atmosphere for which the Home is well known.

We record with sorrow that in the year under review nine residents passed away: Miss Annie Nicolson on 6th March, Miss Grace MacDermid on 20th March, Mr. D. Campbell on 20th March, Rev. Angus F. MacKay on 10th August, Mrs. Agnes MacLean on 12th August, Mrs. Margaret Ross on 15th October, Miss Margaret MacLeod on 10th November, Mr. William S. MacIntosh on 8th December and Rev. John A. Newall on 27th December. We extend our sympathy to their relatives.

Mrs. Jessie Colquhoun celebrated her 100th birthday on 16th January 1996. She received a telegram from the Queen and was presented with a floral arrangement from Inverness District Council by the Provost of Inverness. We would like to thank the Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow, for being with us on this occasion.

For most of the year the Home has continued to operate at maximum capacity (twenty-four residents). However, since the beginning of December there are four empty beds. This has been caused not because of the lack of applicants but because of a lack of funds. The Social Work Department inform us that while there are people who desperately require the service we offer there are no funds available to support them. The only persons who are being recommended presently are those who can afford to fund themselves for three years. It is hoped that this situation will improve.

Worship is still conducted in the Home morning and evening and once again we are indebted to those of our Ministers, Elders, Deacons and others who contribute to this very important aspect of our work. We would encourage others, who happen to be visiting Inverness, to follow their example. The times of worship are 10.15 a.m. and 6.15 p.m. Monday to Saturday; Sabbath 10.15 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. All the services conducted in the Inverness Church are relayed to the Home by land-line provided by British Telecom. This facility has been upgraded during the year at a cost of £1,604, and the results are appreciated both by residents and staff.

All the inspections carried out by the Social Work Department and the Environmental Health Department during the year have been satisfactory.

The Committee is pleased to report with prayerful acknowledgement to the Lord, that the Home is continuing to operate without any financial burden on the Church.

The computerisation of the accounts has been of great value to the Committee Members as they meet regularly to consider the affairs of the Home. Since the beginning of the tax year in April 1996 the staff wages have been computerised thus enabling all wages to be paid monthly through the BACS system. This system has resulted in a considerable saving of time. We wish to thank Mrs. Catriona MacLean for her invaluable and unstinting help in connection with all aspects of our computerisation programme.

We are most grateful to Miss MacCuish, Finance Officer, for her work throughout the year. Miss MacCuish has indicated that she would like to retire in the not too distant future, D.V. We are presently advertising for a replacement in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and expect to interview prospective candidates early in 1997.

Miss MacDonald, Assistant Matron, also indicated that she wished to retire and she did so on 31st January 1997. We wish her the Lord's richest blessing for her well earned retirement. She is to be replaced by Miss Crum, whose present post of third in charge is to be taken by Miss Jane Logue.

We wish to express our thanks to Mr. Donald Dunbar and Mr. Angus MacIntosh for auditing the financial accounts.

We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Matron and her staff for their loyalty and their compassionate and efficient care of the Residents.

Finally we commend the staff and all 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**

**Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod**

ONCE AGAIN we are glad to draw attention to the excellent work being done in this Home to care for up to fourteen residents at the stage in their lives when their health is declining. It is generally acknowledged that these residents receive a very high standard of care, and last year's report from the Local Authority Inspector confirms this. Those who are still able to leave their rooms have the benefit of being present at family worship and of having the services of public worship relayed to the Home from the adjacent Leverburgh Church.

The Committee is thankful that the accounts for 1996 show a surplus of over £2,000. This is largely the result of the significantly higher fees of recent years, the reductions in expenditure on food and other consumables achieved by Mr.

Alasdair MacRae, and, compared with 1995, that all beds were occupied for a higher proportion of the year. We are thankful for the extent to which the Home has had a full complement of residents, though at the time of writing there is one empty bed. It must be stressed that a favourable financial outcome can only be achieved this year and in the future if our income can be maintained in real terms. This means that the fees we receive from the public purse — and almost all our residents have required to be supported from public funds — must at least keep pace with inflation. Equally, we must have all our beds occupied for as high a proportion of the time as is possible. This last factor is outwith our control, but the God of providence is able to provide for the needs of His Cause in every way, and we are to look to Him to supply our every need in this aspect of the Church's work also.

