

**FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

**REPORTS OF  
STANDING  
COMMITTEES  
OF SYNOD**

*Submitted to Synod in May 2010*

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

**Convener: Rev. D. Campbell**

### **INTRODUCTION**

THE Religion and Morals Committee has been producing reports with more or less detail on the state of the nation and trends in religion and morals since its formation at the half-yearly meeting of Synod in June 1914. Many, over the years, have been critical of the manner in which this report has portrayed other Churches. We endeavour, without being censorious or hypercritical in terminology and without causing unnecessary hurt or offence to sincere Christians in other denominations, to fulfil a necessary duty. The responsibility of the Church in every generation is to lift up its voice like a trumpet and to declare to the nation her transgression and sin (Isaiah 58:1). This is not to claim anything for ourselves of blamelessness, as is often alleged. The Committee remains of the view that our own great need, as it is the need of the nation, is of evangelical repentance and contrition. We offer these reports, we trust, in the spirit of Daniel who in confessing the sins of the land and people, identified himself with them, for “all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice . . . we have sinned, we have done wickedly” (Daniel 9:11, 15).

We firmly believe that, in terms of the Synod resolution of 1975, the separate existence of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is “justified because, and only so long as, it is necessary”. When we hear of the events taking place in other denominations in Scotland professing adherence to the principles of the Scottish Reformation, we are thankful that, with all our many failings, a testimony to these principles is preserved among us still. The Committee feels we must remind ourselves of the necessity, as the previously cited Synod resolution states, “to preserve unity in the Church itself, since true love to one another is a distinguishing characteristic of the Church of Christ”; it prays too that “the whole Church will be given grace to walk together in the Spirit, maintaining in humility, loyalty to the heritage which we have received”.

We view with alarm and sadness that in the Church of Scotland efforts are being made to down-grade further the morals of the Bible in relation to sodomy. While the Committee have decided to await the outcome of the 2011 General Assembly review before commenting further, it is deeply shocking that any professing Christian Church can tolerate and allow those who, “declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not”, in her pulpits (Isaiah 3:9). The woe pronounced on such is, we greatly fear, to be the portion also of those who connive at and even encourage them in their sin and intrusion upon the office of the ministry. To evangelicals who have, in sincerity, sought to remain in her communion and to stem the tide of liberalism and decay, the time has surely come to, “come out of her . . . lest ye be partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

We applaud the decision of the Free Church General Assembly of 2009 to call a halt to union dialogue with the Church of Scotland – dialogue which should never have commenced. Not wishing to pre-empt any decision which may be arrived at in this year's Free Church Assembly, the Committee would be remiss to avoid mentioning with alarm the real possibility that purity of worship, as presently practised in that Church, may be eroded. We are very conscious of the prayerful desire of many in the Free Church of Scotland that this eventuality will be averted. In joining that prayerful wish, we cannot but lament the widespread changes which have come over that denomination since its early 20th century attempts to promote union with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Practices and beliefs tolerated and promoted in that body seem to make that joyful prospect even more remote than it was when first mooted. We long for that unity in the truth which our fathers also craved, but remain determined to hold to our testimony in a declining age.

#### *The Work of the Committee*

The Committee's report this year takes a slightly different form in some respects to previous years. This was left to the discretion of the writers and we trust that the detailed review of religious trends and events will be of use as well as interest to readers. As has been the custom for a number of years, two members of the Committee are appointed to write the two parts of the report. The Committee is greatly indebted to these members who give their time and commitment to this considerable task. This year Rev. Bruce Jardine produced the Religion report and Mr. Hector Munro the Morals report. The Committee have not interfered with the style or presentation of these reports and would like to thank both members for their work on behalf of the Synod. Our hope is that those reading will use the facts presented and the many grievous happenings as matter for earnest prayer at the throne of grace.

The Committee met twice since the last meeting of Synod for two hour sessions. Among other things discussed and agreed, two letters were sent by the Convener protesting against the planned papal visit; one to the Prime Minister and one to the First Minister of the Scottish Government. These letters expressly requested that no arrangements be made for the pope to visit Scotland in this year which marks the 450th anniversary of the Reformation. A proposal for a petition to be framed was passed from as unlikely to prove much more than the weakness of Protestantism in this country. The Committee, however, wishes to propose a special day of prayer throughout the Church over this lamentable issue. This proposal is made formally in an overture to the Synod.

Another item which took up the attention of the Committee was the draft policy guidelines produced by the Director of Public Prosecutions in England concerning assisted suicide. An opportunity to submit an opinion to the public consultation was taken and will appear with other submissions in due course. It is heartening to see the rising opposition to these proposals and also the declared intention of the Scottish Prosecution service not to introduce a similar

proposal. The Committee has produced a Resolution outlining its opposition to the Bill on Assisted Suicide presently before the Scottish Parliament. The clamour for assisted suicide to be legalised gathers pace. In opposing this, the Committee is anxious to present biblical reasons and also to direct poor sinners to the consolations of the gospel as the healing balm for despondent and despairing souls (Jeremiah 8:22). As in many other areas, the Committee and the Church at large is greatly indebted to the work done by the Christian Institute in its campaigns and information distribution.

Two matters relating to organisation were discussed by the Committee at its meetings. The burden of responding to issues of national importance has traditionally fallen on the Convener and Clerk and it was agreed that in future this work be shared among all members of the Committee. This will hopefully be reflected in future reports to the Synod in which the contribution of each member will be brought together in a summary form. Conscious also of the responsibility that the Committee has to the Synod and the need for clear accountability, the Committee discussed preparing a constitution setting out its duties and responsibilities, together with rules for its meetings. Owing to lack of time at its meeting this proposal was held over for discussion later, DV. This constitution would be offered to the Synod for adoption and it is hoped will be a means of clarifying what the Synod expects the Committee to do on its behalf.

The Committee also wishes to record its sense of loss at the passing of Dr. Duncan MacSween, who was for many years, an active and eminently able and useful member. Dr. MacSween regularly contributed to the reports over the years and was a reliable and faithful participant in its discussions. His presence and his many years of experience and wisdom will be greatly missed. At present the membership of the Committee is 10, with six ministers and four elders. The Committee is aware that a high proportion of its membership are young and inexperienced and draw attention to this in the hope that future changes will bear it in mind. The time of the Committee meeting may also be requiring review as it makes attendance difficult for those who have employment commitments during daytime hours.

As Convener I commend the report to the Synod and to the people of the Church as a sobering and sad reflection on the state of religion and morals in our land and further afield. It is, like reports before, a further call to earnest prayer and supplication that in justly deserved wrath, the Lord would “remember mercy”.

## **REPORT ON RELIGION**

THE purpose of this report is to give an accurate and objective picture of the state of world religion at the present time. The writer has drawn on reported events from the last few years, with the purpose of establishing the state of religion at the end of the first decade of the new millennium. He has endeavoured not to repeat any items that have received timely report and

comment within the pages of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* or have been circulated through the Christian Institute mailings that the majority of Synod already receives.

### **ROMAN CATHOLICISM**

**Exorcism:**\* It was recently noted that Jeremy Davies, 73, the diocesan exorcist for Westminster since 1986, has carried out thousands of exorcisms in the London area.<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic Church, concerned over the growing interest in Satanism and the occult, has made plans to train hundreds of further priests as exorcists. Bishops are now required to have a number of trained exorcists within their diocese. The present pope, Benedict XVI, is a firm believer in the existence and danger of demonic evil and is concerned over the danger posed by satanic sects through Rock music and the Internet.<sup>2</sup> The Roman Catholic Church in Poland is planning to open its first ever exorcism centre to offer spiritual help to the needy near the Baltic city of Szczecin. There are already about 50 trained exorcists in Poland.<sup>3</sup>

**Shrines:** A cure of an Italian woman, who is reported to have recovered from a serious illness after returning from a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1952, has been officially recognised as Lourdes' 67th cure.<sup>4</sup> It is also claimed that Thomas Robinson, aged 9, was cured of a malignant brain tumour.<sup>5</sup> However, historical biographer, Therese Taylor, has uncovered a darker side to Lourdes. She claims that the Grotto at Lourdes, known locally as the fairy cave, has always been connected with darker forces such as fairies, wraiths and sorceresses. Since pagan times, the area has been connected with the apparition of white women, who were believed to be spirits of a lustful, capricious and powerful nature. It is said that these apparitions have been connected with a number of suicides: some locals believe that these spirits were luring people to their deaths. Human bones were found in the cave, prior to the supposed visions of Mary the mother of Jesus. These bones appear to be the remains of human sacrifices. We should remember that, when St. Bernadette first reported her visions of Mary, she was accused of being bewitched by an evil spirit.<sup>6</sup> On 4th May 2008, the Roman Catholic Church officially recognised a further shrine in the Alps where Mary is said to have appeared to a young shepherdess back in 1664. The shrine already attracts 120,000 pilgrims a year and could grow to rival Lourdes, as a place to find a cure or gain salvation.<sup>7</sup>

However, the Vatican has also announced that visions of Mary, seen in Medjugorje in Bosnia Herzegovina, are demonic. Five million pilgrims visit the shrine annually. It is claimed that Mary has appeared over 40,000 times and imparted tens of thousands of messages and secrets. The Vatican refuses to recognise the site as "everything happens in function of money: pilgrimages, lodging houses, sale of trinkets. This whole sham is the work of the demon. It is a scandal."<sup>8</sup> Yet the Vatican's condemnation of the shrine has had little or no

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\* "The driving out of an evil spirit," *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*.



effect. Worship has also been banned elsewhere: on a hill in Burundi, where a woman, called Euzebie, claims to see a vision of Mary on the 11th of each month,<sup>9</sup> in South Korea, where Julia Youn, a woman who claims to have stigmata,\* has gathered a large sect around herself after claiming to have seen a statue of Mary weeping blood;<sup>10</sup> in Surrey, where Patricia de Menezes, founder of Community of Divine Innocence sect, claims to have seen visions of Mary; in Canada, where members of the Army of Mary follow Marie-Paule Giguere, who claims to be a reincarnation of Mary.<sup>11</sup>

Such controversy is not new. Back in 2005, 10,000 people crowded around the Jesuit headquarters in Naples to catch a glimpse of a man called Brother Elia, whose face, hands and feet, like those of the late Padre Pio, now canonised by the Church, is claimed to show signs of stigmata. The Church hierarchy, however, is not happy at his growing popularity among the masses, especially when they are unable to agree on the veracity of his stigmata. Brother Elia claims to have been receiving visions of Mary since he was 7, to talk to angels and to have the power to heal.<sup>12</sup> Over seven million pilgrims a year continue to visit the tomb of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio), who was famous for his supposed stigmata, power of healing, bilocation, levitation and prophecy. On 24th April 2008, his remains were put on show in a crystal casket, with a wax mask being used to cover his face. Just under a million pilgrims were expected to visit his body by the end of 2009.<sup>13</sup>

**Pope John Paul II:** Ever since Pope John Paul II died on 2nd April 2005, there have been calls for his sainthood and, indeed, Pope Benedict XVI began the process of Beatification on 13th May 2005, after waiving the usual 5-year waiting process. On 30th May 2007, sister Marie Simon-Pierre, a nun from Paris, announced her overnight cure from Parkinson's disease and attributed the cure to the intercession of Pope John Paul II, to whom she and her fellow nuns prayed for a cure. It is believed that this supposed miracle will now bring an end to the Beatification process. Another miracle is now needed before he can be canonised.<sup>14</sup> In April 2008, the Polish Church officials requested that the heart of Pope John Paul II be put on show in Poland as a relic. His body currently remains in Rome and receives the veneration of thousands of pilgrims a day.<sup>15</sup> After the death of John Paul II, the Vatican offered relics from one of his cassocks via the Internet and over 160,000 requests were received.<sup>16</sup> It is claimed that flames in a photograph taken of a bonfire, lit to mark the second anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, form a figure of the late pope.<sup>17</sup>

**Unholy Orders:** The Santa Clara convent in Bisceglie, southern Italy, was closed after a fight between its last three remaining nuns. The Mother Superior was admitted to hospital after being attacked by the other two sisters, who

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\* "The phenomenon of marks appearing on the body in the places corresponding to Christ's Passion wounds hands, feet, side," *ibid.*

were provoked by her authoritarian ways and nasty habits. The local Archbishop was unable to bring about reconciliation and so ordered its closure. However, the Mother Superior refused to leave and barricaded herself in.<sup>18</sup> In another incident, 150 Polish police officers were forced to scale the walls of a convent in the town of Kazimierz Dolny to evict 64 nuns and one monk. The nuns had been expelled by the Vatican from their order, but had refused to leave the building. It is reported that some of the nuns swore and acted aggressively towards the police. The Mother Superior and monk were both arrested. One nun was taken away in an ambulance, along with an eight-month-old baby, whose presence was not explained.<sup>19</sup> The number of nuns in the USA has drastically fallen over the past few years, prompting an investigation by Church officials into the reasons for the sharp decline. Concerns have also been raised over the non-traditional views being adopted by many young nuns.<sup>20</sup>

