

**FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**REPORTS OF  
STANDING  
COMMITTEES  
OF SYNOD**

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

**Convener: Rev. R. MacLeod**

### **Introduction**

IT IS ADMITTED on all sides that this is a dark day spiritually. There is little fruit to be seen from the preaching of the Gospel and, whether the measure used is biblical doctrine, worship or practice, there is a general departing from the old paths. The following report merely highlights some of the religious trends in our land over the past year.

### **RELIGION**

#### **Roman Catholicism**

Two quite different movements are to be seen in the Roman Catholic Church. First a loss of 22,000 members over the whole nation, in the last year for which statistics are available, and the fear that their witness will be extinguished in some areas. On the other hand there is an increase in high-profile conversions to Romanism. These include the Duchess of Kent, Mrs Shand Kydd, the late Princess Diana's mother, and Anne Widdicombe, the politician. Within the past month journalists have raised the spectre of the Prime Minister becoming a Roman Catholic, "if indeed he is not already one". The Pope is reported to be considering making the Prime Minister's wife, Mrs Cherie Blair, a Dame. This title conferred by the Vatican, is equivalent to a knighthood, and is given to those who show consistent devotion to the Pope.

A petition containing 4,380,000 signatures was sent to the Pope by his followers world-wide. They requested that the status of Mary, presently designated "Mother of the Church", be officially elevated to that of "Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all Graces, and Advocate for the people of God".

Meanwhile there is a softening of attitude among professed evangelicals. A Professor in the Free Church of Scotland wrote that Protestants and Roman Catholics "share a huge area of fundamental theology". The fact is that there is agreement in terminology only: we use the same words, but mean different things. The difference between the teaching of the Reformed Church and Romanism on such fundamentals as the Atonement, the Person and Offices of Christ, faith, repentance, the afterlife, and good works, amongst others, puts a mile of very clear and deep theological water between their Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In the past year Cardinal Winning started a scheme by which pregnant girls were offered money to relieve them of financial worries while going on to have a baby. To date a number of babies have been born as a result who would otherwise have been aborted. While saving of life is admirable in itself, it sits

uncomfortably with the law of celibacy for their priesthood. One woman who had two children by a parish priest started a support group for women in similar trouble. In two years she was contacted by dozens of women. She comments: "What we will never know is the number of babies who were aborted as a result of these secret unions."

### **Church of Scotland**

During the year the Church of Scotland had to shut down two of its hostels in Glasgow for people with learning difficulties because of political correctness on the part of Govanhill Housing Association to whom the hostels belong. Officials of the Association said that the policy of employing only Christians was in breach of equal opportunities. The director of the Association, Ann Lear, said: "We can't understand why someone who is not a Christian cannot provide the same quality of care if they have the right qualifications for the job." Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said early last year, that he was considering bringing in religious discrimination legislation, similar to the laws on race and gender. This legislation would force the Church to employ the person with the best secular qualifications — regardless of religious commitment — even in establishments owned by the church.

The cause of feminism within the Church of Scotland received a boost when the Reverend Susan Brown, Dornoch, became the first female minister to be inducted to a cathedral. More than 100 of the Church of Scotland's 1,200 ministers are now female. It had been widely expected, though it did not actually happen, that on the 30th anniversary of the vote to admit women, Mrs. Forrester, a minister at Slateford, Edinburgh, would gain the Moderator's chair. Mrs. Forrester "distinguished" herself by formally "blessing" a lesbian relationship between two of her parishioners. Subsequent attempts in the Assembly to prevent any such blessing being given again failed. When it is obviously clear from Scripture that there is no place for female ministers in the Church of Christ, the Church of Scotland manifests its rejection of the ultimate authority of the Word of God by having almost 10% of its ministers female.

In an attempt to reverse the decline in church attendance (only 15% of the population in Scotland regularly attend church) the Church is contemplating radical changes to its worship services. Although such inventions are not new to the Church of Scotland, it has been reported that "dance, drama, and audience participation" would be soon introduced. Others, concerned to make the worship more accessible and interesting are advocating ". . . interspersing traditional hymns with rock ballads".

The Church's decline will not be remedied by gimmicks. There is little hope of God's blessing until we return to the truth. The Church's disregard for such return is sadly and plainly understood when we see it reported that a spokesman for the Church said that it allowed liberty of opinion on such matters as the Virgin Birth, and its ministers are not required to believe in the Virgin Birth. "See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

### **Free Church of Scotland**

Controversy continued in the Free Church. It is increasingly clear that the Church is rent by two parties. In response to the incursions of the more liberal party some of the more conservative have established the Free Church Defence Association. There have now been calls to disband this Association. A “Christmas Eve” carol service held at Bon Accord Free Church, Aberdeen, sparked a debate on the admissibility of hymns of human composition in divine worship, which is but history repeating itself. The measure of the departure from the old paths can be gauged by the words of the Free Church’s Professor of Systematic Theology when he openly admitted: “I suspect that if you compare my pronouncements now with my opinions as expressed say twenty years ago, you would find them virtually incompatible with each other, in terms of my earlier emphasis on intellect and the importance of orthodoxy.”

### **Church of England**

Arising from the sense of sorrow which swept the country at the death of Princess Diana, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, spoke of radical changes in the form of Church of England services, to make them more readily understandable and attractive. He also spoke of a move away from designated places of worship, and praised the small but growing number of vicars who held services in pubs, supermarkets or in the streets. Dr. Carey also expressed his approval of having Elton John, a pop star who is also a homosexual, singing at Princess Diana’s funeral.

The expected move of large numbers of Church of England clergy into the Church of Rome over the ordination of women did not take place. Evidently, there was a division of opinion between the conservatives, such as the Right Reverend Crispin Hollis, Bishop of Portsmouth, and those who, like Cardinal Basil Hume, leader of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales, thought that, “this could be the moment of grace, it could be the conversion of England for which we have prayed all these years”.

Some members of the Church of England, ministers and laity, support the unnatural and abominable practices of sodomy and lesbianism and have become more active and influential within the Church of England. This group has continued to demand the ordination of practising homosexuals. Their aims were furthered by the Archbishop of Canterbury’s proposal to “. . . initiate a high-level international commission to examine sexual issues”. That proposal was generally interpreted as paving the way for the ordination of homosexuals.

### **Church and State**

A new Bill of Rights incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights is presently passing through Parliament. Because the Church is said to act in the public realm it is classed as a “public authority” and will be under the jurisdiction of this Convention. No other member of the E.U. has so involved the Church in the legislation. Unless the Churches are exempt, which

now appears unlikely, it could result in the Church being required by law to perform that which is sinful. It is feared that as legislation is gradually changing in favour of recognising the homosexual partnership, that a minister could be required by law to perform a “marriage” ceremony. It is understood that the area most affected to begin with might be Christian run Homes and Schools. It seems it will be contrary to the Convention to refuse to employ a person because of their beliefs or their lifestyle. The dismissal of an individual from a Church body on grounds of his or her lifestyle would be contrary to the “right to private life”. We understand that it will afford to groups such as the pro-euthanasia lobby the freedom to advertise their beliefs, or provide information, within Church property, such as Christian Homes. One of the Law Lords said that to permit religious bodies to be classified as “public authorities” appeared to him to be both unnecessary and potentially dangerous. Historically the Church in Scotland is no stranger to the serious consequences of the state interfering with the doctrine of the sole Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church.

### **Islam**

Muslims won state funding for their school in the past year. This would have been difficult for the Government to refuse since funding for Jewish and Roman Catholic schools had already been agreed.

However, it cannot but be a concern that Islam, with all the fanaticism and pain it has brought to other countries, is separating its children from even the little Christian religion that is to be found in British state schools, and that a religion which is alien to the “truth as it is in Jesus” has gained a further foothold in our land. Sad to say, Prince Charles, our King in waiting, has been very supportive of Islam and is a patron of a proposed £20 million Islamic Centre.

### **MORALS**

One of the favourite terms among the “progressives” in our society today is “non-judgmental”. Not to pass judgement or to remain neutral in the face of the actions and reactions of our fellow men is counted an act of moral courage and an evidence of spiritual maturity. Taken to its ultimate conclusion, this mentality will produce “a generation that cannot blush”, and a nation which prides itself in that it cannot do so. On the other hand, the Word of God demands that all be brought to the Law and the Testimony, “if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (or morning) in them” (Isaiah 8:20). This report is simply an attempt to bring some of the salient, moral events of the past year to the light of the Word to see if there is any sign of a morning in our land, or whether the darkness is becoming deeper.

### **The European Union**

A recent book, *The Principality and Power of Europe*, by Adrian Hilton, claims that the E.U. has as its aim a European Empire. The threefold cord of

Papal claims and ambitions, German aspirations (especially those of the Christian Democratic Party under Chancellor Kohl) and the legislation issuing steadily from the bureaucrats in Brussels is directed at tying us in to “citizenship of Europe” and eroding our sovereignty as a nation.

Two matters are of particular concern. First, that any group not of the majority Church (Roman Catholic) would be viewed with suspicion: Evangelical Christians are seen by the E.U. as a sect and one MEP lumped them with Satanists. David Hallam MEP has confirmed that a European resolution on sects and cults permits the European Police Force (Europol) to carry out surveillance on such groups’ activities. While this is welcome as far as soul-destroying sects are concerned, one wonders what is intended when we read that this surveillance of the sects could include that of Christians. Secondly, the Amsterdam Treaty, which is being examined by our legislators at the moment, would give authority to the European Court of Justice to give “preliminary rulings” on the “validity and interpretation of decisions” in the field of justice and home affairs. Even without this agreement, it was pressure from the European Commission that forced the Government to agree to put the proposal for the lowering of the age of consent for homosexual acts to sixteen years, to a free vote in Parliament — a vote which has every likelihood of securing this measure.

The former Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning, stated, “No longer is European law an incoming tide flowing up the estuaries of England. It is now like a tidal wave bringing down our sea walls and flowing inland over our fields and houses, to the dismay of us all.”

### **Education**

Standards of morality are falling rapidly within our national education system. The general trend among our children’s educators is towards amorality. An increasing percentage of professional educators are totally indifferent when it comes to matters of morals, if not openly hostile to Christianity. This attitude arises from a profound disregard to God’s Word. The attitude tends to be that Christianity is just one of many religions which children might learn something about. Children are taught that they must be tolerant of such things as God forbids. Feminism, gay rights, sexual liberation, and an excusing of irresponsible behaviour by tracing its source to our genetic makeup, are ingredients for social disaster. Some children are being exposed to these evils practically every day and are being required to accept them as normal or at least alternative lifestyles.

### **Violence — TV and Videos**

Concern over the connection between “video nasties” and the committing of violent acts was raised after the James Bulger murder. A committee set up by the Government to examine this matter, established just such a link where there was a tendency in the viewer to violence in the first place. The incidence of violent crime is rising in our society and these pernicious videos will feed

the flames of this particularly alarming fire. Recently the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) was responsible for licensing a film which was described by one critic as “beyond depravity”. The same body licensed two films which carried scenes which would have ensured prosecution under the 1984 Video Recordings Act for anyone found in possession of the tapes. However, once licensed by the BBFC, no such prosecution would succeed. The Government discovered that the Board had unilaterally liberalised the rules under which they operated, and the Home Secretary replaced the President with someone who would take a more responsible attitude to his work and “take the Board in a different direction”. A different direction is certainly what is called for, but in the present atmosphere of expediency and commercialism we wait more in hope than in confidence.

It is depressing to read that most of the young in Britain derive their moral education from TV soaps. Considering that these serials are becoming increasingly immoral and violent the outlook is bleak indeed. A nation which is very concerned to explain the mechanics of procreation (Sex Education), and then set it in the moral context of these television serials, is giving their young a legacy of confusion and depravity.

The incidence of violent crime and rape rose last year. The rise in drug misuse is closely bound up with this and some previously decent housing estates have become the scenes of gang-wars, intimidation and the entrapment of the young with drugs. The appointment of one individual to oversee a national drugs policy is a step forward, but it is likely that the activities of the drug barons outside the country, and liberal and hedonistic voices within, will ensure a rising toll of trouble from drugs. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

### **Child Abuse**

A huge two-year inquiry into child abuse in children’s homes in Wales is expected to finish in February 1998, and even as it draws to a close further distressing allegations have been made about care homes in Manchester. A similar enquiry in Edinburgh last year resulted in convictions for care workers, for the abuse of children in their care, over a period of more than twenty years. The depressing fact is that enquiries have been set up before and reports drawn up, but, as the Health Secretary said, “Elementary safeguards were not put in place or not enforced”.

It does not seem too much to say, as one paper suggested, that there is a crisis in Britain’s child care system. A QC, Mr. Levy, who chaired the Staffordshire “Pindown” enquiry in 1990-91, asks: “Have we absorbed nothing over the last twelve years or so of abuse enquiries? Where were they (the Department of Health and Social Services Inspectorate)? When there are so many blatant scandals, one has to ask why didn’t they come to light earlier . . . ? I am drawn to the conclusion that there is something rotten in the system . . . too many unsuitable people are being hired.” A recent study of 570 paedophiles found that they had each abused 380 victims on average.



What is “rotten in the system” is a humanistic and godless approach in both teaching and practice which excludes God and His Word.

### **Euthanasia**

There is no clearer evidence of the onward march of humanism in our land than the persistent calls for euthanasia to be made legal. On the one hand a bill called the Doctor’s Assisted Dying Bill was denied a first reading in Parliament by a large majority. This bill would have enabled the incurably ill to commit suicide with the help of the medical profession. The British Medical Association also rejected the legalisation of euthanasia declaring that it was morally, legally and ethically unacceptable and therefore “strongly opposes any change in the law for the time being”. As one politician, Alan Beith, said: “I do not think we can give a more dismal signal to people who think society no longer wants them, than one which says it is a matter of some urgency that we find ways to help them end their lives.” On the other hand the state of Oregon in America rejected an attempt to repeal a 1994 law allowing doctor-assisted suicide, and medical insurance firms are offering favourable rates for termination, as this is cheaper than long term care.

Nearer home, and at the same time as the Commons were rejecting the Doctor’s Assisted Dying Bill, the House of Lords was debating Living Wills or Advance Directives. By these wills patients would be able to state in advance that they do not wish any treatment that would prolong life, should they become seriously ill. These wills have already been supported in several cases that have come before the courts. The debate was with a view to giving them a statutory basis. During the debate, Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, appeared to indicate that that day was not far off when he said: “Ministers will keep an open mind on Living Wills.” Sir Ludovic Kennedy, a lawyer and President of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society, has no compunction about disturbing the minds of those who face a terminal illness, by vivid descriptions of pain, suffering and distress. This contrasts with reports from doctors in charge of hospices and caring for the dying in the community. Dr. Fay Wilson, a Birmingham GP, said at the BMA meeting noted above: “I have been faced with patients requesting assistance in ending their lives, and I have received their thanks for not having done so.” The Word of God is plain: “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13).

### **Abortion**

October 1997 saw the 30th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act. We were assured then that there would be no explosion in the number of abortions but the number has risen from 22,000 in 1967 to 177,000 in 1996. The rise in the past year was described as “shocking”, and the rise was even higher in girls under 16 in England and Wales. There was a rise in the number of teenage abortions in Scotland for the first time since 1990. In all, 4.8 million foetuses have been legally aborted since 1967. We were told in 1968 that the Abortion Act would not lead to abortion on demand. However 91% of terminations were

carried out on the basis that the mother's physical or mental health was threatened — this is largely equivalent to abortion on demand. At the present time a 10-minute lunch-time termination is on offer for £300. The further promise that all children would be wanted children was never fulfilled, in fact there has been a fourfold increase in illegitimate births, and there are widespread reports of child abuse and neglect.

The Health Secretary's private opinion (January 1998), that abortion should be made easier in the early stages, reveals the thoughts of at least one member of the present Cabinet. Several backbenchers have declared themselves willing to bring in such a bill in Autumn.

We hear much of the imbalance in age groups which will result in a disproportionate number of pensioners in the early part of next century — these aborted fetuses would have been in their twenties now and would have helped redress that imbalance. More important, do we care nothing for the sanctity of human life (the foetus), the mother (an offended conscience and possible sterility), and society (a further increase in promiscuity and cheapening of human life), and have we learned nothing since the Abortion Act was passed 30 years ago?

#### **AIDS and Homosexuality**

According to a report from the World Health Organisation the world-wide HIV epidemic was underestimated by a third in December 1996. More than 30 million adults and children are now believed to be living with HIV infection. The organisation warns that the full impact in terms of mortality has yet to be felt. It is estimated that 2.3 million people died of AIDS world-wide in 1997 — a 50% increase on 1996 — nearly half of these deaths were in women and 460,000 were in children under 15.

