

**FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**REPORTS OF  
STANDING  
COMMITTEES  
OF SYNOD**

*Submitted to Synod in May 2003*

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**REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND  
MORALS COMMITTEE  
Convener: Rev. G. G. Hutton**

**RELIGION**

***Romanism and Paedophilia***

The Roman Catholic Church is reeling worldwide as allegations concerning sexual abuse keep coming into the public domain. The greatest focus is on America where Cardinal Bernard Law in 1984, just before being ordained Cardinal of Boston, this making him the most powerful Roman Catholic in America, said, "After Boston, there's only heaven". Just weeks after Law's ordination John Geoghan, a priest, was accused of sexual misdemeanours. After counselling, Geoghan was then transferred to another parish where he re-offended, then to another parish. He was eventually convicted for molesting a total of 130 boys. Eighty-six victims sued the archdiocese, and Law was eager to settle, but when in March 2002 another 150 people filed similar suits, his financial committee advised him to withdraw agreement to settle with the others. When forced to testify in a civil action his lack of sympathy for the victims compared badly with the indulgence and forgiveness he offered to criminal priests. The arrest of Paul Shanley, one of the Cardinal's associates, for the rape of ten boys, however, proved the final straw, for it was revealed that despite Shanley's public pronouncements in favour of paedophilia, the Cardinal approved of his transfer to a New York student hostel in 1995.

The *Evangelical Times* of June 2002 states, "The suits for damages have begun to affect the Roman Catholic Church in America where it really hurts – in its wallet. It is estimated that since 1985 it has paid out in excess of \$1 million in financial settlements. . . . What the Vatican tried to dismiss as 'the American problem' is likely to cost it dear." The Boston archdiocese has let it be known that it is prepared to declare bankruptcy rather than agree to the \$1 million damages claimed by victims of sexual abuse. It seems that in such circumstances the Vatican claims to be a sovereign State, and therefore cannot be sued despite the church money which flows into her. The truth, of course, is that the Vatican is really a political entity, which uses religion, with the consequent destruction of countless souls, to further a political agenda, in which the whole world will be ruled by the Papacy, and her enemies destroyed. Many Roman Catholics have stopped contributing to their church, figures showing a drop of \$800,000 for one month. Fifty-eight priests from Law's diocese asked him to resign. The backlash against the Roman Church reached new heights in the acquittal by the court of a man charged with shooting a priest, and wounding him. He had been abused by the priest as a boy. He was cleared of attempted murder, and the jury asked for leniency.

Among cases made public in a dossier was a priest who destroyed young girls training to be nuns and by making them his "brides". Law merely sent him

to another parish. Another traded cocaine for sex with choirboys, and when found out he too was transferred. Many victims were in the fearful situation of having their abuser as their confessor. There was a total unwillingness to laicise these men or to take away their church privileges. No one underestimates the seriousness of this scandal, in particular, the revelations of the Church's role in covering up for priests who raped and molested children. "It is undoubtedly the greatest crisis in the modern Catholic Church since Henry VIII split from Rome," says Father Richard O'Brien of the Catholic University of Notre Dame in Indiana. There is a call for an end to celibacy, and this is also prompted by the huge decline in the number of priests. Since 1970 the men studying to be priests in the USA has fallen from 18,000 to 3,500 at present.

"Law's snivelling letter to the diocese, addressing the scandal, was neither one of explanation, nor one of apology. While the bodies and minds of hundreds of children were being sacrificed, through his inaction, he was moving his wily wolves between one hen coop and the next," says Nicholas Wapshott in the *Times* of 7th December 2002. A convocation of Roman Catholic clergy was called in Houston to address the epidemic of paedophilia in their midst, and the startling conclusion they came to was to notify the authorities only for the second offence, the first to go unreported. Zero tolerance, which had been widely mooted, was forgotten, the priests thinking they could now draw a line under it all. What trust can people have in such men? The Vatican went further than the convocation, rejecting its conclusion as it inadequately preserved the rights of the accused priests. The USA Roman Catholic Church leaders in a later meeting in Philadelphia, representing 25,000 Roman Catholic priests, said they would not seek to have paedophile priests unfrocked, but rather supervised.

Since the mid 1970s about 100 American priests have been convicted out of about 500 or so accused. In his book, *Religious Life Without Integrity: The Sexual Abuse Crisis Within the Catholic Church*, Dr. Barry Coldrey, an Australian Christian Brother, claims that at least ten per cent of priests in Australia have sexually abused children, with the figure rising to 15 per cent in America. "As many as two-thirds of all US bishops have allowed priests accused of molesting minors to continue working," says the *Dallas Morning News* of 13th June. Four American bishops have lost their positions. At a conference of 300 Roman Catholic bishops in Dallas in June it did not appear that the bishops intended to take any substantial responsibility for the scandal. This decision may have been influenced by the fact that five out of eight bishops on the Conference's Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse have been tainted by the scandal. They seek to bury the most squalid scandal in the history of their church. It stretches from Ireland to Australia, but is more pervasive in the USA. Only 97 of the 178 dioceses agreed to give information to groups such as SNAP (the Survivors' Network of those Abused by Priests).

Cardinal Law's resignation as archbishop has now been accepted by the Pope, but he remains a cardinal with voting rights in the next conclave. It is

widely thought that he will keep a low profile in a monastery for a few years, and then be given a senior post in the Vatican. The Pope holds him in high esteem and he helped to formulate the new Roman Catholic Catechism. It is a rare occurrence, but in 1995 Cardinal Hermann Groer, the Archbishop of Vienna, had to go as he was accused of sexual abuse. The Vatican thinks that the scandal will eventually disappear from the headlines, as the paedophilia affair is merely secondary to more important things it faces, and after all in Renaissance times Alexander VI, the Borgia Pope, got away with murder, intrigue and incest without giving a moment's thought to public opinion. In January a study by St. Louis University, Missouri, based on a survey returned by 1,164 nuns, concludes that 34,000 Roman Catholic nuns out of a total of 85,000 may have been abused by priests or nuns. It is doubtful if this can ever be made public to the extent of other scandals mentioned, nuns risking a lot in speaking of such matters, as their church is their home, their family, their everything.

Many noted that the Pope took an inordinate time in acting, that his statements stopped short of using the word paedophilia, and that they were considered not to be strong enough.

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

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, has been struggling to explain why he gave the paedophile priest Michael Hill the job as a chaplain at Gatwick Airport, despite warnings from parents that he was a danger to children. The Police are investigating. Hill is currently serving his second five-year sentence for abusing nine boys. Another priest, Father Timothy Garratt, convicted of indecency previously, was also given a return to pastoral duties by the Cardinal, and this again raises questions. The Cardinal also faces accusations that he covered up the activities of paedophile priests during his 22-year tenure as Bishop of Arundel and Brighton. Meanwhile there is talk of suing the church, and Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor sent a letter to be read in all 214 churches in the diocese of Westminster speaking of a mistaken decision. He neglected to ask prayers for the victims, and Margaret Kennedy, founder of "Minister and Sexual Abuse Survivors", said that his letter was further proof that the Roman Catholic Church considered themselves, rather than those abused, to be the victims. She states that he castigates the media rather than the perpetrators, and that his letter is full of self pity. The Cardinal quoted from his own version of the Bible: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me."

On 20th November of last year it was revealed through the media that the Roman Catholics were paying hush money to people abused by priests. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor denied this, but the *Times* newspaper on 22nd November, stated that it had obtained a copy of the agreement that victims had to sign before they were compensated, and a leading lawyer called it "a gagging clause". Some of these people refused to be quiet. The Cardinal

went on the TV to be interviewed, and excused himself on the grounds of being “naive” and “ignorant” regarding paedophile behaviour in the 1980s – which is incredible. There is no body of people in the world who know more about sexual filth than the RC priests, as they probe pruriently into the lives of their people through the confessional. According to H. W. Crittenden in *Behind the Black Curtain*: “A major part of moral theology, in the Roman Catholic misconception of the meaning of both words, is devoted to sexuality; it covers all the normal relationships between male and female humans which are ‘sinful’ in respect to adulteries, fornications, and even as between husband and wife. It extends over the entire range of sexual perversions in homosexual relationships in disgusting details. Bestialities, such as few normal minds could even conceive of, are dealt with in the form of page after page of questions which the unwed bachelor ‘father’ has to memorise, so that he can pursue his enquiries further still into the deepest sewers and cesspits of the human mind.” If Crittenden is speaking the truth, and if those who warned the Cardinal are telling the truth, then Cardinal Murphy-O’Conner cannot possibly be naive nor ignorant regarding these moral improprieties. The teaching given to priests, added to what takes place in the confessional, plus again the fact that the priests are unmarried, must contribute, not only to the terrible scandal in the RC Church, but also to the vile state, morally, to which our nation has come. Cynically Cardinal Murphy-O’Conner refuses to resign, and continues to lecture the rest of us about morality and humility.

*The Times* newspaper, on 20th January 2003, reported that the convicted serial paedophile Michael Hill, who was first imprisoned in 1997, has not yet been unfrocked by the RC Church. At the beginning of year 2003 no moves had yet been made to unfrock Joseph Jordan, a priest in Cardiff who was jailed for sexual abuse in 2000.

Father Christopher Maxwell-Stewart is another against whom allegations have been made, and who has now disappeared into hiding. At one time he was sent to the States for treatment for paedophilia. His superior? Murphy-O’Conner. The Roman Catholic authorities in Birmingham, Arundel and Brighton, Cardiff, Salford and Northampton, are investigating cases of sexual abuse in their midst. The former Archbishop of Birmingham is to be investigated, over allegations that he protected paedophiles in the West Midlands. A former resident of Father Hudson’s Children’s Homes claimed that Monsignor Maurice Couve de Murville failed to report allegations of child sex abuse which took place over twenty years. Suspicions of a paedophile ring at the home have surfaced, and two priests were jailed for seven years. Maurice Couve de Murville has resigned. *The Scotsman*, of 17th February 2003, tells of Michael McConville, a former Roman Catholic priest, who was found guilty of abusing a position of responsibility at the St. Mary’s Home in Gravesend through sex with children, and also David Murphy convicted of indecent assaults in the same home. The RC Archbishop of Wales too, has resigned, following child abuse scandals in his area.

The problem is world-wide. The Pope has already accepted the resignation of Ireland's Bishop of Ferns after allegations that he protected a paedophile priest. Bishop Brendan Comiskey had kept quiet until exposed by a BBC documentary. The priest, Sean Fortune, committed suicide before his trial on 29 charges came up. Dublin too has its troubles. Father Brendan Smyth was known to have terrorised Roman Catholic children for thirty years, and was imprisoned, but now allegations of cover-ups of abuse are appearing. Cardinal Desmond Connell is under severe pressure to answer questions about concealment of sex-abuse cases, and was forced to make a courtroom apology to an altar boy molested by a priest. The Cardinal is the most senior Roman Catholic in Ireland. A huge sum was given to the altar boy in damages. A Roman Catholic Canon law expert, Tom Doyle, when interviewed for an Irish television programme, dubbed Dublin one of the worst cities in the world for covering up clerical child abuse. He said that the 450 separate civil cases pending put Dublin at the top of the heap compared to other places and countries. Recently 150 people staged a demonstration against sex abuse as Cardinal Desmond Connell celebrated Mass.

In Sydney, Australia, the Roman Catholic Archbishop has stepped down temporarily while he is investigated for the abuse of a boy years ago. He has given money to prevent a priest being sued for abuse. The appalling treatment of young people in church-run orphanages in Australia is well documented, and in June 2002 Archbishop George Pell said that up to 90 priests and religious brothers had been convicted of sexual abuse in the past six years, and the Church has paid out about one million pounds in compensation to sexual abuse victims in the state of Victoria alone since 1996.

Fears have been raised of widespread paedophilia in Germany's priesthood as there are 300 cases in the Essen bishopric. The Bishop of Mainz thinks the situation is as serious as in the USA. This virus has spread throughout the whole RC Church. It will do great damage to them just as the charge of gross immorality did during the Reformation in Europe, but the problem is that we are not really dealing with a church, but rather with an evil political entity which uses a religious disguise to hide its true nature, which disguise can change to absorb any religion which exists if it will further the political ends.

Entrants for the Roman Catholic priesthood have fallen dramatically since 1978, by 26 per cent in Britain and 65 per cent in Ireland. The total number of priests in England and Wales has now fallen to 5,600, its lowest level for 60 years. It used to be regarded as an honour to have a son who was a priest, but the number of applicants is now affected by the sex scandals throughout the English-speaking world. The average age of student priests has gone up to 33 and many are not "cradle Catholics". Some of the seminaries for student priests seem doomed to closure. Scotland has three colleges, at Glasgow, Rome and Salamanca in Spain, with only 35 seminarians training for the priesthood between them.

Church attendance too has gone down in the Roman community. The much-heralded decade of evangelisation in England and Wales was a failure. Those

attending Mass in England and Wales fell from 1.3 million in 1990 to one million in 2000. A spokesman for the RC Church in Scotland says that the number attending was stable, about one third out of 750,000.

By October 2002 the Pope had managed the canonisation of saint number 468, namely, Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, the founder of the organisation Opus Dei (God's work). Escriva, a monk, founded it in 1928. RC critics call it a secretive sect which binds its members through rules based on coercion and brainwashing. It seeks to infiltrate and control the financial and political world, especially in Latin America. Pope John Paul has now made more saints than all his predecessors put together, so it is evidently a matter of change in political policy. He also canonised Padre Pio, who was one of the 300-odd persons in the Roman Church said to have had stigmata, or the wounds of Christ, which were purported to bleed at times. He was said to lose a cupful of blood a day. Some Roman Catholics believed he was able to levitate, and to practise bilocation (being in two places at the same time). He was said to have ascended into the skies during the war to foil allied bombers. His shrine will draw more than Lourdes, it is said, and the sale of Pio souvenirs will develop wealth in the area.

Mother Teresa is on the fast track to sainthood as well, having the requisite qualifications according to the RC church. Another is an Aztec Indian who was said to have a vision of a dark skinned Mary in 1531, Mary leaving her own image on the man's garment. Four leading Church theologians openly question the man's existence, but what does that matter if millions visit the shrine? The saints are increased in number as are the chains tying the hearts of poor blinded Romanists. The utter paganism and idolatry of the RC system is seen in the thousands of pilgrims who recently went to see the image of Christ on a burnt piece of bread at the Renewal Retreat Centre at Bangalore, India. A mother charred it by mistake, the daughter would not eat it, then the mother recognised the image of Christ on the burnt bread. It was recognised as a miracle, and even Hindus and Moslems went to gaze on it. That is one way of promoting unity, but how did they recognise Christ's face when nobody knows what he looked like? Father Mychal Judge, the New York Fire Department chaplain, who was killed by falling debris during the World Trade Centre attacks, has those who push for his elevation to sainthood, as a boy who prayed to the dead priest was "miraculously" cured of speaking difficulties. The chaplain's grave has been made a shrine and his white fireman's helmet has been presented to the Pope. Other so-called healing miracles have since been reported. Father Mychal was a reformed alcoholic, and was said to swear like a trooper while alive.

The present Pope has done a great deal of service for the Roman Harlot Church, and it is expected, the *Times* of 14th October 2002 reveals that he will be granted the title John Paul the Great after his death. Cardinal Thomas Winning after his death is having an area in Glasgow named Cardinal Winning Square. Meanwhile, in contrast, before his death, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Conner, the head of the RC Church in England and Wales, despite

centuries of hostility to cremation in the RC Church, has become vice president of the Cremation Society. The ban was lifted in 1966. What has changed? Ironically Myra Hindley was cremated last November, although young Keith Bennett she had helped murder was left to moulder on Saddleworth Moor. Father Michael Teader said she believed she was going to heaven. The Roman Church only sends special saints to heaven. Did he not tell her that at best she was only going to purgatory, for that is RC teaching, when he took her last confession and absolved her from her sins (although that is blasphemy)? The tabloids seemed to believe she went to hell. The *Daily Mail* of 21st November says a mass was said for the repose of her soul for £340 of her savings. We know from Scripture that the blackest of sinners can be saved who trusts in Christ alone for salvation. Sadly she seemed to depend on a sinful priest.

#### ***The Roman Catholic Church, the Bible and the Free Church of Scotland***

It is sad reading that in July the United Bible Societies (UBS) opened a major exhibition in Rome in co-operation with the Vatican Library, tracing the impact and culture of the printed Bible. We read in the *Quarterly Record* of the Trinitarian Bible Society that more than 100 guests attended the formal grand opening, which featured greetings from the RC Director of the Apostolic Library of the Vatican, and also Rev. Fergus Macdonald, the UBS General Secretary who was ordained in the Free Church of Scotland, and was its Moderator of Assembly in 1987. Mr. Macdonald said that “it was a privilege and an honour for UBS to co-sponsor the exhibition with the Vatican Museum”. We note that one of the reasons why the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed in 1831 was to oppose the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the Bible.

*The English Churchman* of May 2002 notes that a Bull was issued against the Bible Societies by Pope Pius VII in 1816 in which he speaks of “a pestilence which must be remedied and abolished; a defilement of the faith, eminently dangerous to souls”. A Trinitarian Bible Society pamphlet, *Ecumenism and the Bible Societies*, shows how Roman Catholic translators have been taken in to help in the translation and production of Bibles, so that now the Pope praises the work of these societies as an ecumenical project.

#### ***The Church of England***

The Church of England is taken up with Rowan Williams, the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, “enthroned” in February 2003. The *Times* newspaper on 25th February stated that Cardinal Walter Kasper, from the Vatican, and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor would participate. His views on women bishops, homosexual priests and remarriage of divorcees in church are liberal. In a BBC2 documentary, regarding homosexuality, he said, “My own personal conclusion is that I can see a case for acknowledging faithful same-sex relationships”. “Conservative” evangelicals have called on

him to resign, or recant, owing to his view that passages in the Bible on the issue of homosexual relationships are open to re-interpretation. One such body of conservatives, "Reform", has called him "a false teacher". Another body called "Church Society", asked him to resign, saying: "It is clear that he prefers his private judgment to the voice of Scripture." The "Church of England Evangelical Council", too, is fighting his liberal homosexual agenda, pointing out that the Anglican Church in America, has reached the point where homosexual rights are overtaking the rights of women and blacks. A fourth body opposing him is "The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies".

*The Times* on 3rd December 2002, gave the view that the new Archbishop will go along with the draft report as set forth by the Constitution Unit. The Bill of Rights of 1688 prevents a monarch from marrying a Roman Catholic. The Coronation Oath of that same year requires the monarch on his or her accession to make a declaration before Parliament rejecting Roman Catholicism. The Act of Succession of 1701 was designed to ensure a Protestant succession. Prince Charles, if he ever becomes king, would prefer to be the "Defender of Faiths" rather than of "The Faith". The Constitution Unit says: "There has been disquiet over the form of the next coronation . . . it is possible that legislation may be required to omit some of the contentious oaths." However, whatever the synod may do, Parliament has the right to introduce its own church legislation or reject synod measures. Rowan Williams was not of the Church of England but of the Anglican Church of Wales. As his church in Wales is disestablished, his thoughts may be going along these lines for the Church of England, and this may have dire effects for the constitution. Recently a spokesman for Cardinal Murphy-O'Conner said of the Act of Settlement: "This legislation is a historical relic which has no place in plural Britain of the 21st. century." Let people examine the oaths taken by Cardinal Murphy during his ordination and they will find that hatred of Protestantism is still very much alive in the RC Church.

The Anglican Church seems to be in "meltdown", with thousands of churches closing and many dioceses disappearing, it is thought, by 2030, if Ruth Gledhill is correct in her article in the *Times* of 30th October 2002. At the present rate of decline, attendance in 2030 will be about 500,000, which is less than two-thirds of those attending now. Child attendance fell by 28 per cent in the 1990s.

### ***The Church in Scotland***

In Scotland we have the same trend as in England. Forty years ago almost forty per cent went to church every week, but now only 18 per cent do so. The Kirk is 200 ministers short of its needs as well. The Church of Scotland turned its back on the Calvinistic Sabbath many years ago, and passed a "Brighter Sundays Act", to win people to church. The ministers too have turned away from the demand of preaching to the souls of men and women about salvation through Christ, and mostly favour the easy option of indulging in politics and social issues. Steve Bruce, a researcher from Aberdeen University, in making

a survey of churchgoing and belief in God, concluded that “Scotland is no longer a Christian country”.

The change in the Church of Scotland is seen clearly in how it has given up on the Roman Catholic issue. Last year it passed an overwhelming vote admitting religious bigotry, particularly against Irish Catholics, saying that “it regrets any part played in sectarianism by our church in the past, and affirm our support for future moves towards a more tolerant society”. It forgets that it came into being because our Reformation Fathers came out of the evil quagmire of Romanism, which quagmire remains, as the world wide sexual abuse by priests and the physical abuse by nuns, and others, of children in their homes has brought to light in these days. The truth is that the 416 publicly funded Roman Catholic schools in Scotland are harbouring sectarianism and teaching their pupils that Protestantism is evil. Despite this, however, twenty-nine per cent of RCs in Scotland believe that single-faith schools should go, and the figure is even higher among the young.

The curse of “political correctness” too affects the National Kirk as well as others. Some Psalms and hymns have been ditched as not politically correct, such as Psalm 23 and the hymn “There is a green hill” is deemed irrelevant to modern life. One third of old hymns were got rid of last year, and people will be expected to learn new ones which will be “green”, dealing with environmental damage, the careless use of water, ore and soil. That is how Kate Sherry reports matters in the *Daily Mail* of 25th March 2002. Rev. Charles Watson condemned the old hymnal for not having “liberation theology, feminism and the peace movement”.