**Counterfeit Miracles:** More than 100,000 believers flocked to an ancient monastery in Nicula, in northwestern Romania, to kiss an icon believed to have miraculous healing powers. There were 24-hour services with crowds sleeping in the open. According to legend, the icon, a picture of Mary painted in 1691, wept for 26 days in 1699 and that, in 1702, the picture was responsible for an army officer's wife being cured of blindness.<sup>21</sup> Pilgrims also flocked to the flat of Valeriu Junie, after reports that images of Jesus and the apostles Peter and Paul had appeared on a wardrobe there. Mr. Junie claims to see such images on a regular basis. A local priest, Vasile Nuhaiu, said, "Jesus was there. It's a miracle."<sup>22</sup> Pilgrims also flocked from all over Poland to Wadowice, the birthplace of John Paul II, to fill bottles with holy water and to drink from a "miracle fountain" flowing from the statue of the late pope. However, local authorities later admitted that a water pipe had been installed under the statue as a water feature.<sup>23</sup> 57-year-old Gregorio Gomez, a Tzotzil Indian, had a dream that led him to discover an image resembling Jesus on a rock. The image later drew hundreds of Pilgrims to the mountains of Mexico's southern Chiapas state.<sup>24</sup> In March 2007, two portraits of Christ belonging to Eric Nathaniel of Port Blair in the Andaman Islands, began to leak red fluid. Thousands of people have gathered to see the "bleeding portraits".<sup>25</sup> In February 2008, at least 50 people in the Indian district of Kerala were blinded after gazing at the sun, following a rumour that an image of Mary had appeared on its surface. The rumour began in the same hotel in Erumeli where statues of Mary are said to have cried honey, bled oil and perfumes.<sup>26</sup> Leaders of the Santa Muerte (Saint Death) cult in Mexico have complained of the government's destruction of over 30 of their shrines. Santa Muerte is the patron saint of crime and criminals.<sup>27</sup> Dozens of faithful Roman Catholics have been visiting a statue of Mary outside a Vietnamese Roman Catholic Martyrs Church in Sacramento, California, after the parish priest and congregation saw bloody tears being wept by the statue.<sup>28</sup> A hotel in Mexico has claimed that an image of Jesus appeared on one of its pot plants after

Hurricane Wilma. It is claimed that the image was responsible for the safety of its residents during the storm.<sup>29</sup> Francesca Zackey from Benoi, in South Africa, claims to have had 20 visions of Mary; each vision is accompanied by the smell of roses. Her home has become a centre for pilgrimage.<sup>30</sup> In July 2009, workmen cut down some overgrown trees at Holy Mary Parish Church in County Limerick. One of the workmen claimed to have discovered an image of Mary on the stump. The image has now been made into a shrine, attracting hundreds of worshippers.<sup>31</sup> A small group gathered at a Marian shrine in Kerrytown, Donegal, after local man Joe Coleman, a faith healer and visionary, claimed to have received a vision informing him that crosses would appear in the sky. Witnesses claimed that crosses did indeed appear in the sky over a ten-minute period. After the crosses faded, the shrine's statue of Mary was said to have changed colour and form; "she appeared to have a human face and her head turned and she looked at people, before crying".<sup>32</sup> It remains a custom in the village of San Pedro Cutud, north of Manila, to imitate the example of Christ by crucifying a number of local men each year. The men wear a crown of thorns and are literally nailed to crosses after being whipped with bamboo canes.<sup>33</sup>

**Relics:** Thousands of childless women have been visiting a small flat in Naples to sit in an old armchair draped in a worn blanket, to ask St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds of Jesus for a miracle. Each needful woman is asked whether or not they are married, before a jar, containing a vertebra and lock of hair from the Saint, is used to touch them. Pilgrims are later led to the room where the Saint spent most of her life and in which hair shirts and a whip hang from the wall to remind pilgrims of the need for voluntary penance.<sup>34</sup> The Roman Catholic Church ended its year of "St. Paul" on 28th June 2009, with Pope Benedict XVI announcing that scientists had confirmed that Paul's bones had been found under a church in Rome. The bones were found, along with incense grains and purple linen, laminated with pure gold in the spot where the apostle is traditionally said to have been buried.<sup>35</sup> The relics of St. Terese of Lisieux (a thigh bone and foot) were shown in York Minster in October 2009, at which there were scuffles between worshippers and protesters. They were also taken, with Home Office approval, into the Wormwood Scrubs prison. The Church of Rome used the occasion as a means of raising money by the sale of roses, which Terese said she would like to throw down to the earth when she was dead. In 1997, Cardinal Hume discouraged plans for the relics to visit Britain, as he feared that it might at the time have been seen to be a discouragingly backward-looking and morbid style of worship. Now the visitation of relics is seen as a way of bringing a more psychological approach to strengthening and comforting believers. Yet the whole idea of relics remains a doctrinally difficult area for the Church. How can you differentiate the veneration of physical relics from the superstitious idea that they simply possess magical powers?<sup>36</sup>

**Child Abuse:** A Roman Catholic Bishop has excommunicated a journalist after he secretly recorded a Church confession, for an article concerning sex abuse by priests. The journalist posed as a monk who had come to the confessional to confess his abuse of a young girl. He was absolved by a priest and given Psalm 131 as a penance.<sup>37</sup> In late 2009, volumes of the *Ryan Report* into the abuse of children by the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland, spelled out a horrifying catalogue of sexual, physical and emotional abuse by Roman Catholic clergy. The report highlighted the fact that the Church hierarchy knew of the abuse and yet failed to take any serious action, either to prevent it or to punish its perpetrators or even help those abused. It also states that the Garda did not act, as they thought that the Church was outside of their remit.<sup>38</sup>

**Cardinal John Henry Newman:** The process to canonise Cardinal Newman, the founder of the Oxford movement and convert to Romanism, began in 1958. He now has two miracles attributed to him. This must please Pope Benedict XVI, who is a follower of Newman's teachings, and has agreed that the Cardinal is responsible for a miracle in 2001. Roman Catholic deacon, Jack Sullivan of Massachusetts, claims to have been cured from a serious spinal disorder after praying to the Cardinal.<sup>39</sup> In April 2008, the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Sainthood applied to have Newman's remains moved to the Birmingham Oratory. The Ministry of Justice granted permission on 11th August 2008, the 118th anniversary of his death. It was hoped that, during the removal, experts on holy objects would be able to retrieve some relics such as bones, skin and cloth. After his canonisation, these objects would be placed in small shrines within many British churches. However, this was all academic as, when the grave was opened on 2nd October 2008, it was discovered that Newman's remains had returned to dust, without any trace of teeth or bones. All the relics that could be found were several locks of hair, a wooden crucifix and a coffin handle. John Hunter, Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Birmingham, cast doubt over the fact that the remains had decayed so quickly. "It is very interesting from a forensic point of view to find a body that has completely decayed within this amount of time. It is very unusual and very unlikely. It's very unlikely for a body to vanish completely." The Church countered by claiming that there may be some parts of the body still to be found among the three boxes of textile remains that were removed from the grave. The homosexual lobby opposed the whole idea as Newman is buried along with his life-long partner, Ambrose St. John. Newman lived with St. John from 1843 to 1875.<sup>40</sup>

**Interfaith Relations:** The Roman Catholic Church is continuing its moves to increase links with Islam.<sup>41</sup> It is claimed that interfaith co-operation between Protestants, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics in the Philippines is growing through their combined work on a new translation of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church funds the work in return for a place on the translation team.<sup>42</sup> It must also be noted that the recent *Manhattan Declaration*, signed by such

figures as J. I. Packer, Chuck Colson and many others, has declared that the followers of both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy are Christians.<sup>43</sup>

**Proposed Papal Visit:** The pope has been invited to preach in Durham Cathedral during his proposed UK visit by its supposedly Evangelical Bishop, Tom Wright.<sup>44</sup> It is also expected that the pope will address MPs at Westminster Hall, the same place where the Roman Catholic Thomas More was sentenced to death in 1535, as was Guy Fawkes. It is believed that the visit will last about 4 days.<sup>45</sup>

**Commercialism:** A man calling himself Pilgrim Gil offers to undertake a pilgrimage on behalf of anyone who wants to go to Fatima in Portugal but is unable to do so. The pilgrimage and a certificate of proof cost £1,673.<sup>46</sup> The Church of Rome has begun what it calls “religious outsourcing” due to a lack of priests in the industrial world. Prayers for the dead and Masses are being paid for by Roman Catholics in the West and then “off-shored” to India. The idea is that a parishioner in London will pay £50 for a Mass that his local Church is unable to perform; the Church authorities will then pay a priest in India to perform it.<sup>47</sup>

**Evolution:** The Vatican has announced its unequivocal belief in the theory of evolution. It is now held that “biological evolution and the Christian view of creation are complementary to each other”.<sup>48</sup> The pope has also endorsed the belief that there may be life elsewhere in the universe. It is now Vatican doctrine that a belief in extra-terrestrials does not conflict with faith in God as the creator or in Christ dying for the sins of mankind.<sup>49</sup>

### ***THE BRITISH CHURCHES***

**The Church of England:** The Rev. Rupert Foxwell has caused outrage in the town of Tonbridge, Kent, by claiming that he can cure cancer by the laying on of his hands. He believes that he will rid the town of all disease and illness within 10 years.<sup>50</sup> The Church of England’s Liturgical Commission has issued an outline order for a combined Baptism and Marriage service.<sup>51</sup> Senior Clergy have raised concerns that the government has been diverting funds, meant for helping the poor, to support other faiths and that the government has “a preoccupation with Muslim communities at the expense of Christian groups”.<sup>52</sup> It is reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury does not believe that the book of Genesis is literally true; that he does not know if anyone actually goes to hell and that the current debate within the Church of England over women Bishops is embarrassing to the Church. He has also stated that he is fond of the writings of the writer Philip Pullman, the campaigning atheist. Pullman has previously referred to the aim of his children’s books as being to “undermine the basis of Christian belief” and about “killing God”.<sup>53</sup> The annual idolatrous parade through Walsingham took place this year with a new image of Mary in white being carried in honour of the presence of the Roman

Catholic Bishop of Lourdes.<sup>54</sup> The Church of England has promoted Darwin's theory of evolution throughout 2009, in celebration of the 200th year of Darwin's birth and 150th anniversary of the publication of the *Origin of the Species*.<sup>55</sup> **Church of Ireland:** The leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland addressed the Synod's annual Eucharistic service in May 2009, for the first time.<sup>56</sup> **Church of Scotland:** At the General Assembly in May 2009, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was given a standing ovation after addressing the Assembly and telling them that homosexuals have a place in the Church. He said: "In this family there are no outsiders. All are insiders – lesbian, gay, so-called straight – we are family."<sup>57</sup> The Church has also suffered greatly from the financial downturn, after losing in the region of 89 million from the value of its investments. At the current rate, Church reserves will be exhausted by 2018. Staff at CrossReach, the Church's social care service, face redundancy and it is feared that ministers' stipends may have to be cut. The Church faces shortfalls in the number of its ministers – at present 16% of its congregations are vacant. It is proposed that lay members, after taking an 18-month training course, should be ordained to serve as "locally ordained ministers".<sup>58</sup> The Church is also considering the use of "virtual ministers" who would, via the Internet or other means, provide a live link to vacant congregations.<sup>59</sup>

#### ***THE AMERICAN CHURCHES***

**Presbyterian Church (USA):** A Church Committee has been looking into the possibility of changing its standards to remove any condemnation of sodomy. The Committee is considering the revision of Q87 in the *Heidelberg Catechism* that has formed part of the Church's constitution since 1967. The Committee will report back to the General Assembly with its findings in 2010. At the same time, the Church's 173 Presbyteries are voting on whether or not to delete a requirement of fidelity and chastity from the constitution, in an attempt to open the way for the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals to the clergy. **Episcopal:** Katherine Jefferts, the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, has been accused of teaching bad religion after preaching that the whole idea of personal religion is a heresy.<sup>60</sup> **Lutheranism:** The Lutheran Church of America has voted to separate itself from Biblical Christianity by accommodating and endorsing unrepentant homosexual activity.<sup>61</sup> In October 2009, a top-level crisis meeting was held between Lutheran and Roman Catholic clergy after a senior Lutheran pastor described the pope as being "incompetent" and criticised ecumenism. The true reason for the rift seems to lie in Pope Benedict's policy after absolute power.<sup>62</sup> Some Lutherans have become so dissatisfied with the downward trend in the Church that they are considering setting up an alternative Church body.<sup>63</sup>

#### ***ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY***

It is claimed that as Alexei II, the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, died on 5th December 2008, he appeared in a dream to a close relative in Estonia and said, "I am dying now". At the same time, it is claimed that an icon

began to weep scented oil at a church in the Sverdlovsk region.<sup>64</sup> An Orthodox official in charge of inter-church relations met with the pope during a five-day visit to Rome. It is noted that more cordial relations exist between the two Churches than previously thought possible.<sup>65</sup> A Greek Orthodox monk, who died 15 years ago, is attracting thousands of worshippers because of his remarkably preserved body.<sup>66</sup> The supposed hand of John the Baptist, which is meant to be responsible for many miracles, has been displayed in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow during a tour of Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine. It is said that a crippled stroke victim, who visited the relic, was cured after kissing its display case. Thousands of worshippers waited for up to 11 hours to kiss the relic during its tour.<sup>67</sup>