Combinations of drugs for treating HIV have changed the outlook in the short-term, at least, for HIV/AIDS sufferers in developed countries. Despite a rise in HIV infection, there has been a fall in the UK of new cases of AIDS and in deaths from AIDS in 1997. However, the virus continues to be present in the body and the long-term effects of these drugs are not known. The high cost of these drugs means that they are not available to the vast majority of sufferers world-wide.

As though it had experienced nothing and learned nothing, London is selling itself as the "gay" capital of Europe and is building infamous bathhouses, where sodomites can meet new partners. Some of these bathhouses are conveniently sited for visiting American homosexuals. A San Franciscan journalist who wrote an authoritative history of the disease says: "From a purely medical standpoint the (American) bathhouses were a horrible breeding ground for disease."

Meanwhile attitudes move towards more acceptance of sodomy and sodomites. The editor of a magazine for homosexuals said: "There is a more confident mood among the gay community. We see messages coming through from the Establishment. When the Gwent Police in South Wales wanted to

recruit 30 officers they came to us. Chris Smith's career as a Cabinet Minister has certainly not been affected by his sexual orientation." Nearer home the Highland Health Board issued a "sharp new warning" to teenagers of the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. At the same time there is no evidence that that body is taking a lesson from the evident failure of its sex education programmes, as the number of such diseases has risen in Scotland again in the past year. Could it be that these programmes are actually adding to the problem?

Spending on AIDS reached £200m last year at the same time as £50m was cut from war pensions. Evidence exists that money for AIDS is being wasted by over-provision. Tayside Health Board for instance have 108 full time AIDS staff for 38 AIDS sufferers and 247 other HIV patients. "Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it" (Micah 6:9).

### CONCLUSION

This year's Religion and Morals Report presents a picture of a land going further and further away from the imperatives of the Divine Law. To a large extent the Word of God is ignored and sins which are condemned in Scripture are no longer confined to secret indulgence but are tolerated by legislation and by the appointment to high ministerial position in the government of men who are well known as indulging in such sins.

Nothing short of an outpouring of the quickening and reviving power of the Holy Spirit will effect a change in our once spiritually favoured land and bring about a return to the preaching of that Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth". The day is dark but the praying Church of Christ should take courage, for Jehovah is "omniscient and infinitely wise. His wisdom will be her guide, His eyes are ever upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. . . . He is acquainted with all the plans of her enemies, and He will defeat them." It is for us who are cast down, because of the state of religion and morality in our own day, to seek, by divine grace, to "leave ourselves to the entire disposal of His providence and to be as clay in the hands of the potter, willing to take any form or impression which He pleases". Only thus will we be freed from "vain, earthly and corroding anxiety".

"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer" (Psalm 102:16-17).

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

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

THE LORD'S DAY is a public emblem of Christianity. It is a visible sign of the authority of the living though invisible Lord of the Sabbath, stamped on the life of a nation, by the weekly return of the solemn public worship of the Lord God. In its proper observance, our people would be receiving such divine instruction and unspoken impression of the great issues of time and eternity, as would have a salutary effect upon the life of our nation. Sadly ours can no longer be viewed as a nation with such a visible emblem. By their continuing failure to observe the Christian Sabbath, the majority are putting themselves beyond the reach of the ordinary means of obtaining salvation. In place of that fear of God which the Sabbath's public preaching and private instruction might impress upon our nation, we have a new morality which generally argues for such things as are forbidden in the Bible: euthanasia, unscriptural divorce, abortion, sodomy, and many other abominations.

### **Sabbath Trading**

The Proposal for a draft Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 was published for public consultation on 7th March 1996. It is to be regretted that following its consideration of the comments received, the Government has decided to proceed with the Order. It was placed before Parliament in November 1997. In December the Government changed the law in Ulster so as to relax the constraints on trading on the Sabbath in that province. We understand that this will allow most shops to trade in all goods on the Lord's Day. Some larger shops, except those in places designated as holiday resorts, will be restricted to trading between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. The change is brought about because the existing law is said to be out of date, and unenforceable, and requiring urgent replacement. Sadly this will bring the province of Ulster broadly into line with the law now in operation in England and Wales: the Sunday Trading Act 1994.

### **Sabbath Entertainments**

*Opening of Pubic Houses.* Strenuous attempts have been made to have public houses opened on the Sabbath for the first time in the island town of Stornoway. So far they have had no success in gaining a licence to trade on the Sabbath. The Outer Isles Presbytery of our Church has been involved in the local opposition to these attempts.

*Sunday Observance Act 1780.* During the last Parliament, a Private Members Bill known as the Sunday Dancing Bill was introduced by Viscount Astor. The purpose of the Bill was to remove the prohibition on charging admission to public dances on the Lord's Day by disapplying the Sunday Observance Act 1780 from these events. It was also intended to amend the 1964 Licensing Act to permit the sale of alcohol at these events. Thankfully,

this Bill floundered on its second reading. Calum Macdonald MP, in a letter to the Clerk of this Committee said: "It is unlikely that it will ever make it to the statute Book". It is indicative of the disregard with which the Sabbath is held, that such changes to the law are even proposed in the Parliament of our Protestant land. The damage sustained by our nation from an increased opening of such places of entertainment would be very great. Not only would the guilt of it wring increasing judgements from the hand of the Lord of the Sabbath, but the present symptoms of our moral sickness seen in multitudes of social ills would be mercilessly compounded. Is it conceivable that the problems already caused by discos and night-clubs would not be increased?, that the alcohol and drugs problem would not be exacerbated?, that family life will not be further eroded?, that violence would not become more frequent, in the home and on the street?, or that people would not be forced to work on the Lord's Day? It is most encouraging to know that the Lord has not left us altogether to our own ways with respect to the Sabbath, and that such attacks on the Sabbath are thwarted.

#### **Large Companies and the Sabbath**

*British Telecom.* One of the great blessings of the Holy Spirit working in a community at large is that Sabbath keeping becomes established, and may remain a feature of that community's way of life for generations. This is what has taken place in many of the islands on the North Western coast of Scotland. However, this general Sabbath observance is being increasingly attacked and eroded, and opposition to it has had varied degrees of success. When BT engineers began to appear on the Lord's Day in the villages of North Harris to engage in their employment, our local Minister complained to several BT authorities. As a result of this, a most encouraging letter was received from the Office of Sir Ian Vallance, Chairman of BT. Although it is stated in this letter that BT "have both contractual and maintenance requirements to fulfil" (which it would appear the Sabbath Day must not interfere with), yet it is stated that:

"Wherever possible, our resourcing strategy has been based on six day working. . . . There have, however, been occasions when we have been required to work a seven day cycle, in cases of restoring telephone service, or to meet our emergency service requirement, or our contractual obligation for the provision of service". With respect to "this particular incident" the letter stated: "I can assure you that we will in every case continue to ensure that only essential work is undertaken on the Sabbath. I have arranged with our local manager . . . and our Work Distribution Centre to take full cognizance of this requirement. I do appreciate your concerns and we will do everything possible to respect the wishes of the community."

*Scot Rail.* There was no reply received from Scot Rail when we wrote to oppose their proposal to introduce train services on the Lord's day on the Lanark-Milngavie; Glasgow Central-Neilston; and Glasgow Central-Barrhead-Kilmarnock routes.

### **The Monarchy**

*Balmoral Castle.* It is with deep regret that we have to report again that the Lord's Day continues to be almost the same as any other day as far as the Royal Family is concerned. The Committee was informed that the Estates intended to open Balmoral Castle to the public on the Sabbath for the first time in the summer of 1998. This is particularly sad. Not only is Balmoral one of the residences of our Monarch, but also it has resisted until now the pressure to follow the practice of other country houses and gardens, who open to the public on the Lord's Day.

*The Death of Diana, Princess of Wales.* How loud a voice to a Sabbath breaking and adulterous generation Princess Diana's death was! We are informed that the tragic crash occurred early on Sabbath morning. Yet again disaster struck when worldly pleasure was being sought on God's day. ". . . Turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [thine own] words" (Isaiah 58:13) Many sports fixtures were cancelled that Sabbath out of respect to Princess Diana. It is to be deplored that our nation does not put away all sport every Sabbath, out of respect to our Prince and Saviour, the Lord of glory. It was made worse when the sports scheduled for the Saturday of the funeral took place instead on the Sabbath. "Where is mine Honour?", the Lord has every right to ask of our country. It is also to be regretted that the body of Dodi Al Fayed, killed in the same crash, was buried unnecessarily on the Lord's Day, to accommodate the custom of Islam.

### **Literature**

Though there is no end of religious books procurable, there is very little sound literature currently available on the subject of the Sabbath Day. It is hoped that the work begun on two booklets or tracts will soon be ready for the Committee to review: *One Day in Seven* and *The Change of the Sabbath*. Work was carried out on Willison's *Treatise on the Sabbath*, with a view either to recommend the publication of the whole work or parts of it, in tract form.

### **Conclusion**

We live in a generation where we allow the precepts of God's law to influence our morality, only in so far as they do protect our worldly interest. Is it not a mockery of God, the infinitely wise Legislator, and moral Governor of men to insist upon that part of His law, which legislates for the protection of our persons and possessions, and to discard His commands which respect His day and worship? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

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

**Convener: Rev. John MacLeod**

OVER ANOTHER YEAR the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee has attended to the duties falling to it to the best of its ability. Discerning Christians know that these are difficult times as far as the cause of Christ is concerned and the year under review was not without its troubles as far as our African Missions were concerned. To discover that some in whom we had placed our confidence had betrayed our trust was a particularly painful experience. The misappropriation of funds in Zimbabwe and the theft of money in Kenya caused us much concern and we hope the measures which have now been taken by the Committee will prevent a recurrence.

### **Zimbabwe**

It is a matter of profound thankfulness to the Most High that the Rev. A. B. Ndebele has recovered from the injuries sustained in 1996 to the extent that he is now able to attend to his ministerial duties. The other ministers — the Rev. P. Mzamo and the Rev. Z. Mazwabo — continue to labour in the Gospel as their own Reports show and for this we are also thankful.

The John Tallach Secondary School continues to function under the capable supervision of Miss Marion Graham and her staff — Miss Katie MacAulay, Miss Norma MacLean and, since February 1998, Mr. Teunis Benschop, who belongs to the Netherlands. Miss Norma MacLean's work permit expired and the Zimbabwean "powers that be" refused to renew it on the ground that her work could be done by a native Zimbabwean. However, she now awaits the result of an application to be allowed to continue to work at Ingwenya but as an employee of the Church. If this is successful she will continue as a teacher but there will be no Government grant to cover her salary. At present Miss MacLean is standing in the breach in the Administrator's office in Bulawayo. We are thankful that, in the Lord's providence, we had a person of her abilities and training on hand when the emergency arose. Miss Graham was on furlough from August to December 1997 and over that period Miss Katie MacAulay attended to the duties of Headmistress. We are grateful to Miss Etta MacLennan for going out on a voluntary basis to help out over the last term of the session.

At the Mbumba Hospital our doctor and nurses have continued to perform their duties in their own exemplary way. They are far away out of sight in the African forest but we hope not out of mind. Miss Margaret MacAskill, the Matron, returned to her duties after furlough in February 1997. Miss Louise Leiper also returned at that time. For a time her health caused some concern but happily she has now recovered and is attending to her duties with her usual zeal. Miss Lia Terlouw left for Holland on furlough in September 1997 and returned four months later to resume her duties in her own quiet efficient way.

The application from another Dutch nurse — Miss van de Graaf — was accepted by the Committee but so far her work permit has not come through.

### **Malawi**

There has been no change as far as the situation in Malawi is concerned. Mr MacGrath, a Blantyre businessman, continues to keep an eye on our Mission House in Blantyre and is responsible for paying the watchman's remuneration.

### **Kenya**

In Kenya the Rev. John Goldby has attended to his duties over the course of the year and is due to come home on furlough in August, D.V. Sadly, we have to report that he has informed the Committee that he does not intend to return to the Kenyan Mission field. Mr Ian MacLean has carried out his duties as Administrator supervising building work both in Kenya and, from time to time, in Zimbabwe. He is due home before the meeting of Synod and will be present to present his own report. Dr. de Jong and his nursing staff, led by Miss Jessie Coote, have not wearied in well-doing and, we believe, have been instrumental in saving many lives. Miss Catherine MacKenzie arrived at Sengera in September to take up her duties as teacher of the Mission children and she has done her work with exemplary dedication and skill. At present we have within the compound at Sengera ten European adults and nine children. We regret that two clerks — natives of Kenya — were discovered to be purloining money and they were summarily dismissed. Pilfering and dishonesty in various forms would appear to be besetting sins among Africans at Sengera.

### **Deputies**

The Convener and Clerk visited Kenya for two weeks in September. A separate Report on this visit is being submitted to the Synod. The Rev. D. A. Ross and the Rev. K. M. Watkins visited Zimbabwe in connection with the misappropriation of funds there and again a separate Report is being submitted to the Synod.

We urge the Lord's people among us to pray earnestly for all those who labour on our Mission field whatever their sphere of labour may be.

## **REPORT FROM ZVISHAVANE**

**Rev. Z. Mazvabo**

THIS PART of the Church has often been referred to as New Canaan Mission, although these reports have always been called "Report from Zvishavane". These two congregations, New Canaan and Zvishavane, rose up at about the same time, so they rightly strive for the birthright as it were. In actual fact,



services were conducted for several weeks in Zvishavane before we knew of New Canaan but, when New Canaan was started, it sprang up rather quickly, overtaking Zvishavane in every aspect. It is the Lord's doing.

New Canaan is a congregation of 150 and, of these, twenty-three are members in full communion, only five of these are men. Many of the elderly people whom I found in this community have been removed by death, most of them, sad to think, without any hope at all.

We like to give names to the congregations other than the names of the places they are in: the congregation in Zvishavane is called Ebenezeri. It is a small congregation of thirty people, six of whom are members in full communion and only two are men. It is expected that as the Church spreads all around this town, this congregation will continue to grow. Even now though, small as they are because they are working, they stand head and shoulders above their fellow peasant congregations. In the latter half of 1997, cruel death visited them, taking away their elder, Mr. Thomas Dube. He is greatly missed, not only by his family, but by the whole congregation. The angel of death is very frequent in these parts, leaving sad memories behind and solemn warnings. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42).

Between Zvishavane and New Canaan is a primary school called Makobere and here we have a small congregation of fifty called by that name. There are only eight communicants and two of them are men. We have watched it grow from very small beginnings. What we need is that the Word preached would be blessed to them.

In the south east of Zvishavane, in this same district, is Chief Mazvihwa. Here we have three little congregations, namely — in order of seniority — Maware, Ingezi and Gwen'ombe Dip. Maware, which is built on a rock, has a general attendance of forty-five and nine of them are members in full communion, four of them men. Ingezi stands on the bank of a river called by the same name. Thirty-five people gather here to hear the Gospel every Sabbath, eight of them are members in full communion and four are men. The people of Gwen'ombe Dip were coming to Maware, but it was too far to walk so they requested that services be conducted near their homes. Since this was done a few more have come to attend. Although there is an average attendance of twenty-five it is not surprising, in fact it is to be expected, that these numbers will go up and down. Except for the preachers, there are no communicants in this congregation. Six thousand bricks were burnt in a hurry as the rainy season started; these will help to provide a shelter under which to listen to the Gospel. We endeavour to bring Christ, who is the Way of Salvation, to our fellow men.

The Mberengwa district is just across the River Ngezi from Mazvihwa. Here we have another three congregations: Chiedza, Akori and Ibeteri. Chiedza, the first of these, is well situated in a densely populated area. Here 200 people gather together to hear the Gospel every Sabbath. There are many children in this congregation and a Sabbath School is kept to instruct the little children

in the knowledge of the truth while they are tender-hearted. Their number is not included in the 200. Here the up-to-date number of communicants was not given, but I tried to count for myself. I remembered twenty-two people, three of whom are men. Akori is well placed under the shade of the trees of the valley — it is the most fruitful valley of this area. The small congregation of thirty-two people speaks more than one language. They are Shangani who must have come from Chikombedzi way back. Services are conducted in Shona, which they all understand. There are seven members in full communion and only two of them are men. Chiwara is the name of the place where we have the third of these congregations: they named it Beteri, the Shona for “Bethel”. Eighty people gather here regularly to hear the Word of truth. Ten of them are members in full communion and two are men.

We now come to the last of our congregations which is Munaka in the Chibi district of the Masvingo Province. It is a small congregation of thirty, five of them are professing and one of them is a man.

Communion is held at New Canaan twice a year, Chiedza twice a year, Beteri once a year and Munaka once every year.

What a struggle I have had just to be able to make a passing remark on each one of the congregations! Looking into the future, my only comfort is that I am but an unprofitable servant — the vineyard belongs to the Lord. He is able to provide suitable labourers and to bless it when He sees fit.