Singing at funerals too has changed, as many now prefer pop tunes to hymns. The *Times* newspaper of 5th August tells us of the results of information gathered by the Co-operative Group’s funeral service. Pop tunes are gaining as the solemnity of death and eternity lessens in the eyes of people. We have all this because of Christless men preaching a Christless Gospel, producing a Christless generation. The result is not mourning but celebration at funerals, in a lifestyle full of strong drink, drugs, pop, and immorality.

### ***Feminism in the Church***

Rev. Professor Iain Torrance was chosen to be Moderator of the Church of Scotland. He was up against Rev. Margaret Forrester, darling of the liberal wing, and a campaigner for women, who blessed a lesbian relationship ten years ago. A letter signed by 140 women expressed disappointment at the Church’s failure to appoint a female moderator in the 30 years women were eligible for consideration.

In the Scottish Episcopal Church women were open to ordination as priests since 1994, two years after the Church of England. The push is now on for women to be bishops. At their Synod last May only 15 voted against a move towards the making of woman bishops, and at the Synod in 2003 it is expected that the final vote for women bishops will be a mere formality. At the moment only the Anglican churches in the US, Canada, Polynesia and New Zealand

have women bishops. In Scotland all seven bishops support the move. Churches are being paganised and the creation order turned upside down, namely the headship of the man over the woman. Society as a consequence can only be downgraded. Women will become rulers of men in the churches if the present pattern continues. The cohesion of family life must suffer, and the imbalance must affect families growing up. The Godhead will be replaced by a super goddess figure, perhaps Mary the mother of Christ.

A pamphlet distributed in the Church of England says God should be referred to as a woman, saying that it is offensive to some to think of God as exclusively male. The proposal was that they should pray that “the Holy Spirit will move amongst us and that we may recognise Her presence and co-operate with Her work”. The fate of the word “Chairman” will be decided by the General Synod of the Church of England this year. Critics say that failure to use “gender-neutral language” will prevent young people from turning to Christianity. They obviously think they are wiser than God who spoke in His holy Word and fixed its genders. If they accepted the authority of God’s Word we would not have such blasphemous nonsense.

A carefully conducted survey by “Cost of Conscience and Christian Research”, published on 30th July 2002, shows 51% of the clergy in favour of women bishops. On every item of the creed the women clergy were lower than their male counterparts in the survey of nearly 2,000. 78% of the males believe in the Trinity compared to 70% of females. 76% males believed Jesus died to take away the sins of the world, and 65% females. Christ as the only way of salvation was believed by 53% of males and 39% of females. The virgin birth was accepted by 58% and 33%.

### ***The Superkirk***

Various bodies all over the world are working towards the megachurch. Various modes of communication have made the world smaller, and various nations and bodies can work together more readily. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) Assembly will be held in Norway this year. It is a fellowship of 127 Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and Old Catholic Churches from all over Europe, with offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg. It speaks of the “there is no alternative syndrome”, and makes the correct noises about working in unison. The Russian Orthodox Church is interested, but Patriarch Alexei is at present involved in a deep quarrel with Rome which has dared to set up four dioceses in Russia. Cardinal Kasper, the head of the Vatican Pontifical Council on Christian Unity, has spoken of the ecumenical movement as being in crisis. He says the positive signs were the joint declaration between the RC Church and the Lutherans on justification, the ecumenical events of the papal jubilee year, and the inter-faith gathering to pray for world peace at Assisi. He complains of there being no real response to the Pope’s call for a renewed “Petrine primacy”, which could be shared by all. Other churches dream of shared compromises, whereas Rome aims at total submission to Rome.

In England, Dr. Carey, former archbishop of Canterbury, stated that one day Britain would have a single united church. At Windsor, in front of the queen, he joined leaders of other mainstream churches in signing a covenant committed to that very end. For forty years "Christian Unity" has been prayed for. The Church of England and the Methodists are interested in each other. Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, leader of RCs in England and Wales, preached at Sandringham at the invitation of the Queen.

The RC Archbishop of Edinburgh spoke to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland last year stating, "You were talking to us, and we were not even nodding our heads in reply". The blueprint for a united superchurch, merging the various branches of Protestantism in Scotland, has been unveiled. The Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, think of forming a single institution, with maxi-parishes and bishops. The convener of the discussion group is the Right Rev. Michael Henley, Episcopalian bishop of St. Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane. It is thought that falling attendance and finance may have something to do with it. It comes before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May. Opposition centres, the *Scotsman* tells us, on the fact that bishops are inconsistent with the presbyterian principle that the authority of elders is on a par with clergy. Bishops are essential to ecumenical progress because of the Roman belief in Apostolic succession. We have the old saying: "No bishop, no priest. No priest, no sacrament. No sacrament, no church. No church, no salvation." Ecumenism is not a grass roots movement, but a priestly movement, which depends upon the acquiescence of the ignorant and the gullible.

Professor Donald Macleod, of the Free Church of Scotland, writing in the *West Highland Free Press* of 26th July, states: "In a few weeks time the Scottish churches will hold their first ever Ecumenical Assembly. . . . My own instant reaction on hearing of such an Assembly was regret and shame that my own church would not be part of it." In speaking of his desire for ecumenical union he says: "If it would help, I would happily reduce the basis of faith to the Apostle's Creed; and I would equally happily tolerate episcopacy (provided the church herself freely appointed the bishops), women ministers and even guitars, if these were the stated will of Scottish Christians." Enough said!

Alan Bookbinder was made head of religion by the BBC less than two years ago. The son of a Jewish father and a Roman Catholic mother, he himself is an agnostic. More than 100 eminent writers and academics have written to the BBC's governors complaining that the *Thought For The Day* slot on Radio 4 Today Programme discriminates against atheists. Religious programmes have declined enormously in volume, and what is left is usually bland. There are few people more dogmatic than militant atheists, and they colour so many programmes with their unproved beliefs, and now they demand that they be allowed to make use of this tiny slot as well to further propagate their godlessness.

### ***Islam***

According to the Central Institute Islam Archives in Soest, Germany, the number of Muslims in Europe has mushroomed to 51.8 million. In Belgium, France, Italy, Austria and Spain they have overtaken Protestantism. The breakdown given of religion in Europe out of 750 million is: 269 million Roman Catholic, 171 million Orthodox, 79 million Protestant, 28 million Anglican, Others 203 millions. Islam is growing at an annual rate of 6.5%. If this trend continues, Muslims will be the second largest religious grouping behind Roman Catholics by the year 2014. This is the reason behind the opposition in Europe to Turkey joining the EU. The Holy Roman Empire concept is threatened. The Vatican dreams of uniting Islam to itself, and then when it dominates politics in the USA it will control the world. Their word, however, will not be the last word in this matter, for Christ is the Ruler of heaven and earth.

Support for Islam is part of Rome's long-term strategy which generally is to weaken national governments, and then to make political parties it supports beholden to itself. We see that Rome, in following such strategy, is not behind President Bush but speaks of peace and reconciliation as it eyes Islam. It intends sending a mission of peace to Baghdad, stating that war with Iraq would be "a defeat for humanity". The Pope meets Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi foreign minister, but yet strangely enough, a Nestorian Catholic in a Muslim country. Rome knows that the *Koran* teaches the subjugation of all other creeds under Islam. In its early days Islam was spread by the sword, and today in Indonesia at least 8,000 have been forcibly converted to Islam. Those refusing were put to death, and these number about 10,000. In Nigeria too thousands of Christians have been killed, their homes and churches destroyed. In Sudan the Arab Islamic government wars against the African people of the South in the name of Islam, to wipe out and conquer. The Pope is wary of condemning this slaughter for the political agenda is uppermost in Roman Catholic eyes. Roman Catholic bishops warn the British government against ill treating immigrants for there too Rome is playing the Islamic card.

It is no wonder then that Romanising bodies, such as the WCC are blatantly anti Semitic, and inflame the Middle-East situation while they talk of peace and reconciliation. They too want to have dialogue with Islam. Dr. Carey, when in office, at a dinner at Lambeth palace, with senior Arab and Middle-East representatives present said, "At a time when many Muslims in this country are living in fear, I want to say loud and clear that as a Christian leader I deeply respect your faith".

In East Renfrewshire, the Council is demanding that the Scottish Executive act to make Christian assemblies in non-denominational schools part of national policy. The *Daily Mail* of 23rd January reports that the Council maintains that multi-faith assemblies are confusing. Inspectors of schools say that two out of every three non-denominational schools in Scotland have abandoned old-style Christian assemblies amid fears of causing discrimination

and disharmony. Obviously now paranoia about religious correctness has invaded our schools. What are we doing to our children whom we should be preparing for eternity? We now read in the *Daily Mail* of 22nd February that the Church of Scotland is seeking to downgrade the tradition of daily school assemblies, and would support the Scottish Executive religious observance review group which says that religious assemblies should be replaced by sessions where current affairs are discussed with soothing music in the background. Kirk officials are reported as saying, "There has to be a way to promote mutual understanding among faith groups that can celebrate diversity as well as shared values".

### **MORALS**

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has always believed that it is the duty of the visible Church to preach the Gospel of the free and sovereign grace of God. It has desired to be an instrument in the hand of God for the gathering in of the elect, and the building up of God's people, in holiness and comfort through faith, unto the consummation of that salvation wrought on the behalf of His people by Jesus Christ, and applied by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the Word of God: "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). Furthermore, this branch of the Church of Christ on the earth has acted on the principle that the Church ought to speak on moral issues within the nation, "*Declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin*" (Micah 3:8). Though we live in an age when moral absolutes are resisted, it is not the Church's business to follow philosophical fashions but to speak as God would require His servants to speak, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isaiah 8:20). We are firmly persuaded that the moral decline in the last 150 years (to go no further), is mainly due to the uncertain sound coming from the more influential churches in our land. That solemn charge lies heavily upon the ministers of the visible Church: "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . . that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen*" (1 Peter 4:11).

#### ***A time of Judgements***

Judgements come on a nation because of its sins against God. We state with great sadness and with much foreboding, yet without reservation, that the scourge of terror threatens our shores with a new impetus because our nation has forgotten its obligation to God and His law, "*For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted*" (Isaiah 60:12).

That nation is ripe for judgements that forgets God, or that says that there is no God. The government that legislates contrary to the revealed will of God is, to all intents and purposes, an atheistic government. It might not state a theory

of atheism with respect to the essence of God but acts on a principle of atheism with respect to the will of God. The visible church might not officially agree with those who hold unbiblical and atheistic views within its ranks, yet by not exercising its divinely given powers of discipline against them, it makes an open question of the being of God, biblical doctrine and biblical morality. The testimony of God regarding atheism, in all its forms, is that it is folly: *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good”* (Psalms 14:1).

On account of the evidence of our national forsaking of God we fear that God is preparing more scourges for the United Kingdom, to teach us that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lord.

1. The place that is given to false religion is growing increasingly prominent. In the devolved Scottish Parliament the devotions do not follow the pattern of the Westminster Parliament, where prayer is made to the Father in the name of the Son. In the devolved parliament in Scotland place is given to all faiths to lead the periodic devotions of the chamber. The King of kings is Christ. Scotland now repudiates Him; tramples her once renowned glory under her feet, and disowns Her once loved King. Fools may say that that is not a matter to tremble at, to disown the government and tutory of God’s anointed King. But the Word of God says it is a great dishonour to Him, evidence of crass spiritual ignorance, and a matter with grave and cataclysmic consequences: *“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? [saying] Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. . . . Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him”* (Psalm 2:1-5; 11, 12).

2. By practice and by statute we have desecrated the Lord’s Day. The moral degeneracy of our nation must be largely attributed to the profanation of the Lord’s Day, the Christian Sabbath. Rulers and people actuated by a principle of practical atheism see no benefit in keeping the Sabbath. The church today ought not to be silent regarding the desecration of the day set apart by God for the worship of His name and the instruction of the people in matters moral and spiritual. Godly Nehemiah was not silent: *“Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath”* (Nehemiah 13:17, 18).

3. The lives of millions are terminated in the womb, the vast majority of them without legitimate reason. Is this to be viewed with a pragmatic shrug, as is fashionable, or do we view it with the horror, which our troubled consciences suggest? Let the Word of God be the judge: *“These . . . are an abomination unto God: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed*

*innocent blood*” (Proverbs 6:16,17). “*And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood*” (Isaiah 1:15). Our hands, as a nation, are filled with innocent blood. We must give heed to the Word of God: “*Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction*” (Proverbs 31:8).

4. The name of God is blasphemed without fear of retribution. But the responsibility of rulers and people to the name of God is, “*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*” (Exodus 20:7).

The laws of our land sometimes seem to be enforced with more rigour for the defence of sin than for the defence of righteousness.

5. The church and state condone and seem to actively encourage homosexuality by immoral laws, which normalise the homosexual relationship, to the extent that rights to adopt children are now granted to homosexual couples. While not only the state, but the church condones homosexuality, the Word of God abominates it: “*And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel*” (1 Kings 14:24). “*And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made*” (1 Kings 15:12). “*And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land*” (1 Kings 22:46). “*And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove*” (1 Kings 22:46 – see also Romans 1:26- 32).

6. There is a national moral consensus that seems not only to allow, but to require, immoral and violent scenes in television, film, books, magazines and billboards, encouraging all manner of uncleanness, violence and crime. How many judgements must visit our land before we realise that the charge against a sinful Judah is equally appropriate to our own national character, and that the deliverance of that nation to the sword and captivity for their sins is a warning to our own people: “*Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward*” (Isaiah 1:4). “*They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters*” (Jeremiah 6:28).

### ***A Time to Repent***

Great is the burden of guilt on our nation. But greater yet is the mercy of the Lord which, on the basis of the infinite merits of the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, pardons sin upon repentance, and returning to the Lord. The nation seems to be bracing itself at the time of the writing of this report for the scourge of war and the renewed menace of terrorism. The only way for a guilty nation to turn away the holy wrath of God is by forsaking our sins and returning to God.

### ***Some hindrances to repentance***

#### ***1. The national forsaking of the Christian Sabbath and the Christian ministry is a hindrance to repentance.***

Only a small percentage of our people go to any church on the Lord's Day. Furthermore from many of our pulpits preachers preach neither that which will convince a man that he is in need of repentance, nor that which will commend the remedy in Jesus Christ. How can we expect a people to see their sins and be alarmed at God's wrath, when church and state leaders are blind leaders of the blind? Those in influence do not speak as the oracles of God, and so there is no light in them. What we presently hear from leaders is talk of moral superiority, without any realisation, much less a confession, of our being a nation that is wringing judgements from God's hand. It would be well for those who think they stand on the high moral ground to remember that the Pharisees had a mistaken sense of their own moral worth. One flaw made their moralising obnoxious to scorn, and their religion to be rejected of the Lord Jesus Christ. While they sought to remove the mote from their brother's eye, they did not see that there was a beam in their own eye.

***2. Intolerance of those who seek to speak according to the Oracles of God is a hindrance to repentance.*** [This subsection is a modified form of a letter intended to be a response to an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, at the end of last year. All expressions in inverted commas are from that article.]

When Dr. Williams was elected to be the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, there was great opposition amongst those who are regarded as evangelicals within the Church of England. This is not at all surprising for Dr. Williams has liberal views on the matter of homosexuality, he has written a book which admires Mariolatry, and has received a form of honour or recognition from the pagan religion of the Druids.

Those who cannot endure the voice of biblical ethics saw this opposition to the archbishop-elect, as an unwelcome, menacing power that had been unleashed upon the Church. The editor of one influential broad sheet feared that conservative evangelicals had "acquired an ominous momentum" in their opposition to the practice of homosexuality. This is most deceptive considering that the Christian Church, historically, has, until very recent times, held that the homosexual lifestyle is immoral. It is the clamorous voice of the homosexual lobby that has gained momentum.

When the church speaks plainly about the truly "ominous momentum" of immorality in our society and the necessity to debar people with an immoral lifestyle from church privileges, the liberals accuse her of exclusiveness, and that her "sense of church unity is defective". One wonders whom their liberal idea of inclusiveness could exclude.

Though it seems perfectly obvious that a house can be no broader than its foundation, and that the Christian Church has no foundation but the Bible, nor any authority for its existence, nor any warrant for its statements, but the Holy Scripture, yet the liberals incriminate her for having a "concept of authority

narrowly based on the Scriptures”. Again, one wonders what sources they would recommend for the Christian Church – to take their authority from – to speak on moral issues.

The church must speak about morality (how can it justify its existence if it doesn't?), yet the liberals identify its opposition to immorality with sectarianism. What is truly ominous, as far as the freedom of the church to speak is concerned, is, that persons in places of great influence are unable, or unwilling, to differentiate between the virtue of strongly held biblical principles and the vice of religious hatred or sectarianism.

Though the liberals (quite rightly) abominate sectarianism, the menacing accent of sectarianism is thinly disguised in their own opposition to the Word of God. Those who oppose immorality are called a “small group of ultras”, by which we understand them to be besmeared as fanatics.

*3. Insensitivity to present judgements is a hindrance to repentance.*

The threat of war, terrorism, the famine of Gospel preaching, the rise of false religion and the occult, the plagues of cancer and AIDS and other diseases; drugs and drug related crimes and deaths, rail disasters, ruin of our fishing and agriculture industries, are some of the thunderings with which God has spoken to our nation in the recent past.

One particular judgement we wish to mention particularly, being topical at the time of writing, is the judicial blindness to the identity of the enemies of our civil and religious liberties.

The British people are engrossed in the issues of war with the President of Iraq. We are told that he is a murdering tyrant, and that he is a danger to our nation. If that is so, then our leaders must be supported in wielding the sword, for the defence of our religious and civil liberties. However, while our people run about throwing their hands in the air about the danger to lives, liberty and prosperity, because of a distant tyrant, a very serious danger to the liberty, peace and prosperity of our nation is going on within Europe, almost unheeded. In the *Daily Telegraph* (7th February 2003) in a piece entitled “Brussels elite accused over ‘federalist coup’”, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard writes:

“Britain will lose control of foreign policy and defence and will be stripped of its sovereign power to legislate in almost all areas of national life, under the draft text of the European constitution released yesterday. Sweeping aside British objections, the document establishes the European Union on a ‘federal basis’, enjoying primacy over the law of the member states.”

The writer is referring to a draft constitution for a United States of Europe produced earlier this year. Another writer from the same source wrote a piece entitled “The superstate is here”:

“The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, a draft of which has just emerged from the constitutional convention in Brussels, would, if adopted by the Council of Ministers, be the coup de grace for the

European nation states. If the Government were to submit to such a constitution, it would be acquiescing in the abolition of our parliamentary democracy and the creation of a European superstate. The moment of truth, long feared by Labour and Conservative governments, when Britain might have to choose between EU membership and national independence, may soon arrive.”

What is additionally alarming is that the Pope was and is personally involved. He “interceded personally with M. Giscard [chairman of the committee drafting the constitution] not to forget the ‘cement of that extraordinary religious, cultural and civic heritage that has made Europe great down the centuries’ . . . the Vatican said it was appalled by the humanist text . . . deeming it ‘completely unsatisfactory’ since it ‘went against the explicit desire of a great part of Europe’s peoples’” [*Daily Telegraph*, 8th February 2003].

The dangers we fear are a curtailing of the liberties, and an eventual outlawing of the Protestant Church and Gospel preaching. We anticipate the grooming of our people and Parliament, luring them to the perversions of idolatry, Mariolatry, the blasphemous Mass, the unscriptural and unclean priesthood and the tyranny of the blood-shedding antichrist. Our fears are founded on such documents as an Encyclical called *Constitution of States* by Pope Leo XIII, promulgated on 1st. November 1885, which uses such ominous language as “The State .. is clearly bound to act up to the manifold and weighty duties linking it to God, by the public profession of religion. . . . Since, then, no one is allowed to be remiss in the service due to God, and since the chief duty of all men is to cling to religion in both its teaching and practice – not such religion as they may have a preference for, but the religion which God enjoins, and which certain and most clear marks show to be the only one true religion – it is a public crime to act as though there were no God. . . . All who rule, therefore, would hold in honour the holy name of God, and one of their chief duties must be to favour religion, to protect it, to shield it under the credit and sanction of the laws, and neither to organise nor enact any measure that may compromise its safety.” Needless to say the compulsory religion referred to is the Roman apostasy.

Though we do not wish to underestimate the danger posed by terrorism and rogue states, yet we are equally wary of the dangers to our liberties from a Romanist superstate. The British flag is an ensign which stands for religious and civil liberties. Our forefathers learned that the nation could not be free until the Papacy had been barred from political influences. Inscribed in the Act of Settlement is a statement which at the same time speaks of the bitter experience of our forefathers, and is a warning to succeeding generations regarding the rule of Romanism: “It hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Popish Prince.” If this constitution is accepted it will be our misery to have been ruled by a company of perfidious and perjured persons.

*4. Continued countenancing of the antichrist, and other false religions is a hindrance to repentance.*

The idolatrous Roman antichrist is countenanced by our civil and religious leaders. The National press doffed its cap to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his vision that one day Britain should, and would, have a single, united Church. The words were spoken in the context of an ecumenical agreement. "At Windsor in front of the Queen he joined the leaders of Britain's other mainstream Christian churches in signing a covenant that committed them to achieving precisely that unity" (*Daily Telegraph*, 13th June 2002).