### ***CULTS, SECTS AND FALSE MESSIAHS***

**Scientology:** The cult has etched out two large interlocking rings on the surface of the New Mexico desert as markers for Scientologists returning from outer space. The signs act like a signpost pointing to a nuclear-proof bunker, housing copies of the works of the cult's founder, Science Fiction writer Ron Hubbard.<sup>68</sup> Two French Courts have convicted the Scientology group of mass manipulation and fraud. The group was fined 630,000 Euros. The French refuse to acknowledge Scientology as a religion, holding that it is a purely commercial operation.<sup>69</sup> Australian authorities have been more blunt, calling it "a criminal organisation", after allegations of its merciless hounding and punishment of critics and its policy of taking its members' money. There have even been rumours of blackmail, forced abortion and wrongful imprisonment.<sup>70</sup> Yet Scientologists claim to be like the knights of old; standing for justice, wisdom, temperance, resolution, truth and liberty. The main headquarters and conference facilities for Scientology in Britain are at Saint Hill in Sussex. Scientologists claim that a new civilisation is being built there. "It is a place where you can reach levels of knowledge, awareness and freedom never before possible in man's long history." This takes place through following their prescribed courses. A look at any copy of *The Auditor*, their official magazine, will show the astronomical amounts that followers are expected to pay for the courses they undertake. *The Basics Books & Lectures Package* with a 25% discount costs £3,065 and *The Congresses Package* with a 25% discount costs £2,170.<sup>71</sup> **The Chosen Ones:** Russia is home to a large number of sects – at least 120 of them make their followers live in total isolation like those who call themselves the Chosen Ones. Several years ago, Pyotr Kuznetsob, a schizophrenic engineer from Belarus, declared himself to be a prophet, left his family and began writing books. In 2005, along with a number of followers, he settled in the village of Nikpskoye, in the Penza region of Russia, to await the end of the world, due in May 2008. On 7th November 2007, 25 adults and children barricaded themselves into a snow-covered cave full of gas and petrol and refused to leave.<sup>72</sup> It is believed Kuznetsob later tried to commit suicide after his predictions failed to take place.<sup>73</sup> **The Grail Movement:** The cult has 10,000 members who follow the

teachings of Oskar Ernst Bernardt and “depicts man as a being whose spirit can return to its source in heaven by performing good deeds in earth”.<sup>74</sup> **Benevolent Missionary Association:** Police in Malaysia entered a house after receiving complaints from neighbours of continual chanting and found three women conducting prayers to bring their prophet back to life. Ching Chi Vui Ivan, leader of the Benevolent Missionary Association, had died 13 months earlier. Before his death, he told his followers not to bury him, as he would come back to life. His badly decomposing body was kept wrapped in plastic within the house.<sup>75</sup>

**Lia Aminuddin** from Java believes that she is imbued with the spirit of the prophet Gabriel. She claims that she is Mary and that her son is Jesus. Lia has become the centre of a growing cult.<sup>76</sup> **Steven Tari**, a cult leader in Papua New Guinea, calls himself the “Black Jesus”. The authorities accuse him of being guilty of child abuse, murder and cannibalism. Tari copies the style of clothing Christ wears in paintings and has grown his hair long. He has been going among various hill tribes and has gathered a large group of followers. He teaches followers to destroy their Bibles as heretical books and believe in him as the true Son of God.<sup>77</sup> **Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda** is the founder of a cult called **Creciendo en Gracia** (Growing in Grace). Jose is a former drug addict and criminal who now claims to be the incarnation of Jesus and the Antichrist at one and the same time. The cult is growing all across the Americas, claiming at least 10,000 active followers. Followers are called on to receive a “666” and “SSS” tattoo which Jose says stands for *Salvo Siempre Salvo* (Saved Always Saved). Jose claims to run God’s government on earth. Globally, the cult has 335 education centres, 200 pastors, a radio programme played on 287 stations and a 24-hour television network. To receive a blessing, you must pay a tithe set at as much as 40% of your income.<sup>78</sup> Former MI5 member, **David Shayler**, claims that he was anointed as the Messiah while visiting a psychic who channelled the spirit of Mary Magdalene. He believes that there was a Hebrew anagram of “David Shayler, Righteous King” written on Aaron’s rod. He holds that his new divinity enables him to change the weather, prevent terrorist attacks and fix football matches. His mission is “to inform humanity about the changes in the Universe and spread the spiritual rules of unconditional sharing, never judging and having faith in the Universe”.<sup>79</sup> **Sergei Anatolyevitch** from Siberia, a former traffic policeman, claims to have received a mystical revelation in May 1990, by which he was reborn as Vissarion, the returned Jesus Christ. He dresses and grooms himself to look like an Orthodox Christian icon with a benign smile, gaunt features and wispy beard. In August 1991, he founded **The Church of the Last Testament** or **Community of United Faith**, which is believed to have about 10,000 active members and over 50,000 adherents. His followers are called the Vissariontsi or Vissarionites and have founded a now thriving town called Ecopolis in Siberia. The doctrine they follow is a mixture of Russian Orthodoxy, Buddhism, apocalypticism, collectivism and ecological values.<sup>80</sup>



### ***CREATIONISM AND EVOLUTION***

**Christian Ministry AIG** (Answers in Genesis) opened their Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, on 28th May 2007. By October 2008, 550,000 had visited the museum. The museum seeks to combine fossil displays with biblical history and to celebrate the wonders of creation while giving an evangelical view of sin. It is the view of the Museum Directors that the battle for creationism must be fought among the very young and, therefore, they draw on the fascination that children have for dinosaurs to teach about the literal six days of creation. It is the general purpose of the museum to put forward an alternative to the theory of evolution.<sup>81</sup>

It is reported, that Charles Darwin, when he was aged 50, felt sick at the sight of a tail feather of a peacock because it pointed to a flaw in his theory of evolution. His theory of evolution predicted that a lot of intermediary links between creatures would be found in the fossil record. The validity of his theory was founded on the notion that a vast fossil record of creatures in different stages of evolution would be found; yet now, after 150 years, no such intermediate fossil record has been discovered and the crucial links are missing.<sup>82</sup> A recent poll by ComRes found that more than 50% of the population do not believe that the theory of evolution can explain the full complexity of the created world.<sup>83</sup>

Sir David Attenborough, the well-known naturalist and Television presenter, has, in the science journal *Nature*, blamed the command of God in Genesis 1:28, “and God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth”, for the recent environmental devastations, as it teaches that the world’s resources are expendable.

### ***ATHEISM***

Anton La Vey formally established the **Church of Satan** on 30th April 1966. The very name was chosen because it was both blasphemous and sacrilegious. Its members refuse to believe in the existence of any higher spiritual being than man and yet they practise ritualistic magic with the belief that they can produce a tangible result in the world around them. Their main ritual is called *Ragnarokin*, in which they focus their energy to “will” a change in society to make the satanic point of view more widespread. The group does not believe that Satan is an anthropomorphic, independent, conscious being; rather, they view Satan as a philosophy that represents the carnal, the rebel and the adversary of God. They consider themselves as the adversaries of the world they live in and to be different from those that call themselves devil worshippers or Satanists because they refuse to accept any Christian doctrine. They claim that what they believe is the natural fruit of atheism, that there is no God and no devil. In the Church of Satan, every single person is considered godlike and to have the right to do everything that they want as long as it does not harm another person. In their own words, it is a “carnal based religion”.<sup>84</sup>

**The National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies** launched a summer recruitment drive while holding a number of summer camps for atheists. At the camps, children recruits, between the ages of 8-17, were to be taught how to “damage religious activity in schools” and lobby local authorities about religious issues. The campaign had the backing of prominent atheists such as Richard Dawkins and A. C. Grayling.<sup>85</sup> The camps taught lessons on rational scepticism, moral philosophy and the use of such music as John Lennon’s *Imagine* which contains lyrics that deny the existence of heaven and hell.<sup>86</sup>

It is reported that the number of atheist or agnostic groups active on US College campuses has more than doubled since 2007. These groups use social networking sites such as *Facebook* to organise events, give a channel for discussion and provide a way of testing the waters with others.<sup>87</sup>

In February 2009, atheists complained of a Bible poster campaign by the TBS before it was even due to start. Attempts were made via various websites to actively encourage complaints to the Advertising Standards Agency, in an attempt to outnumber the number of complaints made against a recent Atheism-based campaign.<sup>88</sup> The children of religious parents are now being targeted in an anti-religion advertising campaign. The British Humanist Association’s adverts read, “Please don’t label me. Let me grow up and choose for myself.” The adverts are part of its attempts to have all faith schools closed down. The posters used show young children surrounded by religious names such as “Protestant Child”.<sup>89</sup> It was reported at the beginning of December 2009, that the government is proposing, in the new Education Bill, to make the teaching of Evolution compulsory for all 5-11 year-olds in England and Wales. The decision follows a relentless campaign by the British Humanist Association for its introduction.<sup>90</sup> Philip Pullman, in his new book, *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*, claims that the idea of Jesus being God came from the “fervid imagination” of Paul. It is known that Pullman uses his books as tools for “proselytising” others, especially children, to the atheist cause.<sup>91</sup>

It has been known for some time that Richard Dawkins sees himself on a mission to eradicate religion and superstition. The theme of his television series, *Enemies of Reason* and *The Root of all Evil?*, was their eventual replacement with Science and Reason. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that he is viewed by his own peers as being too dogmatic and unreasonable in the implementation of his own views. There is a growing concern among many scientists that his approach is giving a bad impression of science, such a bad impression that many lay people are being put off science altogether. The essence of true science is meant to be a method of enquiry into the unknown and not a vehicle for dogma and prejudice.<sup>92</sup> The January 2009 issue of *Fortean Times*, a magazine that seeks to consider strange phenomena, accused Dawkins of being “an unimaginative and ill-informed buffoon . . . on matters of religion”. The article went on to claim that “there is plenty more to complain of in Prof. Dawkins’ treatment of religion, however,

without being a creationist or a disciple of ‘intelligent design’ or even a believer in God”. Why? Because “it is a false syllogism to make the leap, as he does, from the dottiness of creationism and the elegance of Darwinian theory to the notion that all religion is bonkers, malign, a bane upon the Earth, a kind of brainwashing, nasty, abusive, crass, and ought to be abolished”. Dawkins is also charged with using “infantile” arguments, being “lazy”, and “if he is not merely ill-informed, Prof. Dawkins could be accused here of intellectual laxity, if not dishonesty. He has already been accused of moral cowardice.”<sup>93</sup>

It was reported, in February 2009, that Christian Union groups at Universities throughout Britain were actively campaigning against Richard Dawkins’ campaign and had distributed over 400,000 copies of the Gospel of Mark to students.<sup>94</sup>

### ***SATANISM***

In January 2004, Italian police found the body of Mariangela Pezzotta, who had been shot and then buried alive. Her ex-boyfriend was lead singer in a Death Metal band called “Beasts of Satan”. Band members were later discovered to have been involved in a satanic cult and possibly guilty of eight murders that took place during the performance of satanic rites. The Italian government estimates that well over 5,000 young Italians might be connected with similar satanic cults.<sup>95</sup> Previously, in June 2000, three former students confessed to the murder of Sister Maria Laura and said that her murder had been a sacrifice to the devil. The girls had previously taken part in satanic rituals such as drinking each other’s blood.<sup>96</sup> In June 2007, a gang of **Russian Satanists** murdered four Gothic teenagers. Each teenager was stabbed 666 times in reference to the mark of the beast in the Book of Revelation. It is believed that the murderers went on to eat parts of their victim’s bodies. The murderers gave reasons for becoming Satanists, including one who said, “I tried to turn to God, but it didn’t bring me any money. I prayed to Satan, and things improved.” It is thought that the gang had previously dug up human remains for use in their ceremonies.<sup>97</sup> A member of the **Satan’s Brethren Association** in Slovenia has been appointed to a five-year term as Director of Slovenia’s State Office for religious Communities.<sup>98</sup> The rise in Satanism has been blamed on several things, such as the prevalence of Death Metal and social issues. Once a teenager gets involved in internet chatrooms dedicated to the music, they can be led on to the practice of Satanism.