Lord, for labourers and for a shower of blessings, we pray Thee! Amen.

## **JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Marion Graham, Headmistress**

THE YEAR 1997 started on a sombre note for us with the death of one of our teachers from malaria. He left a young wife, a grand-daughter of Rev. J. B. Radasi, and a small child.

In the middle of the year also our assistant Matron died after succumbing to multiple infections which she could no longer resist. She left a number of orphan children as her present husband was father only to the youngest baby. These children have very little security now that the extended family is no longer the norm. At school we are helping with the education of two of the girls.

During Term 1 we won the local schools' Athletic Trophy, much to our surprise, as many schools do not keep strictly to age groups and our pupils were often disadvantaged.

Our 1996 Form 4 results were above average with 101 out of 132 gaining a full certificate and 31 getting the maximum possible of 5 points. Most of our teachers are college trained, not University graduates, but they work hard and these results are a credit to them, especially when teaching classes containing about forty pupils.

The year 1997 was the year for visitors and from February on we were rarely without some extra friends, either assisting in school or going off for trips to the Falls! Some came to give extra assistance and this was most useful as, with only twenty-four staff and 600 pupils, we really are stretched to the limit.

We were very upset when in May, Norma MacLean, who was holidaying with two Australian friends, had a serious accident. As a result of a burst tyre, their car overturned. We were thankful that they were not killed, though they all sustained painful injuries. The body of the car was so damaged that it was decided to claim insurance for a new car. Now, February 1998, we are awaiting delivery of our new vehicle any day. This, combined with a more minor accident to the school bus, meant that transport for staff and supplies has been fraught with difficulties.

School continued quietly and the pupils seemed to be concentrating well on their work. Mr. Ndebele was able to preach more often as the year progressed, even taking sometimes the Sabbath evening school service as well as the ones during the day.

I went on leave during August and Katie MacAulay acted as Head, with Norma MacLean and Etta MacLennan, who returned for the term, helping her with all our extra duties.

Towards the end of Term 3 it became clear that there was serious misbehaviour going on. Eventually, three boarder boys were excluded for having obtained beer and three local boys were also excluded for using and bringing drugs into the school. At the end of term, some Form 4 boys had to be dealt with for bullying and vandalism. It seems that these vices, so prominent now overseas, are also becoming a severe problem throughout this country and there seems no way to prevent this.

With the support of the teachers and the boarding master, Miss MacAulay was able to deal with these additional worries and bring the school quietly to the end of term!

While I was away, my old house was demolished, but the new building is going up very slowly, due in part to lack of materials — though the level of competency of the contractor is also in doubt.

In Term 2 we began to use two new classrooms which had taken a long time to complete. Both teachers who occupy them are delighted with them. For the first time in many years we bought new school furniture which gave added pleasure. We now just have one classroom to build to complete the second courtyard.

With the decrease in value in the dollar, the cost of living has about doubled. Even since I went on leave the rise in costs is huge. This has necessitated increases in fees in order just to cover our running costs, and wages have become much higher too.

In July we started to use our own telephone line which, though not without problems, has made some aspects of life much easier.

We had eleven boys in the Resource Room in 1997 and two of them managed to obtain places in the prize list. Several previous occupants, despite

their difficulties, have now completed degrees at University. The gifts received from Glasgow and Inverness Sabbath Schools helped us to obtain the expensive materials needed by pupils.

Much to our dismay, when Norma MacLean went for renewal of her work permit during Term 3, this was refused by the Public Service Commission (Civil Service). However, we have appealed to the Immigration Authorities for a permit for a worker supported by the Church, which in fact she already is, as the Government grants in place of salaries go to the school.

The new Dutch teacher, Mr. T. Benschop, has finally been granted his permit after long negotiation and expects to join us in February. We were glad to add four more former pupils to our staff, two of whom are also from Free Presbyterian families.

Despite the problem which led to the resignation of Mr. B. Mziya, the Mission Administrator, we are thankful to have been able to start school smoothly. The deputies' visit was a source of help and encouragement to us.

We hope that the work in school will continue to be a blessing to the boys and girls whose lives we touch.

## **MBUMA CHURCH REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

IN THE KINDNESS and forbearance of the Lord, we have seen another year pass, still on mercy's ground, where His hand is not shortened that it cannot save and His ear not heavy that He cannot hear.

Time flies, bringing us to give an account of stewardship to the Head of the Church; not to men — a very solemn matter. The great missionary to the Gentiles once said: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

The Church work continued throughout the year. The Church services on the Lord's Day were on the whole attended regularly, although there are some people who need to be spoken to from time to time for their irregularities. Some of the congregations have fortnightly services and no weekday prayer meeting — a very unhealthy situation, all caused by shortage of manpower. Lord, send labourers into Thy vineyard.

Although the numbers in most of our congregations are encouraging, the Christian giving to the cause of Christ is very disappointing. If my people would have the mind and the heart as people in the days of Nehemiah, when building the temple wall in Jerusalem, the Church would be strong and our witness would reach far. May the Lord be pleased to give us the spirit He gave to Nehemiah and his people.

The Church elders and deacons have faithfully continued taking Church services every Lord's Day, some of them taking prayer meetings on weekdays. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered as in the past, a few added to the Communion roll. The sacrament of Baptism was administered to five adults and ten children. I performed eight marriages and conducted five funeral services. I assisted at a number of Communion services in other parishes of the Church. Going to assist at these Communion services, I leave home on a Wednesday because of the distances and spend a night in Bulawayo, continue the journey on the following day, leaving early in time for the services. I do the same when returning home. The distances I used to do in one day now take me two days.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the home Church and to Dutch friends for the continued support of the work in the Mission field.

## **ZENKA CHURCH REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

IN THESE CONGREGATIONS the Sabbath services and weekday prayer meetings are largely taken by the Church elders. I try to visit these congregations from time to time between their Communion services. Every Lord's Day elders are out on the roads to take services at different preaching stations.

The Communion services were administered twice at Zenka with an assisting minister, twice at Nkayi and once at Donsa with no assisting minister. A few were added to the Communion roll at Nkayi, one at Donsa and none at Zenka.

I administered Baptism to three adults and four children at Zenka; two adults and three children at Nkayi; two children at Donsa.

Nkayi congregation has now its own Church courts, separate from Zenka. Nkayi has five preaching stations and four elders; Zenka has four outstations and five elders. As Nkayi is now a separate charge they need two Communion cups — they already have a plate. They also need about sixty tokens. As these cannot be obtained in this country, nor in South Africa, they are willing to purchase them in Scotland.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”

## **MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT**

**Dr. J. Hak**

THE YEAR 1997 was a milestone in the history of the hospital. The long years of isolation were finally broken when a telephone was installed in June. It is wonderful to be able to communicate with the outside world, with the office in Bulawayo and with our suppliers, saving a lot of time. For those who have

never been without, it will be difficult to imagine how difficult it is to work without a telephone.

The Ministry of Health also installed a radio, charged by a solar panel, which is connecting Nkayi Hospital with Mbema and all the clinics in the district. It is great to have these means of communication. The same solar panel also provides for solar lights in three rooms in the hospitals, which are very satisfactory.

It is not easy to write a medical report, where the work mainly consists of maintaining existing services. The aim is to avoid expansion, but this cannot really be avoided in the future, as the work is gradually increasing. Over the years the average bed occupancy has gradually gone up from 55% in 1990 to 131% in 1997, and is even higher than in 1996 when we had the busy malaria season. The reason for the increase could be partly due to a rise in the total number of patients admitted, but probably mainly to the increase in chronically ill patients with HIV infection. "Home based care" should be the policy for these patients, but many of them also have TB, for which they need hospitalisation. The bed occupancy for only TB patients has gone up from 5.6% in 1990 to 23.6% in 1997. There has also been an increase in the number of deliveries, 709 confinements in 1997 against 485 in 1996 and a maximum of 578 in 1994. There can be many explanations for this.

The data in the statistics below give an indication about the workload, but do not really say anything about the quality of care given. There are some indicators which can give an idea about the standard of medical care, but these have to be interpreted with great care, because there are many factors involved. The factors which may influence these figures are poverty, large families, malnutrition, poor environmental sanitation, unprotected water supplies, infection and ill health in the community. Good health and nutrition of the mother before birth, combined with good antenatal care and delivery by skilled staff, should reduce morbidity and mortality rates. The percentage of supervised deliveries (calculated on the total number of expected deliveries in the catchment area) varied from 58% in 1990 to 76% in 1994, with an unusual unexplained figure of 93% in 1997! (compared with 66% in 1996). Also important is the number of transfers to other hospitals.

Some calculations on hospital figures give the following picture over the years 1990-1997 (please note that the only figures available for comparison are taken from textbooks):

The still birth rate is fairly constant over the years, 0 to 10 per 1,000 births (compare with a rate of 12 per 1,000 for England and Wales in 1973), with a maximum of 15 per 1,000 at the time of the drought in 1993.

The perinatal mortality rate (number of still births and early neonatal deaths within the first week of life) has been 16 to 32 per 1,000 births, with a maximum of 43 at the time of the drought in 1993 (compare with 10 per 1,000 for Europe).

The neonatal mortality rate (early plus late neonatal deaths during the first month of life per 1,000 live births) varies from 13 to 26 per 1,000, with a

maximum of 33 for 1993 (compare with 10.9 in the USA and 7.3 in Denmark during 1976).

The infant mortality rate (death of infants in the first year of life) is calculated against the number of expected births in the catchment area. Compare a rate of 31 to 43 per 1,000 with the rate of 110 per 1,000 in Zimbabwe in 1960 and 73 per 1,000 in Zimbabwe in 1987, 8 per 1,000 for Sweden, 215 for Upper Volta, and an average of 50 to 200 per 1,000 for developing countries.

The maternal mortality rate is low, 2 per 1,000 in 1993 (the year of the drought) and 2 per 1,000 in 1996 (the year of the malaria epidemic). The other years there were no maternal deaths. The WHO gives figures of 0.3 to 10 per 1,000 for developing countries in 1975.

The malnutrition rate is constant over the years, 13 to 14% of the children under the age of five presenting at the hospital are underweight according to Zimbabwean standards (which are lower than those for Europe). An expected increase of orphans and malnutrition both due to HIV infection does not yet show itself in these figures, but will undoubtedly follow.

Staffwise the situation is much the same as before. When Lia Terlouw went on leave we had three local qualified nurses each relieving for about one month, which was a wonderful provision. The Ministry of Health is now allowing nurses to work during their holidays, although individual permission has to be sought and granted. A Health Information Clerk has been employed, paid by a donor via the Ministry of Health. He also received some training at Mpilo after which he will also be able to assist in the laboratory.

The Ministry of Health has now introduced an appraisal system for all health workers. This involves a lot more extra time for our qualified staff, discussing with and assessing individual staff members. The annual bonuses will only be awarded to those who have a good rating in their appraisals.

Staff accommodation for unqualified staff is no longer adequate. Renovation of the existing buildings is a must, and extra units will have to be added, because at present there are not enough rooms to accommodate everyone comfortably.

There have been problems with the DC (direct current) at night which is drawn from the batteries charged by the generator in the evening. This meant that during four to five months in 1996 there were no lights at the hospital during the night, which made work very difficult for the night staff, who then had to work with candles. In 1997 there was no DC for about two months. The DC panel had to be sent to Harare for repair, but now in 1998 it is the batteries which are giving problems. The three solar lights installed by the Ministry of Health in the labour ward, one of the clinic rooms and the treatment room, are great.

All the toilets and showers at the hospital have been renovated by the Ministry of Health (Family Health Project). Also a kitchen, toilets and washing facilities were built for the waiting mothers.

Transportwise 1997 did not really give us many problems, but the ambulance is wearing out, and will have to be replaced.

We thank the Lord for His mercy and for His provisions, which we do not deserve. It is our desire that the means used may be blessed to our patients spiritually, which is the ultimate purpose of the work here.

### STATISTICS

<b>Admissions</b>	
General .....	2,021
Maternity .....	861
T.B. ....	69
<b>Discharges</b>	
General .....	1,882
Maternity .....	876
T.B. ....	65
<b>Bed Occupancy</b>	
General .....	19,538
Maternity .....	3,561
T.B. ....	5,078
<b>Deaths</b>	
General, including neonatal deaths .....	127
Maternity .....	0
T.B. ....	8
<b>Outpatient Attendances</b>	
New cases .....	19,101
Total cases .....	27,870
<b>Confinements</b> .....	
Live Births .....	704
Still Births.....	5
Neonatal Deaths (first month).....	12
Caesarian sections .....	0
<b>Antenatal Clinic Attendances</b> .....	5,920
<b>Child Welfare Clinic Attendances</b> .....	5,554
<b>Major Operations</b>	
General .....	0
Maternity .....	0
<b>Minor Operations</b>	
General .....	277
Maternity .....	190
<b>X-Ray</b>	
Number of patients .....	846
Number of films taken.....	1,265



**Ambulance**

Number of trips (referrals only) .....	223
Distance covered in kilometres .....	52,417

**Five Major Health Problems**

*In the age group below 5 years:*

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

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

1. Acute respiratory infection
2. Skin disease
3. Malaria
4. Injuries
5. Eye disease

*In the group of 15 years and over:*

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

**INGWENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. A. B. Ndebele**

THIS YEAR much of my time was spent in visiting doctors and following their advice, so that very little was done in my work as a preacher of the Gospel. At the present time I am recovering slowly and hope to gain more and more strength to work as before.

Our spiritual needs in the Church in Zimbabwe are the preachers of the Gospel. The Lord Himself said to the disciples: "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few." We feel this need very keenly as we look at the numbers of elders and ministers. The Lord taught His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers into His harvest.

The numbers of those people who attend our services are big enough to expect some spiritual work among them. However, the Lord is able to work with small numbers as well as thousands who may be called in a day. When He visits congregations at His own chosen time the numbers in the Church do not matter at all.

Smaller places under Ingwenya, like Cameron, Gadade, Insiza and Inyathi, have been attended to by elders and myself when it is convenient.

I am aware that our bodily pains can take such a grip of our strength that one is left with an unwillingness to put all the strength into the job. The evil one is also cunning in that he uses such opportunities in self sympathy to allow the neglect of the Lord's work in the attempt to carefully look after ourselves.

## **BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. A. B. Ndebele**

THE MAJORITY of the members of the Bulawayo congregation are families of the Free Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe.

It is often very pleasing to meet with the families which we have known for years. It is most pleasant when they follow the means of grace as their late parents taught them.

It is also hopeful that the men could be used by the Lord to fill up the gaps which their fathers left in the Church. Our hope is that there will come times and days of refreshment in the Church so that believers will be added from the preaching of the Gospel.

## **THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT**

**Rev. A. B. Ndebele**

IT WAS VERY SAD that Edward Sayi Moyo died after a short illness. Mr. Moyo was buried on 27th May 1997, mourned by his wife and family. The Home has suffered as a result of the death of two Superintendents following one another in a very short period of about two years.

After the advert a new Superintendent has been found and arrangements are in hand to get him started. There will be some changes in the school as the government will be very involved as they will appoint a head teacher by Government standard.

We hope to continue to be allowed to help orphans and feed the very distressed. Of course, the main aim in this social work is to teach the young their need of the Saviour at a young age. The Lord said: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

## **BUILDING AND TRANSPORT REPORT**

**Mr. J. B. Mpofu**

WE NEED to thank the Lord for His everlasting Gospel, as it says in Hebrews 2:3: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.”

### **Building**

Several projects were embarked on this year:

1. *Teachers' Cottage at Mbuma Mission.* Work on this new cottage has proceeded quite well, although we have been kept back for some weeks because of the shortage of cement. The cottage is near gable level and the timber for roofing is at hand.
2. *Maintenance of Houses.* This is an ongoing work at Mbuma as many houses have the problem of walls cracking down to the foundations.
3. *Mpakama Church.* The original church building was falling down because of white ants and needed to be rebuilt with burnt brick — it now only needs finishing with plastering.
4. *Zenka Primary School.* Work has been progressing on new toilets but has been held back because of the shortage of cement so they are not yet finished.
5. *Ingwenya Mission.* The contractors working on the new house for the Headmistress have been moving very slowly but we are looking forward to them finishing the work. Kelly Electrical are working on the wiring of the house presently.
6. *Teachers' Cottage, Ingwenya.* This new cottage is still at foundation level because of the cement shortage.
7. *Ingwenya Primary School.* Door frames were fitted here to make up a wall cupboard. The classrooms have also been painted, this was necessary because it is a long time since they were done.
8. *Mguza Church.* A new toilet was built here as the old one was full.
9. *Lobengula and Nkulumane Churches.* Maintenance was done on roof leaks and some repainting was also necessary.
10. *New Canaan.* We have continued with painting of the walls and maintenance of the buildings.