Our Prime Minister gave countenance to the head of the antichristian system by seeking an audience with him. Our Queen honoured the highest ranking officer of the kingdom of the antichrist in our land by asking him to preach to the Royal Family at Sandringham. If the church were speaking as the oracles of God, she would be as the prophet of old who warned his king of the evil of conniving with idolaters: "*Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet . . . king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord*" (2 Chronicles 19:2).

But far from speaking out, both the retired and the newly "enthroned" archbishop of Canterbury are silent. It would be difficult for the new incumbent of that unwarranted throne, Dr. Williams, to speak against idolatrous Rome. He is the author of a book entitled, *Ponder These things: Praying with Icons of the Virgin*, wherein "he argues that the images of . . . Mary portrayed in medieval icons are holy because they stand on the boundary between the spiritual and the everyday" (*Daily Telegraph*, 25th July 2002). The same reasoning might have justified the idolatrous calves of Aaron or of Jeroboam. But both were rejected, God saying of the former that by it Israel had corrupted themselves and of the latter that they were allied more to the worship of devils than of God: "*And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made* (2 Chronicles 11:15). See also 2 Chronicles 13:8: "*There are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.*"

The Word of God forbids dallying with idolaters: "*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*" (2 Corinthians 6:16, 17).

Furthermore the Word of God identifies the pope as the antichrist that should be manifested upon the decline of the Roman Empire (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

"*Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time*" (1 John 2:18).

"*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of*

*perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10).*

*“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (1 Timothy 4:1-3).*

### **Conclusion**

The Free Presbyterian Church has from its inception held an optimistic general eschatology: that though we have now a long night of spiritual bondage in our land, there will be better days, and the Sun of Righteousness will arise upon the world. The Lord Jesus Christ will raise up His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, the world throughout. We believe God has promised better days, when the Jewish people will recognise their Deliverer and Messiah in the Lord Jesus Christ, and when the Gentile nations will turn unto the Lord.

“That God in his appointed time will bring forth the kingdom of the Lord Christ unto more glory and power than in former days, I presume you are persuaded. Whatever will be more, these six things are clearly promised: —

1st. Fulness of peace unto the gospel and the professors thereof, Isaiah 11:6, 7, 54:13, 33:20, 21; Revelation 21:25.

2dly. Purity and beauty of ordinances and gospel worship, Revelation 11:2, 21:3. The tabernacle was wholly made by appointment, Malachi 3:3,4; Zechariah 14:16; Revelation 21:27; Zechariah 14:20; Isaiah 35:8.

3dly. Multitudes of converts, many persons, yea, nations, Isaiah 9:7, 8, 66:8, 49:18-22; Revelation 7:9.

4thly. The full casting out and rejecting of all will-worship, and their attendant abominations, Revelation 11:2.

5thly. Professed subjection of the nations throughout the whole world unto the Lord Christ, Daniel 2:44, 7:26,27; Isaiah 60:6-9 — the kingdoms become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ [Revelation 11:15], amongst whom his appearance shall be so glorious, that David himself shall be said to reign.

6thly. A most glorious and dreadful breaking of all that rise in opposition unto him, Isaiah 60:12 – never such desolations, Revelation 16:17-19.

[John Owen Volume 8, Sermon 7.]

As the godly Isaiah recognised the justness of God's judgements against Israel, and sought to justify God in His judgements rather than to justify Israel in its sins, so we desire to do also: "*Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee*" (Isaiah 26:8).

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

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

OUR Report this year is on familiar lines. Sabbath breaking is rife on every level of society and it is not in our power to protest against every profanation that comes to our notice. Our nation has turned away from God and His Law and the Fourth Commandment has been an obvious casualty in this process. We can only report this with sadness of heart as, if there is no repentance and turning from sin, God will assuredly judge us as a nation for our Sabbath breaking. Never was there greater need of the apostle's exhortation to believers, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing". The spirit of the age is summed up in this extract from a national newspaper: "Sunday shopping has become an essential part of the nation's weekend." "Of the major 100 cities and towns 97 have more than 10% of their shops open. Twenty-two out of the top twenty-five shopping centres are open." This is affecting family life as the newspaper report states: "Shopping has overtaken more traditional pastimes on the 'day of rest'. Only one in eight Britons now sit down to family lunch."

It is strange to note that when EU regulations stipulate that the twenty-four hours of rest to which all workers have a need should no longer be on the Sabbath, the strongest protest about it has come from Roman Catholic Italy. In fact they are facing fines now for noncompliance with this directive. A spokesman for a leading Italian trade union is quoted as saying: "Sunday is not like any other day – it is untouchable. It is the day of the Lord." Shame on Protestant Britain when they are silent at such a time. As often mentioned, sport has become a cause of much Sabbath breaking. In view of the proliferation of football matches played on Sabbath, the Committee agreed to send a standard letter to clubs in the SPL. These were sent to all the clubs once unless there was some unusual circumstances, such as crowd disorder or violence.

During the time covered the Committee wrote upward of forty letters, the following of which are a cross-section arranged in chronological order. Some are given in full.

1. To Safeway plc re opening of store at Portree, 6th June 2002 – this letter was not acknowledged.

2. To Argos Stores re dismissal of staff who refused to work on Sabbath – 14th August 2002:

*I write on behalf of the Committee to express our strong disapproval of your decision to dismiss employees who refuse to work on the Sabbath day.*

*Christians everywhere regard the Sabbath, the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath. It is a day bound by all the strictures of the Law of God, which commands, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work" (Exodus 20:8, 9). Trading, buying and selling on the Sabbath is against God's Law and those who break it will be answerable to Him.*

*To dismiss workers because they wish to honour God rather than men is an oppression. This is persecution of sincere Christians, which is also against God's Law. Even if you are not breaking any human law in general terms your cynical disregard of those who have sincerely held views is far from the Scriptural principle, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

*We implore you on Scriptural and humanitarian grounds to change your policy. No good can come to your business by the use of such schemes.*

This letter was not acknowledged.

3. To Skibo Castle re holding "Open Day" on Sabbath, 14th August 2002 – Acknowledged in Replies section.

4. To House of Aigas, Beaulieu, re Charity Fair on Sabbath, 14th August 2002.

5. To Loganair re proposed Sabbath flights to Stornoway – 28th August 2002:

*I am writing on behalf of the Committee, which is representative of the Church throughout the UK. We would like to voice our protest at your firm's plans to have passenger flights in and out of Stornoway airport on the Sabbath.*

*Our first objection is based on the Bible. The Lord's Day, the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath. This being so it is bound by the Fourth Commandment, which commands, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work". By running this service you are breaking God's Law and it is our duty to point out to you that you are responsible to God for your actions.*

*It must be obvious to you that the arrival of large numbers of passengers in Stornoway on the Sabbath will cause unnecessary work for many others apart from the aircraft crew and airport staff. It will involve catering and transport on a scale never seen in Lewis on the Sabbath.*

*We would also point out to you that the vast majority of the population are against it and that many who support it would not do so if they were assured of adequate services on Saturday and Monday. You are in danger of destroying a way of life, which is precious to the majority of the people on the island, a way of life which draws many visitors because of the unique way of life and quality of life to be found in our islands. We urge you most strongly to reconsider your plans and to draw back from engaging in further profanation of the Lord's Day.*

*We implore you, do not further erode the Sabbath Day in Lewis. It will bring no permanent profit to your company and you are leaving yourselves open to the just displeasure of God. We do so on the authority of the One whose day it is.*

Letter not acknowledged.

6. Scottish Rugby Union re match played on 24th November – 25th November 2002 – see Replies section.

7. To House of Bruar, Blair Athol, re continuation of sale over Sabbath – 29th November 2002.

8. To Johnson of Elgin re introduction of Sabbath trading – 2nd December 2002.

9. Letter to Cairngorm Funicular railways re running of railway on Sabbath over festive season – 23rd December 2002.

10. Strathspey Railway Company Ltd. As above – 26th December 2002. See Replies section.

11. Linton Country Furniture, North Berwick, re Sabbath opening – 21st. January 2003 – Replies section.

12. Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dancing re holding of auditions on Sabbath. – 23rd January 2003.

13. Manager, Stornoway Airport, re obtaining of drinks sale licence – 20th January 2003:

*I am writing on behalf of the Committee to protest at your selling alcohol on the Lord's Day. We are aware that it is legal as far as the law of the land is concerned but we would respectfully remind you that there is a higher law than this. The Law of God says, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." We are, each one, bound by this*

*law and responsible for breaking it. We ask you to confine your working on Sabbath to works of necessity and mercy.*

Not acknowledged.

14. Western Isles Licensing Board – 20th January 2003:

*I am writing on behalf of the Committee to express our disappointment at the Licensing Board's decision to grant a seven-day licence at Stornoway Airport.*

*In your defence of this on the radio you said the law of the land bound you. Have you forgotten the Law of God? This we feel is one case where you should have applied Scriptural principles. "We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). We hope that your Committee will look again at this matter, remembering God's Word, "them that honour me I shall honour".*

Not acknowledged.

15. Letter to a Mr. Stephen Copsly, Norfolk, encouraging him in his refusal to work on Sabbath as such working was against his religious belief. He was quoted in the National Press as saying: "Hindus, Jews and Moslems claim religious rights under the Race Relations Act but Christians are not afforded the same concessions." He went on to say: "Sunday is not a normal working day, it is the Sabbath day. It is a requirement of the Fourth commandment." His firm's defence is: "There is no legislation allowing him not to work on Sundays."

16. Letter to Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, Prime Minister – 5th March 2002:

*I write on behalf of the Committee, which represents the Church in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland to protest strongly against the Government's plan to stage the exercise of a mock "catastrophic incident" in London on the Lord's Day, March 23rd.*

*We feel it is our duty to point out to you that this action is a breach of God's Commandment, which says, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy". The Lord's Day, the first day of the week, is the Christian Sabbath and is bound by all the strictures of the Fourth Commandment. While we appreciate something of the danger we are in as a nation from terrorism, and strongly support you in your unflinching position on Iraq, we must respectfully point out to you that every man's duty is firstly to God. The Bible tells us that "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God".*

*We continue to pray for you and your Government in this time of national and international danger. We point you to God's promise, "Them that honour me I will honour". We feel it is dishonouring to God to use His day for this exercise and beseech you to find some other day of the week for carrying it out. You would surely not wish to commit the*

*nation to a war with unknown consequences knowing that you have grieved God by Sabbath breaking.*

No reply so far.

### **Replies**

Approximately half the letters written are not acknowledged. Most replies are merely bland acknowledgements but the Committee thought this selection would be of general interest.

### **Skibo Castle**

*Thankyou for your letter dated 14th August 2002 and I reply with the greatest respect and tolerance towards your beliefs.*

*Unfortunately I am unable to provide the assurance that you seek. The Open Day at Skibo has been successful for many years and I plan to continue this in the same vein. The reasons for this are two-fold.*

*Firstly, the money raised for local charities was of a substantial nature and in this local area it would be very hard to replace this source of income.*

*Secondly, any entertainment that occurred was wholesome in nature. This entertainment consisted of the pipe band and the ice cream van. Compared with the ills that face our society at present I suggest that these should be of little importance to your Committee.*

*I believe that religion has an important part to play in maintaining the moral code that societies require to change and develop. Changing the Open Day at Skibo is not going to ensure the worship of the Christian religion. This can only be achieved through the ability of the church leaders to re-connect with the public.*

*I will bear your request in mind when setting the date for next year. I also ask that your Committee focus on updating many of the traditions that are needlessly preventing our Christian leaders from becoming the true leaders they should be.*

### **Scotland v Fiji**

*I thank you for your letter of 25th November in regard to the playing of the above game on a Sunday. I recall that we have been in correspondence before on this issue, when I pointed out that not only Rugby Union but also many other sports are nowadays played on a Sunday, not only in Scotland but also throughout the British Isles. So far as Rugby Union is concerned at international level, with a concentrated programme such as in the autumn window and indeed in the 6N Championship in the spring, it is inevitable that a Union will have a Sunday game, although perhaps not every season at each time – last season we had Sunday play in the autumn but not in the spring, other Unions had different patterns, while this season we have Sunday*

*play in both the autumn and in the spring – the days must be shared round in equity amongst the Unions.*

*I would thank you for writing to me, I fully accept the point which you are making, but hopefully you and your colleagues can accept our views and the necessity for Sunday play when required.*

***Strathspey Railway Company Ltd.***

*Thank you for your letter of December 26th. The Management of the railway has noted your comments and respects your religious views. When planning future railway services we will bear in mind the issue you have raised.*

***Linton Country Furniture***

*I was quite taken aback by your letter about Sunday trading, and can only wonder that you have no better way to help your own congregation.*

*I feel that if there is a God, about which I remain unconvinced, I am perfectly prepared to account to him about why we open on Sundays. I would also expect to be fairly far down the queue on the day of judgement.*

We have been often criticised for comparing the present unfavourably to the past but the following extract from a Committee Report of 1950 should be an answer to all such criticism:

*We would warn against the widespread evil of profaning the Sabbath by worldly or common conversation. Those who trifle away the sacred hours of the Sabbath in this manner are guilty before God. . . . The most able and judicious theologians agree with the standards of our church, in affirming that sins committed more immediately against God are more heinous in their own nature than sins committed more immediately against man. All sin is committed against God, but Sabbath profanation is more directly against Him than robbery. . . . No rational hope of salvation can be entertained by one who voluntarily and presumptuously persists in violating any statute of God's law. He who pollutes the Sabbath by habitually employing any part of it as a common day is chargeable with self destruction. In the light of the above, how terribly guilty before God of polluting the Sabbath, and of destroying their own souls for eternity are the sellers and readers of the Sunday newspapers. . . . As the Monday newspapers involve Sabbath labour, we would warn our people from buying the Monday papers. . . .*

This Report does not take long to read and maybe does not reflect as adequately as we would like the extent of the Committee's endeavour to witness on the side of God's holy law. We have no doubt that many scoffers are speaking of our work in the spirit of those who said, "What do those feeble

Jews?”. However, it is our duty to adhere faithfully to God’s Word and it is the function of the Committee to defend the Lord’s Day against the multitude of inroads made upon it. It is also our duty to keep before our own people what the witness of this church on behalf of the Sabbath is.

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

**Convener: Rev. John MacLeod**

### ***General***

It is a matter of general knowledge and universal comment that the political situation in Zimbabwe has been both tense and unstable for some time now. However, we are thankful to report that the “powers that be” in that troubled land have not passed any laws which have restricted or prevented us from continuing with our missionary activities there. Those engaged in the work have had to contend with many additional difficulties – as the various Reports submitted to the Synod will show – and they are to be commended for their courage, diligence, perseverance and faithfulness. The same applies to those who labour in Kenya, who, also, have had to meet and overcome difficulties incident to their particular situation. The circumstances on the ground may be to a great extent dissimilar, but it is the same “principalities and powers”, the same “rulers of the darkness of this world” that we have to contend with in Kenya as in Zimbabwe. In the face of such opposition, we surely have reason to acknowledge that, “Hitherto, the Lord hath helped us”.

### ***Zimbabwe***

At the time of writing this report, it would appear that the Rev. Petros Mzamo is not enjoying good health but we hope that he will soon recover and be spared to continue faithfully to serve the Church at Mbumba into the future as he has done for so many years in the past. The Rev. Z. Mazwabo, notwithstanding sight debility, has continued to attend to all the duties laid upon him and these were all the more onerous on account of the vacant pulpits at Bulawayo and Ingwenya. The Rev. A. Ndebele continues to take an interest – and we believe a prayerful interest – in the cause of Christ although regrettably he is not able now to engage in preaching duties. If all goes well, the newly licensed ministers will be ordained and inducted in charges before the Synod meets – the Rev. S. Khumalo is due to be settled at Bulawayo and the Rev. M. Mloyi at Zenka.

Notwithstanding the difficulties which have arisen on account of the shortage of maize and also of vehicle fuel, the John Tallach School has continued to function and the examination results bear testimony to the

expertise and dedication of our staff there. Mr. Bonekele Ncube has attended to matters relating to the day-to-day running of the school with Miss Norma MacLean assisting him and also ably attending to the multifarious and onerous duties which are related to the provision of the boarding facilities. The labours of Miss K. M. MacAulay and Miss R. MacKay as members of staff are invaluable. Miss MacAulay, additionally, continues to play a very important role in the revision of the Ndebele Bible. In August, the Committee responded favourably to an application by Miss Martina van Praag of Sydney, Australia, to serve as a teacher at Ingwenya but, at this point in time, it is not certain that she will take up the appointment. A famine fund for Zimbabwe raised a sum of £12,000 and, in regard to this, the Committee would seek to acknowledge the generosity of our people. A "Day Pupil Educational Fund" has been set up to help day pupils from poverty-stricken homes in attending the Ingwenya School. This is funded by the Catherine Morrison Legacy and its administration and allocation of help is left to the discretion of the Ingwenya teachers.

The revision of the Ndebele Bible has continued over the year and it is hoped that the New Testament will be ready for publication before the end of this year. The Committee is much indebted to Mr. Teus Benschop and Miss K. M. MacAulay for all their work in relation to this project. We regard this work as very important and necessary and it is gratifying that so much has been achieved as a result of the dedicated work of the two people mentioned and also that of others who have made their own contribution.

At Mbumba, the Hospital has continued to provide such medical facilities as lie within the scope of those who labour there. Dr. Janette Benschop, because of complications arising from her pregnancy, returned home to Holland with her husband at the end of the year. Her future as far as returning to Mbumba is very uncertain. We are grateful to her for all her years of faithful service and also to her husband for having served the Mission so well. We hope that he will continue with the work of Ndebele Bible revision.

Miss Louise Leiper departed from Mbumba in August and we would express our gratitude to her for all her loyal, devoted service which extended over many years. On Dr. Benschop's departure, Miss Jessie Coote was left alone as far as expatriate staff was concerned and we greatly appreciate the fact that she valiantly and self-denyingly held the fort there until the recent arrival of Miss Truus Ringleberg, who has, for a period of time, been "seconded" from Kenya.

The projects funded by Oikonomos Foundation are now nearing completion. These were: (a) Staff accommodation at Mbumba Hospital; (b) Teacher cottage at Zenka; (c) Construction of classroom at John Tallach Secondary School; (d) Contribution to the materials needed to finish the already started construction of two classrooms at Lutsha; and (e) Teacher Cottage at Mbumba. We have only praise for the expert and business-like manner in which the Oikonomos Foundation fulfilled their obligations under the agreement. Not only the schools concerned, but the whole Zimbabwean Mission benefited from the presence of Mr. Wifred van der Kooij and his

willingness to help in situations which called for the exercise of his expertise was much appreciated. The relationship with our staff and the Field Committee was always harmonious. Among other things, he has been endeavouring to bring a lorry load of maize to Zimbabwe to relieve the famine, but so far this has not been successfully accomplished. The Committee expresses its sympathy with Mr. Jan Baan, the Chairman and founder of the Oikonomos Foundation, on the death of his son Jan Peter Baan, a missionary in Nigeria, who was shot and killed by thieves in his home which he occupied with his wife and four children. The Committee's future relationship with the Foundation is, at present, unclear.

### ***Malawi***

Mr. Nedson Banda, the Malawian Divinity Student, is now ready for licensing. The Zimbabwean Presbytery regarded it as something which would be beneficial to himself and the Kenyan mission if he were to spend six months in Sengera under the supervision of the Rev. K. M. Watkins. This period is due to commence in April. The Church still has a Mission house in Blantyre and it is hoped that Mr. Banda, once licensed, might be ordained and inducted to engage in mission work in Malawi.

### ***Kenya***

We have to report that our endeavours to bring the Gospel to the ears of as many as possible of our fellow sinners in Kenya continues unabated. Thankfully, the health of the Rev. K. M. Watkins has much improved and he is able to attend to all his duties, not only in Sengera, but also in Zimbabwe, where from time to time it is very necessary for him to be present with his brethren there in order to attend to Presbyterial matters. In recent times these matters included those related to the licensing of students and their subsequent settlement over congregations. Mr. Hugh MacKenzie, the Mission Administrator, having come home in April on well-earned furlough, returned to Kenya in June. The Rev. K. M. Watkins began his furlough in June but his return was delayed as a result of a viral illness and his stay in this country was extended until October. Mrs. MacKenzie was the subject of medical investigation (which, thankfully, did not reveal any serious illness) and also did not return until October. Mrs. Watkins travelled with her husband. Both these women, in their own spheres, labour much in the Gospel and their respective contributions to the work at Sengera is much valued and appreciated.

Revision of the Ekegusii Bible is in hand and the work of translating Psalms to be used in Divine worship continues. A handsomely-produced booklet containing thirteen psalms in metrical form has now been produced. An Ekegusii version of the TBS *Words of Life* calender was widely distributed.

Miss Peta van de Ridder was home on furlough for two months and returned in October. Miss Truus Ringleberg was home in Holland for two months from

December but on her return she agreed to go to Zimbabwe for three months to help Miss Coote at Mbumba Hospital. Miss Gelia Wijngaarden arrived in Kenya with Miss Ringleberg and is now working in the Omorembe Clinic with Miss Celia Renes, the other highly-valued member of our staff there.

#### ***Jewish Mission Work***

The Rev. J. Goldby was asked to investigate ways of resuming and furthering our mission work among the Jews. He visited Israel in January with a view to establishing contact and reported back to the Committee. He has now been asked to further investigate the position and consider the possibility of visiting Israel for a 3-6 months period and the feasibility of setting up a web-site with a view to attracting the interest of Jews. It was agreed that £500 be given to the Society for Distribution of Hebrew Scriptures.