### ***BLACK MAGIC & SUPERSTITION***

It was reported in April and June 2008 that at least 19 albinos throughout Africa, including children, had been killed and mutilated over a 12-month period to supply body parts for black magic. Witch doctors use their skin, bones and hair in their magic.<sup>99</sup> When an aunt of **Gambia’s** president died in early 2009, he suspected witchcraft and ordered the arrest of 1,000 alleged witches. A number of confessions were obtained through torture, which left at

least two dead.<sup>100</sup> Further reports from **West Africa** claim a rapid increase in witchcraft-related rumours.<sup>101</sup> In 1899, the Colonial settlers of **Zimbabwe** made it a crime to accuse anyone of witchcraft. In 2006, a Criminal Law Codification became law in Zimbabwe, making witchcraft a criminal offence punishable by a fine or five years in jail. The law was passed after a substantial increase in the number of Witch doctors, caused by the country's economic turmoil and a rise in fear and desperation. However, the new law also legitimises traditional healers who perform divination, fortune telling and the use of charms and spells.<sup>102</sup> In January and February 2009, it was reported that witch hunting was becoming epidemic in the Highland region of **Papua New Guinea**. In the previous year, there had been over 50 deaths related to witch-hunting. Accusations of witchcraft usually arise after the unexpected or unexplained death of loved ones and the victims are usually strangers to the area. The Sorcery Act of 1976, passed by the government, tolerates white witchcraft, but forbids the practice of black magic.<sup>103</sup>

### ***PAGANISM***

On 10th May 2006, a Greek Court lifted a ban on the worship of the 12 ancient gods of Greece. There are believed to be about 2,000 hard-core pagans who want to return to the ancient ceremonies and plan to petition the Greek government and EU to bring this about. Up to 100,000 sympathisers of the old religion are said to meet at clandestine ceremonies every full moon.<sup>104</sup> In a study made in 2001, over 134,000 Americans claimed Wicca as their religion.<sup>105</sup> A witch school opened for business on 1st July 2006, in the town of Hoopston, Illinois. The school now has 120,000 students from all over the world, most of whom take courses over the internet. The courses offered vary from Druidism and Celtic History to crystal and gem magic. Successful students will become accredited members of the Wiccan clergy. On 24th April 2006, Gabreila Chukar became Romania's first official witch after negotiations with the government. Witchcraft is increasingly popular in Romania's rural areas. Witches are sought out by women to settle love scores, heal broken hearts or punish a love rival.<sup>106</sup> British pagan police officers, who practise witchcraft, have been allowed to establish their own Pagan Police Association. They have also been given the right to take eight days off work to celebrate their religious holidays, such as Halloween and the mid summer solstice.<sup>107</sup>

### ***FALSE RELIGIONS***

#### ***ISLAM***

**Islamification of UK:** Nearly 100 Sharia tribunals and informal courts are now operating within the UK. There are also thought to be around 90 local Sharia councils across the UK that dispense information and rulings, many of which are considered inconsistent by their critics.<sup>108</sup> In July 2009, the independent think tank, *Civitas*, advised that Sharia courts should not be

recognised under Britain's 1996 Arbitration Act. It is feared that such courts may be handing down rulings that are inappropriate to this country because they are linked to Islamic laws which are seriously out of step with Western thinking, as the essence of Sharia Law is to give a ruling that is according to the divine will, as recorded or deduced from the Koran. One particular area of concern covers rulings in divorce cases as, under Sharia law, women are not viewed as being of equal worth with men and there is also no specific commitment to the best interests of the child. In October 2008, the House of Lords ruled that Sharia Law was incompatible with human rights.<sup>109</sup> Yet it is believed that the UK government is seeking to change financial regulations to accommodate Sharia finance, including Islamic bonds. Current accounts, mortgages, investment funds and motor insurance that conform to Sharia law are all now available in the UK. Such a move appears to be nothing less than an attempt to have the UK submit to Sharia law. Junior government Minister, Shahid Malik, MP for Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, has predicted the total Islamification of Britain and a Muslim Prime Minister by 2040.<sup>110</sup> Several organisations such as **Stop the Islamization of Europe** have been formed to combat such advances by Islam.<sup>111</sup> Islam, when in the majority in any country, is increasingly seen as being as oppressive as Communism was.<sup>112</sup> It was reported in May 2009 that the European Commission is considering new Directives that will result in Muslims being entitled to operate Sharia Law within their own communities throughout the EU. Civil Law judges would be forced to accept the ruling of a Sharia Court.<sup>113</sup> It has been agreed that Scouts in Dundee will be able to pledge allegiance to "Allah" rather than to God and the Queen. The move came with the formation of the "Dundee 45th troop" which is to be recruited from the Muslim community. There are currently just over 25 Muslim Scout troops throughout the United Kingdom.<sup>114</sup> The government's counter terrorism board has issued draft guidance for police authorities advising them not to arrest "extremist Muslims who commit certain crimes, fearing that to charge them with crimes could make them 'more extreme'". The crimes to be overlooked include "incitement to religious hatred" or "viewing extremist material on the Internet", including anti-Semitic remarks and publications. The government is seeking to appeal to the wider Muslim community. It must be noted that, although Muslims only make up 3% of the UK population, they make up 10% of the UK prison population.<sup>115</sup>

**Islamification of the West:** International Barnabas Director, Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo, expressed concern at a recent fundraising event that some Christian leaders were contributing to the success of Islamic mission. He claimed that ventures that seek to engage with Islam end up in giving too great a place to its teachings at the expense of the Scriptures. He noted that there were now 1,700 Mosques in the UK and the idea of "Jihad of the womb", or the increase in the birth rate among Muslims, which at present is three times that of British women, was very real.<sup>116</sup> For centuries, Roman Catholicism has been the world's largest religion and Islam the second. It is now believed that Islam has

overtaken Roman Catholicism. The followers of Islam represent 19.2% of the world's population and Roman Catholicism 17.4%.<sup>117</sup> A concerted attempt is being made to have more Muslims serve in the White House. Details of the most qualified Muslims were submitted to the Obama administration. Muslims only make up about 2% of the US population. President Obama has tried to distance himself personally, from being seen as a Muslim, but has, at the same time, been seeking to reach out to the Muslim world.<sup>118</sup> The United Nations, in March 2009, moved towards criminalizing the "Defamation of Islam". The move would mean the distortion of human rights, free speech and religious freedom and marks a backward step for liberty and democracy.<sup>119</sup> The majority of Switzerland's population (57%) have voted to ban the building of any further mosque "minarets" in Switzerland. The ban was opposed by the government, the major political parties, the Roman Catholic Church and business leaders who feared insulting Switzerland's 400,000 strong Muslim population. However, there is a general unease in the country concerning Islam.<sup>120</sup> Mosques across the country, of which there are 200, tried to prevent a negative vote by opening their doors to non-Muslims in an attempt to promote greater understanding.<sup>121</sup> Turkey was quick to challenge the ban, calling it "undemocratic and intolerant" and demanded "corrective action". However, one Turkish Newspaper, the *Hurrryret*, spoke of Turkey's interfaith tolerance being proved by the number of churches and synagogues burnt down in the country as well as a call to remember that theirs was a country in which, "locals have slit the throats of Christian missionaries".<sup>122</sup>

**Counterfeit Miracles:** People from all over the southern Egyptian province of Sohag gathered in front of Mohammed Abu Dif's house in the village of Tunis to seek blessings from a calf that they believe was sent from Allah. It is claimed that when the calf was born, its skin was folded in such a way as to form the words "There is no God but Allah".<sup>123</sup> A baby boy born in Dagestan, Russia, is said to have left doctors stupefied after the word "Allah" is alleged to have appeared on his chin. Since then, several verses from the Koran have allegedly emerged on his back, arms, legs and stomach. The boy was diagnosed with coronary spastic infantile paralysis at birth, but this is said to have been cured when the writing appeared. Two thousand pilgrims come daily to see the boy.<sup>124</sup> A book called *Possessed: How to Treat and Prevent It* became an instant best seller in Brunei. In the 113-page book by Awang Abdul Aziz Juned, Brunei's leading cleric, he advises reciting verses and prayers from the Koran to ward off spiritual attacks and strengthen Muslims against them. Demon possession is a common fear in Brunei.<sup>125</sup> A Saudi family recently took a *djinni* or *genie* to court, accusing it of leaving threatening messages on their phones, stealing their mobiles and throwing stones at them.<sup>126</sup> Mohammad Ponari, a nine-year-old boy from Java, was struck by lightning in January 2009 and, because he survived, is believed to possess special healing powers. Thousands queue daily to receive cures from him which he imparts to them by making an elixir from a magical stone.

It is believed that many of the supposed cures have ended in the death of pilgrims. The Islam of Indonesia is mixed with Animism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Many Islamic clerics also double as shamans and witchdoctors.<sup>127</sup>

**Morality:** Sheikh Muhammad al-Hababan, an important Saudi cleric, on Arab television, called on women to wear a full veil or Niqab that reveals only one of the wearer's eyes. He believes that showing both eyes makes women look seductive.<sup>128</sup> Islamic militants have been rounding up anyone with silver and gold false teeth and forcing them to have them removed. The extremists believe that such false teeth are vain and worldly.<sup>129</sup>

**UFOs:** Islamic preacher Omar Bakri,<sup>130</sup> of Lebanon, has urged Muslims to convert any aliens they encounter to Islam. He said, "We are obliged as Muslims to make the whole galaxy subservient to almighty Allah".

### ***BUDDHISM***

A tortoise caught by a fisherman in Cambodia is being kept at a Buddhist temple because of its healing powers after a number of locals had dreams about its ability to heal illnesses. Worshippers pray in front of it, wash injuries with water it has bathed in and even drink its bathing water to cure their illnesses. The tortoise is believed to be a reincarnation of one of Buddha's guards.<sup>131</sup> Daily attendance at a Zen Buddhist temple in Japan has dramatically increased after a black and white Chihuahua dog joins in prayers by sitting on his hind legs, raising his paws and putting them together to touch his nose.<sup>132</sup> Every year, an unusual ceremony takes place in the Buddhist monastery of Wat Krang Si Charoensuk in Thailand. The remains of Luang Phoo, one of its previous abbots, are taken out of a glass case and paraded before a large crowd, before being covered in gold leaf in honour of his being considered to be an enlightened being.<sup>133</sup> The 6th descendant of the ancient tree, under which Buddha attained enlightenment in eastern India more than 2,500 years ago, is suffering from a mysterious ailment. Many Buddhists believe that this is a seriously bad omen for mankind.<sup>134</sup> It is reported that 700 students at a school in Kamala, Thailand, were sent home after 29 students were "possessed" by demons. The symptoms included uncontrollable convulsing, loud screaming and paralysis. The school was closed for a week while Buddhist monks exorcised the grounds using snakes' and pigs' blood. A Muslim ceremony was also celebrated.<sup>135</sup> Similar reports have previously been made in both Indonesia and Australia.<sup>136</sup> There is a marked move towards secularism among young Buddhist monks. They are increasingly using Internet cafés and becoming involved in Heavy Metal music. Many are seeking after worldly items such as mobile phones and gold jewellery. Several scandals have also been noted, involving immorality, gambling and criminal activities.<sup>137</sup>

### ***HINDUISM***

A rare albino-like king Cobra was paraded around a statue of the Hindu deity Amman, in a suburban temple in Malaysia, before a crowd of 30,000 who brought it offerings of milk, eggs and money, as they considered its appearance to be a good omen.<sup>138</sup> Hundreds of people flocked to an Indian village in the eastern state of Bihar to worship a baby girl born with rare deforming tumours. They believed her to be an incarnation of the Hindu god Durga, a multi-armed goddess.<sup>139</sup> Villagers from Southern India worship a colour-changing frog.<sup>140</sup> In 2007, 400,000 Hindus going on pilgrimage in the Indian Kashmir, to see ice stalagmites worshipped as an incarnation of lord Shiva, were disappointed as the ice had melted into puddles.<sup>141</sup> A British transsexual, called Pamela or Stephen Cooper, has become a prominent spiritual figure at the Bahucharaji temple in the Indian state of Gujarat. Worshippers come to the temple to be blessed by its 80 eunuchs, and Pamela's blessings are especially sought by women hoping to become pregnant.<sup>142</sup> On 6th November 2007, Rampur Kodar Katti had the extra limbs, which she had been born with, removed by surgeons. Before her operation, she was believed to have been the reincarnation of the 4-armed Hindu goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, on whose feast day she was born.<sup>143</sup> A baby was born in northern India on 11th March 2008, with craniofacial duplication, meaning that she had two faces. She is believed to be the special gift of the gods and a reincarnation of Durga, goddess of valour, who has three eyes and many arms. Up to 100 worshippers visit her every day, making offerings in exchange for her blessing.<sup>144</sup> On 31st August 2009, a Muslim was killed in front of his three-year-old granddaughter as he left a Mosque in Tooting. It is believed that Hindu extremists carried out this and another near fatal attack that took place on 8th September 2009.<sup>145</sup>

### ***INTERFAITH MOVEMENT***

The first ever English (a similar event already takes place in Scotland) **Interfaith Week** ran from 15th to 21st November 2009. The aims of the week were "to strengthen good interfaith relations at all levels; to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief".<sup>146</sup> It is reported that thousands of schools, including the Church of England's 4,720 primary and secondary schools, took part in the week.<sup>147</sup> The World Council of Churches continues to call for unity, not only between Christian Churches, but between all faiths.<sup>148</sup>

**A Celebration of Faiths and the Environment** was held at Windsor on 24th November 2009. Both the Duke of Edinburgh and the Secretary General of the UN were in attendance. Representatives from the World's nine major faiths were also present. The purpose of the meeting was to announce a large range of practical initiatives to save the environment.<sup>149</sup> However,



the increasing involvement of religious leaders in the climate change debate has been condemned by many as no more than a “dreadful” idea and not part of their assigned spiritual jurisdiction.<sup>150</sup> There is also growing alarm at the nature of environmentalism, especially when Mr. Justice Burton declared in the High Court at the beginning of November 2009, that “belief in climate change . . . deserves the same protection in the workplace as a religious conviction”.<sup>151</sup>

Tony Blair, former Prime Minister and convert to Roman Catholicism, has given his endorsement to the charismatic and Rome-leaning Alpha course. Mr. Blair founded an interfaith organisation called the **Faith Foundation**<sup>152</sup> in May 2008. The purpose of the foundation is to “counter extremism in all six leading religions” through a realisation that the great religions of the world share the same values of respect, justice and compassion, with all extremism being viewed as a distortion of faith rather than an intrinsic part of it. The Foundation hopes to use modern communications to educate, inform and develop interfaith understanding. The Foundation has been criticised for trying to reduce religions to the same predetermined common denominator by stripping them of their identity; it is “a matter of promoting one, and only one, religious confession, which a universal global power would impose on the entire world”.<sup>153</sup>

#### ***PERSECUTION***

In the spring of 2009, the international charity, “Open Doors”, published its annual *World Watch List* of the 50 worst nations for persecuting Christians. The report reveals that it has become harder to openly practise Christianity in the Middle East. North Korea remains the most dangerous place to be a Christian, with Saudi Arabia and Iran coming joint second. Afghanistan comes fourth, Somalia fifth, Maldives sixth, Yemen seventh, Laos eighth, Eritrea ninth and Uzbekistan tenth. The chief executive of the charity states that “the increase of persecution against Christians is a disturbing global trend. The plight of Christians can no longer be ignored.” A full report can be found at [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)<sup>154</sup> It is feared that a resolution, passed on 26th March 2009, by the United Nations Human Rights Council to protect religious ideologies, may in fact do so at the expense of freedom of expression.<sup>155</sup>

**Britain:** In Manchester, a five-strong police team examined a Church’s literature inviting the public to its Easter services after they received a complaint that it was offensive to homosexuals. Officers from the force’s “Hate Crimes Unit” later confirmed that they found no evidence that the leaflet was offensive.<sup>156</sup> In February 2009, a Christian foster carer, who had cared for over 80 children, was struck off for allowing, though not actively encouraging, a Muslim teenager in her care to convert to Christianity. The girl herself had been interested in finding out more about Christianity before she was placed with the foster mother. Social Work officials held that the foster carer should have done all she could to preserve the girl’s original religion.<sup>157</sup> The carer has

a previously unblemished record since becoming a foster carer in 1999.<sup>158</sup> In March 2009, an Asian Christian minister, who hosts an Asian Gospel Show on Christian television, was brutally attacked in London by three Asian men. The police treated the attack as a “faith hate crime”.<sup>159</sup> In the weeks previous to the attack, his views had been aggressively challenged by Muslim callers in a broadcast phone-in.<sup>160</sup> It was feared in April that Christian parents, who had kept their children away from controversial lessons promoting homosexuality, could face prosecution from the local council.