### **Transport**

1. Rev. Mzamo's car is still going well on the road and giving good service.
2. Doctor's Mazda is still in good condition and is also giving good service.

3. One of the ambulances needs replacement and it has been in and out of the garage since the accident — it is not reliable.
4. The Mbumba lorry (Triton) is giving good service at the Hospital: it is meeting all the needs of the Hospital.
5. The brown Nissan, which I am using, is doing well and is roadworthy.
6. The Leyland Comet (the big lorry) is doing very well, meeting all Mission needs. It is very reliable and gives no problems since it is still almost new. It is in the hands of a good driver!
7. Rev. Ndebele's Mazda is also still giving good service and is fully roadworthy.
8. We are waiting for the new Toyota Venture for the ladies at Ingwenya to come to Bulawayo from Harare any day now.
9. The John Tallach School bus (Ford Triton) is still not on the road after the accident at the end of last year. Purchasing of parts is a problem — since it was bought in South Africa some of the parts are not easily available here.
10. The green Nissan used in Bulawayo is now old and gives problems whenever it is out on a long journey. It is only useful for doing orders in town.
11. The Ford Sierra needs maintenance on the bodywork. This car has a very good engine and does very well on the roads.
12. The Thembiso Kombi is now an old car but is still of good use in town.
13. The Thembiso Mazda presently used at Ingwenya for school needs and orders is in good condition and running order.
14. Rev. Mazvabo's car is still of good use but we recommend replacement as it is used on poor roads and for long distances. We think a diesel car would be best as petrol is very dear in our country.

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

I BEGAN MY JOURNEY to Zimbabwe from Inverness Airport on 6th January, meeting with Rev. Keith Watkins at Gatwick Airport en route. We arrived safely in the good mercy of God at Bulawayo Airport on 7th January to be met by Mr. James Mpofu. Two hours after we arrived, most of the Mission Staff and the three ministers met in preparation for a Field Committee Meeting.

Rev. Mzamo, the Chairman, welcomed Mr. Watkins and myself. The purpose of our visit and our remit from the Foreign Mission Committee was placed before the Field Committee. Thereafter the Committee proceeded to the business which necessitated the meeting. A full account of that meeting and the events transpiring has been detailed in a prior report to the Foreign Mission Committee.

After many days of difficult and intense work for Rev. K. Watkins and myself, the Mission Treasurer resigned from his post. We also had to deal with the reorganisation of Office Staff and prepare recommendations for the more efficient handling of money matters and accounts. This could not have been done without the accountancy expertise of Rev. K. Watkins. Mr. Watkins has compiled a separate report for the attention of the Foreign Mission Committee. These recommendations were also submitted to the Field Committee, who accepted them, with some slight alterations. The advice of Mr. Harvey, Head Accountant of Coopers & Lybrand, was very helpful, and much appreciated.

We are much indebted to the Field Committee and others for their assistance and advice, and also to the Heads and Staff of the various Mission departments responsible for their own administration and handling of finance. We are grateful to Miss Norma MacLean for taking on the work of Administrator on an interim basis. Her qualifications and personality make her very suitable for the work. During our stay, Miss MacLean was truly helpful, assisting us in the reorganising of the office. An advertisement for a full time Administrator has appeared in the February *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. There has been some response to this advertisement.

A new computer and copier for the Bulawayo Office was ordered prior to our departure, as the present equipment was inadequate. In conjunction with Coopers & Lybrand's accounting system, a new computer package for accounting was introduced to the office.

### **Building and Transport**

I made a particular point — along with Mr. Ian MacLean — of inspecting as much property as possible. This was useful in making decisions about buildings and property which were brought before the Field Committee.

One of the main contract works in progress was the building of a new home for the Headmistress, Miss Marion Graham. Mr. Ian MacLean had much work to attend to in connection with this house. This entailed site meetings with the contractor to point out deficiencies in the building and necessary alterations. Mr. MacLean's appointment by the Foreign Mission Committee to advise on building projects, and the efficient way in which he does his work, is very much appreciated by the Mission.

Recommendations for a more efficient building and repair programme were brought before the Field Committee and accepted. These were mainly that contractors would not be employed for any future building projects and that the Mission employ two qualified builder foremen, a bricklayer and a

carpenter. These men would be in charge of the Mission squad of builders and labourers. While Mr. James Mpofu must continue to have the oversight he will now depend on these skilled foremen to maintain reasonable standards. We trust this will prove satisfactory for the future.

Proposed buildings for the future and maintenance plans were considered. At Mbumba the African nurses' quarters are woefully inadequate and not at all up to present-day standards. The plan is to renovate the present nurses' living quarters and year by year to add a number of new buildings. The renovation is urgent. Mr. Ian MacLean provided within a few days a plan for suitable alterations in one of the older of the nurses' quarters. One staff house needs an extended veranda to reduce the intense increase of heat in the house during the summer months.

At Zenka Primary School the new additional classrooms to the school appear to be very well built and laid out. I had the opportunity of being in the company of the Headmaster, Mr. Elijah Mpofu, for a considerable period of time. He left me with the distinct impression that, as well as having the secular education of the children at heart, he cared for their spiritual wellbeing, doing much to promote religious education among the children.

The Ingwenya girls' dormitories need to be extended. The girls are packed into some of the dormitories, with only a few inches between beds. There are two old dormitories which need renewing. These can be extended to accommodate the boarders. Mr. Ian MacLean is preparing a plan to begin on the first of these. The building of a teacher's cottage at Ingwenya is at a standstill because of the difficulty in obtaining cement.

There is need also for a new storage bin for maize. The present storage is inadequate, neither rat-proof or insect-proof. Mr. Ian MacLean intends to improvise, if possible, a large plastic water tank which would fulfil all these requirements.

At Thembiso Children's Home it was discovered that all the internal main carrier veranda beams, as well as some external, are in a serious state of disrepair, and highly dangerous to staff. During a storm the whole veranda could easily be blown away. It appears that a fungus has spread from beam to beam. The repair will be extensive and costly, but must be done immediately. There are other repairs necessary at Thembiso.

The School at Thembiso for the older pupils is inadequate and could be partially improved at little cost. The flimsy division of plywood between four classes can be replaced with sound-proof brick divisions, preventing noise disturbance during study periods.

We were assured that there is to be no more expansion on the Mission and that all the building activities are to do with renewing inadequate buildings and maintenance.

The new telephone system is proving to be reasonably adequate. The back-up system at Ingwenya is not working at the moment. There is still need at Mbumba for internal phones to link the hospital to the nurses' homes.

### **Transport**

As always, transport proves to be the most expensive item on the Mission. Tighter journey controls, through the use of logbooks, is being enforced. Logbooks come to the Head Office each month for checking.

It was agreed that a locally-qualified mechanic be sought and that this would be the means of considerable savings. The Ingwenya workshop would be used as a suitable centre and workshop. Tools would need to be purchased. Repairs done by garages in town prove time and again to be disappointing and the Mission can never be certain of the genuineness of spare parts put into vehicles. The Mission's own mechanic would eliminate this to a certain degree.

### **Thembeiso and the Bookshop**

For some years the Thembeiso Children's Home has had its own Committee. It has been decided to disband this Committee and that the entire Mission be under the Field Committee.

There is now a new Superintendent in the person of Mr. Stanford Mpofu, a brother of James Mpofu, who is presently teaching in the Nkai area. He has been a Headmaster for several years and is a Church member. He is, it seems, well suited for the work. Mr. S. Mpofu takes the place of the late Mr. E. Sayi. There were three applicants for this post and Mr. Stanford Mpofu was unanimously chosen to be Superintendent.

The Bookshop has been reorganised with a reduction of staff and the addition of a computer. Book shelf space has been improved, with a view to the preservation of books from excessive handling and dust.

The selling of religious books is running at a loss because of the steep difference in the exchange rate. However, it is a valuable service to the religious community. The selling of school items is profitable.

### **Schools and Hospital**

When visiting Ingwenya Secondary School and the Mbumba Hospital I was impressed with the constant energy and devotion the lady missionaries maintain in their work.

The schools continue endeavouring to maintain a high standard of education with a Christian ethos. The only way that this can continue in the present political climate is to continue the policy of employing Heads of schools sympathetic to the views of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. All religious syllabi received from the Educational Department are examined by the Heads of Department and the Christian viewpoint is emphasised. This is presently being done by all Heads as well as by Mr. George Mvumbu, who gives religious instruction at Thembeiso and adult education centres throughout Bulawayo.

Whenever it is discovered that a teacher is not teaching religious education according to the accepted standard, the fault is corrected and the required standard returned to.

There seemed to be a good selection of religious books in the libraries and one Primary School requested a greater supply.

Providing healthy recreational facilities is not an easy task for the Staff, particularly in connection with 600 boarders at Ingwenya. Serious consideration should be given to provide, if at all possible, additional facilities.

The Hospital continues its valuable work to the community. It is run very efficiently. There are times of epidemic illness when the hospital nurses go from one crisis into another and they could well do with another nurse. Patients that are sufficiently well attend the Church services, as do their helpers. The Catechist, who continues his work of instructing the patients and hospital workers, has been accepted by the Presbytery to study for the ministry.

#### **Deacons' Courts**

The Field Committee was informed that the Foreign Mission Committee wished that the Church in Zimbabwe would function entirely from the giving of the congregations. Some members of committee maintained that there were many poor people in the congregations and that this was not possible. It was pointed out that a start ought to be made. It was agreed at the Field Committee that Deacons' Courts be asked to supply, from now on, one-third of the minister's petrol. This provision would be increased yearly, so that by the third year the Deacons' Courts would have the full responsibility of supplying petrol for ministerial duties in connection with congregational work.

There are existing debts to the General Fund, but the Deacons' Courts are not in a position to pay these. The Field Committee requested that the Foreign Mission Committee be asked if these debts could be written off.

#### **Calendars and Bible Translation**

Concern was expressed that the Trinitarian Bible Society did not on occasions receive from the Mission acknowledgement of the receipt of calendars granted to the Mission each year. It was decided that in the future the Mission Administrator would be responsible for this duty. Mr. Bonakele Ncube, a member of the Bulawayo congregation, and the Head of the Ndebele Department of the John Tallach Secondary School, was accepted as a suitable person for the selection of texts for the calendars.

A short meeting was held with the ministers regarding progress of translation of the Ndebele and Shona Bibles. Due to his illness, Rev. Ndebele was unable to be of any assistance. However, some progress has been made in both Shona and Ndebele versions. The Gospels are being worked on and suggested alterations are made by comparison with the Authorised Version. This way, unsuitable words and missing passages in the Shona and Ndebele Bibles are corrected. Corrections already done have been handed over to Mr. Watkins, who will present this to the appropriate Trinitarian Bible Society Committee.

Investigations are being made with a view to a reprint of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Ndebele, and other suitable literature.



### **Preaching Commitments**

The African ministers continue with the all important work of preaching the everlasting Gospel. It is a great mercy to see Rev. Ndebele back in harness, although he has a considerable way to go to regain his former health. One of the great tasks of the ministers is to see to the supply of the many stations under their charge, and this can be very difficult at times.

There is always the danger of institutions overshadowing the work of the Church but as yet the Church in Zimbabwe is the centre of the Mission. It is the aim of ministers and the Mission staff to keep it that way.

Each Sabbath Mr. Watkins and myself were fully occupied with preaching commitments as well as taking weekly prayer meetings. We were disappointed, due to our particular duties, that we were not able to visit more congregations to engage in the preaching of the Word. We both preached at Ingwenya, Bulawayo, Thembiso, New Canaan and Mgusa. Mr. Watkins preached at Mbuma and Zenka, while I preached at Nkai. Congregations varied from 50 to 1,000 in number.

There is no doubt a concern among ministers and staff that there should be more visits made by deputies and that visits should extend to longer periods. Advice and direction from deputies is much appreciated and not least their time spent assisting the ministers in the preaching of the Word.

We acknowledge the Lord's goodness throughout our stay in Zimbabwe and His granting travelling mercies. The Lord is good, and has consistently manifested His goodness to us in all our travels. "Thou art good, and doest good" (Psalm 119:68). We also acknowledge the kindness shown by members of staff, the ministers and their wives.

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE**

**Rev. K. M. Watkins**

IN JANUARY 1998 it was my privilege to go to Zimbabwe as Church Deputy in the company of Rev. D. A. Ross, at the request of the Foreign Mission Committee. Problems in the Mission Office at Bulawayo prompted the visit, and indeed a large part of my time and effort in Africa was expended in that direction.

Regrettably, it was confirmed that the former Administrator and Treasurer, had not been altogether faithful in his handling of Mission funds and records. Endeavours were made to strengthen the accounting and financial controls for the future, by introducing a number of modifications to the existing accounting systems and staffing arrangements. These should help to safeguard Mission funds and improve the financial management of the various Mission departments. I am thankful to all the Mission staff for their kind and willing co-operation, which greatly facilitated this aspect of my duties.

It was a pleasure to be able to preach on a number of occasions. My two Sabbaths were spent in Bulawayo and Mbumba respectively. In addition, prayer meetings were taken at Ingwenya, Zenka and Thembiso, together with a service at New Canaan on the Thursday of the Communion season. Having sown the precious seed of the Word, we are very conscious that only God can give the increase.

It is remarkable to see at first hand what the Lord has done through the Gospel of His redeeming grace by means of our Church's Mission in Zimbabwe. Apart from the valuable fact that the temporal afflictions of many have been relieved in some measure, the Church of the Saviour has been established in numerous congregations; His ordinances dispensed in Gospel soundness for almost 100 years; sinners have been converted, saints edified, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ glorified.

I met with nothing but kindness throughout my brief stay in Zimbabwe, from both African and European, and record here my appreciation to everyone that made my time there so comfortable and enjoyable. Above all, I would acknowledge the mercy of the Most High, without whose help and blessing all is in vain.

“Lord, bless and pity us,  
Shine on us with Thy face:  
That th' earth Thy way, and nations all  
May know Thy saving grace.”

(Psalm 67:1-2, metrical version)

## **KENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. J. L. Goldby**

IN GENERAL the main work of the Mission in bringing the Gospel to the people of Kisii has progressed well over the year. The excellent medical work being done in the hospital is a handmaid to the Gospel and is having a significant impact in the community, so that when coming with the Gospel we are well received throughout the area. The catchment area for the clinic roughly equates with the ten-mile radius from the Sengera Mission in which we have been working among the people on the spiritual level. In the villages one comes across the sick and the dying and continual requests are being made for outreach medical services. Very often on the return journey from taking a service or visiting we have carried the sick to Omorembe.

### **The Field of Labour**

The Kisiis are a warm and friendly people. As we move around we are invariably given a courteous and kindly welcome in their simple mud huts. Visitors are given the best food the family can provide and the people are

delighted to show their hospitality. Few white people dwell in this part of Kenya and the children examine the strange Omosungu (white person) visitor with great interest and often rub our skin to see if the colour will come off! When we show our love towards them and deal fairly with them, they in turn show themselves to be loyal, hardworking and trustworthy. There are some in the congregation who have a hope that the Lord has begun the good work in them. In some cases that profession is credible. There are others whose life, walk and conversation, appear to be consistent with that of a Christian. As yet, it has not been possible to observe the Lord's Supper here so that there has been no opportunity for anyone to make a formal profession. Many have increased in Christian knowledge in general, especially those who have been under the preaching and teaching of the Free Presbyterian Church for upwards of eight years.

The population of the Republic of Kenya as a whole is doubling every fifteen years, at present numbering around 30 millions. The people are divided into three main ethnic groups — the Bantu, Nilotes and Cushites. These groups are sub-divided by many different tribes, each with their own language. The Bantu are the largest group, having two-thirds of the total population. The Gusii or Kisii people, among whom we labour, are one of the smaller Bantu tribes, numbering around 1.5 million souls and no rural area of Kenya is more densely populated than Kisii. Despite the high soil fertility, acute land shortage is already causing problems and as no plans appear to be being made for the future, these difficulties may well become very serious for the people.

The beginning of the general election campaign in November last year sparked off increasingly serious tribal clashes in various parts of the country. Tension between the Maasai and the Kisii flared up on the border ten miles to the south of Sengeru Mission, whilst similar conflicts erupted on the Luo border ten miles to the east. The people of Maiga and Magenche are still suffering from these clashes, which are continually fuelled by land disputes and thefts of cattle by both sides. The destruction of Kisii maize crops, the burning of houses, brutal murders, injuries and shootings with arrows have been commonplace over recent months. These unwanted additions to the hardships of life are compounded by devastating malaria epidemics which have carried off thousands of lives in the year. The cost of medical services, needed for the sick, adds to the ever present burden of finding school fees. AIDS is sweeping many young people here into eternity and with a huge percentage of the local population carrying the HIV virus, many more must follow.