#### ***Mbumba Zending***

As on past occasions, we have to acknowledge the generosity and support of the Mbumba Zending. This year our Dutch friends have increased substantially their quarterly remittances and we are much indebted to them for that. We desire to acknowledge the warm attachment to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland manifested by the members of the Mbumba Zending Board. It is no small evidence of the goodwill of our Dutch friends that so many thousands of them turn up annually on their Mission Day.

#### ***Conclusion***

In acknowledging the contribution made by the Mbumba Zending, we are not forgetful of the generosity of our own people at home and abroad who continue to support the Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund. We hope and pray that all who support the work in Africa will discover, in their experience, the truth of what is written: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

## **ZVISHAVANE MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. Z. Mazvabo**

THE Zvishavane congregations are made up of New Canaan, Makovere, Ebenezer, Maware, Gwemombe, Ingezi, Chiedza, Akori, Chiwara and Mnaka. These congregations are far apart and in three different districts.

The holy communion is celebrated twice at New Canaan, twice at Chiedza and once at Mnaka every year.

Mr. Siziba, whose home is near New Canaan, supplies New Canaan, Makovere and Ebenezer, with the help of three other men. Although we cannot say that these congregations are growing fast, we are pleased that most of the people with whom we started still continue with us. At the communion at New Canaan, which was at the end of January, we were surprised but encouraged that one elderly woman, who seemed to be an enemy of the Church, herself confessed the Lord Jesus. The saying is true indeed: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

Mr. Josiah Mashavakure, who is now employed as home missionary, the same as Mr. Siziba, has his home near the Ingezi place of worship. He is a great help in supplying and visiting in the surrounding congregations. Also at the communion at New Canaan, we appealed for a special collection to purchase a bicycle for Mr. Mashavakure. The people responded well and \$20,000 was raised. But the cost of bicycles, like everything else in Zimbabwe, has gone high, so instead they are trying to acquire a second-hand machine to be a means of conveyance for Mr. Mashavakure, as he travels from congregation to congregation. Mr. Siziba's motorcycle is still in reasonable condition.

The communion at Mnaka, which used to be in April, has had to be changed to September, because in April the rivers and streams are in flood, making it difficult for people to travel.

We still have adult literacy classes which are conducted by Mr. Smart Zhou. In the congregation where this service has been offered one will find a few who are able to exercise their newly acquired skill in the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Some are so fluent that you will think they went to an ordinary school. The famine is a disturbance, even to such schools, for often they spend their time looking for the maize meal.

The AIDS menace is still doing havoc among us. Although there are many organisations that are trying to warn the population against AIDS and to help those who are ill, there is so much to be done and yet so little has been done. We need the prayers of the Lord's people.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

## **INGWENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. Z. Mazvabo**

THE congregation of Ingwenya is both at the centre and is the headquarters of our congregations. Here is the boarding school and often the people of the congregation are surrounded and hidden by the schoolchildren, yet there is a sizeable congregation.

This congregation is made up of Ingwenya, Cameron, Inyathi, Kadade and Insiza. The holy communion is celebrated twice a year at Ingwenya and once

a year at both Cameron and Inyathi. The congregations of Inyathi and Insiza are a residue of people moving to new resettlement areas, and the Church following them with the Gospel.

It is expected that if a minister settles at Bulawayo, the same minister will also look after Ingwenya. This is by no means an easy task, but because of shortage of manpower, that is the best arrangement. Both Ingwenya and Bulawayo have many young souls who need constant instruction but this, in the circumstances, cannot be done properly.

The healthy arrangement would be to have one minister settled over Bulawayo and another settled over Ingwenya. However, for the time being and perhaps for a long time to come, until it pleases the Lord to send more labourers into His vineyard, we have to be content with the present arrangement.

Mr. Manzini, Mr. Moyo, Mr. Nxusani and Mr. Philani Mzamo are the ruling elders in these congregations. It is because of their devotion to the work of the Gospel and hard work that the doors of these congregations are kept open. Three services are conducted at Ingwenya every Sabbath Day. Usually the first one is conducted in English and interpreted, the second is usually conducted in Ndebele, and the evening in English.

This evening service is attended mainly by the students in the boarding school and the people that live on the mission. These pupils come from different parts of Zimbabwe. This is our outreach by which we sow the seed of the Gospel to all parts of Zimbabwe as all that dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus as Paul “separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus”. Although we do not see much in form of result, we have in the Word of God both encouragement and promise: “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days”; and again, “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good”.

There is great need for missionary teachers on the school to help in the teaching of the Bible, because it is easier for somebody who has a good knowledge of the Bible to follow the preaching from the pulpit, than somebody who has not.

## **ZENKA AND NKAYI MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

AT both these places, church services were held regularly on the Lord’s Day, also the weekday prayer meetings, which were mostly conducted by elders. The elders also attended burials of the dead, warned the careless, and comforted the bereaved, as many places are too far apart for me to pay them regular visits.

The Lord's Supper was dispensed at the appointed times and Baptism administered at these places. A church elder passed away after a very long illness. I managed to attend his funeral on my way to Inyathi Communion.

At Inyathi there were a good number of Fingoes from Bembesi and I had to revise my Xhosa (the Fingo language) in giving my addresses. This congregation is, however, under Ingwenya church. The singing here, unlike in Cameron congregation, is done in Ndebele and not Xhosa.

Both Nkayi and Donsa congregations lost a church member. I was unable to attend either funeral and the elders had to attend to these.

Famine, drought and disease are prevailing upon the nation. The voice of death is heard every day and it is mostly young people and young couples who die of the killer disease of AIDS, often leaving behind young families in the hands of their failing grandmothers.

We are very thankful for the assistance we received towards famine relief. The Grain Marketing Board is selling maize at a very high price and they have limited supplies.

We have a non-governmental organisation called "Christian Care" which is distributing maize meal, beans, nuts, cooking oil and seed maize. The World Food Programme of the United Nations is also distributing maize meal, maize seed, corn seed and beans freely to the local people – the supplies here are in large quantity and are of a better quality.

We look forward to the near future when these congregations will have a residing minister in the kindness of the Most High. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psalm 122:6).

## **BINGA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

BINGA was visited once in the year 2002. Two nights were spent there while staying in the church building. On Sabbath morning a service was held at Senga and in the afternoon one was held at Samende. At both places there was a good gathering.

At the end of the service at Samende, questions were asked by the congregation. This was after hearing our preachers speaking often of the need of repentance. The questions were answered and some understood while some did not. On Monday morning, corn mealie, maize seed and clothing were given out. This took a good part of the morning, before we started driving back home.

On 6th October three men came from the Binga congregation – two from Samende and one from Senga. This was time for the communion season at Mbuma and it was pleasing to have them attending all our communion services to observe the dispensing of the Lord's Supper. May the Lord bless to them the Word preached and the Lord's Supper dispensed before them. They are witnesses of this great truth of the everlasting Gospel.

## **MBUMA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. P. Mzamo**

IN the kindness of the Most High we have seen the year pass and another year begin. All have the same message to us all – “Here we have no continuing city”. This truth is illustrated by Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. The Lord commissioned His disciples to preach the everlasting Gospel to all mankind, in season and out of season. “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world .”

By the grace of the Lord this commission is maintained in the Mission field as it was handed down to us by the early fathers of the Church as they bore witness by their life and conversation in the midst of the floods and waves of ungodliness, worldliness and false teaching. However, the Lord of the Church was in the boat on the Sea of Galilee and He calmed the waves and wind. The vessel of the Gospel will not sink as long as the Lord is in it. “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end.” We need the faith of Peter whose eyes were to the Lord and as long as his eyes were fixed he did not sink.

Throughout the past year, in the midst of all the difficulties and problems, church services were conducted on each Lord’s Day. In some of the preaching stations, services were held fortnightly because of an acute shortage of manpower (i.e. places where there are no professing men). People come to our church services each Sabbath and on weekday prayer meetings. There are those who come regularly to hear the message of the Gospel but there are also others who come for material things – more so now that there is much famine in the country. Perhaps there has not been such famine known within living memory. However, it was so even in the days of our Lord’s ministry on earth. Large crowds followed Him and He had to say to some: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.”

The church elders and some of the professing men continued to take services and prayer meetings, travelling to different congregations at their own expense. Going to places where there are no professing men is difficult. Travelling on the Nkayi district roads is not easy, either on foot or by bicycle – especially in winter when the sand is quite deep, which makes travelling more difficult. However, the work is done and it continues to be done, but without these men the church would be poorly serviced. Nonetheless, how dependent we are on the guidance and care of the Holy Spirit.

The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was dispensed on the Lord’s Day at communion seasons in all the places where these are held. A few were added to the communion roll and the Lord says to such as they came out of darkness into His glorious light: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” I also assisted at communions held in other parts of the vineyard.

There are three judgements upon Zimbabwe from the Lord – famine, disease and unrest. The Lord speaks of these demonstrating His displeasure upon the nation. There is a great famine in the whole country – such as was never known in living memory of many. There is no food in our land, therefore it has to be obtained from South Africa and is usually sold at very high prices when bought at the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). Two non-governmental organisations, Christian Care and the World Food Programme (of the United Nations) also give out free food. At the GMB people have to queue for maize, spending nights there waiting for lorries to deliver food from South Africa and other sources. These queues are a common sight for virtually everything – bread, fuel, sugar, paraffin and the like. All basic commodities are in short supply.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our people throughout the Church in Zimbabwe and overseas, as well as all our friends, who have responded so wonderfully to our needs. We now have money to buy a little food for the poor from time to time. There is, however, a great shortage of maize, along with both rice and potatoes – these are very costly too.

I also sincerely thank our friends in Holland who have given large sums of money to us for the purchase of maize seed. The Oikonomos Foundation is also to be thanked for the help they gave us in putting up our large and beautiful buildings for the use of the school and hospital. My sincere thanks go to our dear friends in Mbumba Zending who, for nearly forty years, have wonderfully supported the work in the Mission field. It reminds me of the days of Ezra and Nehemiah who rebuilt the temple and the walls at Jerusalem – the same spirit continues to prevail amongst our friends in the Mbumba Zending.

All is to the glory of the Lord and the salvation of souls, through the mighty working of the Holy Spirit.

## **MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT**

**J. A. Coote**

AS I sit down to write this report, there is lovely heavy rain falling for the second day running – the heaviest we have had this rainy season. We hope and pray that it is not too late to save some of the coming harvest. We think of all the problems which drought and famine prices raise (some things have trebled in price) and the lack of basic commodities in the past year, but we have to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in providing all our needs in these very difficult times. We have experienced queueing for bread maize and mealie meal, going to Nkayi (some 53km away) to get maize, only to come back without any and when fuel is also so short one feels the lack of proper communication. If we could only check with the Grain Marketing Board before sending the vehicle, but even when we have been able to do this there

have been occasions when we have been promised maize and have received none. The telephone has been very unreliable since the middle of the year when some solar panels were stolen in the area and we went without the telephone for over two months. Even now, if the weather is overcast, there is often not enough power from the sun to charge the batteries. However, despite all the shortages, from staff to commodities and rising prices, we have been carried through and have to say, "hitherto hath the Lord helped us".

### *Staff*

At the beginning of the year we had Dr. Benschop-Hak, Louise Leiper and myself. We have been waiting all year to hear about two Dutch nurses who applied to come out to Mbuma, but by the end of the year there was no definite word that they had been accepted by the Nurses Council for registration. We employed a Zimbabwean State Certified Midwife/Nurse in February, initially for three months and then on a permanent basis, with a government grant. We are very thankful for this appointment and Ma Dube has proved a very useful member of staff. We also employ Locum staff (those on holiday from other hospitals) but this is a big financial burden on the Mission.

By the end of the year there were only Ma Dube and myself left. Louise Leiper left in August and Dr. Benschop-Hak went home on sick leave in the middle of December, leaving a critical shortage of trained staff, as there was no prospect of Locum staff at that time. But we are thankful to say we have managed and the hospital was not too busy then. During the year we lost two of our faithful workers through death and we believe that it is well with them both and they are now with Christ, which is far better. Both Pauline Tshuma and Fildah Chaminya had been with us since the 1980s and had professed Christ in the church. Sadly another of our Nurse Aids has had to retire through ill health. We employed a senior clerk in July and he is involved in the day-to-day running of the hospital, proving a useful help, especially when trained staff is so short. He has done accountancy and we would like to use him more, but the problem is getting the time to give him more jobs to do. Then there have been problem cases resulting in dismissal including, sadly, two brothers arrested and charged with growing "mbange" (a kind of hemp) in their fields and involvement with labour relations. Three of those dismissed were involved in the theft of donated blankets and sheets. How sad to think of these, especially when most of those dismissed were long-standing members of staff who had been regularly under the sound of the Gospel.

We are thankful that there are a few professing men on the staff and they all take part in the morning and evening worship. A rearrangement of staff has enabled us to have four of these men working at the gate day and night so that now there is at least one professing man to call upon at any time. When Mr. Mloyi, our Catechist, left us to start his divinity course we lost a very important worker and, as yet, a suitable replacement has not been found.

Because of the shortage of staff we had to cut down on the number of admissions and only admit those urgently needing admission. Some patients

were send home early on oral antibiotics and we transferred more to the district hospital, including maternity cases. Thus we were able to temporarily close the Isolation Block and transferred existing patients to the hospital wards. The following are the statistics for the year.

### STATISTICS

	2001	2002
<b>Admissions</b>		
General, including TB .....	1,082	881
Maternity .....	616	424
<b>Discharges</b>		
General, including TB .....	977	808
Maternity .....	606	426
<b>Bed occupancy</b>		
General, including TB .....	19,237	11,742
Maternity .....	5,167	2,692
<b>Deaths, including NND</b>		
General, including TB .....	110	115
Maternity .....	0	0
<b>Outpatients</b>		
New.....	12,750	9,816
Total.....	17,378	13,619
<b>Confinements</b>		
Total .....	605	389
Live births.....	602	387
Still births .....	13	5
NND (up to 1 month) .....	12	6
<b>Antenatal Clinic attendances.....</b>	3,485	2,112
<b>Major Operations</b>		
General.....	—	—
Maternity .....	2	1
<b>Minor Operations</b>		
General.....	146	222
Maternity .....	127	—
<b>X-Rays</b>		
Patients.....	459	166
Films .....	719	248

**Ambulance**

Number of trips .....	150	107
Other cars used – number of trips .....	—	91
Km covered .....	28,464	40,328

**Five major health problems 2001 2002**

<i>Age below 5 years</i>	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Skin disease 3. Diarrhoea 4. Malaria & malnutrition 5. Eye disease	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Diarrhoea 3. Skin disease 4. Eye disease 5. Malnutrition
<i>Age 5-14 years</i>	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Skin disease 3. Malaria 4. Injuries 5. Eye disease	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Injuries 3. Skin disease 4. Eye disease 5. Malaria
<i>Age 15 and over</i>	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Sexually transmitted disease 3. Malaria 4. Skin disease 5. Injuries	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Sexually transmitted disease 3. Malaria 4. Skin disease 5. Injuries

A number of factors may be said to account for the fall in the numbers this year, which was more noticeable in the second half of the year – the staff situation, reduction in admissions, and the lack of fuel resulting in a reduction of buses, causing problems for staff getting back to work from days off.

The past year found us often running out of basic medicines – a thing that we never saw in the past. A patient would come back from the dispensary with o/s (out of stock) written beside the prescription, something we often saw on the government hospital cards, but this year was the first time I experienced it at Mbuma. However, during the year we sent for one or two drug orders to ECHOUK and that has been a help. The general treasurer also pays our account at home which, although not reflected in our medicine bills, counts as a donation. Still, the cost of essential drugs is high and, although we receive a government grant for all our recurrent expenditure (a big help), we all too often exceed this amount and are, therefore, grateful to the Mission for extra help. Last year the recurrent expenditure grant was \$5,000,000, but with rising costs the actual amount given by the government was over \$6,000,000. We also received a photocopier from a government grant worth \$1,600,000. To

give you an idea of how prices have risen in the past year we have been allocated for the year 2003, \$21,392,000 for recurrent expenditure with a further \$1,500,000 for drugs and dressings.

A new staff house with six bedrooms is nearing completion and has been kindly provided by Oikonomos.

We were happy to receive visitors from the home Church, both at Ingwenya and Mbuma and appreciated the help they have given. As there are only a few of us on the Mission who have come back to help after retiring, we felt the benefit of having young people around and would like to encourage the young in the Church to come out, even for two years. "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." There is an open door for the Gospel and, although there are many disappointments there is also a lot of encouragement. We need a doctor, nurses, teachers, and those who could help us with motor mechanics and building, etc. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

In conclusion, we would like to thank all who have supported us in prayer and other ways throughout the year and ask that you continue this support and the part you are playing in spreading the good news of the Gospel in our Missions in Africa.

## **BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. Z. Mazvabo**

THE Bulawayo congregation is made up of Lobengula and Nkulumane. It is a growing congregation which needs to be looked after, considering that it is in a big town where they meet with many denominations.

At the time of writing they are in the process of calling a probationer to settle among them as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel. This congregation has gone without a minister for a long time, but now in the Lord's providence, two young men have completed their studies for the holy ministry and the Bulawayo congregation, as mentioned, has approached one who has encouraged them to carry on with the call. The people are all very excited about this and many joyful expressions can be read on their faces. This is something the whole congregation has been praying for – a pastor to be settled over them – and they feel that their prayers have been answered.

Mr. Zikhali and Mr. Jubane are the two ruling elders, but due to the expansion of the area there is a need for additional elders.

The manse at Lobengula is being renovated but a more convenient arrangement would be the building of a new one.

The people who live in town are not spared the menace of the devastating famine, caused by lack of rain. Yes, they have a regular income, but there is no food available for purchase. Sometimes those who have are worse off than

those who have not, because to the latter is given, while the former are left to wander hopelessly in search of food. At this point in time we should register our thankfulness to the people of Scotland and the Netherlands and others, who have given of their substance in cash and in kind to help us out of our predicament. May the Lord grant a blessing upon them.

It has been raining heavily during the past week, but these are late and for many the famine continues.

We pray that our new minister will be long with us and that the good seed of the Word will be watered by the Spirit.

## **BUILDING AND TRANSPORT REPORT**

**Mr. J. B. Mpofu**

### ***Building***

IN opening my report I think of the words of the Apostle in 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

More work has been done on repairs on the Mission stations with repairs of walls, ceilings and floors. We also added verandahs to some old Mission houses which did not have them, using secondhand materials from the demolished dormitory.

We are very thankful to the Oikonomos Foundation for their help in the construction of a staff house at Mbuma Mission, a classroom at Lutsha School and a teacher's cottage at Zenka Mission.

The girls' dormitory at Ingwenya is now at roof level and we hope very soon it will be finished and ready for use.

We also started on the manse at Ingwenya, as previously planned, but because of the lack of cement – a great problem in our country – work has stopped here in order to use the remaining cement to finish the dormitory.

The work is much disturbed by this shortage and if it continues we shall have to cease building work. However, on the whole, the work is continuing very well on the various Mission stations. We were much disturbed on our own Mission when a new water tank fell from its stand and crashed to the ground. We asked the makers of the tank to see what had happened. Apparently there was not much that could be done to help us, which was disappointing as the Mission paid them a lot of money for the tank.

We thank all in Scotland and Holland who have helped us with building and transport, especially our friends in Mbuma Zending.

### ***Transport***

Our transport has remained much the same on the Mission, apart from a few problems. The cost of repairing cars is very high these days and it is, therefore, not easy to keep them running well.

We are sorry to report that after employing a mechanic to save on the cost of garage repairs, we found that we were deceived by him and he has been dismissed.

Our transport is as follows. The Mazda, used by Rev. Mzamo, is still in good condition. Dr. Benschop's Mazda has done very well, though it needs replacement if we can get funds. The Mazda Ambulance is still roadworthy. The Jimbie Lorry is in good running order but continues with door problems associated with the handles which are not very strong. They have been repaired time and time again and are still not working properly. The window winders also are not working.

The old Defender Landrover is still much used around the Mission and it has a very good engine in a very old body.

The Mazda used by the Building and Transport manager is still in very good condition. The Venture, used by staff at John Tallach Secondary School, is still giving good service. The Mazda school bus remains in good condition and the Leyland Committee still serves all our Mission Stations very well. The bus donated by the friends at Ingwenya is saving the school funds in its use in trips for the schoolchildren. It is also used for the transport of schoolchildren at the opening and closing days of the school.

The Mazda, used by the Bulawayo office, is still running well and the Ford Corria is still of good use. The Thembiso Combie is in very good condition and the Mazda, used by the superintendent, is still roadworthy. Rev. Mazvabo's roadworthy Mazda continues to provide safe trips. The old school bus, once used to transport people of our Bulawayo congregation to church on Sabbath, can no longer be used.

We have problems with all petrol cars on the Mission because of the lack of fuel and, therefore, cannot make use of them.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

## **KENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. K. M. Watkins**

THIS is my second report from the Kenya Mission. We are very conscious that these are still formative years for this work, but we hope that a sound foundation is being laid for a stable and settled Church among the Kisii people.