Death has again brought sadness to the Home, carrying away three residents into eternity since the last report was written: Mrs. W. MacGregor and, within three weeks of each other, Mr. and Mrs. Calum Macleod. The Committee would express sympathy to their families.

Year by year, the Committee has expressed its thanks to the Officer in charge and her staff. This should not be treated as a formality. Their unstinted service to the residents is indeed worthy of our sincere gratitude, and we wish them all the Lord's blessing. We again commend the work of the Home to the prayers of the Lord's people.

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. G. G. Hutton**

THIS YEAR another title has been added to the number of Gospel Tracts produced by the Committee, bringing the total to eleven. As requested by members of Synod last year, we list the titles as, *The Unknown God*, *One Mediator Between God and Men*, *Law and Gospel*, *Repent and Believe*, *Where are You Going?*, *Where do You Expect to Spend Eternity?*, *The Predictions of the Bible*, *Conveyer-belt Christians*, *Why Keep the Christian Sabbath*, *Let us Stand Fast for the Seven Points of Protestantism*, and the latest, *The New Birth*. The demand for these tracts has been such that it has been necessary to reprint 10,000 of each. While we do not come into personal contact with most of those who obtain these tracts through the Bookroom in Glasgow, which is our main outlet, we are encouraged by the fact that so much use is being made of them.

Following our report to the last Synod, the Committee has investigated the use of the Internet. We have decided to advertise the Church's presence, literature and testimony, taking appropriate safeguards regarding the Sabbath.

## **THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE REPORT**

**Rev. Neil M. Ross, Editor**

SOME PEOPLE outwith the Free Presbyterian Church receive information about the Church only from the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* or from newspaper reports about items in the Magazine. It is important that we produce material which is helpful, not only to those belonging to the Church, but also to others in this country and abroad who, in the providence of the Lord, have contact with us through the Magazine. At least a quarter of the magazines go to people outwith the Church.

We seek to show faithfully and compassionately what the Scriptures say about the momentous issues which face every soul, and the religious and moral issues of the day which give rise to concern in many minds.

We are grateful to those who have produced articles on a wide range of doctrinal, practical, moral and historical subjects; to others who have penned review articles, reviews, obituaries and items for "Notes and Comments" or "Protestant View"; and to yet others who have written news reports about the Church's work in Africa and Eastern Europe. The time spent in editing most sermons is considerable, especially when they have been transcribed from tape, but we deem it all very worthwhile when we hear instances of help being received from reading the sermons. We thank those who have spent much time in transcribing some sermons prior to the editing process, or who have reproduced extracts from old writings on their word processors. I am much indebted to Rev. K. D. Macleod for his frequent assistance in many ways.

We are grateful to Rev. John MacLeod for continuing to edit the Magazine's quarterly eight-page Gaelic Supplement, which is now printed, as are the two Magazines, by the Stornoway Gazette.

We acknowledge especially that the Lord has been mindful of us in our work, and we pray that He will bless the Magazine to the edification of His believing people and to the spiritual benefit of many others.

## **THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S MAGAZINE REPORT**

**Rev. K. D. Macleod, Editor**

THE MAGAZINE has been sent out into the world month by month for another year, following much the same pattern as in the previous two years. In a small way, the magazine aims to provide sound reading matter for age groups who have much of a very different kind thrust in their direction. Whether secular or religious, much reading material for young people is highly dangerous.

One is thankful if in the *Young People's Magazine* young people have had something put into their hands which will give them some scriptural directions

as to how they should live in an increasingly dark day, pointing them especially to Christ as the one “name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”. We hope that this has not been without some good to the souls of readers. If what appears in the magazine would even exert, in the Lord’s goodness, a restraining effect on some young people, one would feel that the effort has been worthwhile. Yet we would wish for a much greater blessing for many.