Murder, fornication, adultery, theft, corruption, drunkenness, wife inheritance, male and female circumcision and witchcraft, are rife. Although polygamy is legal in Kenya and very common in Kisii, not many of the younger generation are taking extra wives for economic reasons.

How great and deep is the wickedness of man and the misery which follows, and what need there is of the preaching of the Gospel in every tribe and the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God in all our hearts and in every part of the earth.

Whatever may be said about the President and government of Kenya, they have done well in giving freedom to preach and teach the Word of God without hindrance. People are ready to hear, but in the long term the future depends on the Lord raising up Kenyans who will be able to teach others. Christians in other parts of the world by their material and spiritual support are doing, and may do, a great work for the Mission field. The battle will be won at a throne of grace. The back of the enemy will be seen and the benefit felt in the home Churches. In this way Satan's kingdom will be spoiled. "Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil" (Psalm 68:12).

In the spiritual realm strong heathen customs, superstitions and beliefs prevail, even among some professing Christians and highly educated people. Kenya's top heart surgeon was recently reported to have refused to testify in a court case for fear of being cursed by witchcraft! There is much Christianity, but little Christian knowledge, and even less spirituality. There is a great work to be done to educate the people in the knowledge of the Gospel and to bring them to see their need of really seeking Christ and the saving work of the Holy Spirit.

The Gusii name for God is "Engoro". In traditional religion "Engoro" is the single supreme being who made the universe and is the source of prosperity and life. His attributes are said to be goodness, pureness, impartiality, love and generosity. Man, being God's creature, should reflect these attributes and behaviour and he who does not is considered to be in rebellion which may be severely punished through His intermediaries, the *ebirecha* (ancestor spirits). The people think these ancestor spirits can cause much trouble, hence the common practice of sacrificing after funerals. Death, disease, disaster, etc., can all be attributed to either Engoro's or the ancestor's displeasure. In addition to this, Gusii society dwells in the most awful bondage to outlandish superstitious fears. *Abanyanabi* is a powerful class of witchdoctor who call themselves doctors and work for money and of whom the people are very afraid. People are equally afraid of *Omonyabibiriria*, that is, a person possessed by the "evil eye" who can kill or cause disease by a look. Next in line are *Abarogi* — those who use magic arts to kill and curse. There are said to be many of them among ordinary people. Four people accused of being *Abarogi* were burnt to death near Sengera in 1994. Last of all is *Omoragori*, a kind of seer who can foresee problems and prescribe remedies against curses. To rid the Abagusii of these devilish delusions and fears must be one of the objectives of those who bring the Gospel to them. How unwilling are men to believe the Truth, but yet how ready to believe Satan's lies, however incredible and fantastic!

President Moi was brought under the influence of Protestant missions as a boy but among the people of Kenya the Roman Catholics are the largest denomination, claiming a huge 25% of the population. They have an Italian Archbishop in place as the Apostolic Nuncio to attend to the political aspirations of the "Holy See", so called. Any genuine missionary to the Abagusii must contend for "the faith once delivered to the saints" against

Romanism, that masterpiece of satanic imposture which pretends to be the bride of Christ.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa is the denomination next in size to the RCs. This Church is descended from a Mission at Kibwezi called the East Africa Scottish Mission, sponsored by Sir William Mackinnon and his associates. This was the first serious attempt to establish a mission in the interior of East Africa. The mission was handed over to the Church of Scotland in 1903 and became known as the Kikuyu Mission. Sadly, PCEA appears to have followed the Church of Scotland's pattern of spiritual and doctrinal decay and apostasy.

The most numerous denomination in our area are the Seventh Day Adventists, followed by the RCs. Both groups have been deeply entrenched here since the early part of the century. The RCs, true to their usual practice, keep the people in bondage to their system and in ignorance of the Bible with both people and priest living as the world lives. The SDAs, on the other hand, whilst keeping their followers enslaved to their false views of the Sabbath, do not in practice so closely follow the views of their founders as one might expect. Many evidence a degree of acquaintance with the Scriptures and show themselves open to discussion of biblical doctrines. In an area long neglected by Christian mission, the SDAs were the first to attempt to evangelise the Gusii from about 1912. Any semblance of Reformed evangelical teaching was non-existent here until the mid 'fifties, when Swedish evangelical Lutherans settled on the other side of Kisii town. As far as I know, we are the first "Calvinists" ever to work in this area.

Whilst aiming at the conversion of sinners to Christ and seeking to counteract those sinful heathen traditions which form an immense obstacle for any Kisii turning sincerely to Christianity, our teaching and preaching must take into account the particular errors of the SDAs regarding the Sabbath, the Atonement, the Person of Christ, soul sleep and the doctrine of the inspiration, finality and sufficiency of the Scriptures. Not being readers of books, many SDAs are ignorant of the worse errors of Ellen G. White and the founders of Adventism. Until recently the people of this area have been presented with only two choices as far as Churches are concerned — either Romanism or Adventism. The task, then, is to introduce the leaven of the only scriptural alternative, advancing the claims of the Almighty God whilst looking to Him whose Cause it is to glorify His Name and vindicate His own truth.

The long-term objective ought to be to establish an indigenous, largely self-sustaining Church and not one which is still after many years entirely dependent on external support. Resources released in this way may be used to reach and teach other peoples so that original missions become Churches in their own right, engaged in evangelising in other places. The real need is for African ministers, supported by African people and African office-bearers, working together in an African Reformed Church, preaching the Gospel to their own people. As it is in families, so also in missions, parents are always parents, but grown children become self-supporting.

### **Sengera Congregation School and Clinic**

The Mission and Clinic are situated close to the Sengera market. Fifty families, comprising about 276 souls, form the regular Sengera congregation. Sabbath services begin at 9.30 a.m. with the adult catechism class, followed by the main service at 10.30 a.m. and the afternoon clinic service at 2 p.m. The Sabbath School, with around 150 pupils, is run by Miss Ringelberg, Miss MacKenzie, Mrs. MacLean and Mrs. Goldby, assisted by African translators. The ladies make use of the photocopier to reproduce catechism questions and Bible texts for the pupils to learn and copy suitable articles from the *Young People's Magazine* and other sources.

The hospital staff hold daily evening prayers with the patients whilst I try to go round on Sabbath evening with tracts (issued by the Outreach Committee) and pray with patients in the wards. I visit the wards for evening prayers every second weekday evening, as enabled, during malaria season, when the staff are busy. It is often quite touching to see how respectful and appreciative the patients and their helpers are at these times of prayer. At 8 a.m. each day morning worship is usually followed by a short address. At present with the malaria raging, numbers attending can reach 150. Most of these are passing through the hospital and are only under our ministrations for a few days at most. Rain, wind, congestion, the arrival of new patients, lack of seating and the close proximity of the maternity ward, at times makes for considerable difficulty in conducting these services. Land has been purchased adjacent to the hospital compound recently and it would be a great advantage in every way if the church building could be relocated on this ground close to the clinic with a facility for relaying the services to the wards. The existing church building is only a very basic shell and can easily and profitably be converted into school classrooms.

Rianyakwara Primary School, sponsored by the Mission, has been given financial assistance with roofing the mud classrooms and provided with some textbooks. A number of additional teaching staff are also paid by the Mission. One of these staff members does very valuable work in teaching the Psalms and catechism to the children between my fortnightly visits. On these occasions we hold worship and give a short address to the whole school, followed by catechism for standards four to eight, which in total number more than 200 children. With the valuable help of the photocopier we have been able to issue a selection of Eke-Gusii metrical Psalms to the school. My wife is assisting with the teaching of English and English metrical Psalm sheets have also been issued.

### **Ogembo Congregation**

The journey to the Ogembo Church, six miles or so from Sengera, takes twenty minutes. On the way we collect a number of people who live en route. The 8.30 a.m. Sabbath morning service is attended by between twenty-five and fifty adults and children. The church building, made of mud with corrugated

iron roof, was relocated recently and slightly extended at the request of the congregation. They supplied most of the labour and the timbers. Iron sheets, nails and skilled labour, were provided out of congregational funds at a total cost of £90. It was heartening recently to witness the old man who gave the site for the church, setting fire to his long-cherished instruments of witchcraft. The non-combustible items, such as the Maasai sacrificial swords and spears, we threw into a deep part of the swift flowing Gucha. Long ago the man and his wife had journeyed to Tanzania to consult a famous witchdoctor in seeking a cure for a serious illness. The witchdoctor ordered the procuring of these instruments and had given directions as to their use. After keeping them all his life the old man admitted, with a smile, that they had never worked!

### **Magenche and Maiga Congregation**

The Magenche congregation is a relatively recent development. Shortly before my arrival in August 1996 the Field Committee, under the chairmanship of Rev. James Tallach, took a decision to hold fortnightly services for about twenty-five persons in Magenche. The journey to Magenche, which lies about eight miles south of Sengera, close to the Maasai border, takes the best part of forty minutes on rough roads. In close proximity to Magenche is the village of Maiga.

The Maiga people have been associated with the Free Presbyterian Church since its beginning in Kenya in 1988 until services were discontinued (owing to some problems caused by a few who have since departed) by the then administrator, Mr. D. MacDonald. I was first introduced to the Maiga people by Rev. D. B. Macleod, who had a special attachment to them. It was here that I heard the late Mr. Macleod preaching the Gospel for the last time to a congregation gathered under a tree. From the time of our arrival in Kenya in August 1996 the Maiga people were pressing for services to be restored and this was done by linking them with the new group in Magenche. The Maiga Primary and Secondary Schools have also been associated with us from the beginning and since 1996 they have been given fortnightly catechism instruction and Psalm singing. Some TBS Bibles and catechisms have been donated to these schools.

For the last eighteen months I have been appealing, without success, for a vehicle for the work of the ministry. It was, therefore, a great disappointment to me that I was forced to bring these services to the Magenche/Maiga congregation and other weekday services in various places to a close in December last year. Funeral services and visits to sick persons and the Maiga schools have also been discontinued. Since that time there has been no transport for this work and with many other duties I am not able to reach them on foot. I felt this as a great blow to my ministry here, having worked among these people, ministering to their sick and dying, burying their dead, consoling and supporting them in their fears of attacks from the Maasai. We have given tracts to their warriors on the battlefield (some of whom as a result were asking

for the Gospel to be preached among them). Seeing the same eager faces in the little mud church week by week, we gradually gained the confidence of the community. Our home visitation included some of those not attending any church. In the Maiga service we have felt at times that the Lord was there.

#### **Translation work, Bibles and Literature**

A selection of individuals within the congregation receive the *Free Presbyterian* and *Young People's Magazines* by post direct. A packet of twenty *FP* and 40 *YP* magazines are also sent and distributed to interested persons. Many TBS Bibles and also Kisii language Bibles have been distributed. Hundreds of Shorter Catechisms are being used in schools and by individuals. The TBS kindly send us fifty TBS magazines quarterly. Thousands of tracts have been distributed and a lending library for Christian books has been in operation.

Most of our Eke-Gusii metrical Psalms were translated under the supervision of Mr. D. MacDonald. This work I have been continuing with the help of my interpreter, Mr. James Onwonga. It is a very interesting part of the work. An Interlinear Hebrew text and various commentaries are to hand, with some home-made Eke-Gusii dictionaries on loan from Miss Ringelberg. The objective in translating is to ensure every element of meaning is included in the Eke-Gusii, even if this means additional verses — but the greatest difficulty comes when this has to conform to the metre. Although the work is slow, we now have twenty Eke-Gusii metrical Psalms in use at present. Some are still to be completed, whilst five have been completed recently and the first drafts of a number of others are awaiting work to be done on them. With the help of the photocopier we have been able to provide Psalm sheets for the hospital worship. The Eke-Gusii metrical Psalms have interested others and following requests some Psalm sheets have been given to persons outwith our Church.

We are thankful there is a translation of the Bible in Eke-Gusii, as many tribes still have no Bible in their own language. This Bible, however, appears to have been translated from the RSV and not from the original languages. Whilst there has been no time to examine this translation, a cursory look at the first chapter of John's Gospel has revealed a glaring error in verse 5. Whatever the quality of the translation, the Eke-Gusii Bible is ultimately based on the deviant Westcott and Hort text. A percentage of the text of the Eke-Gusii Bible will therefore be faulty. Because of this, and also because no Scripture portions exist in Eke-Gusii, we have asked the TBS if it would be possible for them to supervise the translation of one of the Gospels into Eke-Gusii.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the very willing help of my interpreter, Mr. James Onwonga. He has been beside me at almost every service, in home visits and in interviews with many persons. He has been my navigator and guide on our journeys. Without such help, almost none of this work would be possible. As to the accuracy of the interpretation of sermons, there are a number of well-educated English-speaking Kisiis among our regular hearers,



so that his work has been under constant review. Their comments have been consistently positive.

A good start has been made in planting the Reformed Faith among the Kisii people. As to the future, with proper oversight and support, the work should prosper. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed and it is of His goodness that we have been permitted to labour for a season, in these regions beyond, under His preserving care. All the glory and the praise belongs to Him.

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

**Mr. I. MacLean**

ANOTHER YEAR has passed, for which we must give an account. Truly we can say, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities".

The past year at Sengera has been a busy one. Omorembe Health Centre has seen a substantial increase in patient admissions and the Centre is now recognised in the community for its valuable contribution to healthcare.

It is above all, in the Lord's providence, a meeting place where many come in contact with the Gospel of the grace of God.

The year 1997 was election year in Kenya and although the much publicised Richard Leakey party, SAFINA, was registered in November, the December vote secured for President Moi another four-year term in office.

In the run-up to the election, there was much political unrest, with the Kisiis and their neighbours, the Maasai and Luo tribes, involved in serious clashes. Some of the patients admitted to the Clinic were victims of this tribal violence. One man came to the Clinic with his hat pinned to his head by a Maasai arrow.

One day, while travelling to the border village of Kilgoris I witnessed a scene which reminded me of Goliath's challenge to David. The Maasai tribe, armed with spears and poisoned arrows, were gathered on a hill to my right, inciting the Kisiis who, similarly armed, were poised on a hill to my left. My Landrover, travelling on the road which marked the boundary, was just a little too close for comfort — no, I did not stop to take a photograph! It seems that the Maasai no longer need to prove their manhood by killing a lion!

Tribalism, sad to say, is still very much alive in Kenya, and nothing, I believe, but the Cross of Christ, will be effective in reconciling these people and slaying their enmity to one another.

The severe drought of the early months, which hindered planting, was followed by the "El Nino" rains which prevented harvesting. Many maize crops rotted in the fields and were only fit for animal consumption. Any maize that did ripen was sold at prices way beyond what most Sengera families could afford. The Mission tries to assist some of these needy families through a

“poor fund” which receives donations from friends at home. A group of Church people act as a “watchdog” to report regularly to the Deacons’ Court of the people they know who are in need. Depending on funds, items such as food, clothing, bedding and shelter may be provided for such. We are very grateful for those who have given to this worthy cause. The Mission also tries to buy bulk maize at harvest time in order to sell to the workers when the market price becomes too high.

### **Staff**

In September we welcomed the arrival of Miss Catherine MacKenzie from Laide as teacher for the Mission children. The parents were delighted to place their children’s education in her capable hands. This addition to the Mission staff brings the total European presence to twelve adults and nine children.

As far as African staff are concerned we have forty-two clinic staff and forty-six general mission workers, seven of these being teachers at Rianyakwara Primary School.

Needless to say, much of my time is taken up with the management of people.

### **Building**

Some new building work was necessary during the year.

The basement of the Clinic building, previously used for water storage, proved unsuccessful. A new 200,000 litre underground tank was, therefore, constructed in reinforced concrete and the basement converted into an Outpatient Department. This consists of laboratory, dispensary, doctor’s room, three examinations rooms, minor op-room and clerk’s office. The existing Outpatients’ Department on the ground floor is to be converted into an operating theatre. Other projects proposed for 1998 are: new security fencing, kitchen/laundry and isolation unit. Space on the compound is very tight and the acquisition of a small piece of adjoining land is in the process of being finalised. A PABX telephone system was installed in December at a cost of £1,800.

### **Transport**

The upkeep of motor vehicles has proved a real headache over the past year and we are indebted to the Foreign Mission Committee for sending out Mr. George MacAskill at such short notice on two occasions. His mechanical expertise was much appreciated and ensured mobility for the period of his stay.

However, soon after his return to Scotland, the Bedford lorry, which had proved so useful during the drought for carrying water, was involved in an accident and has been off the road for over three months. The two Landrovers had huge repair bills, due mainly to poor maintenance by the Kisii mechanics. Just as I write, a Kisumu mechanic with twelve years’ experience has started with us and hopefully our garage bills, which topped £8,000 this year, will be reduced considerably.