Sabbath days continue to be an encouragement to us. Numbers can vary, but usually between 50 and 70 people answer each week's Catechism question, some in English and others in Ekegusii. Many in the congregation have little or no English, and we have done everything we can to encourage them to learn in their mother tongue. This has contributed greatly to the increased numbers. Morning and afternoon services continue to be well attended: some 350 on

average in the morning, and towards 250 in the afternoon. We have added an extra speaker to the public address system. This is placed outside on the verandah, where a number of people sit because there is not enough room inside. On the whole, attention to the Word of God has been maintained, and the people's attitude to the worship of God shows a degree of reverence otherwise unheard of in this part of the world. The five Sabbath school classes are full to overflowing. We cannot meet outside because at that time of the afternoon it often rains, and we have run out of suitable space for additional classes. One feels that this part of the work could expand much more, although it would need suitable teachers as well as space.

The library is well used by a number of mainly younger people. We would like to see an interest in reading among the adults, but redeeming the time in that way is not part of the Kisii way of life. How much they miss! How weak their understanding as a result! On the other hand, a particularly pleasing development has been the increasing numbers doing the Scripture and Catechism exercises published in the *Young People's Magazine*. Recently I was asked for paper for 52 people who wanted to do these. The singing class continues each week. This has proved necessary with the constant introduction of new and revised psalms. A new Ekegusii reading class has begun for women from the congregation who cannot read. A dozen or so women have attended regularly and some of them have made real progress and can now read enough to sing the psalms and follow the Scriptures being read. We continue to teach a catechism class at the local primary school. It is a cause of joy and hope to hear so many young ones reciting these precious truths word perfectly. Home visits are frequently an encouraging experience. Although I am recovering steadily from the heart virus which started at the end of the summer, I am still not able to do as much visiting as I wish.

Last year we said that "translation and publication will form a major focus of the Mission's efforts in the coming years". This has proved to be the case. A translation team has been formed. With two Africans and one European working full time, much good work has been done. They work in close liaison with me and I try to give as much of my time as possible to this most important aspect of the Mission's Gospel efforts. We were very thankful to a local group in Holland connected with Mbuma Zending when they provided us with funds for purchasing an advanced, heavy-duty laser printer. Reliable printing is difficult to find in Kenya, so this has enabled us to do our own printing.

Two editions of the psalm book, with much more accurate translations and an increasing quantity of psalms, have been printed over the year. The first half of the *Shorter Catechism* has been thoroughly revised and corrected. Arriving at suitable theological terms in a very limited language has exercised our minds a great deal. A number of the late Margaret MacLeod's letters to "J" are in the final stages of editing and it is hoped to print these in booklet form in the near future. Other translation projects include parts of Joseph Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, a book on the right and wrong use of the tongue, and some children's books. A tentative beginning has even been made on the

Bible itself: the Gospel according to Mark. The Trinitarian Bible Society kindly agreed to print *Words of Life* calendars in Ekegusii. Most of the 2003 verses had to be changed considerably, and we have just found the same with 2004 also. We were able to distribute almost 5,000 calendars, and these were gladly received by the people.

We continue our attempts to learn the Ekegusii language, but it is hard to find the time necessary for real study and it is easy to become discouraged. However, when we consider where we were a year ago, we have to acknowledge that there has been some progress.

I have had a number of trips to Zimbabwe for Presbytery meetings and communion seasons. It has been good to know that in Kenya we are part of the wider Church. As I write this report I am in Zimbabwe, in the midst of various Presbytery meetings for inducting and ordaining two men to the ministry of the Gospel. How thankful we are for this throughout the African mission, and in Kenya how we long for the day when similar things might be happening among us too.

Within the last month we have been pleased to welcome another European nurse to our clinic staff, Miss Gilia van Wijngaarden. We are especially thankful for her coming at this time, as our European nurses are being called on in turn to spend some months in Zimbabwe, to help the hospital at Mbuma until the staff shortage there is relieved.

You will find separate reports from the Administrator about the temporal side of the mission and from the Matron about the clinic. I am thankful to them both, and indeed for all the labours of Europeans and Africans together. In my Gospel work, I am thankful to those who have interpreted for me in and out of the pulpit, and to Mr. Mackenzie who has shouldered the burden of the spiritual work during my absences. We wish to thank all those who contribute to this work by their prayers and gifts. Above all we acknowledge the kindness of the Lord who in His mercy has extended the offer of free grace to the Kisii people for another year. Our desire in this part of the kingdom of Christ is to see the day spoken of in Psalm 102:13: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."

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

**Mr. H. Mackenzie**

IT is with thankful acknowledgement to the Most High that over the past year the Kenya Mission has experienced many tokens for good in the furtherance of the Gospel in Sengera. With the spiritual work continuing apace the supporting role of meeting the temporal needs of the Mission has involved some interesting new developments.

A refurbished administration block consisting of four offices to accommodate the minister, the translation team, the office staff and the administrator, has been established above the store and workshops. Each room is equipped with computers linked via a local area network which allows efficient resource sharing and information interchange. A computerised accounting system has been introduced and, now that the members of the office staff are trained in its use, it provides fast and accurate information about all aspects of the Mission finances.

Our staff training programme has continued throughout the year with two carpenters, two vehicle mechanics and one electrician following relevant courses in order to achieve formal qualifications in their particular trade. Other members of staff are undertaking informal work-placed training related to individual and specific needs. It is hoped, in the near future, to extend the Mission training accommodation and facilities so that both European and African staff can have a better learning environment in which to pursue their particular educational needs, such as Language Study (Ekegusii or English), Bible Classes, Health Care, Computer Applications, etc.

A camera surveillance system has been put in place to increase security around the compound. Not long after its inception the internal system recorded a burglar entering the administrator's office at 3 a.m. one morning to steal money. The offender turned out to be a Mission nightshift guard who had been suspected of stealing for some time but it could not be proved until he was caught on camera.

One of the biggest projects undertaken during the year and still ongoing is the introduction of a new water heating system for each residence. The system uses purpose-built wood burning boilers which provide clean hot water to each home within 20 minutes of lighting the fuel. The boilers use much less wood than the previous system, thus saving time and money.

The provision of a mobile telephone network to many parts of Kenya including Kisii has at last enabled us to overcome the greatest source of frustration in our external communications. We are now no longer dependent on unreliable landlines either for voice or email communication. The internal telephone network has been extended to all the essential locations of the Mission, including residences, the canteen and the clinic delivery room, with also a link to the external network.

The past year saw the full implementation of our vehicle replacement programme. We now have a new ambulance, a reconditioned pick-up, a minister's vehicle for pastoral duties and a general purpose double-cab. All four vehicles are diesel variants of the Toyota Hilux which means we have only one model of vehicle to maintain or repair as required. The Mission mechanics are now well trained in this type of vehicle which reduces our dependence on outside agencies which in the past have proved costly or unreliable. The road improvements between the Mission main gate and Sengera market have also reduced the wear and tear on these vehicles, making passage during even the heaviest of rain relatively easy.

The acquisition of the land adjacent to the Mission purchased in November 1997, but never handed over by the seller, is nearing a satisfactory conclusion. With the support of the District Commissioner's office and the local chief we have reached a position where both parties are being formally directed to fulfil their side of the purchase contract.

The Foreign Missions Committee have agreed to a feasibility study being conducted on possible ways forward in supporting the primary school located at the bottom of the Mission compound. Around 300 children attend the school and, apart from paying the wages of one full-time teacher and running a Catechism class every Friday morning, there is no direct contact or involvement with the school. It is to be hoped that the opportunities presented to the Mission in this area will be tempered by learning from past mistakes and building on support which can be met by the limited resources of the Mission. The completion of the feasibility study depends on further investigation and research.

In conclusion, I wish to record my grateful thanks to all the friends of the Kenya Mission, known and unknown to us, at home and abroad, who have over the years faithfully and generously continued to support the Cause of Christ in this remote part of the African continent. 2 Corinthians 9:7.

**KENYA MISSION**  
**OMOREMBE HEALTH CENTRE REPORT**  
**Sister P. Van de Ridder**

WE acknowledge, that for another year, the Lord has been mindful of us in our work in and around the Clinic. By now the Clinic is well established. Some of what is to follow may seem repetitive but it is necessary to keep you in the picture of our services.

- **Outpatient Department**

Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. After 5 p.m. and on Sabbath there is an "on call service", which is regularly made use of. We have two beds in the O.P.D. They are frequently occupied by patients who need short duration observation and/or treatment. Also patients who come in the evening or night hours, or from a long distance, often make use of this facility.

- **Ambulance Service** available 24 hours.

- **Staff**

*European –*  
Sister C. Renes  
Sister G. L. Ringelberg  
Sister P. Van de Ridder

*African –*

- 1 full time Kenyan Staff Nurse/Midwife
- 1 part time Kenyan Staff Nurse/Midwife
- 2 qualified Laboratory Staff, both part time
- 1 full time Clerk
- 5 full time Supportive Staff
- 2 Domestic Cleaners, both part time

The part time Staff Nurse/Midwife mainly assists in doing night duties when one of the European Staff is on leave.

We are pleased to report that one of our Support Staff was accepted for the three-and-a-half-year Nurse/Midwife Training. She started last September in the Medical Training College in Kisii, and appreciates it very much that the Mission is sponsoring her. She has accepted the condition that, after finishing her training, D.V., she will work for the Mission for some years.

Attending to our O.P.D. clients mainly involves us in treating:

- **Malaria**

We usually see a rise in malaria cases from January to March and again from June to August, depending on the weather. This past year we encountered a real outbreak, especially during the months June and July, as the following statistics show. We improvised on bed space and many nights we were able to accommodate four to five patients. Although it made us very busy, it was gratifying to see so many children and adults recovering well for comparatively little money.

The statistics also show that we had to transfer quite a number to other hospitals. These are cases with complicated malaria and severe anemia. Both conditions are due frequently to waiting too long before coming for treatment, caused by not having money or going to wrong clinics, who care more about money than about the welfare of their patients. Apart from treating, we need much time and patience to instruct the mothers how to look after their children when having fever and malaria. For example, mothers come with children having extremely high fever, all wrapped up in warm clothes or blankets. We explain why we remove their clothes. When we come back to them one hour or so later to check their temperature, we find them all wrapped up again! After this, more instruction follows.

- **S.T.D. (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)**

We again attended to quite a number of these patients. Their immoral behaviour costs them quite a lot of money. Husband and wife (sometimes, wives) often need to have repeated treatments with expensive antibiotics. For this sort of costly treatment money is usually available, whereas for minor treatments money often presents a big problem. Recently a 15-year-old unmarried girl delivered in our maternity and was discovered to

have syphilis. This shows the severity of the problem. There are many more cases like that.

- **AIDS**

As is known world-wide, there is a lot of AIDS in African countries. We know there are many cases around us and yet comparatively few come to us. The ones who do attend come mostly from far away. It is obvious that they do not want to be known in their own area. Statistics show that there is a high percentage in secondary schools and students.

In view of all this we are in the process of organising an AIDS Teaching Programme. Our community is teeming with Primary and Secondary Schools. To begin with we will aim mainly at Secondary Schools. Our goal is behaviour change based on the Word of God.

- **Maternity**

People like our services, especially as mothers get a small present for their baby. Hence our numbers are still showing some increase. We sometimes come across complicated cases which we promptly and successfully transfer with our ambulance to hospitals that are not too far away.

- **Deaths**

The number of deaths mainly refer to stillbirths and not to adults or children.

### CLINIC STATISTICS FOR 2002

	General Outpatients	Malaria Cases	STD Cases	Ante Natal Cases	Deliveries	Stillbirths/ Perinatals	Referral by Ambulance	Other Referrals	Lab Tests
Jan	369	230	47	150	49	5	5	16	328
Feb	286	159	41	123	34	0	4	8	273
Mar	314	185	40	109	45	0	8	4	248
Apr	306	164	38	146	24	1	23	8	244
May	280	154	41	149	41	0	6	11	245
Jun	564	484	20	147	40	3	16	41	458
Jul	609	495	19	163	56	3	11	35	472
Aug	298	151	26	136	48	1	28	7	251
Sep	231	103	28	148	53	2	2	9	305
Oct	237	79	27	155	36	1	2	9	137
Nov	196	91	33	128	31	1	4	1	132
Dec	234	105	20	129	37	2	4	9	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>3924</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>1683</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>3233</b>
2001	4078	2174	576	1408	362	18	113	111	3278

### **Other Activities**

We European sisters are all involved in Sabbath School teaching. Recently a successful Ekegusii reading class, of one hour per week, has started for some of the illiterate women from the congregation.

In conclusion, we again commend our work among the Kisii people to the praying people at home. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

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

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

MINISTERIAL supply in the home Church is thin on the ground at best and it is no easy matter for the Committee to obtain supply for our congregations overseas. We are thankful, however, that a number of our ministers were in a position to help most of those congregations. This is no small task for these ministers and we are indebted to them. We believe that our congregations abroad understand our difficulty and that we do our best to keep supply in circulation among them. In the absence of Pastors for most of our congregations abroad we are grateful to the elders and readers who readily help by conducting services. Were it not for their assistance it would be impossible to continue the work of the Gospel in certain parts of the Church. We reiterate the often quoted but heartfelt sentiment: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

Rev. John MacLeod was able to supply Singapore for three Sabbaths in July. This was much appreciated by the Singapore congregation and Kirk Session as well as by the Committee. At the Singapore communion in December, when the Rev. J. van Dorp presided, there was one new communicant. Also there was an election and ordination of elders. It is hoped that in the not too distant future the congregation will have sufficient elders from among themselves to make it unnecessary for them to depend on assessor elders being appointed by the Presbytery.

By the time this report comes to the Synod it is expected that the Rev. Neil Ross will have returned from Church deputation work for six weeks in Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, God willing. At the time of writing it is expected that he will assist at two communion seasons as well as conducting the usual Sabbath, weekday and some additional services in several places. His visit is very much looked forward to by our people in those parts.

Rev. D. A. Ross visited Chesley and Texas in October/November and there were communions in both places. There were no new members. However, there was the baptism of the infant of the Ervin family. It is a solemn but happy

occasion when children are received into the visible Church by the sacrament of baptism, and with the promise of God to the parents, “. . . to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Genesis 17:7).

The Interim Moderators of the Kirk Sessions of Chesley and Richmond have visited these congregations as enabled. One such visit was made by the Rev. Neil Ross to the Richmond Congregation in January for almost two weeks, when he preached on Sabbath and weekday, baptised an infant of the Metcalfe family, and visited the homes of the congregation. His visit was well received and much appreciated by the people there. At the time of writing it is intended that the Rev. G. G. Hutton will visit Chesley for three Sabbaths in April when there will be the usual communion season and an election of elders. Mr. Hutton is unable to visit Vancouver. It is necessary at times, when congregations are not in a position to pay the fares of visiting ministers, that the fare be paid from the Dominions and Overseas Fund.

We very much regret that we have not been able to send supply to Vancouver. Those there who remain steadfast in the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church, continue to worship together. As yet the congregational property is faithfully and well cared for by Mr. John MacLeod to whom the Church is much indebted.

In February and March, Rev. D. A. Ross and Mr. Lucio Strata, once again visited Fornaci di Barga, Italy, for one Sabbath only. As well as the Sabbath services, we conducted a few weekday services. We also visited relations of Mr. Strata in Stabio, Casella, near Genoa, and gave two short addresses from the Word of God, something that was not possible some years ago.

Since about a year ago sermons are being read twice on the Lord's Day to the little group there by one of the Campani family, Mr. Dario Campani. This appears to be very much appreciated by the group. Previous to this, they had only the reading of the Word of God at their meetings. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining suitable sermons, but Mr. Lucio Strata is doing his utmost to keep sermons supplied to them. Some of these are taken from the Internet and where necessary are edited by Mr. Strata. We are much indebted to him for this and other work he does in connection with the mission in Italy. If the work of regular sermon reading is to continue it will be necessary to spend considerable time in translating suitable English sermons into Italian. We hope that in God's providence a way will be opened to do this essential work.

Our friends in Fornaci di Barga continue to be visited by other preachers. While they do appreciate our visits very much, they have received on occasions some who professed to be evangelical, but at the same time they strongly resisted certain wrong teachings from some of those preachers. However, among other things, the group continues to disregard the biblical requirement for headaddress in public worship. Nevertheless, their appreciation of our visit was expressed by their liberal donation, of over £1,200 to our Church for the work of the Gospel among them. Our hope and prayer is that the people there will come to be settled once again in the Free Presbyterian

Church, endeavouring to follow fully the doctrine, worship and practice required by the Most High.

In the goodness of God, the group in Odessa was received into the Free Presbyterian Church as a congregation at the last Synod, and was given the status of a preaching station under the supervision of the Western Presbytery. It is hoped, God willing, that there will be the first communion season there in May. The work of the Gospel continues among them, but as there is another report about Eastern Europe, there is no need to say more in this report.

In concluding this report, we observe that the great objective in preaching the Word of God is not only to declare that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners but also to sound an alarm against false gospels and all crafty devices of the devil to captivate sinners. This we believe is the standard that is being maintained by grace in our congregations abroad. May the Lord give the desired and often prayed for increase.

“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)

## **AUSTRALIAN REPORT**

**Rev. E. A. Rayner**

IT was our privilege to be across to the Synod this year and to have contact with the ministers and various congregations we were able to visit. This strengthens our bonds when we are so isolated from the main centre of the Church. I was thankful to be able to assist at two communions and supply some of our congregations, especially in Skye, where I had not been since the 1970s. Our bonds are likewise strengthened when visiting ministers supply us from Scotland. We look forward to Rev. and Mrs. N. Ross coming in the new year, D.V. Little did we know that Mrs. Rayner was suffering from an angina problem when we left for Synod but it became more and more evident that all was not well as we continued our time abroad. On arriving home she was given various tests followed by an angioplasty procedure which has proved successful, for which we are thankful.

As reported last time, the Sydney congregation sold its block of land and has now purchased a very suitable manse not far from the church. It requires the addition of a garage and patio, now in the planning stage, and it is hoped this work will be completed early in the new year. It is providential that we had a

block of land which proved a good investment. From the proceeds the congregation was able to purchase the manse. This was done before the prices escalated out of reach. Property prices have dramatically increased all over Australia during the year. There is much to be thankful for regarding these temporal arrangements. However, the funds are now used and since the size of the congregation has diminished, as reported last time, it is no longer possible for Sydney to provide fares for visiting ministers who are not deputies paid by the Dominions and Overseas Committee. I can only emphasise again this year the help needed from supply prepared to spend some time in Sydney. I am sure that if a deputy were available that the new manse would prove most suitable accommodation for himself and his wife.

There was the usual communion season in Sydney during the year which was held early owing to my proposed visit to Scotland. I was thankful for the assistance of the Rev. David Campbell. There were no new communicants. There was one baptism, Aidan van Praag.

This year was the centenary of the Clarence Valley TBS Auxiliary which I understand is the oldest that is still operating since its institution. In better days it was more widely supported by other churches who also provided collectors, a tradition since its inception. Nowadays the society is more or less confined to our own denomination, apart from individuals outside our congregation who still give donations.

The usual communion seasons were held in Grafton with the assistance of Rev. van Dorp. There were no new communicants but one baptism, Cassandra van Praag. Some of our young folk have now left school and will be seeking further education and job training. How we need those raised up from among them who would take the place of the fathers. There are a number in the congregation who are now quite aged, including our elder, Richmond Kidd. This year has been the driest on record with some horrendous bush fires. There were houses destroyed on the outskirts of Grafton. Severe water restrictions are in place in most towns and cities in this part of the country. How needful we are that the Lord would open the windows of heaven to pour out a blessing to supply spiritual as well as temporal needs and that the Lord would revive His work in the midst of the years and in wrath remember mercy.

## **NEW ZEALAND REPORT**

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

It was a sad day on the 15th January 2002 when Mary Haringa called to collect her grandmother Molly van Dorp from the manse. Molly had lived over 50 years in Gisborne; 55 years to be more exact. Her house at 7 Herbert Road had been a hospitable home for Church deputies and migrants coming to New Zealand and later also for the Lord's people at communion seasons. At first her

house was the church besides being a dwelling place, when she conducted worship there with her children, George and Barbara, and later some others joined her as well. Before a church building was built there were occasions when about 30 people would gather in her lounge for public worship. Now the time had come to shift to Australia at the age of 81 years, so that she could be closer to her daughter in her old age. Considering that Molly was a foundation member of the Free Presbyterian congregation in Gisborne and that she would never miss being in the public means of grace if she could, her departure from here was a sad occasion. Yet, no doubt she will be remembering the Church here every day of the week at the throne of grace.

Another departure here from the Cause of God on earth this past year was Ted Christensen, Elder in Auckland. He passed away, we believe to his eternal inheritance, on Sabbath, 2nd June 2002, at the ripe old age of 86 years. In one sense, he was lost to the public means of grace, sooner than was necessary. This came about through a strange view that he developed. Immediately he entered Elmwood, the old people's home, where he spent his last years, he considered himself an invalid. This deprived the Auckland congregation of his public prayers – not of his private exercises, however, of petitioning the Lord concerning His own Cause. This remained a matter of deep concern to him right to the end.

A relatively young person that passed away in the Auckland congregation, also in the last year, was Mrs. Cathrine Haringa, at the age of 56 years, after a long illness. Her maiden name was MacKenzie and she was a sister of Calvin, Elder in Sydney. She battled with many temptations but a few months before her death she got considerable encouragement from Isaiah 49:16: "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me." Her assurance markedly increased the last week of her life when she was overheard at times saying, "wonderful", "precious", and "no condemnation, no matter how many sins". Also evidently with reference to Satan's attacks, "he is evil to the last". The end came on Saturday, 24th August 2002.