Owners of a small hotel in Cornwall were sued at the beginning of 2009 by a sodomite couple after they refused to allow them to share a double bed. The hotel owners operate a decency policy of only allowing married couples to sleep together.<sup>161</sup> Police warned a street preacher in Lincolnshire that it was a criminal offence to claim that homosexuality is a sin, even though he never mentioned the fact in his actual preaching.<sup>162</sup> A primary school receptionist was disciplined after asking friends to pray about the school’s treatment of her daughter. She claims she has suffered religious discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The daughter aged five, who attends the school where she works, was reprimanded by a teacher for speaking about her Christian faith to another child. In response, her mother sent a private email from her home computer to friends asking them to pray for them. Someone gave the mail to the school headmaster, who charged the receptionist with professional misconduct that resulted in her receiving a final written warning.<sup>163</sup>

Caroline Petrie, a nurse, who was suspended without pay for offering to pray with a patient, even though the patient was not offended, was later reinstated. Her suspension was taken as a clear case of political correctness gone wrong and her reinstatement as a victory for common sense.<sup>164</sup>

A new code of conduct for teachers in England and Wales has been redrafted in order to calm fears that staff had about being disciplined at work because of their faith.<sup>165</sup>

**Europe – Norway:** Norway has recently passed “hate crimes” laws protecting homosexuals from criticism and intimidation.<sup>166</sup> **Sweden:** Pastor Ake Green received a one-month jail sentence under a Swedish “hate crimes” law that forbids criticism of those that are involved in homosexual behaviour. The sentence was later overturned on appeal. **Southern Ireland:** In 2009, the Irish Government announced large cuts in the funding of Protestant schools. It is claimed that the cuts will put Protestant education back 40 years.<sup>167</sup> **Moldova:** Moldova continues to refuse legal status to religious communities of various faiths, in spite of contrary judgements by the European Court of Human Rights. **Azerbaijan:** A Christian was recently deported to Russia and separated from his wife and family as punishment for holding religious services in his home. A number of Christian books were also confiscated.<sup>168</sup> **Ukraine:** On 14th October 2009, a homemade bomb was thrown into the Calvary Chapel Church in Kaharlyk, Ukraine. Minor damage was done to the building, but none of the six people asleep in the building were hurt. It is believed that the attack was

carried out by members of the “Ukrainian Nationalist Movement”, who see many Protestant churches as harmful sects.<sup>169</sup>

**Colombia:** At least ten Protestant pastors in northern Colombia have been threatened by armed paramilitary groups during the start of 2009.<sup>170</sup> **Canada:** In 2002, after “hate crimes” laws were passed, the Alberta Human Rights Tribunal actively forbade evangelical pastor Stephen Boisson from expressing his moral opposition to homosexuality and fined him \$50,000 for stating in a paper that the homosexual agenda was “wicked”.<sup>171</sup> In December 2009, Pastor Boisson was exonerated of having committed a “hate crime”.<sup>172</sup> **United States of America:** A federal judge has agreed with officials from the city of Dearborn, who have banned a Christian group from distributing literature during an Arab festival.<sup>173</sup> Paul Diamond, one of Britain’s top Religious Rights Barristers, has claimed that the Christian foundations of the United States will be eroded if its politicians and courts continue to import anti-Christian legal precedents from the UK.<sup>174</sup> **Mexico:** In August 2009, traditionalist Roman Catholic leaders expelled 57 evangelical Christians from towns in two different states, after they refused to participate in Roman Catholic religious festivals. These religious festivals are a mixture of Roman Catholic idol worship and native rituals, which usually end up as debauched drunken affairs. Those banished were initially attacked with machetes and ropes, before being forced to flee, leaving their property and belongings behind.<sup>175</sup>

**India:** A large anti-Christian mob brutally attacked two missionaries in March of 2009. They were stripped naked and severely beaten, while their belongings were burned. The missionaries were later arrested.<sup>176</sup> On 30th June 2009, a group of Christians in Orissa, India, were attacked for refusing to take part in a Hindu Festival.<sup>177</sup> Such incidents are increasingly common.<sup>178</sup> Hindu militants are accused of seeking to kill staff at a Christian orphanage and day centre, as well as actually destroying the homes of 5,000 Christian families.<sup>179</sup> It is reported that, after the continued violence in Orissa, the government has established seven relief camps for 50,000 people made homeless in the continuing anti-Christian violence. Claims have also been made of a church elder being crucified on a bamboo cross and his wife being repeatedly violated by 14 men before being chopped into pieces for refusing to deny their faith.<sup>180</sup> Few convictions for anti-Christian violence have been recorded.<sup>181</sup> It is claimed 800 tribal Christians and adherents of aboriginal religions were “reconverted” to Hinduism in a ceremony in December 2009, by a Hindu nationalist cleric. Hindus believe that all babies born in India are born Hindus, including those born to parents of other faiths, and therefore need to be purified.<sup>182</sup> There is fear among Nationalist Hindus that continual conversions to Christianity pose a serious threat to Indian security.<sup>183</sup> **Sri Lanka:** There was a noticeable rise in the number of Christians attacked in the weeks following the defeat of the Tamil Separatists in May 2009. The attacks have

involved the burning of a Church, the destruction of property belonging to Christians and personal attacks.<sup>184</sup> **Pakistan:** In January 2009, a hundred Muslim protesters surrounded a courthouse and chanted death threats against a Punjabi Christian accused of sending a “blasphemous” text message. The defendant, along with his wife and daughters, had previously been assaulted in their own home.<sup>185</sup> It is believed that a great number of the false accusations raised against Christians are really made for non-religious reasons such as land disputes.<sup>186</sup> In May 2009, it was reported that Taliban murdered an eleven-year-old boy of a Christian family. Two other Christians were executed during the raid, with another two being injured and many Christian houses, shops and churches being burned.<sup>187</sup> The terrorists are also accused of violating Christian women and physically abusing others with clubs, iron rods and whips.<sup>188</sup> A Christian mother appealed for help after her 12-year-old daughter was kidnapped, coerced into converting to Islam and forced to marry a 37-year-old man.<sup>189</sup> A number of Christian women and girls have been attacked with acid and petrol bombs in the province of Kasur.<sup>190</sup> In July 2009, Muslim demonstrators burnt seven Christians alive, including three women and two children. As well as these deaths, a number of Christian houses were burned, churches vandalised and Bibles desecrated. The demonstration was started by a rumour that a copy of the Koran had been burned during a Christian wedding.<sup>191</sup> Fifty houses were also set on fire in the district of Gojra, leaving 14 Christians dead, including women and children. It is believed that the cause of this riot was a rumour that a Christian had blasphemed the Koran.<sup>192</sup> In August 2009, 50 houses and a church were set on fire in north eastern Pakistan during violence which claimed the lives of 14 Christians, including women and children. It is believed that trouble began after a Christian was accused of blaspheming the Koran.<sup>193</sup> There have also been claims that police fired on mourners at the Christian funeral, preventing them from carrying out the burial.<sup>194</sup> On 11th September, a number of Christians were burned with acid when 600 Muslims went on a rampage. A total of 117 houses were vandalised, some with petrol bombs. These events follow on from the burning of over 60 Christian homes elsewhere in the country.<sup>195</sup> A young Christian believer was forced to flee the Taliban and go into hiding after they sought to convert him to Islam. The young man was severely beaten after seeking to defend himself by quoting from the Bible. The Taliban later accused him of blaspheming the prophet Mohammad.<sup>196</sup> **Bangladesh:** Islamic pilgrims beat up a Bible school student for distributing Christian literature among Muslims.<sup>197</sup> It is claimed that a young Christian woman was abducted by four Muslim men and forced to convert to Islam before being made to marry one of her kidnappers.<sup>198</sup>

**Morocco:** It was revealed in April 2009, that Morocco had expelled five Christian missionaries without charge because they were illegally seeking to convert Muslims to Christianity.<sup>199</sup> **Eritrea:** 2,000 Christians in Eritrea are being imprisoned just for being Christians and are being kept in solitary confinement with frequent beatings from prison guards.<sup>200</sup> The prisoners claim

that they are being treated like animals in an attempt to have them renounce their faith on a “recantation form”. It is believed that 160,000 Eritrean Christians have fled to the Sudan and more than 20,000 to Ethiopia.<sup>201</sup> **Kenya:** A Church building was ruined in Northern Kenya after an attack by Islamic extremists from Somalia. Tensions between Christians and Muslims have been growing in Garissa, after the building of a mosque close to a Christian church, and a local pastor had sought to evangelise some Muslims. It is reported that many Christians are now living in fear of their lives. Several restrictions have been placed on them, including a ban on Christianity being taught in schools.<sup>202</sup> “The National Christian Council of Kenya” has rejected proposals for Islamic courts in a new draft constitution. It is feared that the legal introduction of the courts will lead to the Islamification of Kenya, where only 10% of the population are Muslim.<sup>203</sup> **Algeria:** Several Evangelical Christians have been charged or detained in Algeria in an attempt to prevent the spread of protestant Christianity in the overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim country.<sup>204</sup> **Zanzibar:** Islamic militants seeking to bring an end to the spread of Christianity, destroyed two churches during recent attacks. **Somalia:** Islamic extremists have beheaded two sons of a Christian who refused to betray the hiding place of their church leader.<sup>205</sup> A Kenyan pastor visiting Somalia was stopped when entering the country and beaten up by Immigration officials who threatened him with the fact that they had previously killed two Christians.<sup>206</sup> A Christian convert was killed south of Mogadishu in July 2009, by Islamic extremists intent on “cleansing” Somalia of Christians. It is believed that the extremists are monitoring any converts to Christianity and actively hunting them down when they go into hiding. It was previously reported, that the same group had viciously attacked and violated a woman and her pregnant daughter before holding them prisoner for 5 days and leaving them only when they thought they were dead.<sup>207</sup> Islamic extremists have executed a young Christian that they accused of trying to convert a Muslim boy. The 23-year-old was executed by two shots to the head after enduring a severe beating, during torture to disclose details of other Christians.<sup>208</sup> **Nigeria:** A group known as the “Nigerian Taliban”, which aims to cleanse Nigeria of Christian influence and introduce Sharia Law, murdered 11 people in February 2009, displaced 1,500 others, destroyed 14 churches and eight vicarages. The violence later continued with the death of a church pastor and the destruction of 5 Church buildings.<sup>209</sup> In July 2009, a thirteen-year-old Christian was forced to watch her pastor being murdered after she, her brother and an older Christian woman were taken hostage by a militant Islamic group. **Egypt:** In September 2009, a Christian shopkeeper was stabbed in the neck and abdomen and then beheaded by his attacker before the same man stabbed two other Christians. These attacks are considered as part of a wave of orchestrated violence.<sup>210</sup> Egyptian Imams have formed an Islamic Edict that states that it is “a sin against god” to build a Christian Church.<sup>211</sup> A female Christian convert was arrested at Cairo airport, on 13th December 2008, while seeking to flee from persecution. While appearing in court, it is reported that the presiding judge declared that he

would like to kill her himself.<sup>212</sup> Violence towards Coptic Christians by Muslims broke out in the Nile Delta after Coptic Christians were accused of kidnapping a Muslim girl in order to convert her to Christianity.<sup>213</sup> Two policemen convicted of killing a Coptic Christian in cold blood, during a savage beating, only received a 5-year prison sentence.<sup>214</sup> In April 2009, a Christian convert and her husband had to go into hiding in Cairo after receiving threats from family members and police. It was reported at the time that a group of Christians were shot while leaving church in the south of the country. At least two were killed and one wounded.<sup>215</sup> Government security authorities have been accused of abusing, and seeking to extort money from, a Coptic Christian who had rescued his daughter from her Muslim husband, who had held her against her will.<sup>216</sup> An Islamic sect opposed to western education killed 12 Christians in the state of Borno. Over 20 churches were also burned during the attacks.<sup>217</sup> **Sudan:** A number of Christians were kidnapped and at least seven were crucified by soldiers of the LRA, an Islamic group influenced by occult beliefs.<sup>218</sup> **Uganda:** About 40 Muslim extremists armed with machetes and clubs attacked a congregation during worship on 1st November 2009. One worshipper was left with several injuries and the building was badly damaged. Many Christians in the area now live in fear of future attacks.<sup>219</sup>