No vehicles were added during the year and the old 4 x 4 Pajero was sold for £3,000. Our present number of vehicles consists of Pajero (£17,000), Bedford Lorry (£6,000), Toyota Hilux (£5,000), Landrover Ambulance (£4,000) and SWB Landrover (£4,000). All these vehicles, due to the large excess, are insured third party.

### **Finance**

At the beginning of 1997, the Mission adopted the Imprest system for monthly running costs. Every month the General Treasurer is given details of our income and expenditure. A ceiling of £6,000 per month is fixed and this is the maximum which can be remitted monthly to our Kenyan Account. Clinic income average £3,600 per month, while the three largest items of expenditure (wages, fuel, medicines) averaged £4,700. The months of July and February (this year) were the busiest, due to severe malaria epidemics and income for each month exceeded £10,000. It is clear, however, that the Clinic will never be self-supporting, although income this year covered wages and medicine bills.

Closer links were made with our friends and colleagues in Zimbabwe through Rev. J. Goldby's attendance at Presbytery in April and my own visits, combining Presbytery and building supervision in June, October and January.

In September we had a timely visit from Church deputies, Revs. J. MacLeod and J. R. Tallach, whose wise counsel and warm encouragement was much appreciated.

In concluding my report I would like to thank the many friends in the home Church, in Holland and beyond, for continuing to meet the needs of the Mission at Sengera.

The Kisii people are a needy people. The works of darkness are all too obvious, with witchcraft possessing the minds of many. Only the mighty power of God can change darkness to light. We would crave the prayers of the Lord's people for God's blessing on our work at Sengera so that we might be able to say of the Kisiis, as Paul said of sinners at Corinth: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

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

**Dr. E. de Jong**

IT IS BECAUSE the Lord is gracious, merciful and longsuffering that I am able to write this report about the medical work in 1997.

He blessed the means in curing the sick and in helping the suffering and dying, despite our daily many shortcomings! When many were dying around us, we were upheld in life and health.

At the same time we want to thank all our Mission friends in Scotland and the Netherlands for their prayers and financial support. Without them we would not be able to do our work.

**Staff**

Sister J. A. Coote arrived in the middle of March, after helping out the Mission in Zimbabwe in their shortage of staff. Sister C. Renes went on furlough from June to October. She could not extend her registration as a nurse in Kenya due to matters of conscience, already known to the Foreign Mission Committee. As a community worker she is now fully occupied in social work (counselling and visiting, mainly AIDS patients, together with Sister A. N. Ringelberg) and in assisting with non-medical duties in the clinic. In February, Sister P. van de Ridder started her training and orientation for registration as a nurse in Kenya. The process of registration was considerably delayed by several factors, like communication problems with the Nursing Council, a disabling wrist fracture and the striking of the nurses at the end of the year. However, she was a great help, especially during the busy season.

Sister H. Burggraaf went to Zimbabwe for two months in March, together with Nurse H. Terluin, who came from Holland in 1996 as a volunteer. From May to September, Sister Burggraaf did her training and orientation in Nairobi and was registered as a midwife in Kenya.

**STATISTICS**

<b>Admissions</b>	
General .....	3,084
Maternal .....	434
Deliveries .....	391
<b>Bed Occupancy</b> , average per day .....	36 (15-100)
= 90.3% of the full bed occupancy	
<b>Deaths</b> .....	222
= 6.3 per 100 admissions	
<b>Referrals</b> .....	17
<b>Laboratory Tests</b> .....	15,844
<b>Minor Operations</b> .....	275
<b>Out-Patients</b> .....	4,027
<b>Antenatal visits</b> .....	1,181

The overall picture is strongly coloured by the “Highland Malaria Epidemic” in June, July and August, with a bed occupancy of 71 (178%), 100

(250%) and 66 (165%) respectively. Despite this, the bed occupancy remained significantly higher than in 1996 until the end of the year. It should be noted that activities which are not related with the malaria epidemic, like deliveries and minor operations, increased by 74% and 96% respectively. These observations may lead us to the conclusion that our clinic is appreciated more and more by the community.

Up until now we were not able to start with outreach work (mobile clinics) because of staff shortage and vehicle problems.

The Mother and Child Welfare Clinic building was ready for use in March. However, we were not able to start with Child Welfare work because of lack of equipment; e.g., KEPI fridge.

We were very grateful for the donation for the operating theatre, which we hope to have built in due course.

The visit of the deputies in September was very much appreciated as they took the regular hospital services and Dr. Tallach was able to help in the clinic when I was away for a few days.

Hitherto the Lord has helped us. We pray that it may be said of “the house” of our mission at Sengera: “And the rains of disappointment descended, and the floods of sorrow came, and the winds of questioning blew, and beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock”!

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

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

THE DOMINIONS and Overseas Committee has been in the good providence of the Lord able to send deputies to several countries where we have an interest in preaching the Gospel.

Rev. N. M. Ross gave a report in July 1997 to the Dominions and Overseas Committee of his visit in April to Chesley and Mount Elgin. At the Chesley Communion there was a regular fifty-five to sixty people at each of the services. There were also services held at Mount Elgin, which is about two-and-a-half hours’ drive from Chesley. At that time the Mount Elgin people expressed the wish to belong to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

In November, the Rev. K. Watkins supplied the Chesley congregation and conducted the Communion services. He also visited the group of people in Mount Elgin and another in Texas who also have expressed a desire to belong to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Since then a number of the people from Texas have visited the Church in Scotland and attended services in the London congregation and a Communion season in Stornoway.

In March, the Rev. J. MacLeod visited the group in Texas, as well as supplying Chesley and conducting the Communion season there. A number of the people from Texas attended the Chesley Communion and it was good news to hear that three of them were accepted as members in full communion. With

the Mount Elgin group, there has been no progress with respect to their joining the Church. The Chesley congregation and the groups in Mount Elgin and Texas have expressed much appreciation of the visits by our Church deputies.

It is interesting that the first contact with the people in Texas was through the Internet. Mr. James Rodgers, of the Larne congregation, picked up information about the Texas people and passed it on to Rev. K. Watkins.

There has been no deputy for some years to the Vancouver people who have remained with the Free Presbyterian Church when others departed to form the APC. It is the hope of the Committee that we will be in a position to do so in the not too distant future. Sadly, there have been no services in Vancouver for a number of years.

We were thankful that within the period of one year, two deputies, Rev. G. G. Hutton and K. D. MacLeod, were able to visit New Zealand and Australia — Mr. Hutton in March and April, and Mr. MacLeod in December and January. The visits of the deputies were much appreciated by Revs. J. A. T. van Dorp and E. A. Rayner, and our congregations. I trust that we will be able in the good providence of God to continue this regular supply of deputies to these countries.

In January, at the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery, a Mr. Christopher Tuck was received by the Presbytery to study for the ministry. The Presbytery also approved the establishing of Church services in the city of Tauranga, which lies on the north coast of North Island, 413 kilometres north of Gisborne. The services are normally conducted by Mr. Dick Vermuelen.

The work of spreading the Word of God in Eastern Europe continues on a regular basis. The problems of getting aid into Ukraine remain, and there has been no load taken in since March 1997. There has, however, been one load taken to Moldova and it is hoped that a load will be taken to Romania in July and to the Ukraine in the autumn.

The gathering of people in Odessa who wish to be identified with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, continue to worship according to the form laid down by the Church. They have asked several times for the ordinance of Baptism and it is hoped that that will be possible in the not too distant future. Rev. Neil Ross is to spend, in April and May, two Sabbaths in Odessa, preaching and lecturing.

We are still in contact with the friends in Fornaci di Barga. Mr. Lucio Strata is to go there in May, hopefully for two Sabbaths, and will conduct public worship in the same way as in the home Church. The friends there are looking forward to his visit. We are much indebted to Mr. Strata for his assistance.

The individual reports of the deputies cover the information proffered here in greater depth. As we visit these different countries and engage in Gospel activities, it is not without looking to the Lord of the harvest to give the increase (1 Corinthians 2:15).

## **AUSTRALIAN REPORT**

**Rev. E. A. Rayner**

DURING 1997 we were encouraged with the visits of two deputies. Assistance was given by Mr. Hutton at both the Grafton and Sydney Communion. The Sydney Communion was put forward so that it coincided with the deputy's visit. While there were no new communicants, there was the baptism of Heather van Praag. At the conclusion of this year, the congregation has had the privilege of supply from the Rev. K. D. MacLeod. No Communion season was arranged, owing to the holiday season when some had already made arrangements to be away. One of the difficulties of such a large city as Sydney is travelling distance. Although the majority of the congregation are located not too far from Riverstone, there is a family south of Sydney who travel as often as possible for the long distance. Special effort is made to attend when a minister supplies. While regular attendance is impractical every Sabbath a monthly attendance enables the children of the family to keep to the programme followed at the catechism classes. This is an encouragement when another family from that area emigrated to Carterton, N.Z., at the beginning of the year. The elders have continued to read suitable sermons when there is no supply. Such sermons are read well and are usually from some of the outstanding ministers of the past. While appreciation has been expressed from time to time, it is the prayer and desire of the congregation that the Lord would provide one of His own servants to labour in this large city where there is much work to be done for the cause of Christ among us.

Grafton was privileged to have Mr. Hutton for his final Sabbath before returning home. It was an encouragement that Mr. Les Kroenhert and his wife, Beverley, both publicly professed at the Lord's table for the first time. They have come in from outside the congregation and have been with us for over two years. Mr. Hutton's ministry and company was greatly appreciated, as was the case in Sydney. Mr. MacLeod is not expected in Grafton till the New Year. There were also three baptisms during the year, Alexandra van Dorp, Anna Tuck and Cynthia de Bruin.

At the October Communion we were pleased to have Mr. van Dorp to assist and on the Sabbath there were about seventy people in the church, with some visitors from Sydney, Brisbane and Singapore. It was our privilege to have Pastor Chacko and some of his people from Singapore that we had heard of from their former visit to N.Z. It was a time of fellowship and theological discussion. As a result of this, the subject of public transport on the Lord's Day was discussed, and after consideration, it was agreed that the view of our Church would be considered prayerfully. This is now the practice among their people, despite the fact that not so many have cars, since the price of vehicles is so costly, thus discouraging private ownership in such a densely populated small state.

There was one new communicant from the congregation at the October Communion, a young mother, Mrs. Dennell White. The Tuck family from

Brisbane have spent several Sabbaths in Grafton and Sydney during the year. Mr. Tuck has now almost completed an honours degree at the Brisbane University and his application to become a student for the ministry has been processed by Session and the application is expected to be before the Presbytery in January. He has now been a communicant member for over two years.

The witness of the Church in Australia has continued since 1912, when Mr. Scott was received into the Church. Today contacts and enquiries are still made from time to time and some of these have been fruitful. Discernment and wisdom are required to deal with each individual case. Meanwhile we continue to pray for the increase here and abroad, for the harvest is truly great and the labourers few.

## **NEW ZEALAND REPORT**

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

THE WORK in the congregations in New Zealand proceeded as in other years. The Communion seasons were conducted in Auckland, Wellington and Gisborne, with the assistance of Rev. E. Rayner on three occasions and with the assistance of the Church deputy, Rev. G. Hutton, on two occasions. The visit by Church deputies, Rev. G. Hutton and Rev. K. D. MacLeod, to these distant lands was much appreciated. At the time of writing, Mr. MacLeod has just left for Australia, but is to return for a further two Sabbaths in January 1998. The sacrament of Baptism was dispensed to two infants. Attendances have continued much the same during the year.

A significant development was the commencement of services in the city of Tauranga, a coastal city between Gisborne and Auckland. This occurred in February 1997 as the result of family relocation and a desire expressed by two members and a number of adherents for services under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. As Mr. Dick Vermeulen was already resident in Tauranga and agreed to officiate at the services, the matter could be proceeded with. The subsequent petition to the Presbytery was unanimously approved. May the Lord of the harvest prosper this much-needed Reformed witness in doctrine, practice and worship.

When I say that this witness is much needed, I am conscious of the fact that our denomination's witness is the only fully Reformed witness in New Zealand. That is in spite of other denominations that make the claim of being Reformed. Whilst the use of instrumental music and hymns in public worship obviously belies such claims, the more serious aspect of the difference with such Churches is of a constitutional nature. There are several denominations who claim to have the Westminster Confession of Faith in their constitution. Their document, however, is not the same Confession of Faith that was framed



at Westminster by the illustrious body of divines of that name, but a document seriously vitiated by amendments, mostly in the form of deletions.

The most significant alterations are the removal of the passages that require the civil magistrate in his official capacity to honour and serve Christ by recognising His truth and promoting His cause. This recognition is required because Christ is not only King of saints (Revelation 15:3) but He is also King of nations (Jeremiah 10:7). The late Rev. Wm. MacLean, in his publication, *Christ's Kingship Over the Nations*, referred to these deletions as an Achan in the camp. "This Achan in the camp, this accursed thing in the eyes of the Most high, must be destroyed," he writes. He also quotes Dr. Begg, who said with respect to these deletions: "It is questionable whether Popery itself more directly robs Christ of His glory, the glory of having all power in heaven and on earth."

Another most significant alteration is the removal of the section that identifies the Papacy as the Antichrist. What a great need there is for prayer for the destruction of the great antichristian system, according to the promise that the Lord will destroy it with the spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9). Scriptural prayer for this blessing is greatly impeded when there is no knowledge of the Antichrist's identity. Sadly this understanding is obviously lost amongst the neo-Reformed who use the vitiated editions of the Confession of Faith.

In Gisborne it became necessary to write to the City Manager in connection with a proposal by a member of the District Council to erect a popish symbol on the town clock. The following letter was sent by the Kirk Session:

"The Kirk Session consider the use and display of a cross as a Christian symbol a sign of decline rather than an honour done to Christ. This pagan tool of torture and execution was not used as an emblem of Christianity until it was introduced for that purpose by the heathen emperor Constantine in the fourth century. Although it is said that Constantine converted to Christianity he never rose above being a nominal Christian and always remained half pagan, in spite of his use of the cross as an ostentatious symbol.

"There is no scriptural direction to indicate the use of such symbols, but rather the reverse, as the Saviour said: "God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). When the Saviour counsels His disciples to take up the cross (Matthew 16:24), He obviously does not refer to a material cross, but to the difficulties that are associated with a Christian profession.

It is suggested therefore that instead of erecting a cross, the Council do more to ensure the sanctity of the divinely appointed memorial to Jesus Christ, namely the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10). The fourth commandment of the moral law requires of us, without the least shade of ambiguity, to keep one day in seven holy unto God, by exercises of worship, abstinence from unnecessary work and from activities that are inconsistent with the sanctity of the day (Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 10:25). The Saviour Himself makes the duty clear when He says: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15)."

May the Lord of the harvest, in His unspeakable mercy, not only send forth the labourers into the harvest, but also raise up rulers who will be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the Church.

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

**Rev. K. D. MacLeod**

I BEGIN WRITING this report as I wait at Sydney Airport for the onward return flight to London. I have flown from Auckland into the bright sunshine of an Australian summer's day. The last part of that first leg of my journey home gave us fine views of beautiful Sydney harbour and much of the city before we touched down on the tarmac here.

Eight weeks have passed quickly since my wife and I left home on 2nd December to fly to the Antipodes. We arrived safely in Sydney after some thirty-six hours of travelling. In the evening of the next day, a Friday, I took a prayer meeting in our Church, in the western suburb of Riverstone. Although the Church is a considerable distance from the city centre, it is very convenient for a significant proportion of the congregation.

After two days in Sydney we flew on to Auckland, where I took the services for the next two Sabbaths. I was also able to conduct the services on the Day of Humiliation and Prayer, on the Wednesday of the intervening week. The prayer meeting was held on Tuesday, 16th December, and the next day we set out to visit the other congregations in New Zealand. We have to acknowledge the great kindness shown us by Mr. Dick Vermeulen, who drove us from place to place until he brought us safely back to Auckland eight days later. The first night of this trip we spent with Mr. and Mrs. Vermeulen in their home at Tauranga. As Synod members will be aware, Sabbath services are now conducted on a regular basis in this rapidly-growing town. About fourteen people were present at the service, conducted that Wednesday evening in a small Girl Guide hall in the town. The hall provides suitable accommodation for public worship in this new congregation. May the Lord bless what is being done there in His name!

Two days later we arrived in Wellington, where I took a prayer meeting that Friday evening and the usual two services on the Sabbath. On the Monday we travelled to Eketahuna, where we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Peter Best, and I took a service in a hall in the evening in Masterton, a larger town some distance away. Of the thirty-five or so who attended, a large proportion have no connection with the Free Presbyterian Church. The next day brought us to Havelock North, where we stayed with Miss Jocelyn Cox, a friend of my wife since their days together on the Mission in Zimbabwe. There, also, a service was held, with a congregation of seven.