It is a matter for thankfulness that there are corresponding additions occurring through natural increase and migration. The Auckland, Wellington and Gisborne congregations have experienced small measures of strengthening in this way. The great need, however, is the blessing we have endeavoured to pray for on the day of humiliation and prayer, i.e. the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is then that there will be the desired spiritual fruits of the Spirit of grace and supplications with the corresponding downfall of the kingdom of darkness.

A recent radio interview highlighted the strength and assertiveness of Satan's domain. The person interviewed was Professor Lloyd Geering. The reason for the interview was the launch of his latest book with the title, *Christianity without God*. It is quite clear that this man, who boasts of still being a minister of the Presbyterian Church of NZ, has given up any faith in God as manifested in the Bible. One question the interviewer put was: "Professor Geering, do you pray?" The answer was: "I have given that up long ago." Besides promoting his book in NZ, he spent six weeks in the USA

personally publicising his work of darkness. The results of this evil activity can be gauged in the de-Christianising effects on some who study his philosophy. Someone invited one of these unfortunate persons to a church service. The invitation was declined because the person had studied under Professor Geering.

The Tauranga congregation continues to meet every Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper was dispensed there for the first time on Sabbath, 3rd February 2002. Ten persons were present at most of the services; four were visitors. The usual services commenced on Thursday. Although there are three male communicant members, a weekly prayer meeting has not yet been established. The eight worshippers that gather here most Sabbaths are mainly elderly persons and if the congregation is to survive it is essential that young families be raised to carry on the witness.

The situation appears more promising in Wellington where the whole congregation of over twenty persons consists of young people. However, our encouragement must come from the Head of the Church who has promised that ,*"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time"* (Isaiah 60:22).

## **SINGAPORE REPORT**

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

IN Singapore the services are conducted by Mr. Bernard Yong and Mr. Tham Wing Keong. There are two services on the Sabbath and a prayer meeting on the Wednesday evening. The Sabbath morning service is held in a conference room of the Bayview Hotel and the other services in a room of the Bible House. This latter venue has its disadvantages even though its purpose is to provide accommodation for church services. The disadvantages stem from noise factors, which sometimes have their source outside the building but more usually the nuisance comes from the inside of the building. Some groups that profess to worship God may do so in a very noisy manner and this can make it difficult for others in adjacent rooms to concentrate. For that reason some thought has been given to re-locate the Sabbath evening service also to the Bayview Hotel, although the costs will be higher and may prove prohibitive.

The congregation are appreciative of the supply given when deputies stop off in Singapore or when they are sent out to Singapore as happened this past year when the Rev. John MacLeod was sent out for a period of three Sabbaths. Such visits are necessary if they are at all possible for the personal strengthening of the members and also for the opportunity it affords to encourage outsiders to come and hear the Gospel. Whilst the gathering has been stable over the past year our desire is that others also would come to appreciate the pure Gospel. At present we cannot claim growth numerically

but we trust we can lay claim to soundness in the faith. The congregation who previously were an independent church are now thoroughly integrated in the Presbyterian system of this denomination and known as the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (Singapore).

The Lord's Supper was dispensed for the third time on the first Sabbath of December. On this occasion, Peter Vermeulen and Cornell van Kralingen attended as assessor Elders. One person sat at the Lord's Table for the first time. The solemn separation of the communicants from the body of the congregation and the use of the communal cup by the participants seated at the Lord's Table, are features almost or completely foreign to other Singaporean worshippers as far as I know. The most usual practice in other denominations is to pass the elements through the pews for those present to partake of which seems to encourage communicating by unworthy communicants.

At any rate, Christianity in this large city republic is at very low ebb in common with the general condition of the world. This is very evident in the low standard of Sabbath observance amongst the professed followers of Christ, most of whom see no inconsistency in making other people work on the Lord's Day unnecessarily when they make use of the public transport facilities or dine out in restaurants. I personally witnessed the unsatisfactory nature of this attitude when I took the services of the Auckland congregation on my way back from the Grafton communion. In the evening service there were two couples from Singapore present in the worship. In conversation after the service I found that one couple are members of the Bible Presbyterian Church and the other couple have their membership in the Pilgrim Covenant Church. The latter congregation are the worshippers who formed themselves into a congregation nearly three years ago under the guidance of Free Church ministers. When I asked where they were worshipping in the morning I found that this Sabbath morning they had booked out of their accommodation in the Bay of Islands and had pursued a journey of over four hours to come to Auckland. The consequence of such lax views is that much of the Sabbath is lost to the purpose for which it is given.

There was a measure of encouragement in that some persons attended some of the services that had not previously been present in the worship of this denomination. What is probably most of a promising nature is the fact that the Singapore congregation is a young community and those who have adhered to the witness of this denomination are fully in agreement with the principles involved.

Following the thanksgiving service on the Monday, the Kirk Session was again constituted and the two men who had been elected to office in April 2002 were ordained to the Eldership in the Singapore congregation. Thus it appears that the interim Kirk Session have gone as far as is possible in the present circumstances to carry into effect the Synod resolution of May 2000, i.e. "to regularize the situation".

What would fully regularize the situation is the settlement of a pastor in their midst and prayer for this ought to be offered up according to the Saviour's

directions: “*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest*” (Matthew 9:37, 38). Meanwhile it is considered helpful if the Synod would constitute them as a Church Extension Charge. This would open up the channels of assistance should a person be raised up in their midst. May the day be hastened when many labourers will be raised up.

## **EASTERN EUROPE REPORT**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

THE Synod decided last year that the Odessa group be given the status of a preaching station under the supervision of the Western Presbytery. The Western Presbytery therefore appointed a Kirk Session to look after the spiritual affairs of the congregation in Odessa.

It was an occasion the Odessa congregation longed and prayed for over a considerable period. It was therefore with much gladness and thankfulness of heart that they returned to Odessa to tell their friends the good news.

Good news it is to the godly when a group of people takes a serious interest in the Reformed faith, wishing heartily to conform to the doctrine, worship and practice stipulated by the Word of God. We hope and pray that by the grace of God they will continue steadfast and unmovable in these teachings of the Word of God.

It had been planned since the last Synod that three visits would have been made to Odessa but because of unexpected circumstances one of these was not possible. At the time of writing this report it is planned, God willing, that there be a visit in April and May, when the Kirk Session will be present to administer the first communion in the congregation.

Bible distribution continues as in the past. The Ukrainian Kulish Bible is mostly distributed. Last year 1,000 copies have been given to those who requested them. Also a considerable amount of Russian Bibles have been distributed, including a number from the Church office in Glasgow. We had to employ Mrs. Catherine King to assist Miss Norma Morrison in this work. New Testaments and Gospels of John were also distributed. Also a large amount of literature has been distributed, including copies of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, *The Shorter Catechism*, *The Mother's Catechism*, *The Apostolic Church – Which is It?* and a large selection of leaflets and Gospel tracts.

The Bibles and literature are distributed free of charge, but the recipients are told that a donation towards postage would be appreciated. A number of people have responded to this appeal.

It is the mind of the men in Odessa, Mr. Ogor Zadoroshney and Dmytryy Levysky, that we continue with the policy of free distribution because most of people are not really in a position to purchase a Bible.

Those who request literature are first given a *Shorter Catechism* along with some small leaflets. Then, if an interest is shown, a *Confession of Faith* is given. It is encouraging that a number of people from different parts of the Ukraine take an interest in doctrines that were not previously appreciated.

Our stocks of the Ukrainian Kulish Bible are beginning to run low. This version is greatly appreciated in central Ukraine and there is quite a demand for it, especially from older people. In the eastern part of the Ukraine the request is mainly for Russian Bibles. In the west a large section of the population is Hungarian and the requests are for Hungarian Bibles. We seek to follow this work by pleading to the God of heaven, who alone has power to bless His Word, to the edification of His people and the unconverted.

We continue with the work of translating Rev. R. Shaw's exposition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The translation of the whole book has been done by Mrs. Tanya Ball who resides in England. However, at the moment of writing the report, we are in the midst of editing the translation. This is being done by Mr. Dmytryy Levytskyy, and Miss Margaret Campbell. The cost of this translation so far is £2,280. Over and above this there will be the cost of printing, which is expected to cost in the region of £4,000. It is hoped that the book will be ready for printing by about mid summer. This book is, of course, an excellent exposition of, and companion to, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

We have also begun to translate the volume of Rev. Donald MacFarlane's sermons. A Mr. Andre Schaposchnikov, who lives in the Ukraine, is doing this translation. While there is a need for books on doctrine there is also much need for devotional works, so we hope to do more of this kind of translation work in the future.

Sermons are read at public worship in Odessa on Sabbath and at prayer meetings. A book of McCheyne's sermons was gifted by Ds. Taverne, Holland, some time ago and these have been much appreciated. There is a great shortage of suitable sermons for reading and we look forward to Mr. MacFarlane's sermons in Russian being available.

The only visit to Odessa to deliver aid was undertaken in June by Mr. Edward Ross and myself. A large quantity of medicine, nurses uniforms, hospital equipment, furnishings and clothing was distributed to the Odessa Children's Hospital. The medicines were purchased while the other items were donated, mostly from Highland Care Trust, Raigmore Hospital, to which we are much indebted.

We were notified about seven months after delivery that the medicines were impounded by the customs. Had we been notified earlier it is possible that they would have been released by now. In our continuing to do all we can to have the medicines released, the customs have suggested a way this can be done, but since it involved underhand activities we are endeavouring by honest means to obtain the medicines.

We have also visited the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe, Romania, with a load of aid. This consisted of the usual items

of aid, which included quantities of scriptures in the Hungarian and Russian languages, and 15,000 *Words of Life* calendars. We appreciate very much that Messrs. George MacAskill and Alasdair Ross used their holiday time to make this visit.

We usually try to make a visit to this Church once a year, which appreciates obtaining the Word of God and aid for those in difficult circumstances. However, as yet we have not found a group in Romania or any other country as in the Ukraine where they heartily embrace doctrine, worship and practice as based on the Word of God. While saying so we are conscious that there are those whom we meet who have come to deeply appreciate sound doctrine and we hope that they will go on to appreciate the worship and practice required of worshippers by the Most High.

Finally, we have to thank all those who in any way have contributed to the work of the Gospel in the Ukraine. There is the Trinitarian Bible Society which for several years has given much assistance by granting thousands of calendars to the Ukraine, Hungary and Romania. Last year 15,000 *Words of Life* calendars were taken by our truck to Romania and 7,500 were posted to the Congregation in Odessa. We thank the ladies who sort clothing in the Inverness Free Presbyterian Church Hall. As in the past, so in the present, we do appreciate this much needed help, as well as to those who give good clothing and other items for bringing to the hospital in Odessa. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Alistair MacRae and Mr. George MacAskill for giving a lecture in Inverness about their visits to Eastern Europe, Rev. G. G. Hutton for the use of the hall, and not least to those who have over the years continued to give the much-needed money for the continuance of this work.

In all these activities in connection with the work of the Gospel in Ukraine we look to the Most High to give the increase. Truly, as Christ said to His disciples: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

**REPORT OF DEPUTY TO THE RICHMOND,  
TEXAS, CONGREGATION**  
**Rev. Neil M. Ross**

BOTH the people of our congregation in Richmond, Texas, and I are indebted to the Dominions and Overseas Committee for paying my fare and thus enabling me to visit the congregation during the last two weeks of January 2003. My visit was in my capacity as the Interim Moderator of the Richmond Kirk Session.

I was privileged to preach to up to 35 of our people in the Richmond church on several occasions, and to administer the sacrament of baptism to the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Metcalfe. The congregation was pleased to have

with it for one Sabbath another visitor from Scotland in the person of a young lady from Glasgow. I took the opportunity also to conduct a weekday service in a rented hall in Santa Fe (when the number of our local people who gathered was increased by a few visitors who were invited or dropped in).

There are 25 to 30 young people in the Richmond congregation, half of whom are children. It is clearly obvious that the parents there are conscientiously concerned about bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I found the people of the congregation to be in good heart on the whole, although, like other congregations, they have their own difficulties. Not least, for example, there is the big problem of the long distances all the families have to travel to the approximately central place of meeting in Richmond. I was pleased that I was able to converse with them freely, and I hope profitably, in their own homes, and also to have a useful meeting in the church one evening with the men of the congregation, and thus to gain a better understanding of their peculiar situation.

The congregation rents a pleasant, modern unit of two rooms in a commercial complex to serve as a church, but it is a costly item in their annual budget. It is hoped by some that one day, in the kind providence of the Most High, they will possess a church or churches of their own – and more conveniently located.

I was warmly welcomed and hospitably accommodated in the homes respectively of Mr. and Mrs. James Moline, Brookshire, and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Smith in Santa Fe. I was able to visit most of the other homes in the congregation, where again I had a warm welcome, generous hospitality, and the opportunity to converse with them. It was a pleasure to meet, in certain of those homes, some whom I could not visit in their own accommodation.

It is a great wonder that the Lord has opened up the way for our Church to have a congregation in the USA. It is something for which our congregation in Chesley, Canada, for example, is thankful, especially when the people of one congregation visit those of the other at communion seasons. Also, there are some isolated professing Christians in the USA who are very pleased to be able, occasionally, to visit those congregations and have fellowship with the Lord's people there.

Our people in Texas, who have been led to heartily espouse the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, are truly appreciative of being visited occasionally and even briefly by our ministers from Scotland. However, I am convinced that what is needed for this comparatively new congregation, which is still in the process of putting down its roots and is not without its growing pains, is a protracted stay among them by one of our ministers.

It was with regret that I had to part once again from our Texas friends. One could not but desire to remain a while longer to give them as much help as possible in their isolated situation, but duties in other places called for

attention. It is a comfort to those who are prayerfully concerned about the preservation of the cause of the Lord that He has promised with regard to His church – the vineyard which He Himself has planted – “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day” (Isaiah 27:3). As we view the situation of the Richmond and similar congregations we feel constrained to say to ourselves and others:

“Pray that Jerusalem may have  
Peace and felicity:  
Let them that love thee and thy peace  
Have still prosperity.

Therefore I wish that peace may still  
Within thy walls remain,  
And ever may thy palaces  
Prosperity retain.”

(Psalm 122:6-7).

I thank my presbytery for giving me leave to go to Texas, my elders for conducting the services in my congregation during my stay away, and my congregation for their prayerful support.

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CHESLEY AND TEXAS**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

IT has been the practice in the Free Presbyterian Church from early times to send ministers to congregations overseas to preach the gospel, encourage the brethren, and give a report to the Synod about the work of the Gospel in those congregations. To the present time the Church continues this practice. It is with much thankfulness that I am able to bring back a report about our congregations in Canada and Texas, which I visited in October and November.

Chesley Free Presbyterian Congregation has fairly equal numbers of old, middle aged, and young people. When we consider that there are few or no children in many of our congregations in Scotland it is encouraging to see so many children and young people in the Chesley Congregation. Our prayer is that the Lord will raise up the children in the place of the fathers. “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children.” Indeed, in both congregations there is a considerable proportion of young people. No doubt the prospect of marriages and families, God willing, is one factor which makes the situation hopeful as far as the continuance of the congregations is concerned.

The Chesley Congregation, mostly of Dutch extraction, is a well-established congregation and thoroughly grounded in biblical teaching. They are well

aware of the erroneous beliefs and practices in some churches and the dangers connected with these, such as Arminianism and Hyper-Calvinism. While individuals and families have come and gone over the years, as is sometimes the case with our congregations, the Chesley Congregation is thoroughly convinced and appreciative of the principles for which the Free Presbyterian Church stands. They are anxious to hand these down to their children and children's children.

Communion seasons were held in both Chesley and Richmond. On my first Sabbath in each place I conducted the normal services, with two services in Richmond instead of the usual one. My second Sabbath in each place was the communion Sabbath there. The services were well attended with some friends travelling long distances to be present. I believe that we had a measure of the Spirit of Christ in that there was a degree of liberty in preaching and hearing.

It is intended, God willing, that Chesley Congregation will have an election of elders in the not too distant future. Hopefully two or three elders will be added to the roll.

The Richmond congregation in Texas is made up mainly of young families. It is now seven years since they first came in contact with the Free Presbyterian Church and three years since they have been received into the Church. They are thankful to the Lord that, in His providence, He has led them into the Free Presbyterian Church. Having been influenced deeply by the writings of the Puritans and other Reformed writings for many years, these families looked around over a long period for a suitable church to attend, and met with many disappointments. Under the direction of the Most High they have at last found a spiritual home where they are content, and for whose scriptural doctrine, worship and practice they have an undoubted zeal.

One drawback in the Richmond Congregation is the enormous distances which all the families have to travel to the central place of worship in Richmond. The furthestmost families have a return journey of more than sixty miles and the others not much less. To travel about 250 miles on the Sabbath would not leave much of the Sabbath for the exercises of that day. Therefore the congregation gathers at Richmond only on Sabbath morning and Wednesday evening. On Sabbath evening the families which are close to each other gather around the Word of God in one of the homes for private worship. One wonders if a solution might be that the families in the vicinity of each other would meet in one of the towns close to them to have public worship and all of them meet together only at communion times. However, we understand that the Texas Kirk Session is addressing this problem.

One of the repeated requests from both congregations was the need for more ministerial supply. At the moment the elders, Messrs. G. Schuit and D. Kuiper in the Chesley Congregation, read sermons from various ministers of the Gospel: the Erskines, Rev. D. MacFarlane, and others. Sometimes Mr. G. Schuit gives an address. In Texas there are no resident elders but sermons are read at the services by one of the older men, Mr. Lyle Smith, and occasionally

by Mr. Steven Ervin, the other appointed reader, who is also the Treasurer of the congregation.

Some of the church members with their families live so far away from either the Chesley or Texas congregation that it is impossible for them to attend Sabbath worship regularly. There is the Hembd family, for example, which attends the services as much as they are able as well as at the communion seasons. Their nearest congregation is Chesley, which is 500 miles away, whereas the Richmond congregation is about 700 miles away. Each Sabbath Mr. Hembd reads a sermon to his family and any others who may wish to join them.

It is a great pleasure to meet with people who have zeal for the stand which the Free Presbyterian Church has endeavoured to maintain over the years. Our people in Canada and the United States are heartily behind this witness.

I also have to acknowledge the unstinting kindness shown me by the members of the families of both congregations, whose names are too numerous to mention. One family kindly gave me the use of their car during my stay in Chesley, which was a tremendous help.

It was heartening to have the assistance of the elders, Messrs. Gerrit Schuit and David Kuiper at both Chesley and Texas, and Mr. Alastair MacPherson at Texas, and I am deeply grateful to them all.

Not least I have to acknowledge the Lord's gracious preservation over the long distances I had to travel. We look to Him to continue His goodness and mercy, especially by giving the increase to this work of the Church in Canada and America. We pray too that He would be pleased to set over these congregations pastors after His own heart, which the people greatly desire and pray for. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15).

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

**Convener: Rev. D. J. Macdonald**

THE Committee has to report that at its meeting on 11th March 2003, the Southern Presbytery accepted Mr. Lyle T. Smith as a student studying for the ministry of the Church. It is hoped that Mr. Smith will finish his academic studies soon and that he will take the Entrance to Divinity Examinations in August, D.V.

The African students, Mr. Siphon Khumalo, Mr. Manford Mloyi and Mr. Nedson Banda, have completed their course of training with Rev H. M. Cartwright. The Synod has already granted leave to the Zimbabwe Presbytery to license Messrs. Khumalo and Mloyi. Mr. Banda is now ready to be taken on trials for license by his Presbytery. The other two students, Mr. J. B. Jardine

and Mr. A. B. MacLean, on completing their studies with Rev. K. D. MacLeod, the Church's Tutor in Old Testament Hebrew and cognate subjects, and, on passing their Exit Examinations, will proceed to Stornoway in September to study with Rev. J. MacLeod, the Church's Tutor in Systematic Theology and Apologetics. We would ask the praying people of the Church to pray for students and tutors and to plead with the Lord to send forth labourers to His harvest.

Last year's Theological Conference was held in Glasgow when the following papers were read:

- (1) *Hyper Calvinism* ..... Rev. W. A. Weale
- (2) *The Rev. Donald MacDonald (Shieldaig)*..... Rev. J. Goldby
- (3) *The Influence of Scottish Exiles on the Church in Holland*  
Dr. R. Dickie
- (4) *The Ruling Elder* ..... Rev. G. G. Hutton
- (5) *Christianity an Exclusive Religion?* ..... Rev. J. MacLeod

The Committee were heartened by the good attendance and it is hoped to hold the Conference this year in Inverness on Tuesday 2nd and Wednesday 3rd December, God willing.

## **THEOLOGICAL TUTOR'S REPORT**

**Rev. K. D. Macleod**

DURING the past session, Mr. J. Bruce Jardine and Mr. Alasdair B. MacLean attended classes in Scripture, Hebrew, Old Testament Introduction, Pastoral Theology and Church History. The pattern of these classes was very similar to that followed in session 1999-2000.

The main differences were as follows: for Old Testament Introduction we relied much less on R. K. Harrison's volume and used instead the greater part of a new book by Walter C. Kaiser Jnr., *The Old Testament Documents, Are They Reliable and Relevant?* In Church History, for the Reformation in Europe, we substituted the more relevant parts of William R. Estep's *Renaissance and Reformation* for the book on the subject by Owen Chadwick.