I would like to thank those who have contributed articles for the magazine over the past year, including those who have given me papers which they presented at the Youth Conference. Others have kindly sent stories which originally appeared elsewhere. My thanks again to Dr. Mitchell for his continued willing help in checking the magazine in the final stages.

May the Lord bless our efforts to further the interests of His kingdom in this small way!

## **PUBLICATION COMMITTEE’S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. Neil M. Ross**

THE COMMITTEE is much encouraged by the fact that sales of the Church’s range of publications have increased by almost 40 per cent over last year’s figure.

*The Westminster Confession of Faith* continues to be our best-seller. We have completed the binding of 1,500 of the unbound copies which were in store since the last printing. We would expect to do yet another reprint about the end of this year.

We have sold out our last printing of *The Apostolic Church* by Witherow, and have arranged for a further reprint. We regret that we have not yet reached the stage, because of committee members’ other commitments, of being ready to go to press with *The Tree of Promise* and *Selected Writings of Rev. Donald Beaton*.

However, we have been investigating a comparatively inexpensive method of doing short print-runs of old titles which are requested but for which there would not be a sufficient demand to justify the usual print run. Titles which could be produced in small quantities in this way would include *Ministers and Men of the Far North* by Rev. Alexander Auld, last published by the Church in 1957, *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald Macfarlane* by Rev Donald Beaton, last published in 1929; *Memoir of Rev. Neil Cameron*, (1932); and *Sermons by Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands*, (1930), these last two edited by Rev. Donald Beaton.

We commend the work of the Committee to the prayerful support of our people, because the history of the Church of Christ shows that while the

preaching of the gospel is the principal way by which sinners are spiritually enlightened, the dissemination of Reformed literature has also been a powerful instrument in the hand of God.

## **BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. D. J. MacDonald**

IT IS WITH THANKFULNESS that the Committee wish to report on another encouraging year in the Bookroom. There was a significant increase in the sales for the year which in total amounted to £63,022. It is also gratifying to record that there was an increase in the sales of Free Presbyterian Publications and Welfare of Youth titles in the course of the year.

It has been a feature of Bookroom Committee reports over the years that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* has been our most popular title and this year has been no exception with 3,300 copies being sold. *The Apostolic Church* has also sold well. Miss Jean Nicolson's book on the life of Rev. John Radasi, the first African minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, has proved very popular and almost 1,500 of the 2,000 copies printed have been sold. Our Bookroom Manager reports that there has been little activity in the second-hand book section in 1996. Only one second-hand book list was issued this year and all the books were quickly sold.

We continue to be encouraged that in the midst of the spiritual darkness and apathy that permeates our generation there is still a market, albeit small, for the sort of books that the Bookroom stocks and that the Church publishes. Our customers are not confined to Scotland or even to the UK, but are dotted all over the English-speaking world. We would hope that our books go out followed by the prayers of the Lord's people for the blessing of the Lord on readers everywhere. The Bookroom itself continues to be an important part of the Church's witness and the staff there often have to deal with enquiries regarding the Church's particular testimony and its relationship to other Churches. And there continues to be a steady demand for the *Which Church?* booklet and the *Welcome to Visitors* leaflet produced by the Outreach Committee.

Saturday continues to be a popular day for visitors to the Bookroom and the Committee is truly grateful for the work of the men from the Glasgow Congregation who keep the Bookroom open on Saturdays. This is a facility for which the general public is appreciative.

At the risk of being repetitive we have to record our indebtedness to Marion Morrison, the Bookroom Manager. She brings to her work not only her professional business skills and her pleasant manner but also a total dedication

to the work of the Bookroom. Once again we have to acknowledge the generous support given by the people of the Church to the Bookroom Fund collection and we would also like to thank those outwith the Church who made donations to the Bookroom.

Once again we commend the work of the Bookroom to praying people of the Church in the hope that the Lord will use our work and witness to His own glory and to the good of the Cause of Christ in the world.