The next day we were to have gone on to Gisborne. Instead we headed again for Tauranga, for the funeral of Mr. A. van Dorp, who had died the previous Saturday evening. We had visited him earlier that week in hospital and found him remarkably bright, though seriously ill. That evening again I preached in Tauranga. The congregation was increased on this occasion by the presence of a number of those, mostly from Gisborne, who were waiting overnight in the town after attending the funeral.

This night again we were entertained in the Vermeulen home. The next day brought us back to Auckland. The prayer meeting was held that evening and the following day we left for Australia.

I kept the Sabbath services and prayer meetings in Sydney for the next three weeks and I was also able to hold the service on New Year's Day. During the days after our return to Sydney we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Jacob van Praag, and on the last day of the year my wife had to leave to return to Scotland.

On Monday, 5th January, I travelled to Grafton. There I stayed with Rev. and Mrs. E. A. Rayner. Although this congregation has a minister of its own, I feel it is important to note here what was impressed on me by a number of people there — the need for deputies to visit the congregation from time to time to maintain contact with Scotland. The need of other congregations for supply should be obvious.

During my visit to Grafton, the Rayners took me, as they have taken so many other deputies, to visit the Church at Brushgrove, where Rev. Walter Scott was once the minister. It was interesting to note that the foundation stone indicated that the now semi-derelict building was built 100 years ago. I was able to take the usual prayer meeting in Grafton on the Wednesday evening, before returning to Sydney the next day. It was encouraging to see a considerable number of children among the approximately fifty-five in the Grafton Church on a weekday. Among them were the Tuck family, who had driven down from Brisbane that day. The 8th January brought me back to Sydney, and for the remainder of my stay in the city I was entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Calvin MacKenzie.

I returned to New Zealand on 15th January and stopped over for two nights in Auckland, which allowed me to take the prayer meeting there before moving on to Gisborne for the weekend. This visit was instead of the one which had to be cancelled to allow us to attend the funeral in Tauranga. Rev. J. van Dorp supplied the Auckland congregation, while I took his place in Gisborne. I also took the prayer meeting on the Tuesday evening before returning to Auckland the following day. While in Gisborne, I stayed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vermeulen and then with Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Geuze.

My final days in Auckland were the days of their Communion season, at which Mr. Rayner and I assisted. It was encouraging to hear men, nine in all, from almost all the congregations within the Presbytery, speak acceptably at the Question Meeting. At one of the meetings of the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery that weekend, Mr. Christopher Tuck, a member of the

Grafton congregation and presently completing a degree in Brisbane, was received as a student studying for the ministry. After my return to New Zealand my days in Auckland were spent in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ken van Kralingen. To them, and to everyone else in whose homes we stayed, I have to record my sincere thanks for their generous hospitality. My thanks also to many others for many acts of kindness. Especially I ought to acknowledge the Lord's care in taking us halfway round the world and back again in safety, and for His help and protection in every other way. I finally left for home on 27th January and arrived safely the following day. During these two months, the seed of God's Word was sown in a number of places; one hopes it was not in vain.

As the plane reversed slowly from its place at Auckland Airport on my final departure, the sun was rising in all its golden glory over the terminal buildings. It reminded one of the blessedness of the time when the infinitely greater glory of the Sun of Righteousness will rise over New Zealand to bring the multitudes to acknowledge Him as the One whom the Father gave to be the Saviour of the world. May the Lord hasten that time, not only in New Zealand, but also in Australia and throughout the world!

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO USA AND CANADA**

**Rev. J. MacLeod**

AS THE CANADIAN Lord's Day Observance Association was holding its Annual Meeting on 20th March and had requested through our Chesley Church office-bearers, who are members of it, that a minister from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland address the meeting, the Dominions and Overseas Committee requested me to attend to this duty, and, while in Canada, administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Chesley. It was also regarded as expedient that I visit the group in Texas which had shown interest in the Church.

Accordingly, after a ten-hour flight via Toronto, I arrived at Houston International Airport around 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 4th March. There I was met by Mr Ernie Smith (who had, with two of his sons, attended the Stornoway Communion season in February), his brothers, Lyle and Warren, and four of his sons, Jett, Joseph, Carl and Mark. From the Airport we journeyed to Santa Fe, about 70 miles south of Houston. Accommodation was provided for me in the hospitable home of Mr and Mrs Lyle Smith and on arrival there I was to meet the other members of the Smith families. At family worship that evening there were nineteen souls present and it was conducted by the head of the home in the scriptural, orderly manner that has for so long been customary in Free Presbyterian homes. The spiritual atmosphere was warm and I was much impressed by what I saw and heard.

On Thursday evening I preached in Santa Fe in a room within the Citizen's State Bank Building which had been hired for the purpose. There were just over twenty souls present. The following evening it had been arranged for me to preach at Brookshire, eighty miles away and to the north west of Houston. Around thirty-five souls attended, including some who had never before attended a Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland service. The venue was the one used every Sabbath when the families concerned regularly come together to worship God according to the manner laid down by Himself. After the service Mr. and Mrs. James Moline took me to their home and there I was to be hospitably entertained over the remaining period of my visit. On the Sabbath I preached twice at Brookshire with again about thirty-five souls present. On the Monday I visited two of the regular worshippers, Carolyn Richards and her daughter Tamara, at their home in Belleville.

Like the Rev. K. M. Watkins, who visited Texas towards the end of last year, I found it quite remarkable that there should be found in this place an isolated group of people, almost of one mind with us as far as doctrine and practice are concerned and that they should have come to this before they were even aware of our existence! They are now fully of one mind with us. Prior to my arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Schuit had spent four weeks in Texas staying with each family in turn and this doubtless further helped in introducing them to our ways. One cannot but feel that if we had a minister permanently settled in Texas the number meeting under our auspices would significantly increase. Houston is the third largest city in the USA and so the harvest is plenteous! At the moment those who gather are, on the ground, divided into two groups, with the Smiths having to travel the farthest to the Brookshire place of worship. If it were possible, it would be better if a suitable place could be found somewhere in between Santa Fe and Brookshire.

On Tuesday, 10th March, Mr. and Mrs. Moline with their young son, Jonathan, took me to the Houston Airport to board the Air Canada flight to Toronto. Also in the vehicle were Carolyn Richards and her daughter, who were also Toronto-bound with a view to being present in Chesley over the days of the Communion season. Mr. Gerrit Schuit was at the Toronto Airport to greet us. It was an extremely cold day in Ontario and before we arrived in Chesley some snow showers were encountered. Over the duration of my visit to Chesley I was under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Schuit, who showed me much kindness. While still in Texas and en route to the Houston Airport I had a phone call from Mr Ernie Smith to confirm that he and his two brothers, Lyle and Warren, and two of his sons, Carl and Mark, would also be travelling to Chesley — by car — to attend the Communion season. They duly arrived in Chesley on Saturday forenoon after having been delayed by a heavy snowfall. The usual services were held from Thursday to Monday and I have to acknowledge the Lord's kindness in enabling me to perform all the duties entailed. I have to say that He made the yoke easy and the burden light. On Friday evening, Carolyn Richards came before the Session and, after examination, was received as a member in full communion. At the conclusion

of the Saturday service Ernie and Lyle Smith were likewise received. There are, therefore, now three communicant members resident in Texas and we hope the day is not far distant when the Lord's Supper will be dispensed there.

The following Friday, in the company of Mr. Gerrit Schuit and Mr. Rick Bouman, I attended the forementioned annual meeting of the Canadian Lord's Day Association. The venue was the Free Reformed Church at Hamilton, about three hours' drive from Chesley. The evening turned out to be very wintry with snow and freezing rain, in some places, and the attendance was consequently not as high as expected. However, a goodly number still gathered and I based my address on the Christian's obligation to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. After the meeting we returned to Chesley. Road conditions were hazardous one half of the way but we arrived safely at our destination in the early hours of Saturday morning. The following Sabbath I kept the usual services in Chesley and also the prayer meeting on Monday evening prior to my departure for home the following day.

The Chesley congregation has in recent years come through difficult and trying times but it still remains there as the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland's only outpost in Ontario. As a result of the economic climate in the Chesley area most of the young people have to move South in order to obtain employment and that is a great loss as far as the Church is concerned and this, I believe, is the principal reason for the non-growth of the congregation. It is a pity that we have not a place of worship towards Hamilton or Toronto which they would be able to attend. We hope and pray that the Most High will give them a pastor after His own heart. There is a crying need for a minister of our Church to be settled in North America where the harvest truly is plenteous and where not a few are now coming to appreciate what we stand for as a Church. Meantime, it is most desirable that deputies visit Ontario and Texas as frequently as possible.

In all my travels I was preserved by the One in whose hands our times wholly are and I have reason to acknowledge His kindness and forbearance towards me. In conclusion, to all those friends in Texas and Ontario, who so kindly received me into their houses, I would express my heartfelt gratitude. I felt it was good for me to be with them.

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO USA AND CANADA**

**Rev. K. M. Watkins**

IT WAS LATE in the evening of Wednesday, 29th October, 1997, when my wife and I arrived at Toronto Airport, to be met by Mr. Gerrit Schuit, with whom we drove the familiar journey to Chesley. Travelling through just a tiny part of the vastness that is the land of Canada, it is remarkable that the Lord should have so favoured the small rural town of Chesley with Gospel

ordinances in their scriptural purity, as they are maintained still in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The sovereignty of divine grace lies behind it all.

Early the next afternoon, we set out for the first of five visits to an even smaller place on the Canadian map, called Mount Elgin, two and a half hours' drive south of Chesley. We went there to hold a service of divine worship after the form of our Church with a group of Dutch extraction, numbering more than thirty souls. Our own first contact was four years ago, when we met Mr. and Mrs. Jan de Wit in Gerrit Schuit's home. But last April, Rev. Neil Ross was the first of our ministers to visit Mount Elgin and preach to them. For a number of years they have been meeting on Sabbaths and weekdays, holding divine service and reading quality sermons in the Dutch language. Often these are translations of the great Scottish divines like Thomas Boston and Ralph Erskine. For a long time they have been looking for a Reformed denomination that believes and preaches the same Gospel that they find in those old sermons. Before the preaching service that first Thursday evening, Mr. Gerrit Schuit and I had a most encouraging meeting with eight of the men, to discuss the procedure by which a closer relationship between them and our Church might be developed.

The service that first evening was attended by about twenty-five people. Over the next four weeks, four more services were held, with attendances nearer to forty-five. We also had the opportunity to meet a number of the families in their own homes. We would like to record our heartfelt thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality that we enjoyed among our Mount Elgin friends. We were glad that a number from the Chesley congregation, as well as others, made the journey to Mount Elgin to attend the services. It was an encouragement to us to find a people that value the same Gospel of free and sovereign grace as ourselves.

The Chesley services began on Friday, 31st October, with the prayer meeting. How good it was to be back among these dear friends, young and old and middle-aged, around the ordinances of God's house. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). Four more prayer meetings were held in Chesley during November. The services of public worship on three Sabbaths were also conducted. On the second of these Sabbaths the Lord's death was remembered in the way He appointed Himself, and the usual services of the Communion season were held. Several Mount Elgin people attended some services. We look to the Lord to bless His Word and sacrament among the Chesley people. He alone can give the increase to our planting and watering. In a day when many throughout Christendom are sliding back from holding all the counsel of God, may the testimony of the Chesley congregation to the whole truth as it is in Jesus Christ be blessed indeed. Again we enjoyed the warmth of Chesley hospitality, arriving to a well-stocked and very comfortable manse, and visiting many a welcoming home. Their evident need is for a pastor. Meanwhile, we commend them to the care of the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, the Lord Jesus Christ.

On Thursday, 13th November, we flew south to Houston, Texas, in the United States of America. We were met by Mr. and Mrs. James Moline, in whose home we were very kindly entertained for the duration of our visit. For over a year, we had been in contact with them, by electronic mail and telephone. They began to meet with a few other interested souls each Lord's Day for worship, using taped sermons of our ministers. More and more they had come to value the distinctives of our witness, and they applied to the Dominions and Overseas Committee to send a deputy to them. Three services of public worship were held, again according to standard Free Presbyterian practice, one on a Friday evening and two on the Sabbath, in a town called Brookshire, west of the city of Houston. We were encouraged that between thirty-five and forty attended on each occasion. This included a group of eighteen souls who for a number of years had been meeting for worship on their own, reading sermons of John Owen and other worthies, and seeking to follow the old paths and the good way in the midst of a worldly and depraved generation. They had travelled more than eighty miles to attend the worship services. Since our visit, a combined group of between twenty-five and thirty have been meeting every Lord's Day, again travelling substantial distances, conducting worship in conformity with our own way, and using Free Presbyterian taped sermons. Such is the interest among them in the stand of our Church that during December five of the men came to London for a brief visit. They can hardly believe that at the end of the twentieth century there really is a denomination holding fast to the things that are most surely believed among us.

During our denomination's history, Free Presbyterian services have been held at various places in the USA, but a congregation with regular ordinances has never been established. It is still early days in Texas, and "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). Nevertheless, we cannot help but be much encouraged with these recent developments. With very little ecclesiastical help, these people have come to positions in many areas so like our own. But then, the Lord has promised His Church: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:13). The Macedonian cry sounds out: "Come over . . . and help us" (Acts 16:9).

We look to the Head of the Church to sustain and prosper His cause in Chesley, and also to open the doors of Gospel opportunity in Mount Elgin and in Texas in such a way that no man could shut them.

In Toronto we visited a retired minister, Rev. Fesenko. This gentleman, who was born in 1900, had translated the Westminster Confession of Faith into the Ukrainian language, the basis of which our Church is using in Eastern Europe, in particular in Odessa. Rev. Fesenko had studied under Professor J. Gresham Machen at Princeton in the 1920s. It was whilst at Princeton that he translated the Confession, realising — as he told us — that it was an unsurpassed summary of the Reformed Faith.



## EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

IN THE JULY ISSUE of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* we gave notice of the need to purchase another vehicle for the work of transporting Bibles and aid to Eastern Europe. In the good providence of God a vehicle was obtained at an auction sale. Mr. Alasdair MacRae and Edward Ross gave of their time and expertise to assist in this purchase. We had hoped to obtain an integral van, but this was not possible, and purchased instead a 7½ ton box van. It appears to be in very good shape.

We have not had the opportunity as yet to use it for a journey to Eastern Europe. It is intended, God willing, to visit Romania in the summer, taking the usual literature and aid. It is hoped that Mr. Alasdair MacRae and George MacAskill will make the journey on this occasion.

Preparation of the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechism in the Ukrainian language is now complete. We intend to print 10,000 of these. We are indebted to Rev. M. Fesenko, Toronto, for the translation and to Mrs. N. Hopkins for preparing the manuscript for the printers. These three documents will be in one volume and will be the second impression. The first was done by Rev. M. Fesenko and there was a steady demand for these from the Ukraine. Stocks of the first impression ran out some time ago, and we hope in God's good providence to continue supplying the demand in the Ukraine for these Bible-based documents.

In Odessa, Ukraine, we have printed in the Russian language, 5,000 *Westminster Confessions of Faith* and 5,000 *Shorter Catechisms* and 10,000 *Children's Catechisms* (*Mother's Catechism* by Rev. John Willison). Our contact in Odessa, Mr. Igor Zadoroshney, advertises this literature in the local press. Requests flow in which are dealt with by himself.

To date we have printed 6,000 *Westminster Confessions of Faith*; 10,000 *Shorter Catechisms*; 30,000 *Children's Catechisms*; 25,000 leaflets exposing the errors of Mormonism and 15,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses; 40,000 tracts of *The Unkown God*; 10,000 of *One Mediator Between God and Man*; and 10,000 of *Law and Gospel*. All these items were printed in Russian, as well as 2,000 *Children's Catechisms* in English.

Our friends in Odessa continue to show a genuine interest in the Word of God as summarised in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Since they first came in contact with these teachings about two years ago they have not departed from them, but rather have come to a greater understanding and appreciation of them. They are opposed to Arminian errors and because of this receive considerable opposition from some quarters. Rev. Neil M. Ross, intends, God willing, to visit them in the last week of April and the first week of May to preach and give lectures. We are grateful for his time given to this group. This group is anxious to be established as a Church and that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper would be given to them. They

are also anxious to obtain a permanent place of worship. Mr. Igor Zadoroshney has tried several times to register the group as the Free Presbyterian Church of Ukraine. While the doors are not closed to registration, it is an uphill climb to obtain this status. There are a number of advantages in being registered; one is that registered Churches are in a position to invite visitors from abroad and receive aid.

Miss Norma Morrison in the Church Office, now handles all the posting of Bibles and literature to Eastern Europe. We are more than grateful for her prompt and efficient work.

Throughout Eastern Europe there is still a huge demand for the supply of Bibles. In some areas Bibles are readily available, but many people do not have the means to purchase these. It is our intention to continue supplying Bibles as our funds permit.