This session, the students' History essays dealt with the following subjects: the evangelism of Charles Finney, a comparison between the Reformations in England and Scotland, and the union controversy in the Free Church (1863-73). These essays give the students the opportunity to explore a few subjects in rather greater depth than is otherwise possible in the course and even, in one case, to go beyond the subject areas covered in the course.

The students worked diligently and I trust they will be successful in their exit exams. I am grateful to them for the help they have given in taking

services in the South Harris congregation and the congregations for which I am interim-moderator as well as elsewhere. May the Lord bless them in the remainder of their studies and make them useful as labourers in that great harvest which, in our time, so very much needs reapers appointed by Himself.

## **THEOLOGICAL TUTOR'S REPORT**

**Rev. H. M. Cartwright**

MESSRS. N. Banda, S. Khumalo and M. Mloyi studied in Edinburgh for three eight-week terms from July to December 2002 and attended classes for three hours each morning from Tuesday to Friday. They sat Class Examinations at the end of the first two terms and at the end of the third term they passed the Exit Examinations set in the four main areas of their study.

### ***The English New Testament***

We worked our way through each New Testament book. As well as attending to the content of the books we looked a little into their background (with the students consulting Machen's *Introduction to the New Testament*) and endeavoured to enter into their interpretation. The students were given lists of questions and points to notice as they read the prescribed chapters. They prepared notes in their home studies and as the passages were discussed in class they supplemented or modified their notes accordingly.

### ***The Westminster Confession of Faith***

Following the same method as in our New Testament studies, and using Robert Shaw's *Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith* for home reading, we considered each chapter of the *Confession* in Class, endeavouring to ensure that the students had a good working knowledge of our chief subordinate standard.

### ***Church Polity and Practice***

We began by giving the students notes on the Church and its characteristics, marks and functions, and on the Headship of Christ and its practical outworking and implications. Coming more particularly to Church Polity we considered the various forms of Church Government and sought to test them by Scripture, following the guidelines given in Witherow's *The Apostolic Church. Which is it?* We then used the *Manual of the Practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland* as our text book for the study of the procedure of Church Courts, providing notes intended to make it a little more accessible.

### ***Church History***

The students had studied the history of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland with Rev. K. D. MacLeod. We interpreted our subject rather widely and began with a brief study of the history of the text of Scripture, going over revelation, inspiration, providential preservation and the translation of the English Bible. We then considered the Greek, Roman and Jewish background to the New Testament. Coming to Church History proper we surveyed in outline, and fairly superficially, the Early Church, the Martyrs, Constantine, some of the "Church Fathers" such as Augustine, Monasticism, the rise and development of the Papacy and the state of the Church before the Reformation and spent some time on Martin Luther and John Calvin, the Reformation in England and the Puritan Movement. After this general background we turned to the Reformation in Scotland and to significant events and persons in the later history of the Scottish Church. Sections of relevant books were referred to and notes were given where that seemed more appropriate.

The time was limited. The students had a tight schedule. They gave supply on a restricted number of Sabbaths, partly so that they could get to know some congregations and the congregations could get to know them and partly to keep them in touch with the reason for their studies. I made a point of hearing each of them, and occasionally prescribed texts for outline notes of sermons and discussed their sermons and outlines with them. They gave themselves with enthusiasm and diligence to their rather intensive course. We trust that the benefit of their studies will appear in the holy ministry to which they now set their hands.

## **WELFARE OF YOUTH REPORT**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

WE thankfully acknowledge that there is encouragement in the work of the Committee. Sadly, however, there are things that cause discouragement. For example, over the years we have seen a number of our young people taking an interest in the means of grace but who, at an older age, cease to do so. How unspeakably sad and solemn it is when such people give themselves to the world and become lost eternally. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

On the other hand, it is a happy experience when young people, having attended church and youth conferences, continue to make use of the means of grace and obtain good for their souls. How good too to see some of them, who marry and are blessed with families, endeavouring to lead their children in the good old ways of the Word of God. Some of them, in fact, have become a great

help in the life and work of the Church. Truly this rejoices the hearts of all that fear God.

It is our prayer that those who have forgotten their Christian upbringing, when they went to the house of God and, perhaps, Youth Conferences as well, and others who did the Scripture and Catechism Exercises, would come to realise and value the worth of Christian privileges and become followers of Christ. It is with this in view that your committee continues with the work of religious instruction for children and young people.

Yet again we have to acknowledge publicly the valuable work done by a number of dedicated ladies of the Church – Miss S. M. Gillies, Mrs. E. Hymers, Mrs. C. M. Sutherland, Miss C. MacQueen and Mrs. A. Dickie – in preparing and correcting the Scripture and Catechism exercises; by Mrs. G. M. Ross in correcting the exercises from overseas, and by other ladies in correcting batches of exercises from our Mission stations. It is gratifying that the number of children and young people who do the exercises is maintained, and that parents encourage them to continue. May the Lord bring our young people at an early age to take a serious interest in the matters which pertain to their soul's salvation.

At last year's Conference, held in Dumfries, more than sixty young people attended. The committee is deeply indebted to those who prepared lectures on various subjects. We were sorry that due to illness the Rev. J. Goldby was unable to present his paper, *A Man of Rare godliness – The Life and Witness of Rev. Donald Macdonald, Sheildaig*. This paper was substituted by, *The Duty of Prayer – "Let your requests be made known unto God"*, by Rev. D. A. Ross.

At the time of writing this report, this year's Conference is scheduled to be held at the Scottish Youth Hostel, Inverness. For one period the conference members will attend the Prayer Meeting in the Free Presbyterian Church. The other periods will be given to suitable lectures and a historical tour in the Black Isle area. The appointed lectures and speakers are:

1. ***"In the Beginning"*** – *What the Bible Teaches About Creation*  
Rev. D. Campbell
2. ***"All Have Sinned"*** – *What the Bible Teaches About the Fall and its Effects*  
Rev. A. Smith
3. ***The Apostle of the North*** – *The Life of John Macdonald, Ferintosh*  
Rev. D. W. B. Somerset
4. ***The Religious Past of the Black Isle*** – *A Historical Tour*  
Rev. D. W. B. Somerset
5. ***Prayer Meeting*** – *Inverness Free Presbyterian Church*  
Rev. A. Smith
6. ***Mary the Mother of Our Lord*** – *Some Practical Lessons*  
Rev. J. R. Tallach

We also acknowledge the work of the Conference house-mothers, without whom our Youth Conferences could not possibly be run as smoothly as they are. We are now pleased to have Miss Margaret MacAskill permanently assisting Mrs. C. Ross in this important work. We also mention our appreciation of the help we receive from residence managers and others.

Above all we are indebted to the Most High for the privilege of hearing lectures soundly based on the Word of God and we are thankful that our Church youth, as well as young people from other Churches, show an interest in these important subjects.

May the Lord bless the work of your committee to the spiritual good of all who in any way take part in it.

Finally, we mention that such is the dreadfully low moral and spiritual state of the nation that, for the protection of children, it is now required by law to have Criminal Record Checks for all new volunteers and new employees, including those in Churches, who are to work with children. When the nation will begin to fear God there will be no need for such laws. May the Lord in His kindness hasten such days in the UK and throughout the world.

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

## **BALLIFEARY CARE HOME REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach**

IN the kind providence of the Lord another year has passed concerning which we have to record the goodness of the Lord towards the Home.

It is with sadness that we record the passing away during 2002 of the following residents: Dr. Donald MacRae on 10th February, Miss Flora MacRae on 15th February, Mr. Walter Riach on 17th February, Miss Rhoda MacLeod on 18th February, Mrs. Jessie Ross on 18th February, Miss Catherine Finlayson on 6th October, Miss Margaret MacPherson on 28th October, Miss Mary Fraser on 27th November and Mr. Duncan MacDonald on 16th December.

The planning and building within the Home, which has occupied the past few years, has now borne fruit and all rooms (22 single and 1 double) are now en-suite. The Committee is particularly indebted to Mr. I. MacRae for his expertise and effort in bringing this project to a successful conclusion. Matron and her staff also coped very well with the inevitable difficulties created by having builders on site.

Up until 1st April 2002, homes for the elderly were either Residential or Nursing homes. Since then all homes have been classified as Care Homes and may look after a mix of ambulant residents and those requiring nursing care, provided sufficient qualified staff are employed. Thus far the Home has not taken in any nursing cases.

Several outings were arranged during the year, taking residents to places in and around Inverness and its surrounding district. This is an aspect of life in the Home which we think important and would like to see developed further.

Although the capacity of the Home was down by two beds during the renovations, the remaining 22 beds were fully occupied and the Home returned to full capacity in October. The Home has remained in a credit balance throughout the year.

While finance and improved buildings are important in their place, it is the quality of the care and, in particular, the place given to the Word which ought to set a Church Home apart. In this connection we are thankful to Matron and her staff and to all who took time and made the effort to visit the Home during the year to read the Word and to pray with our elderly residents. We believe that that Word has had its effect on some and it is our prayer that it would be blessed to all in the Home for eternity.

## **LEVERBURGH CARE HOME COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

DURING the past year, the Home has continued to give a high level of care to its residents. We would wish again to express our sincere appreciation to the Officer-in-Charge and her staff for all their hard work and commitment.

Local authorities no longer have responsibility for the inspection of Homes; this responsibility has been taken over by Scottish Care, which operates under the Scottish Executive. The most recent inspection of the Leverburgh Home was undertaken by an inspector from Scottish Care. The resulting report was very satisfactory. One outcome from this inspection was a recommendation that the Home apply for registration for 16 beds, rather than 14. The application has been successful, but it involves using the bedroom of the flat which was set aside for the Officer-in-Charge. If this flat is required by a future Officer-in-Charge, the number of beds available for residents will have to be reduced to 15.

In line with the decision to have a higher number of residents, the Committee decided to increase the size of the sitting/dining area by building a conservatory-type extension with a tiled roof, which will match the existing building. It is hoped that this work will begin before too long, and we expect that this extension will be a welcome addition to the facilities in the Home.

A recent inspection by the Fire Brigade insisted on the replacement of all bedroom doors by fire-resistant ones. Arrangements for this work are in progress, but there is a significant cost involved. We are thankful, however, that the Home continued to show a surplus at the end of 2002.

Last September, the Earl and Countess of Wessex were in Leverburgh and included a visit to the Home in their itinerary. Their visit extended beyond the

scheduled 30 minutes and they spoke in a relaxed way with residents, staff and members of the Committee. Earlier, in May, some residents and staff were invited to meet the Queen during her Royal Jubilee visit to Stornoway.

Over the past few years, there were, thankfully, very few deaths in the Home. These past 12 months, however, it was otherwise; six residents passed into eternity: Mrs. M. MacDonald, Mr. A. MacFarlane, Mrs. M. MacAulay, Mrs. C. MacCuish, Mrs. A. MacLean and Mrs. D. MacDonald. We would extend our sympathy to all the relatives.

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

THE committee has for another year maintained its ongoing work of publishing and distributing tracts and pamphlets. It has also maintained the witness of the Church's website. Stage by stage, we have enhanced the format with as much information about each of our congregations as is available. The books stocked in the Bookroom in Glasgow, are now pictorially illustrated in addition to the written description carried on the website. This, we have reason to believe, has increased the contacts with the Bookroom. We are much indebted to Mr. James Macleod for all the effort he has put into this.

Because of the information on the website we have had many new contacts from people interested in the Reformed faith. We are encouraged to learn through the number of visits to our website that our witness as a branch of Christ's Church is greatly appreciated. It is obvious that if we had the means to provide it, there are people in various parts of the world, particularly in the USA, who would welcome our Church's ministry and practice. Some, through email letters, express amazement that a Church with distinctives such as we adhere to, actually exists in the midst of all the compromise and departures from the truth.

In previous years it has been felt by some Synod members that the committee was not concentrating enough on the home-front. Serious consideration was given, therefore, to the idea of having a presence at the Black Isle Agricultural Show last August. Obtaining permission to occupy a stand at this, the largest of its kind in the Highlands, we presented a varied stock of Bibles, books and literature to the public. A considerable number of copies of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine*, in addition to Gospel tracts and other free literature, were taken away by visitors. Sales of Bibles and literature amounted to almost £200. Some scoffed as they passed by, while many others expressed joy at our presence. Our desire is that God will bless our humble effort to present our fellow-sinners with an opportunity to receive the knowledge of the Gospel.

The committee once again craves the prayers of the Lord's people, that its members will be given divine guidance, as it strives in a limited way to spread the seed of the Word beyond the boundaries of our own congregations.

## **MAGAZINES REPORT**

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

DURING the past year, both Magazines have been issued as previously, as has the *Gaelic Supplement*. The price of the Magazines for 2003 was left unchanged, except for a small increase in the cost of subscriptions for both magazines, to reflect an increase in the cost of postage. Price increases have been announced which will affect the cost of posting out single issues, but, this cannot be reflected in the cost of these subscriptions till the beginning of 2004. However, it is encouraging to note that the need for a grant from the Forsyth Bequest Fund to the *Young People's Magazine* has been reduced in 2002. During the last 12 months, circulation of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* has improved slightly while that of the *Young People's Magazine* is almost unchanged.

I am grateful also to all who have sent in articles for the Magazines. In particular, I again wish to express my gratitude to members of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* for their consistent help by their contributions. I would also thank a number of others who have helped in various ways in the production of the Magazines, in particular Dr. J. Mitchell, for his continued willing help in checking both magazines at the final stages of editing. Especially, I feel I must express thankfulness to the Most High in this public way for enabling me to carry out my editorial work in a particularly busy year.

The magazines have gone out month by month – somewhat in the way of casting “bread upon the waters” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). May there be fruit found, though it would be after “many days”! Accordingly I would again draw attention to the need for prayer that the magazines would be blessed to those who read them. The fact that both magazines are now available on the internet further increases their reach.

**PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM  
COMMITTEE'S REPORT  
Rev. K. D. Macleod, Convener**

***Publications***

Last year we reported on the republication of the three-volume set of the *Works of Ebenezer Erskine*. These have now all been sold and a further reprint has been made.

Our major production since the last meeting of Synod was a four-volume set, *Christ in the Old Testament*, by Robert Gordon. This is a work which Rev. Alexander McPherson was very anxious to see in print during his time on the Publications Committee, but it did not prove possible. The Committee has also brought out volume 5 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and hopes to proceed gradually with further volumes. We had hoped to publish volume 6 by now, but the absence of an index has caused a delay. Total sales of books in 2002 were significantly down from the previous year, but a large factor in this is the absence of a major wholesale order for the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Stocks of the paperback edition are largely exhausted and it is likely that a reprint will be arranged shortly. Stocks of the children's book, *Pages From the Past*, are now exhausted. It is hoped to reprint it with a little more material. We also expect to have to reprint the popular little volume on Presbyterianism by Thomas Witherow, *The Apostolic Church*, and possibly, later on in the year, the *Larger Catechism*. The reprint of the *Mother's Catechism*, mentioned in last year's report, is now available and has a more attractive cover.

***Bookroom***

The Bookroom has continued to fulfill a useful function as a source of reliable Christian literature for people within the Free Presbyterian Church and beyond. The Bookroom website ([www.fpbookroom.org](http://www.fpbookroom.org)) has made it possible for some to contact the Bookroom who have had no previous contact with the Church or its activities. Mr. Kenneth Hutton, who was appointed Manager a year ago, has now established himself in that position.

Total sales for 2002 were significantly down on the previous year. But when allowance is made for the decrease, as indicated above, in sales of Free Presbyterian publications, and a very significant reduction in sales of second-hand books, the level of other sales was slightly higher than during 2001. With the help of the congregational collection for the Bookroom Fund, there was a surplus over the year.

We are again grateful to the men who have kept the Bookroom open on a Saturday morning and to others also who have given help in various ways. We would once more request the prayers of the Lord's people for His rich blessing on the work of the Church in trying to put good literature into the hands of readers in various parts of the world.

## **REPORT OF AN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

**Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach**

THIS Committee was set up by the Synod of 2002 “to look into the implications of the legislation on Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults and to formulate policies conformable to Church practice”. The legislation was drawn up after the tragic shooting of schoolchildren at Dunblane and with a view to preventing a recurrence. To this end, appointees to any position involving the supervision of children or vulnerable adults must have police records checked before taking up the appointment.

In pursuance of Synod instructions, the Committee drew up policy documents which had to be approved by the official registering bodies.

In addition, a Collator must be nominated through whom all requests for disclosures from the Criminal Records Office must pass. In the case of the Church these disclosures will relate to any applicant for the ministry or appointee for the eldership or to Sabbath Schools, Care Homes or under the Welfare of Youth Committee. The Committee consider that Mr. R. A. Campbell would be a suitable Church Collator.

Local Co-ordinators would have to be appointed and each would have to be registered in the same way as the Church Collator. Care Home Committees, the Welfare of Youth Committee and each Kirk Session would have to appoint a Local Co-ordinator.

This frame-work having been set up, any appointee by the local congregation or Care Home could only be confirmed in their position subject to a satisfactory criminal records check. The Local Co-ordinator would verify the identity of the applicant and having checked the application, forward it to the Collator. The Collator would then request disclosure from the appointed body in the country in which the application was being made. Any past offence discovered would only be disclosed to the Collator and a copy sent to the applicant. The Collator would then simply report back to the Local Co-ordinator as to whether the applicant was “suitable” or “unsuitable”.

An appeals procedure must be set up and the Committee suggest the following:

1. *Care Homes*. The Convener of the Care Home would liaise with the Clerk of the adjacent Presbytery to form a three-man appeals committee from its membership.
2. *Welfare of Youth*. The Appeals committee would comprise the Moderator and Clerk of Synod and one other member of Synod to be chosen by the Moderator.
3. All other appointments would be appealed in accordance with Church law.

By law, training must be given to all involved in recruitment and the Committee propose that this be provided by Mr. Calum Gunn.

The Clerk and Mr. R. A. Campbell have been attending meetings of the Scottish Churches Committee through the year and the Committee has benefited greatly by this.

All the necessary policies have not yet been approved at the time of writing and this means the Collator has yet to be registered. In any event, these arrangements have to be passed by the Synod before further action can be taken. The Committee, therefore, request re-appointment for a further year.

## **JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Miss N. B. MacLean, Deputy Headmistress**

“IN all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee” . . . this promise of the Most High is an encouragement to us in the work at Ingwenya where we are privileged to have so many children under the influence of the Word of God. The Gospel has been at Ingwenya now for many years and we are thankful that there is still freedom to present it as in the past. There are almost 600 children attending the school, approximately 500 of whom are boarding with us for 4 years, which gives us a precious opportunity to expose them to the teaching of the Scriptures. The children are required to attend all church services while they are at school and the prayer meeting on Thursday mornings is also compulsory for all teachers and workers: all our staff are co-operative about attending this service. In addition, the school children have Sabbath School from 9 to 10 a.m., during which time they learn Psalms, passages from Scripture and the Catechism – the aim being that by the end of Form 4 they should have memorised the entire Catechism. On Sabbath evenings there is a special service in English for the boarding children: in the absence of a resident minister we very much appreciated the efforts of Mr. Zikhali and Mr. Nxusani who came regularly to assist us. Our interim Moderator, Rev. Z. Mazvabo, was very mindful of us and the supply was well organised throughout the year. The children are also exposed to the Word of God in the daily school routine: the Boarding Master, Mr. Sibanda, has worship with his large “family” of boarders at breakfast and suppertime every day; school assembly always begins with singing a few verses of a psalm and prayer and all classes are timetabled for Bible Knowledge. In Form 1 the children study Genesis and Exodus for four periods per week and in Form 2 the Gospel of Mark is studied. In Forms 3 and 4 we follow the national syllabus for O Level Religious Studies which is a very good course on Luke and Acts – this is a compulsory O Level for all of our Form 4 students.

### **Staffing**

We are still awaiting Mr. Bonakele Ncube's official appointment as Headmaster by the Ministry of Education but we expect that this will be confirmed during 2003, DV. In the meantime, Mr. Ncube is the officially recognised acting Headmaster and he has, throughout 2002, continued to carry out his duties competently and efficiently. The Ministry of Education supplied and paid for 24 teachers – we have, in addition, two missionary teachers, bringing the total number of teaching staff to 26. Miss N. Dube and Mrs. T. P. Moyo (previously Miss Ncube) are still with us and have continued to assist in teaching Bible Knowledge. We were very thankful to have Miss Rhoda MacKay join the staff in January 2002 – she has made a very significant contribution to the Bible Knowledge department so that we were able to cover all the Bible Knowledge classes with church personnel. The number of staff is larger than in 2001 because the Ministry of Education introduced lower teaching/pupil ratios in practical classes.

Mrs. Sibanda, our Resource Room assistant, who left us during the year, was replaced by Miss Zanele Moyo, who belongs to the Ingwenya congregation. Miss Moyo underwent training in Braille at the Council for the Blind in Bulawayo where she was very successful. She joined Mrs. Muzanargwo in the Resource Room in January 2003.

During the year we were happy to have voluntary help from Miss Eleanor Wylie and Mr. James MacLeod who were with us for a few months. Their help in the Bible Knowledge Department was very much appreciated and Mr. MacLeod gave very valuable assistance in setting up our new computer laboratory.

References to staff would not be complete without a special reference to Mr. D. Sibanda, the Boarding Master. Mr. Sibanda has many roles to play at the school: not only is he in charge of the care and security of the boys who are boarding with us, but he also controls the school food stores, supervises the grinding mill, slaughters beasts for meat and makes the twice weekly trip to Bulawayo for food and other purchases for the school.