**Uzbekistan:** It is virtually impossible to register a religious community in Uzbekistan and, in the north west of the country, all Protestant activity is illegal,<sup>220</sup> especially the Baptist Church.<sup>221</sup> Even registered churches can face a great deal of opposition. Recently, the Pastor and other members of a Protestant Church were imprisoned and charged with holding unauthorised religious meetings. Police later destroyed religious literature confiscated in the raid.<sup>222</sup> **Iran:** Christians are always under surveillance. Two women converts to Christianity were arrested in March 2009, though not formally charged. They were told during a court hearing in August that their crime had been converting to Christianity.<sup>223</sup> They were later charged with anti-state activity, propagating the Christian faith and apostasy. The charge of anti-state activity was later dropped and the women have since been released on bail after international pressure, but still face charges of proselytising and apostasy for leaving Islam.<sup>224</sup> Iran is considering introducing a law forbidding Muslims from changing their faith on pain of death for men and life imprisonment for women.<sup>225</sup> The leading pastor in the largest Christian community in northern Iran was arrested for protesting against a local authority ruling that Christian children should be forced to study the Koran. At the same time, the General Assemblies of God have been told that they face being totally closed down, unless they stop their Friday evening meetings.<sup>226</sup> In May 2009, it was reported that a Christian couple received a suspended sentence for having spoken about Christ to their friends. Another young Christian man was arrested and suspended by his wrist and had his feet beaten.<sup>227</sup> During the recent presidential elections, the government interrupted the broadcasting of several Christian television channels.<sup>228</sup> **Iraq:** Three Christians were

murdered in Kirkuk in April 2009. The deaths took place during intense hostility between Christians and militant Islamists who are trying to “cleanse” the country of the defiling presence of Christians. The Christian population of Iraq has dropped from 1,500,000 in 1990 to 400,000 today.<sup>229</sup> **Middle East:** Four Palestinian Christians lost their lives from a terrorist car bomb near a church; fifteen other professing Christians were also wounded.<sup>230</sup>

**China:** The government revoked the licences of 50 lawyers in Beijing and thereby effectively closed several legal centres which sought to represent persecuted house Churches in China.<sup>231</sup> A Chinese pastor was arrested and threatened with death after performing a baptismal service last April.<sup>232</sup> In July 2009, a Christian youth camp was raided and a large amount of material was confiscated. It is claimed that some of those at the camp were not only interrogated, but also threatened and beaten.<sup>233</sup> A Bible School was also raided on 16th July and its founder, along with about 11 students, were taken into custody. They were all later released with the warning to go home and not to return to the Bible School.<sup>234</sup> The Chinese government demolished a church building in Shanxi province and placed its security forces on the alert for possible civil unrest. During the demolition of the Church, 400 uniformed police and civilians used shovels, batons, bricks and iron hooks to beat church members. Over 100 Christians were hurt, some seriously.<sup>235</sup> A court has sentenced five leaders of the underground Church to prison for up to seven years. These are some of the hardest sentences passed in recent years against those Christian groups that refuse to apply for registration with the government’s Religious Affairs Bureau.<sup>236</sup> The Chinese authorities claim that Christians are only free to worship in state-controlled churches<sup>237</sup> and it is forbidden for those under 18 years of age to believe in Christianity. Though there is evidence of great zeal among many Chinese Christians, yet the Church in China faces several challenges such as the need of better Theological Training.<sup>238</sup> **Indonesia:** There are growing concerns in Indonesia that recent bills and legislation are preparing the ground for the introduction of Islamic Sharia Law. There are indications that many of the new laws are leading to open discrimination against Christians.<sup>239</sup> **Laos:** Police in the Borikhamxay province are reported to have destroyed a church building on 19th March 2009. The Church was destroyed after 40 Christian families refused to be relocated to a different area.<sup>240</sup> **Vietnam:** Christian services in Hung Yen Province were interrupted by police who beat worshippers, including women and children, before arresting the pastor and an elder. Both pastor and elder were beaten while in custody.<sup>241</sup> **Nepal:** A native missionary was freed from prison after serving 9 years of a 20-year sentence, after being falsely accused of murder. The Nepali Supreme Court upheld an appeal. It is believed that an anti-Christian extremist group framed him for murder, even though the dead man’s wife testified of his innocence. It is common for churches and Christians to be attacked by Hindu extremists.<sup>242</sup> **North Korea:** It is claimed that North Korea has publicly executed a Christian woman for distributing Bibles and

spying. Her husband and three children were sent to a political prison camp. It is believed that tens of thousands of professing Christians are currently suffering in state Gulags.<sup>243</sup>

***A suggested remedy?*** Dr. Muhammad Al-Hussaini, founder of the “Scripture Reasoning” and lecturer in Islamic Studies at Leo Beck Rabbinical College, blamed the church hierarchy of the UK for the persecution of Christians around the world. He stated that the Church in Britain showed a “simply don’t care” attitude and that their protests were often no more than a “whimper”. He went on to say that, “If you truly wish to convince me, as a Muslim, that you care about more than your chocolate-box parish churches, then care more about persecuted Christian minorities than you do about your village picnics and your C.U. barbecues”.<sup>244</sup>

#### ***ANTI-SEMITISM***

Richard Williamson, a senior bishop of the Lefebvrist Society of St. Pius X, has endorsed the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a slanderous anti-semitic book that claims that the Jews are seeking world domination through economic manipulation, control of the media and creating religious conflict. Though the society is a breakaway group from Roman Catholicism, the current pope has extended an olive branch to them.<sup>245</sup> *The Times* reported in June 2009, that Chief Rabbi Sacks was concerned over the rise of anti-Semitism in Britain. He referred to how the Millennium bug and the events of 9/11 had both been blamed on the Jews. He went on to comment that a recent anti-globalisation rally had ended in a diatribe against Israel and the Jews. He noted that the number of synagogue and cemetery desecrations and personal attacks on Jews had also risen.<sup>246</sup> The World Council of Churches’ central committee recently renewed its attack on Israel, particularly its settlements in occupied areas, and has called for an international boycott of settlement products and services.<sup>247</sup>

#### ***ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS***

An exhibition in the Gallery of Modern Art, entitled *Made in God’s Image*, gave the opportunity for visitors, who felt excluded from the Bible because of their sexuality, to write themselves into the Bible by adding comments to it. This resulted in a great number of obscene comments being added. The exhibition also included a video in which a Bible was ripped up and photos depicting scenes from the Bible corrupted with a sodomite slant.<sup>248</sup> Aaqil Ahmed, a Muslim, was appointed Head of Religion and Ethics at the BBC in May 2009. Fears were raised that this was just another step towards the Islamification of the United Kingdom.<sup>249</sup> On Thursday 21st May 2009, the BBC broadcasted the installation of Vincent Nichols as Archbishop of Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral in London. The celebration of the Mass was shown, including prayers for the dead. There was a prayer to the late Basil Hume asking for him to petition on behalf of the new Archbishop.<sup>250</sup> A



large Christian protest took place in Glasgow in opposition to a blasphemous play being shown at the Tron Theatre, entitled *Jesus, Queen of Heaven*. The play was performed as part of the “Glasgay” arts festival in celebration of Scotland’s homosexual, bisexual and transsexual culture.<sup>251</sup>

Since the 1950s, there has been a growing use of Religious and Theological themes in science fiction films and television – such films as *The Matrix*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars* with programmes like *Star Trek* and *Apparitions*. One of the most recent programmes to draw interest from its Religious and Theological References was *Battlestar Galatica*. There are clear references to Mormonism and Roman Catholicism, with one of the main themes being a struggle between the show’s characters as to the respective merits of polytheism and monotheism. There were also general references to original sin, resurrection, reincarnation, angels and redemption. There are further covert references to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, Moses, Christian Gnosticism, the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees as well as the retelling of Biblical events and some of the main characters taking the names of Biblical characters. So popular was the show that it spawned a number of Internet sites and books explaining the Theological concepts being covered.<sup>252</sup>

### **POLITICS**

Gordon Brown has intimated his desire to abolish the 309-year-old law that prohibits heirs to the throne marrying Roman Catholics.<sup>253</sup>

The Christian Party entered into an agreement with the Christian People’s Alliance before the European Elections in 2009. **The Christian People’s Alliance** is joined to the **European Christian Democrats**, the main Roman Catholic Party in the EU. The two parties agreed to run joint candidates under the Christian Party banner, which meant making a compromise over their views of the EU. Traditionally, the Christian Party has been for withdrawal and the Christian People’s Alliance for Britain in the EU.<sup>254</sup>

David Cameron, the leader of the British Conservative Party, has said that he has faith in God and that the Churches, such as the Church of England, “play a very important role in society”. Yet Mr. Cameron claims that he does not believe that he has a “direct line” to God and that he does not pray to God for guidance and, indeed, that his faith “grows hotter and colder by moments”. He believes that it possible to live a good life without personal faith, but that the teachings of Jesus, as well as those of other religions, are “a good guide to help us through”.<sup>255</sup>

Protestant Christians in the Netherlands have formed a campaign group called **The National Foundation of the Preservation of the Political Reformed Principles**, to object to the emblem of the European Union being placed on car registration plates, as it conflicts with their religious convictions. They hold that the 12 golden stars on a blue background symbolises the veneration of Mary by the Roman Catholic Church. Historically, the date on which the Council of Europe adopted the flag on 8th December 1955 was

the Roman Catholic Feast of the “Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary”.<sup>256</sup>

#### ***SOME RELIGIOUS STATISTICS***

**Britain:** In a recent survey, about 50% of the British population admitted to fearing death. 20% are afraid of death and how they might die; a further 30% claimed that they did not fear death as such, but how they might die and 25% claimed to fear neither death itself nor how they might die.<sup>257</sup> Another poll by *Mori/Telegraph* found that 70% of us believe in the existence of the human soul and 53% in life after death, whereas 39% believe in ghosts (up from 10% in 1950), 22% in astrology (up from 7% in 1950).<sup>258</sup> A poll, by *ComRes/Telegraph*, found that 79% of Muslims and 70% of Hindus believed that Britain should be guided by Christian values, whereas only 70% of Christians did.<sup>259</sup> A poll by *ComRes/Guardian* found that 51% of the population do not believe that evolution is enough to explain the complexity of life on Earth and about 33% agreed that “God created the world some time in the past 10,000 years”.<sup>260</sup> A poll by *Theos/Guardian* found that 44% of people in the east of England believe that the theory of evolution makes God obsolete, the highest of any region.<sup>261</sup> A further survey by *IpsosMori/Times* found that one in five Londoners had never heard of Charles Darwin.<sup>262</sup>

**America:** A survey carried out in November 2008, discovered that 60% of American Christians do not believe that Satan is a real being or that the Holy Spirit is a “living entity”, but a symbol of God’s presence. At the same time, the majority of Christians surveyed believed that a person can be under the influence of spiritual forces, such as evil spirits or demons, and yet retain the personal choice whether or not to do good or evil. The survey also found that 22% of Christians surveyed believed that Jesus sinned when He lived on earth.<sup>263</sup> In a further survey, it is claimed that people in the United States are increasingly mixing religious practices from different traditions, including New Age beliefs. 24% are said to believe in reincarnation; 23% believe in Yoga, “not just as exercise but as a spiritual practice”; 26% believe that mountains, trees and crystals contain spiritual energy and 25% believe in astrology. About 33% believe that they have felt in touch with someone that has died, while 20% have felt the presence of a ghost, with 15% having consulted a fortune-teller or psychic.<sup>264</sup>

#### ***OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE***

In reading the above report, we cannot fail but to agree with the Psalmist when he said, “the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty” (Psalm 74:20). Yet the Psalmist could also say “have respect unto the covenant”. Why? Because even though the day may be dark, yet our God remains a Covenant making and keeping God and He has promised in the Covenant of Grace that Christ’s kingdom will one day be established over the

whole earth. The Millennial day will dawn and the powers of darkness that cover the earth will be swept away in the glory of Christ's spiritual coming. "The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us" (Psalm 115:12).

### **REPORT ON MORALS**

It is becoming increasingly clear that Biblical absolutes have largely disappeared from our society in Britain today. We have created a new subjective morality which disregards the evil of sin – a morality which focuses on supposed compassion and tolerance while the concepts of punishment and justice have become more alien.

Such teaching begins at an early stage in life: first of all in the home and then in the classroom. Pupils must seldom be allowed to fail. The child's self-esteem is essential: not necessarily his knowledge of the subject. Negotiation is the issue, not obedience, as if the teacher (and at home the parent) and child were on an equal footing. Little wonder, in this climate, wayward children feel they have nothing to fear from adults. A recent teachers' union poll showed 97% of primary school teachers have disruptive pupils in their classroom and 74% of them claimed to have experienced real problems with actual physical aggression from their young charges.