Visits to Eastern Europe by myself and others are regularly reported in the pages of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. We are much indebted to Mr. Alasdair MacRae and Mr. Calum MacAskill, who recently took a load of humanitarian aid, calendars and literature, to an orphanage in Moldova. They also delivered goods to a Pastor in Romania. Mr. MacRae's constant assistance in the work of Eastern Europe is very much appreciated, as is that of Mr. Edward Ross, who sees to the maintenance of our vehicle, at no cost to the Eastern Europe Fund.

We are also indebted to the Trinitarian Bible Society for grants of Bibles from time to time, as well as Scripture calendars in Russian, Hungarian and Romanian. These beautiful calendars find a place in schools, orphanages, homes of rich and poor, government offices and various other places. We believe that nothing less than the Word in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit will effect the conversion of sinners. This we constantly labour and pray for as Bibles and literature based on the Word of God are distributed. It is a great consolation to be assured from the Scriptures that God's Word will not return unto Him void. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

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

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

THE COMMITTEE are pleased to report that, since last Synod, three candidates have been received as students in training for the ministry of the Church. These were: Mr. Christopher Tuck, B.A., of Brisbane, Australia, received by the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery on 26th January 1998; Mr. David Campbell, Struan, Skye, received by the Presbytery of Skye, on 10th February 1998; and Dr. Douglas Somerset, Aberdeen, received by the

Northern Presbytery on 24th February 1998. Mr. Tuck and Dr. Somerset are already graduates and Mr. Campbell is in the final year of his Honours Course at Glasgow University and expects to graduate in the summer of this year (D.V.). On successful completion of the Entrance to Divinity Examinations in August 1998, it is expected that Mr. Tuck and Mr. Campbell will begin their Theological Studies with Rev. J. MacLeod, Stornoway, the Church's tutor in New Testament Greek and allied subjects. Dr. Somerset, because of contractual commitments to the University of Aberdeen, will not be able to sit the Entrance Examinations until May 1999 (D.V.). Mr. Manford Mloyi has reached "O" level standard in Zimbabwe and is continuing his studies under the supervision of his Presbytery.

We would seek to express gratitude to the Most High who has heard the prayers of His own who cried to Him for so long to send out labourers into His harvest. We would urge such to "continue in prayer", for the abiding and obvious need of this generation is of true messengers of the Gospel. May we be enabled to look to the Lord for the supply of our need and for the building up of His own Cause.

#### **Theological Conference**

The Theological Conference will be held in Glasgow on Tuesday, 1st December and Wednesday, 2nd December, D.V. The following papers will be read:

1. *Princeton Theology — the Scottish Connection* ..... Rev. J. MacLeod
2. *Stevenson on the Offices of Christ*..... Rev. J. R. Tallach
3. *A Reformed Exposition of the Book of Revelation* . Rev. D. M. Boyd
4. *The Place of the Sacraments in Worship*..... Rev. K. M. Watkins
5. *The Puritans on Prayer* ..... Rev. R. MacLeod

The last-named paper will be read in public on the Wednesday evening, D.V.

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

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

THE COMMITTEE continues to engage in activities suited to the spiritual wellbeing of the young. We could not do this without the help of others, principally the ladies, who over and above their ordinary work, prepare and correct the Catechism and Scripture Exercises. We take this opportunity of expressing our deep indebtedness to each of them.

There has been a considerable increase in the numbers of young people doing the exercises, especially in the senior section, including some from other

Churches. The standard of work is generally very high. Some parents express their appreciation for the provision of the Scripture and Catechism Exercises. Those who complete the exercises either receive a Prize, Award with Merit or Award.

*The Peep of Day* is now in print, a quantity of the books being set aside for the Mission. Last year 364 copies were sold, as well as 100 copies of *Gospel Gleanings*, 202 copies of *The Perfect Mirror*, 144 copies of *The Life of John Boyana Radasi*, and 105 copies of *The Richest Jewels*. *The Life of John Boyana Radasi* is well down in stock.

Rev. K. D. MacLeod has done some necessary editing on the book *Line Upon Line*, by the same author as *The Peep of Day*, Mrs. F. L. Mortimer. This will make a valuable contribution to religious literature for our young people. We highly recommend these books to parents who are anxious to obtain sound material for their children, or to be given to young friends.

The venue for this year's Youth Conference is Sutton Hall of Residence, Scottish Agricultural College, Craibstone Estate, Bucksburn, Aberdeen. It is a considerable number of years since we last had a Conference in Aberdeen. A few conference centres in Aberdeen were looked at and the Scottish Agricultural College was not only the most reasonably priced, but the one with the most pleasant surroundings. The Conference is from Tuesday, 7th April, 2 p.m., to Thursday, 9th April, 2 p.m. The Convener is to be the Chairman on this occasion.

The papers and speakers are:

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>1. Conversion — What is It? Turning from Sin to God.....</b>                | Rev. G. G. Hutton  |
| <b>2. The Sanctity of Life — Where Lies its Value? .....</b>                   | Rev. J. R. Tallach |
| <b>3. Our English Bible — Translations Past and Present.....</b>               | Rev. K. Watkins    |
| <b>4. Aspects of Religious Life Around Aberdeen — A Historical Tour .....</b>  | Dr. D. Somerset    |
| <b>5. The Relevance of the Reformation Today — Doctrine and Practice .....</b> | Rev. J. MacLeod    |
| <b>6. Daniel and His Times — Lessons from the Life of Daniel .....</b>         | Rev. K. Watkins    |

Once again we take this opportunity of thanking last year's Conference speakers, Revs. A. McPherson, D. J. MacDonald, D. M. Boyd, K. D. MacLeod and S. Horne, for conducting the historical tour. We are grateful when ministers make time in a very busy ministry to prepare Conference lectures for our young people.

We thank also all who in any way helped to facilitate the work of the Committee. The work of teaching the Scriptures to our children and young

people is a duty laid on us by the Most High. There are promised blessings, and the blessing which we especially wish is that our young friends would remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and be raised up to be faithful witnesses on the side of Christ.

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

**Convener: Alistair N. MacRae**

AT THE START of the year the Home was in the position of having four empty beds for a period of several months. However, despite this problem, the Home has prospered and we give thanks to the Lord for His care over us.

We record with sorrow that during the year four residents passed away: Mr. G. Ross on 6th April; Miss M. Graham on 13th June; Miss H. MacLennan on 15th July; and Mr. M. Nicolson on 20th August. We extend our deepest sympathy to all their relatives.

Miss D. MacCuish, Finance Officer, retired on 30th April. We thank her for her work during the seven years she was with us and wish her the Lord's richest blessing in her retirement. As a result of this retirement, a new post, Home Administrator, was created. The post was advertised in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and, after interview, Mrs. Catriona MacLean was appointed on 1st April and is settling in well.

The question of funding for prospective residents has not improved during the year and by all accounts is likely to deteriorate further. This is due to lack of Local Government funds.

All the inspections carried out by the various Authorities have been satisfactory.

The Committee is pleased to report, with thankful acknowledgement to the Most High, that the Home continues to operate without any financial burden on the Church.

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

The Home is presently full and we would express our grateful thanks to the Matron and all her staff for the efficient and kindly manner in which they carry out their duties.

Finally we commend the residents and staff to the prayers of the Lord's people.

**LEVERBURGH HOME OF REST  
COMMITTEE'S REPORT  
Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod**

FOR TEN YEARS NOW the Home has been fulfilling its function of giving care to older people who no longer feel able to look after themselves in their own homes. This it has done consistently. And those residents who are still able to benefit by it have the added benefits of being present at family worship and of hearing the services of public worship relayed to the Home from the adjacent Leverburgh Church. Ten years on from the beginning of the work of the Home, it seems a suitable time to acknowledge particularly the Lord's goodness in making this provision for what is now a large number of elderly people.

The Committee is thankful that the accounts for 1997 again show a surplus, which has increased from the previous year to over £17,000. This is the result of a continued increase in the income from fees and a much lower increase in costs. A factor in our favour at the moment is that, because the Home is relatively new, maintenance on the whole has been of a relatively minor nature. We cannot expect that this will always be so. The relatively healthy position of the Home financially can only continue if it is full for most of the year. At the time of writing there is one empty bed. It is a constant matter of concern that the number of residents within the Home will remain at a viable level.

Since our last report, progress has been made in the computerisation of the Home's finances, with the help of Mrs. Catriona MacLean, Inverness. We are very grateful to her for her assistance. It is expected that this work will be completed shortly on a second visit to the island. We would also acknowledge the continued help given by Mr. Iain Gillies, who has negotiated the level of fees with the Local Authority for a number of years.

Death has again been a frequent visitor to the Home, four residents having passed into eternity since the last report was written. Among them was Mrs. Margaret Macaskill, who was the first to move into the Home when it was originally opened. Miss Margaret Morrison, Mrs. Annie MacGowan and Mrs. Mary Ann Morrison also passed away. The Committee wish to express their sympathy to the families.

Year by year, the Committee has expressed its thanks to the Officer in charge and her staff. This year also, we would acknowledge the hard work and the consistent care they have shown to all who have gone to live in the Home. The unstinted service given by the staff 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**

HAVING REPORTED to the previous two Synods the Committee's intention to investigate and obtain a site on the Internet in order to expand the Church's witness, we have now to report that progress has been slower than expected. In order to safeguard our Church's principles, particularly regarding the observance of the Sabbath, it has been necessary to move cautiously. The Committee expects that a Web-site will be established and that some of our Church's literature will be available to a worldwide audience during the course of this year. Some other Synod Committees have expressed an interest in making use of the available facilities once we are organised.

The demand for tracts published by the Committee continues much as before. A Church in Singapore ordered a selection amounting to almost 3,000. This same Church, Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church, Pandan, Singapore, has now been granted permission to print our tracts for the use of its own people, after any changes in format meet with our Committee's approval.

Once again we commend the work of the Committee to the prayers of the Lord's people.

## **THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE REPORT**

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

THE MAGAZINE is to many of its readers the public face of the Free Presbyterian Church and is the only contact they have with our witness as a branch of the Church of Christ. It is therefore of vital importance that the magazine accurately reflects our Reformed doctrine, worship and practice, and that it faithfully shows what is the mind of our Church with regard to various current issues. Unlike some other denominational magazines, the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* is intended to express the views of the Church, not just those of the Editor and contributors.

This clear testimony is as necessary, of course, for readers within the Church as for readers who do not belong to it. While we seek to reach out through the pages of the magazine to those outwith our bounds who are seeking the truth, we need to remind readers within the Church of the nature and value of our own precious Reformed heritage.

It is encouraging that from time to time our comments on moral issues are picked up by the press and reported, usually quite fairly. This in turn has resulted in mail to the Editor, and in some instances to the taking up of a subscription for the magazine. For example, the editorial on the funeral of the late Princess Diana resulted in wide publicity for the magazine and the Church, and it is noteworthy that of the numerous letters about the editorial sent to the

Editor, all were commendatory apart from two — and all of them, except one, came from outwith the Church. The fact that the number of subscribers has increased significantly is also encouraging.

We express our gratitude to contributors who, since the last meeting of Synod, have written articles on Sabbath observance, psalmody, the Referendum on Scottish devolution, a history of a congregation, baptism, the Declaratory Act, Evolution, the history of the Church of Rome, the decline in churchgoing, and an exegetical study. We are grateful to those who have written book reviews or review articles, obituaries, biographical sketches, mission news, notes and comments and pieces for the regular Protestant View page. We thank also those other friends of the magazine who have suggested or sent pieces from writings of the past.

It would be most useful for the Editor of the magazine and his successors if the Church were to procure a full set of bound volumes of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. The set would be retained for the use of successive editors who would add to it year by year.

Rev. John MacLeod is thanked for continuing to edit the magazine's quarterly *Gaelic Supplement*, which, we are reliably informed, is much appreciated by its readership.

We live in an age when people, even in the visible Church, "will not endure sound doctrine", and when the errors of Romanism are gaining ground by the month. There is, therefore, all the more need for the truth to be set forth boldly and clearly. Our hope is that by divine aid the magazine will serve that purpose. May the Lord bless its publication, so that souls may obtain what is good, and the name of God be glorified.

"The whole earth let His glory fill.  
Amen, so let it be."  
(Psalm 72:19)

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

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

THERE IS REASON to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in having been able to produce the magazine over the twelve months of another year. I have tried to produce a magazine which speaks particularly to the needs of today's young people.

The guidance which today's young people need is to be found in those Scriptures which God has revealed as a light to the path of young and old in every generation. This is true, although the Scriptures are so much derided today as completely out of date and irrelevant to the needs especially of young



people in this scientific age. Accordingly, the continuing relevance and authority of the Scriptures as inspired by the Holy Spirit is one point which must be emphasised over and over again in the magazine. The attempt is also made, in the light of the Scriptures, to direct our young people towards Him who has said, "I am the door", and to point out the narrow way in which He has directed us to walk if everlasting life is to be ours when we pass out of this world.

I would like to thank those who have contributed articles for the magazine over the past year, especially the regular contributors. It is also appreciated when people point one to other useful material which may prove suitable for the pages of the magazine. My thanks again to Dr. Mitchell for his continued willing help in checking the magazine in the final stages of editing.

It is a matter of thankfulness to be able to note an increase in sales of the magazine between 1996 and 1997. But we ought to be very conscious that if the magazine is to have any effect spiritually, it must be accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is something we ought to pray for earnestly and also that it would please the Lord to bless the other efforts made by us as a Church to further the interests of His kingdom.

## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

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

OUR MAIN PUBLICATION, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, continued to sell well last year. Stocks ran out by the end of the year and we have had to proceed with another reprint in hardback — our thirteenth reprint since we began reprinting it nearly forty years ago. *The Apostolic Church* was also reprinted last year, and it continues to sell well.

The Committee has been publishing the text of *The Westminster Confession of Faith* as a separate booklet for a number of years and it continues to sell steadily. It was decided to print *The Larger Catechism* in the same format, giving the references to the Scripture proofs, but not quoting the actual verses. We hope that many will derive benefit from this valuable work which clearly does not get the attention it deserves. At the time of writing we are almost ready to go to press.

A major development during 1997 was the decision to take advantage of recent technology to reprint some of the valuable works of the past in very short print runs. These are books which might not be expected to sell in great numbers. The first two titles were *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Neil Cameron* and *Sermons of Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands*, both of which were edited by Rev. Donald Beaton. It was soon necessary to arrange a second printing of the latter title to satisfy an order from Singapore. These first

two titles are to be followed by short print runs of *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald Macfarlane* and *Ministers and Men of the Far North* by Alexander Auld.

The work of the publishing arm of the Church is commended to the prayerful support of our people. Our desire is that our publications would be blessed so that the Kingdom of Christ would be strengthened and extended. May our endeavours to spread the knowledge of the truth through literature contribute, under His hand, to the eventual fulfilling of the divine promise, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea".

## **BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

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

THE COMMITTEE are pleased to be able to report on a reasonably successful year, though actual sales were slightly down on last year. We are heartened by the fact that sales of Free Presbyterian Publications and Welfare of Youth Publications continue to do well and a special "sale" of these to retail outlets at the end of 1997 generated a satisfactory response. As in the past the *Westminster Confession of Faith* continues to sell well, reaching a total number of 2,800 copies during the year. There were two short runs of books published last year, *Sermons of Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands* and *Memoirs and Remains of Rev. Neil Cameron*, and these two titles sold very well.

The Welfare of Youth Committee and the Foreign Mission Committee jointly published a new edition of the children's book, *The Peep of Day*. About 600 copies of this book have already been sold. During 1997 a new booklet was issued detailing all the stock which the Bookroom carries. This booklet is in a handy A5 format and appears to have been well received by our customers. It is updated regularly to include new publications and price changes. The need for this booklet emphasises the fact that a great deal of our sales are carried out by post. It is encouraging to the Committee that though our range of books is necessarily limited on purely theological grounds, that there continues to be a demand for our stock from near and far. We would ask our praying people to plead for a blessing on our work which is so small when compared to the volume of religious literature which abounds.

The Committee wish to express publicly our gratitude to Miss Marion Morrison, the Bookroom Manager. As well as her undoubted skill and business acumen, she continues to bring to her work a commendable dedication and a very pleasant manner. Much of the success of the Bookroom is due to her efforts.

Once again we acknowledge the generosity of our people who contributed £6,448 to the Annual Bookroom Fund Collection. We would also like to thank others outwith the Church who made donations to the Bookroom throughout the year. Our thanks are also due to the volunteers from the Glasgow congregation who give of their time so readily, especially in keeping the Bookroom open on Saturdays.

The Committee regard the Bookroom as an important part of our work and witness as we continue as a Church to endeavour to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints and we commend it to the prayers and support of our people.