### **Pupil Enrolment**

In 2002 our enrolment over Forms 1 to 4 was 584 pupils, including approximately 100 children from the local community who attend on a daily basis – the remainder are boarders. We had 9 children with varying degrees of visual impairment who are benefiting from our Resource Room facilities.

Pupils continue to leave us because of inability to pay fees, although we are still one of the cheapest boarding schools. A new development is that several pupils have left us to move overseas, usually to join parents who are already working over there.

### **O Level examination results**

We were delighted with the results for the examinations in November 2002: 131 out of 142 candidates passed 5 or more subjects, i.e. 92%. Twelve pupils

managed to achieve 8 A passes, there were 5 with 7 A passes, 5 with 6 A passes and 19 with 5 A passes.

In August 2002 an Awards Ceremony was hosted in Bulawayo by the Ministry of Education to recognise achievement in the 2001 O Level results among all Matabeleland North schools. We had the second highest pass rate in the whole of Matabeleland North and were delighted to be presented with trophies for:

1st in Bible Knowledge;  
1st in Biology;  
1st in Geography;  
1st for Junior Public Speaking.

During the year there has been a great deal of pressure from parents, the community, the local council and the Ministry of Education for the introduction of Form 6 classes – there is a serious shortage of Form 6 places throughout the country and with our excellent O Level results the school appears to be well suited to Form 6 development. It is difficult for us to consider such development at the moment as we have still not completed the improvement of our present facilities and any expansion to Form 6 would involve us in massive capital expenditure as we are presently working at maximum capacity. It is, however, very clear that it would not be easy for us to resist this pressure in the longer term.

### **Finance**

Due to spiralling inflation it was impossible to complete the year within budget so each pupil was surcharged \$3,000 to cover the shortfall. The subsidy provided by the Foreign Mission Committee for each local child was a great relief to local families, especially at this time of famine. When there are good harvests, many local families pay for their fees by selling their surplus maize to the school: during a drought not only do they not have enough food to eat but they do not have maize to sell to provide for their other needs – it can become almost impossible to meet school fees' commitments at such times.

In 2002 the Minister for Education introduced new regulations to govern increases in school fees. It is now compulsory to consult with and gain the approval of parents before implementing any fees increases. This involves us in a lot of extra administration as we have to call a meeting of all parents, all discussions have to be carefully documented, and ballot papers must be produced. Our parents have been very reasonable and realistic about the necessary increases, so our meetings were amicable.

### **Vehicles and buildings**

The vehicles are essential to the smooth running of the school so we are thankful that they remained in reasonable condition, although it has again become very difficult to find spare parts. The greatest hindrance as far as

vehicles were concerned was the erratic supply of fuel, which from time to time meant that we were reduced to a “strictly essential trips only” policy.

The parents’ committee had been working very hard for two years to source and supply a large 76-seater bus for the school – the reconditioned bus was handed over to the school in June 2002. This bus has been used to carry children back and forth to school at beginning and end of terms and also to take some groups on trips. This was a very ambitious project for the parents and it is a valuable contribution to life at school. The parents also presented the school with a bandsaw for cutting meat: this is a much appreciated gift, as previously the carcass would have to be driven over 40km for cutting, with the risk of contamination. Now all butchering can be done at school, which is much more satisfactory as far as hygiene is concerned.

The very old Form 1 girls’ dormitory, which was in poor condition, was demolished in April so that building of a more comfortable and modern replacement dormitory could begin on the same site. It was hoped that this building would be ready for occupation at the beginning of 2003. Progress on the building was disappointing, but it is expected to be ready for occupation by the end of the second term of 2003. Once this dormitory is completed the overcrowding problem in the girls’ dormitories will have been resolved and all the girls will be comfortably housed. It will then be necessary to upgrade the boys’ accommodation.

In 2002 a lovely new shower/toilet and changing room block was added to the Dining Hall premises for the convenience of the Kitchen staff. Previously staff only had the use of an outside toilet with simply a tap for handwashing: it is to their credit that with such limited facilities good hygiene was maintained. The staff are delighted with the new facilities which make it easier to maintain high standards of hygiene.

A very exciting development was the completion of our computer laboratory: all the extra security was installed and the equipment was in place in time for classes to begin limited access in Term 3. We are very grateful to the Oikonomos Foundation for donating the top-of-the-range equipment, complete with internet access for this laboratory, and particularly to Mr. Wilfred van de Kooij, who spent so much of his time smoothing out all the problems for us. One group of students joined a *Global Teenager Programme*, run by an organisation in Holland. In this programme several schools from different parts of the world are linked together to combine studies on an agreed topic. Our topic was the “Environment” and it was very exciting for our students to be able to research for completely up-to-date information on the internet and to be able to communicate with students in Latvia and South Africa! It is intended that in 2003 all classes will have some training in computing and that an O Level course will be introduced.

### **Conclusion**

The economic difficulties we face in Zimbabwe are well documented and it is no easy task in the present economic climate to run an institution with

approximately 500 resident children: food and other school supplies are difficult to source – the boarding master and the headmaster regularly have to queue for hours to bring back the bread for the morning tea and the lorry driver usually has to spend two days sleeping overnight in his truck at the Grain Marketing Board to collect the school's maize allocation. Rapidly rising inflation means that our budgets quickly become meaningless and we face a constant battle struggling to meet our costs.

We had serious difficulties in communication at the end of the year when all our telephone lines were out of order for almost three months – this, with the travel restrictions necessary to conserve limited fuel supplies, left us feeling very cut off at times. In the Lord's kind Providence, however, our difficulties were overcome and we were able to continue with normal operations. The 2001 School Report concluded with an acknowledgement of the kindness of the Most High in His Providential provisions for us during what was also a difficult year: during 2002 we would have to say that, in our experience, He has again proved Himself to be the One who changes not.

## **ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Mr. E. B. Zikhali**

WE have every reason to be thankful for having been spared to see another year when some of the people we knew very well have passed away. The Lord has not treated us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:10).

The year 2002 has been very difficult in many ways. There was virtually shortage of everything in the country – the foreign currency, food, fuel, basic commodities, just to name a few. Almost all the Mission projects came to a halt because of the shortages of cement. Some people starved to death. However, we are thankful that none of our people in our congregations starved to death. Zimbabwe had very little rainfall this year and some of the drought-stricken areas like Matabeleland never experienced any rain this year.

The Mission finances remained stable throughout, in spite of the difficult economic situation in the country. Car repairs drained a lot of money from the Mission because of the rise in spare parts, cost and labour charges in garages in order to make up for the employees' salaries/wages.

Car Insurance premiums too rose by 50% per year, which will increase our expenditures in the year. Building materials also rose three times in the year. The Mission employees were given 20% cost of living adjustment, back-dated to the 1st of July 2002.

The food situation for the Boarding School is also very critical. Beef is hard to get and very expensive. Budgeting is impossible. This has caused inflation to raise to 208.5% by the time this report is written. Food shortages for both the Hospital and Mission employees is critical too. The Mission experienced

its highest number of thefts this year. The water engine at Ingwenya Mission was stolen, but it has since been replaced. All four wheels of the donated School Bus were stolen from Lobengula church, where it was kept. We had to improve our security by housing all our water engines at all Mission stations and door locks were provided.

### **Visitors**

The overseas visitors declined this year. Maybe it was due to the political climate in the country. However, we had the visit of the former headmistress of John Tallach Secondary School, Miss Graham. It was very exciting to witness the return of Messrs. M. Mloyi and S. Khumalo after successfully completing their divinity course in Scotland in December 2002.

More labourers have been added to the vineyard, although more are still needed. We have to be very thankful to the Almighty God for this provision. Oikonomos Foundation continued to monitor its projects at Mbumba, Zenka and at John Tallach Secondary School. The snag is now lack of cement in the country. The two Oikonomos Foundation workers have now moved into the city of Bulawayo for more accessibility. We are very thankful to have had them at our Mission stations.

We are thankful that we are still having the maximum services of Miss K. Macaulay in translation, Miss Rhodah MacKay in school, and Sister Jessie Coote in the hospital. These ladies, though aging, are doing wonderful service for the Mission in Zimbabwe and we pray that the Lord would spare them for a further period of time.

Dr. Benschop Hak returned home to Holland earlier than was expected because of health reasons. However, we hope for her return as soon as she recovers. Meanwhile the hospital is without its doctor.

We are very thankful that church services continued to be conducted without disturbance in all the stations. We had in some cases the services of Rev. K. Watkins whenever he came down for the Presbytery meetings.

The Field Committee continued to meet this year to discuss matters pertaining to the financial aspect of the Mission. The workforce continued to give invaluable service to the Mission, some of whom were very devoted, although others could not be trusted.

The Main Office is always plagued with staff turnover problems. However, we hope the present two older ladies are more devoted than younger ones – these are Mrs. S. C. Mpofo and Mrs. N. Mahlangu.

The political situation in the country remains gloomy as I write this letter but we have to put all our trust in the Lord.

Holland continued to send in parcels, although there are restrictions on all secondhand clothing which have to be fumigated at source and a certificate provided to prove their treatment.

We are thankful that the churches in Scotland continued to pour in money to the famine relief, which went a long way to alleviate hunger in our congregations.

## **EBENEZER SCRIPTURE MISSION REPORT**

**Mr. S. B. Mpofu, Superintendent**

IT is with much thanks to the Most High that we are still alive. Many of us lost dear ones during the year 2002 but God has spared us to give us more opportunities of turning to Him.

### **Themviso Children's Home**

The home was sometimes overloaded due to unprocessed court orders. The cause was shortage of welfare officers. Our enrolment is now 66, though it was previously 54. It is pleasing to note that we have more relatives who visit our occupants and the number taken for school holidays increase. Our youngest child is 1<sup>1/2</sup> years old and recently lost his mother.

Food shortages are hitting us and though we sometimes go for weeks without bread we have to be thankful that the Almighty has spared us during such days. We have managed to make a good number of repairs to the home. We bought new curtains for the whole complex at about \$1,900,000, fitted floor tiles at \$2,000,000, painted walls that have face bricks, bought furniture for the dining hall and some stools for the library where family worship is conducted. Benches were ordered for the school hall and of late we have purchased a three-plate stove to replace the one in our main kitchen and a two-plate stove for our baby unit.

### **Donations**

These came in better than last year, despite the harsh economic conditions. Miss B. MacLean, Miss K. Macaulay and Miss R. MacKay donated £60 for the children's New Year party. A friend in America donated \$140,000 which we plan to use in buying children's shoes. Government institutional grants and committal grants came in good time and a donation from the President's Cheer Fund was also received. These helped to boost or financial status.

Our three pre-school classes have continued as these help our pupils to associate with people outside. We had a trained pre-school teacher who replaced the late Miss K. Ndlovu but we had to part with her as we discovered she was opposed to our Mission regulations.

Classes continued at Mabutweni and Themviso. The elderly lady tutors are very keen with their students who continue to receive Bible lessons on top of their normal lessons.

### **Bookroom**

The manager at the Bookroom was on sick-leave for some months and the till attendant moved to the Robertson Office – this greatly affected both the Bookroom and the Home as I had to pull staff here and there to fill up the gaps. The Bookroom sales improved towards the end of last year and the beginning of this, when it was necessary for reinforcing the staff. Thanks are due to Miss

K. Macaulay who helps in ordering religious books. Increased rental charges rose to such an extent that we have had to constantly raise our prices.

The departure of Mrs. N. Mahlangu from the Home to Robertson Street affected our stock controls but I am glad to report that we seem to be catching up, though the new clerk sometimes finds it difficult to cope with typing and stock control. Though the times are difficult, through the Lord's help I hope we shall continue to serve our occupants. We hold on to the psalmist's prayers very often in these trying times.

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO SINGAPORE**

**Rev. J. MacLeod**

THIS visit to Singapore was for a period of three weeks. It began on the afternoon of Wednesday, 3rd July 2002, when, accompanied by my wife, I arrived at Changi Airport. Mr. Bernard Yong was waiting to welcome us at the terminal. That evening I presided at the prayer meeting which is held weekly in the Bible House and in the room which is also available to the congregation for the Sabbath evening services. There were ten souls present, including a ship's Master – Ian Maclean – whose home is in Skye, and whose ship was docked in Singapore at the time. It was encouraging to see him there and to note the fact that it was known outside our own circles that services were being held under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in this vast city with its teeming millions of souls.

The usual pattern of services was followed over the days ahead. The Sabbath morning services are still held within the precincts of the same centrally situated hotel and in the room where I, in 1999, held the first ever Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland service in Singapore. The number of worshippers gathered on Sabbath morning and evening was between sixteen and twenty. One or two strangers appeared at some of the services and when we think of the number of souls in Singapore who need to hear the true Gospel of Christ, we hope and pray that the "one or two" will eventually become a multitude! The Sabbath evening services, as already noted, were held in the Bible House, a three-storey building with several rooms being used contemporaneously by several congregations and fellowships. As a result of this my path crossed that of several young people who were persuaded to leave our congregation to join one which had an "ordained" minister settled over it and was meeting in a room upstairs from us. This ordination was carried out by an "ordination council" of which one member was a prominent minister of the Free Church (Continuing). It was gratifying to find that two of the young men who had left were now attending our Sabbath morning services on a regular basis and another one or two were persuaded to attend some of the services which I took. We hope that more of them will in time return.

The Reverend E. A. Rayner, Grafton, had taken the services on the Sabbath previous to my arrival and had read the edict relative to the ordination of Bernard Yong and Wing Keong as ruling elders. Neither of these men need commendation from us, but it has to be said that were it not for their faithfulness and diligence, we would not have a congregation in Singapore. They are both fully employed throughout the week and then on Sabbath and weekday they willingly and self-denyingly attend to the duties connected with the conducting of the public worship of God. Wing Keong drives the congregational bus and has to drive many miles to collect members of the congregation living at widely separated addresses throughout the city. There is thus little time for rest. Both men are staunchly supported by their families and especially their like-minded wives. We believe that the men and women who regularly attend are increasingly appreciative of the fact that our Church is distinctive in that it seeks to conform closely to the New Testament, apostolic pattern of worship and practice. The congregation in Singapore in its isolated situation ought to be remembered in the prayers of the Lord's people among us.

We have to say that we were made to feel "at home" among them and we have to thank them for all the kindness and consideration shown to us. We bade them a fond farewell at the Airport on the evening of 29th July and, in the Lord's kindness arrived safely back in this country the following day. "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

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

**Rev. N. M. Ross**

FIRST and foremost I wish to acknowledge the Lord's great goodness and mercy in carrying me through my many duties and over many miles in visiting our congregations in Singapore, New Zealand and Australia. I found the prospect of extensive travel and a heavy workload, as a Church deputy sent out by the Dominions and Overseas Committee, to be a daunting one, but the Lord was faithful concerning His promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness". It was my great pleasure and privilege to have fellowship in the Gospel with many of the Lord's people in those parts.

I arrived in Singapore on Tuesday, 25th March, accompanied by my wife. We were warmly welcomed by Mr. Bernard Yong, his wife Lai Yee, Mr. Tam Wing Keong and members of their respective families, who then took us to our comfortable accommodation at the Rendezvous Hotel in the city. Mr. Yong and Mr. Tam Wing Keong, as the elders of the congregation, have the weighty responsibility of conducting the church services every week. Next evening I

met the people of the congregation at their midweek service in the Morrison Room of Bible House and was not only warmly welcomed by them, but also felt very much at home with them in our worshipping together. On Sabbath, almost 20 of us gathered for the morning and afternoon services in the nearby City Bayview Hotel. Our friends in Singapore repeatedly expressed their appreciation to the Church for sending out a deputy, and if we take the kindness of the elders and their like-minded wives as a measure of their gratitude we would have to say that they are exceedingly grateful.

My next flight was to New Zealand, and to Auckland in particular, where we received a cordial welcome from Mr. Ken van Kralingen, an elder of the congregation there, and Mrs. Flora Campbell. Mr. Van Kralingen, having driven us to our motel, which is conveniently located for the church, also handed over the congregational car for my use, which proved very useful. The next evening at the prayer meeting I met the congregation, plus a family from my own congregation who were on holiday in the country. I saw many changes since I was last there 17 years ago, and while I was sadly conscious of many blanks due to death and other reasons, I was glad to see that a new generation has arisen, and that even another generation is rising up. At the Sabbath services we had an average of 46 people present, which included some visitors. I was glad to be able to visit several families in the congregation, who showed me much kindness. It was with regret that I parted with the people after the midweek prayer meeting.

Tauranga was my next stop. The small congregation there is made up of people who were formerly in our Auckland congregation, so I was delighted to meet them again. We had a midweek service when I preached on "the precious blood of Christ". The weekly services there are held in a very suitable rented hall and are ordinarily conducted by Mr. Dick Vermeulen, the elder who lives in Tauranga. Mr. Vermeulen not only kindly drove us in his car from Auckland to Tauranga but also to Wellington and then back north to Gisborne. We were thus given a fine opportunity for viewing the beautiful scenery of New Zealand's North Island. We are much indebted to Mr. Vermeulen for not only driving us around, but also for accommodating us in the welcoming home of himself and his wife.

In Wellington, my next port of call, I conducted Sabbath worship in our attractive church which is located in the Tawa district of the city. We had an average of 32 people at the services but this included some friends from other Churches. The Wellington congregation is in the happy position of having two elders, Mr. Neil Hicklin and Mr. Hank Optland (who actually lives a considerable distance away at Carterton), and they are responsible for conducting the services week by week. The Hicklin family not only showed kind hospitality but also loaned me a car for travelling between my motel and the church. It was striking that the larger proportion of the congregation consists of young people and children, most of whom belong to the Hicklin family. When I was there, the congregation was much saddened by the tragic death from a car accident of one of Mr. Patrick Cassidy's daughters.

On Tuesday we headed north to Gisborne, breaking our journey at the hospitable home of Miss Jocelyn Cox. In Gisborne it was my great pleasure to again meet and stay with the Van Dorps in their Gisborne manse, and to be the recipient of their warm hospitality. In meeting the congregation at the Wednesday evening prayer meeting, it was again evident that although there were a number of sad blanks since my previous visit, another generation has arisen. I was pleasantly surprised to see so many children in the church. During the days of the communion season which followed, we had good attendances (an average of 60 at each service, including visitors from Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga, Eketahuna and Havelock North), but more importantly we had a measure of the Lord's gracious presence, I believe, in the courts of His house.

Rev. Johannes Van Dorp bade us good bye at Gisborne airport early on Tuesday morning. By the late afternoon we were in Sydney, where we were kindly met at the airport by Mrs. Nella Van Praag, who drove us to the hospitable home of herself and her husband Jacob. The Sydney congregation has diminished to about 20, but it continues in the path of duty under the guidance of the two elders there, Mr. Jacob Van Praag and Mr. Calvin MacKenzie, who conduct the services each week. I received much kindness from the families of the congregation when I visited them, and it was not easy to part from them after the service at the church on Monday evening. The congregation has acquired a manse, and it is their fervent and prayerful hope that the Lord will one day set a pastor over them.

By Tuesday evening we were settled in the homely Grafton manse, after having been warmly greeted at Coff's Harbour Airport by Rev. Edward Rayner and his wife. I preached at the pre-communion season prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, when I had the opportunity to meet old friends and make acquaintance with new ones. I am very grateful for the kindness they showed me as I went among them in their homes. The congregation there has grown since my last visit – so much so that the church building has had to be extended. There was a good gathering of people during the communion season, including two families from Sydney, and all the services were well attended. It was gratifying to see that the two elderly elders, Mr. Ritchie Kidd and Mr. Ron Kidd, have younger men serving alongside them in office – Mr. Murray MacAlpine, Mr. Geoff Kidd and Mr. Richard van Dorp. It was also encouraging that Mr. Ritchie Kidd was able to attend the services on Saturday, Sabbath and Monday despite his frailty after being ill in hospital. For myself, I felt it indeed good to be there.

We flew from Grafton on Wednesday forenoon to be with our daughter and her husband and family near Melbourne for a few days. This was a welcome opportunity for us to not only see our family but also for me to recover from an attack of bronchitis and to relax before returning to home duties.

As I review my visit to those distant but very loyal congregations of our Church I think of how our people there deeply appreciate, and are encouraged by, the visits of ministerial deputies from the Church. Several people have

asked me to express their gratitude to the Synod, and also to make the plea for more ministers to be sent to them in their isolation from the Church in Scotland and in their ongoing need of ministerial supply. Of our seven congregations in those parts only two have pastors, and these two pastors, Mr. Van Dorp and Mr. Rayner, have the added burden between them of caring for the pastorless congregations.

Another matter I think of is that there is a high proportion of children and young people altogether in these seven congregations. This augers well for the future, but only if the truth will be blessed to them so that they would be members of the body of Christ and also useful and loyal members of our Church. Our prayerful desire is that the ministry of our ministers there, and others who visit occasionally, would continue to be blessed. May the Lord also be pleased to send pastors to shepherd the vacant congregations – men who will be led by the Spirit of God to say, “Send me”. “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

Finally I thank my presbytery for allowing me go abroad, the interim moderators who cared for the congregations for which I am responsible, the ministers and elders who conducted the services in my congregation during my absence, and those people in my congregation and beyond who remembered me at the throne of grace.

May the Lord bless our endeavours to help other congregations, especially those in far-flung locations, so that we will more and more see the fulfilment of His promise, “I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 43:6).