As the child grows up to adulthood, we have increasing anarchy. There is more violent crime and an accelerating breakdown of the traditional family, leading to greater dysfunctionality, as sin abounds. This so-called compassion and tolerance turn out to be bitter pills as the reluctance to punish evil-doers allows them to continue intimidating their victims with little fear of the consequences.

### ***VIOLENCE AND THEFT***

The lack of Christian moral standards has led to a great increase in violence in our society generally and also within the home.

In Scotland alone, domestic abuse figures recorded from 2000 to 2007 have risen from 35,000 to 49,000. In London, knife crime has increased by 120% over the 5-year period leading up to 2008: the majority of victims being teenagers – some dying from their wounds.

One Home Office report quoted in *The Guardian* claims that across the country there has been a 25% surge in personal thefts and 4% increase in burglaries over the first quarter of 2009. Another news report stated that shoplifting has increased by 20% over 2009, making Britain first in Europe in the "shoplifting league". The Home Office minister has acknowledged rather lamely, "we are facing some new challenges", and added that they are working closely with police, and other agencies to help the victims. Of course, Members of Parliament themselves have, in the past year, come under extreme criticism due to inflated expenses claims made by many of them.

Sadly little mention is made of turning in repentance to God, as a nation or as individuals, to seek His mercy in our great need as sinners. Unemployment and the recession have been blamed for much of this crime but the truth is that the malaise is more spiritual than economic.

No sphere of life is exempt from violence. A British Transport Police report recently showed that they dealt with almost 7,000 serious incidents on Scotland's railway network in 2008/09: many of which were connected to drug taking and alcohol abuse.

The media have reported in depth on the appalling death of Baby Peter who was found dead in his cot with a broken back, fractured ribs, and 56 other wounds – one of the worst child abuse cases Britain has ever seen. His mother apparently boasted of spending days in a vodka fog, watching pornographic films with her boyfriend who was, as one newspaper claimed, a “sadistic Nazi-obsessed thug”. He was allowed to torture her defenceless little boy mercilessly. The disturbing picture that later unfolded showed that the mother herself had been seriously abused when young.

Dreadful details of the criminal activity of two pre-teenage boys from Doncaster emerged in January 2010. Completely neglected by their parents, they went on the rampage, torturing other young children and terrorising those who crossed their paths. When not engaged in brutal acts their lives were spent watching violent films, smoking cannabis and drinking alcohol. Ultimately they were caught after a particularly depraved and vicious attack on two children and then sentenced. However, newspaper reports indicate that possibly a softly, softly approach will be used by the authorities, as was the case with Jamie Bulger's killers some years ago.

“Can a woman forget her sucking child?” (Isaiah 49:15). How awful that “they may do”. How fearful sin is, and, solemnly, these seeds are in our own deceitful and desperately wicked hearts. The gospel is the only remedy.

Scotland, so highly favoured in the past, has now become a nation noted for its horrific murder toll. One study showed that Scots were twice as likely to commit homicide or kill themselves as people elsewhere in Britain. Another source said that in Scotland the use of knives accounts for 50% of the murders, while, again, alcohol and drugs feature as highly significant factors.

### ***ABORTION***

The appalling murder of the defenceless unborn in the womb is crying out for God's judgment on our land. Since the infamous Abortion Act was implemented in 1968 (as was noted in last year's *Morals Report*), more than 7 million unborn children have been killed in the United Kingdom. The figure for England and Wales in 2007 was 205,598 – 1,171 of these being performed on girls under 14 years of age.

In Scotland there were 13,817 babies aborted in 2007, which is an all-time high. Over 3,000 of those were performed on teenagers, one-third being repeat abortions. One newspaper report highlights the scale of the tragedy. It states

that in the last nine years nearly 3,000 abortions have been carried out on girls under the age of 16, some on those as young as 12 years old.

The Scottish Executive does show concern at these figures but it seems oblivious to the seriousness of the sin behind them. More education is the answer according to Health Minister, Shona Robison, who says, "Education has a key role to play which is why we are working with parents, teachers and NHS Scotland to provide additional support around relationships and sexual health". Yet there has never been more sex education in schools. One of the latest plans is to pilot sexual health clinics in some secondary schools, offering students free condoms, pregnancy tests and checks for sexually transmitted diseases.

Teenage girls can now get the contraceptive pill without a prescription as long as they consult with a pharmacist. This is ostensibly to avoid the embarrassment of going to a doctor. Pharmacists are also put under pressure to dispense the "morning after pill". At present they have freedom of conscience not to do so but a Government quango is seeking to deprive them of that right. The stark fact is that the UK teenage pregnancy rate still remains the highest in Western Europe.

Phyllis Bowman of "Right to Life" says, "The young have been deliberately sexualized in a culture which sneers at the idea of telling teenagers that they should not have sex". The Conservative MP Julian Brazier wisely states, "This is a further sickening indicator of a society that has broken down and lost its moral compass".

Behind the statistics lie many real broken women who are guilty of killing their own unborn children. The guilt also lies with doctors and other professionals, and on the whole nation which has legislated for this evil. The trauma afterwards has been almost unbearable for some. One woman said that she felt she could never be forgiven. Blessed be God, even this sin can be blotted out in the blood of the Lamb but it leaves desperate scars which are barely acknowledged by our supposedly caring, compassionate society.

### ***HOMOSEXUALITY***

Living in this sin is now considered to be an acceptable alternative lifestyle in our society.

The "Christian Gay and Lesbian Society", itself a blasphemous anomaly, advocates love as the only criterion in a relationship. The solemn warnings given against sodomy in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis and in Paul's Epistle to the Romans are passed over as irrelevant.

At its last General Assembly, after much debate, the Church of Scotland deferred a decision regarding the ordination of homosexual ministers for two years but this is seen by many as disingenuous as it still allowed the appointment of the controversial Rev. Scott Rennie as the pastor of Queen's Cross Church, Aberdeen. He is the Kirk's first openly homosexual minister living with a male partner and last November was named Hero of the Year by Stonewall, the homosexual lobby group.

In protest against the Assembly's action a group called "The Fellowship of Confessing Churches" has been formed inside the Kirk. Their laudable aim is to stand up for biblical principles against this and other evil practices. However, at least one minister, Rev. T. MacKinnon, has felt he must resign his charge saying, in the *Daily Mail* on 25th July 2009, "I believe that ministers now will not be subject to discipline from the Church because if that which is called a sin in the Bible is allowed then anything goes. If the Bible does not have authority, we do not have the authority to preach." We hope that many more will join him.

Last August the Quakers sanctioned same sex "marriages". At present such "marriages" are illegal in the UK although, of course, our government allows homosexual couples to register their civil partnerships. A spokesman for the Quakers says that "homosexual couples who consider themselves married believe this is as much a testimony of divine grace as heterosexual marriage". How tragic that those who profess to be religious – even Christian – should use such biblical words as "grace" in such an evil context!

The Church of England, too, accepts people who have homosexual relationships and allows its clergy to register their civil partnerships. This, and other issues, has brought the Anglican community to a point of crisis, as there is within it a strong conservative group who want to adhere to the old paths. It was heartening to hear the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Michael Nazer Ali, saying: "Homosexuals should repent and be changed."

The "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender Network" (LGBTN) are campaigning vehemently to have the law changed in Scotland to allow marriage on the same terms as heterosexuals, including holding weddings in churches. They want an amendment to the Marriage Scotland Act 1977 "to allow two persons of the same sex to register a civil *and religious* marriage". This does happen in some other countries, for example, Canada, but as yet is not recognised under UK law. Truly if the LGBTN are successful in their aims it will mean greater darkness for our land.

It is very sad to see Sarah Brown, the Prime Minister's wife, identifying herself with the homosexual movement. According to the *Daily Mail* in June 2009 she took part in a "Gay Pride March". "Sarah wanted to show her continued solidarity to the gay community by taking part," said a Downing Street spokesman, so giving the Government's tacit approval of her participation. Gordon Brown has also pledged increasing support to LGBTN candidates in the next General Election, while John Bercow, the Speaker of the House of Commons, wants Parliament to host civil partnership ceremonies for homosexuals.

Refusing to register same sex civil partnerships has caused great distress to some employees of Islington Council. Theresa Davis, a registrar and professing Christian, refused to preside over homosexual marriages and ended up on sick leave through stress. On her return she was told to accept demotion or dismissal. She believes that she is being discriminated against on the grounds of her religious beliefs and took her case to a tribunal stating:

“Doctors can opt out of performing abortions on conscience grounds so why can’t I opt out of civil partnerships?” Another Islington employee, Lillian Ladele, in a similar situation, has recently lost her case for religious discrimination at the Court of Appeal.

Even the Isle of Lewis, which had such a strong Christian heritage, saw a “homosexual couple” register a civil partnership last July. The Western Isles Council has said that as their registrars did not carry out ceremonies, only legal registration would be available. Reports suggest that the Council will continue to uphold its discretionary right to ban ceremonies for same sex couples. However, we wonder how long it will be able to maintain this stand. A spokesman for Scotland Equality Network states that the Sexual Orientation Regulations will soon force Councils to conduct such ceremonies.

One newspaper reporter states that this, together with the new Lord’s Day ferry crossing from Ullapool to Stornoway, “is running roughshod over the sensitivities of one part of the British Isles that still takes its Christianity seriously”. Sadly again tolerance of those holding Christian values is not a strong point with those who insist on going down this evil path.

The Human Fertilization and Embryology Act 2008 allows homosexual and lesbian couples who adopt or have surrogate children to apply for parental orders. Both names can be on the birth certificate as parents. Labour MP Geraldine Smith rightly says, “to have a birth certificate with two mothers and no father is just madness”. It is indeed madness, but worse than that, it is contrary to God’s Holy Word.

#### ***ALCOHOLISM AND ALCOHOL ABUSE***

Alcohol related deaths have increased dramatically over the past ten years. Official figures vary but the president of the Royal College of Physicians, Professor Ian Gilmore, told MPs at a special Committee Meeting that he believed that up to 40,000 people a year die from a great variety of alcohol induced diseases, including cancer, high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks. Blame is placed on supermarkets, which sell cheap alcohol, as well as on public houses.

Sir Liam Donaldson, the Chief Medical Officer, warned, “cheap alcohol is killing us as never before”, and called for minimum pricing. Another professional, Martin Plant, Professor of Addiction Studies says: “Supermarkets are displaying the morality of the crack dealer,” adding “they have been told for several years that what they are doing is completely irresponsible.” He points out too that pubs are particularly targeting young women, making offers such as, “free drinks tonight for women”, so drawing them further into the dark addiction zone.

As far as the recent 24 hour drinking laws are concerned, far from decreasing the problems previously associated with the peak times, it only pushes them further into the night. The Chief Constable of Northumberland states that more problems now occur at 3, 4 and 5 o’clock in the morning: “Every force with a big town centre,” he says, “is experiencing the same

problem.” This is backed up by the Deputy Chief Constable of the British Transport Police who argues that, though the original 11 p.m. closing time problem is not now so marked, yet large numbers of officers have to be deployed throughout the night to deal with extremely violent incidents, so leaving fewer resources for normal policing in the daytime.

In Scotland the figures become even starker. Dr. Peter Terry, chairman of the BMA in Scotland, claims that alcohol is linked to one in twenty deaths and says: “Every 3 hours someone dies of an alcohol related condition.” He states: “Scotland is awash with alcohol and the consequences are crippling the Health Service.”

A report commissioned by the Scottish Association of Alcohol and Drugs Action Team (SAADAT) shows the extent to which the nation is addicted to alcohol. Apparently more than one-third of Scottish men and about a quarter of Scottish women are drinking at potentially harmful levels, while a further 5% are totally dependent on alcohol.

In all these statistics the fact that drunkenness is a sin condemned in God’s Word is rarely acknowledged. However, while we condemn the sin we must have compassion on the sinner and realize that some people have more addictive personalities than others. Alcoholics use alcohol to mask pain which may come from different sources. There is great need for God’s grace and love to be ministered to the drunkard as well as to other addicts.

### ***ASSISTED SUICIDE***

The debate on assisted suicide has raged in the past year. Newspapers frequently report on poor souls who travel to the “Dignitas Clinic” in Switzerland to end their precious lives. This clinic is anything but dignified, as one former employee has pointed out. She states that it is “just a way to make a lot of money out of death and the fear of death”. Ludwig Minelli, the lawyer who founded the clinic, charges from 3,000 euros to 7,000 euros per person to end a life, yet claims it is non profit making.

Up to July 2009, 115 Britons have travelled to Switzerland on their last earthly journey, many suffering from treatable conditions. People’s fears are being manipulated when they feel depressed and afraid of the pain they may have to endure as their illnesses progress; however, they are often not given a true picture of the very good palliative care that is available to people with terminal conditions.

Sir Edward and Lady Joan Downs were a high profile couple who committed suicide at Dignitas. Lady Downs had been suffering from terminal cancer but her 85-year-old husband was well; however, he too was assisted to take his life at the same time and be ushered into the great eternity.

Swiss law requires two doctors to agree to the procedure being carried out but it appears that this is seldom adhered to. The former employee mentioned above says that: “People are dead just four hours after arriving at the airport. . . . It is like a conveyor belt.” This “clinic” is a sinister place ruled by the devil who is a murderer from the beginning and whose great aim is to hasten souls



on to Hell. It is heartening that in June 2009 the Swiss Parliament was alerted to consider tighter restrictions on who could access its assisted suicide clinics and there may be some moves now to restrict Dignitas's activities. We can only hope and pray that it will be closed down altogether.

In Britain a relentless campaign to legalise assisted suicide is being waged by groups such as "Dignity in Dying". They have played on the fears of vulnerable people such as Debbie Purdy, an MS sufferer, who is apparently terrified of unbearable pain and choking to death in spite of reassurances by experts in palliative care that with the right treatment there is no reason why this should happen.

"Dignity in Dying" is behind her case which she brought to the House of Lords in July 2009, when the Law Lords ruled that she had a right to know whether her husband would be prosecuted if he helped her to end her life in a euthanasia clinic. This has resulted in the guidelines for England and Wales being watered down, stating that there will now only be the prosecution of a family member assisting in a suicide, if police can prove that they stood to gain from the death. No relatives have, as yet, been prosecuted for giving such assistance and, under the new guidelines, it is unlikely any will be.

The *Evangelical Times* has quoted Andrea Williams, the executive director of the Christian Legal Centre, as saying: "The guidelines published today will cause great harm to individuals and society. We are concerned that the system will be open to abuse and to a creeping, ever widening application, which has been observed in previous cases in our own legal history where laws have been injudiciously liberalised." Though the guidelines apply only to England and Wales we fear that this ruling will soon have an adverse influence north of the border.

The "fear" culture which has been created expressed itself recently in a popular poll showing that 74% wanted doctors to be allowed to help terminally ill patients to end their lives and 60% wanted to be able to help the terminally ill to commit suicide without fear of prosecution.

An attempt by Lord Falconer to actually change the law so that no one helping another to travel to a place overseas to end their lives would face prosecution was defeated by 194 to 141 votes. It was also heartening to hear of the disabled Peer, Baroness Campbell, a Commissioner of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, making a moving appeal, warning that many vulnerable patients would be at risk if the law was changed. She spoke powerfully against Lord Falconer saying, "those who know what it's like to live with a terminal condition are fearful the tide is already turned against us". Assisted dying, she said, is to "abandon hope and ignore the majority of disabled and terminally ill people". Vince Cable, a prominent senior Liberal Democrat spokesman, has also recently stated his opposition to legalising assisted suicide.

The law of God is there (as the law of the land should be) to protect the weak and vulnerable. This protection would be taken away if the law was further changed by godless legislators. Patients may come under subtle

pressure from relatives, for financial or other ends, to terminate their lives. Very sick people may then feel constrained to commit suicide when they could have received support and better care and discover a purpose in living.

Sarah Ezekiel is a motor-neurone disease sufferer, who was depressed and wanted to die, “to be put down as an animal”, as she put it. Now she has changed her mind and finds a purpose in life. She cannot move and can only communicate through a computer yet, with better care, she has come out of depression and sees herself as living a productive life.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has been reported as being sympathetic to the assisted suicide “cause” and is proposing to enter into talks with the MSP Margo MacDonald on the assisted suicide debate. Margo Macdonald, a Parkinson’s sufferer, is well known for her vigorous campaign to change the law on assisted suicide and is introducing “The End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill”, to be voted on by the Scottish Parliament in the autumn of 2010.

The Christian Institute has reported great disquiet amongst many of the individual RCN members at this change of direction. Lady Emmerton, a Fellow of the RCN, has expressed her outrage at the seismic shift in policy that now nurses could be encouraged to, “Engage in dialogue with their patients on assisted suicide”. She believes that “the majority of the members remain opposed to helping their patients kill themselves and are more concerned about improving their health care”. However, an article in one national newspaper would indicate that many nurses put the “individual’s rights to die” above the over-riding duty to care for the vulnerable to help them cope with their lives.

One source (speaking of Dignitas but expressing sentiments which are applicable to the whole debate), has summed it up by saying: “Stop talking about helping someone to die. People don’t go to Dignitas to die but to be killed – a great difference. Killing can never be a therapeutic act.”

### ***EUTHANASIA***

Assisted suicide and euthanasia are inextricably connected. Tony Bland, lying in hospital in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS), was the first patient in legal history to die through deliberate withdrawal of food and water intended to bring about his death. Since the Tony Bland case in 1993 there have been around 36 instances where the courts have legitimised the withdrawal of feeding and hydration tubes from people in Persistent Vegetative States. Since then the British Medical Association (BMA) have extended this category to serious non PVS cases such as dementia and stroke patients. Incongruously the BMA believe that there is no need to get court sanctions for such patients if their medical consultants and next of kin feel that it is in their best interests for such a person to be dead.

One such stroke patient, though conscious and showing evident signs of recovery, was left to die by withdrawal of feeding and hydration. Because of her condition she was unable to convey her wishes, though her previous Christian view of life was clearly against voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. It is to be feared that other patients in our hospitals are being put to death prematurely and the law does not protect them. Again language is being manipulated to hide the true intent. Sentiments are expressed such as, it is “kinder”, more “compassionate” to put them out of their suffering rather than live the rest of their days with a quality of life that someone subjectively has decided is inferior.

Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 states that “Everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally.” Those words would seem to indicate protection for all. However, the authorities cleverly seek to get round this by stating that withdrawal of food and fluids is an “omission” not an “act”.

The Liverpool Care Pathway has been set up by the Marie Curie Hospice Liverpool to help terminally ill patients at the end of their lives. Withdrawal of food and fluids and administration of strong sedatives may be appropriate in the very last stages of life when difficult sensitive decisions have to be made; however, this model is now being advocated across the community. A senior geriatrician, Dr. Adrian Treloar, said tellingly: “The eligibility criteria do not ensure that only people who are about to die are allowed on the Pathway. For instance patients with dementia, for whom dying can take years, and those who are bed bound and unable to swallow may be eligible.” Euthanasia can come in by the back door for those on this Pathway. Even Dr. Helga Kuhse, a proponent of euthanasia, has admitted that once food and hydration are allowed to be withdrawn, direct killing by lethal injection would soon follow.

Baroness Campbell, mentioned previously, suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, a degenerative disease that means she is immobile without help. When she contracted a serious chest infection and lost consciousness, her physician decided it would be kinder not to resuscitate her and “allow her to die”. It was only because her husband who, of course, knew her wishes, would not consent to it, that her life was spared. If her next of kin had agreed with the doctor, no-one would have treated her and she would inevitably have died.

Many are deeply concerned that we are on a slippery slope leading all the way from assisted suicide to euthanasia by lethal injection. In spite of all the reassuring rhetoric, the assisted suicide and pro-euthanasia lobby’s approach is brutal and barbaric and leaves all kinds of vulnerable people unprotected from their “compassionate murderers”.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Scripture warns us that “in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Timothy 3:1). We are seeing the fulfilment of these words in our own day. “Iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold” (Matthew 24:12).

God's people themselves are not immune to this corrupt atmosphere. They still have a principle of sin within them, as the Apostle Paul makes so clear in Romans 7:24. "The body of this death" is their burden every day, yet God's grace is sufficient for them and it is sufficient too for a lost world, if they will but seek salvation . . . even in perilous times. Christ came to seek and to save lost sinners and He is the same yesterday and today and forever – the compassionate Saviour.

We are to continue to pray to God to pour out His Holy Spirit upon us and to give us repentance: as individuals, as churches, and as nations.

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#### NOTES TO THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic Herald*, 23 May 2008. <sup>2</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Malta Star*, 29 December 2007. <sup>3</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 December 2007. <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 16 November 2005. <sup>5</sup> *The Liverpool Echo*, 28 December 2005. <sup>6</sup> "The Dark side of Lourdes", by Therese Taylor, *Fortean Times*, May 2007. <sup>7</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 2008. <sup>8</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 2 June 2008; *Catholic Herald*, 6 June 2008. <sup>9</sup> *BBC News*, 29 January 2009. <sup>10</sup> *The Catholic Herald*, 1 February 2008. <sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 1 February 2008. <sup>12</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 2007. <sup>13</sup> *The Guardian*, *The Irish Times*, 8 January & 4 March 2008; *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 March 2008; *The Independent on Sunday*, 9 March 2008; *The Independent*, 25 April 2008. <sup>14</sup> *Irish Independent*, 4 November 2007; *Catholic Times*, 12 November 2006 & 28 March 2007; *The Guardian*, 29 & 31 March 2007; *The Times*, 30 March 2007; *The Daily Telegraph*, *International Herald Tribune*, 31 March 2007; *The Independent*, 31 March & 3 April 2007; *The Sunday Telegraph & The Independent on Sunday*, 8 April 2007. <sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 8 April 2008; *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 2008. <sup>16</sup> *Fortean Times*, p. 18, January 2008. <sup>17</sup> *The Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, 16 October 2007. <sup>18</sup> *BBC News*, 2 October 2007; *The Metro*, 3 October 2007. <sup>19</sup> *The Irish Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 October 2007. <sup>20</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 169, p. 8. <sup>21</sup> *The Independent*, 16 August 2005. <sup>22</sup> *The Metro*, 2 November 2005. <sup>23</sup> *The Australian*, 31 July 2006. <sup>24</sup> *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 11 May 2006. <sup>25</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 21 March 2007. <sup>26</sup> *Diligent Media Corp* (Mumbai), 26 February 2008. <sup>27</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 March 2009. <sup>28</sup> *San Antonio Express-News*, 27 November 2005; *The Economist*, 7 January 2006. <sup>29</sup> *The Irish Examiner*, 22 November 2005. <sup>30</sup> *Johannesburg Star*, *Western Mail*, 12 June 2007; *South African*, 26 June 2007. <sup>31</sup> *Irish Times*, 10-11 July, 14 August; *Irish Examiner*, 10-11 July; *Irish Independent*, 10 July; *Dublin Herald*, 24 July 2009. <sup>32</sup> *Irish Examiner & Irish Independent*, 2 October 2009. <sup>33</sup> *Taipei Times*, 22 March 2008. <sup>34</sup> *Fortean Times*, p. 12, March 2008; *British Church Newspaper*, No. 169, p. 7. <sup>35</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 164, p. 6. <sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, No. 171, p. 7; *Fortean Times*, No. 256, p. 14-16. <sup>37</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 171, p. 6. <sup>38</sup> *The Week*, No. 744, p. 11. <sup>39</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 175, p. 1. <sup>40</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 October, 23 August & 4 November 2007; *The Catholic Herald*, 16 August & 10 October 2008; *The Independent*, 30 August 2008; *The Sunday Times*, 5 October 2008; *The Times*, 6 October 2008; *BBC News*, 29 October 2008; *The Guardian*, 1 November, 2008; *The Birmingham Post*, 15 November 2008. <sup>41</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 160, p. 1. <sup>42</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 175, p. 7. <sup>43</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7781, p. 1. <sup>44</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 173, p. 1. <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, No. 175, p. 1. <sup>46</sup> *Sunday Mail*, 5 November 2006. <sup>47</sup> *SMC News*, 30 March 2007. <sup>48</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 162, p. 4. <sup>49</sup> *The Independent*, *Daily Express*, 15 May 2008; *BBC Radio Four Beyond Belief*, 14 July 2008. <sup>50</sup> *The Sun*, 21 August 2007. <sup>51</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7772, p. 1. <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7772, p. 3. <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7774, p. 1; *British Church Newspaper*, No. 162, p. 2; *Evangelical Times*, October 2009, p. 7. <sup>54</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 162, p. 6. <sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, No. 162, p. 4. <sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, No. 161, p. 2. <sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, No. 162, p. 6. <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, No. 175, p. 5. <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, No. 162, p. 7. <sup>60</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7774, p. 1; *British Church Newspaper*, No. 164, p. 8. <sup>61</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7775, p. 3. <sup>62</sup> *British Church Newspaper*,

No. 171, p. 1. <sup>63</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7781, p. 1. <sup>64</sup> *Zhizn* (Russian), 9 December 2008 & 9 February 2009. <sup>65</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 169, p. 6. <sup>66</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 22 April; *The Times*, 25 April 2005. <sup>67</sup> *The Guardian*, 6 June; *Daily Telegraph*, 13 June, 2006. <sup>68</sup> *The Metro*, 17 May 2007. <sup>69</sup> *Evangelical Times*, December 2009, p. 27. <sup>70</sup> *The Week*, No. 743, p. 16. <sup>71</sup> *The Auditor*, No. 340; 50th Anniversary of Ron's Home Saint Hill. <sup>72</sup> *The Guardian*, 16 November 2007; *The Independent on Sunday*, 18 November 2007; www.religionnewsblob.com, 22 November 2007. <sup>73</sup> "Pyotr Kuznetsov", article in *Wikipedia*, 3 February 2010. <sup>74</sup> *Radio Prague*, 23 May 2007; *The Independent*, 2 June 2007; *The Daily Mail*, 11 January 2008; *The Irish Times*, 24 January 2008. <sup>75</sup> *The Star* (Malaysia), 27 September 2009. <sup>76</sup> *The Weekend Australian*, 7-8 January 2006. <sup>77</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 3 & 16 March; *The Independent*, 17 March; *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 March 2007. <sup>78</sup> *Tallahassee (FL) Democrat*, 25 February 2007; *Winnipeg Sun*, 12 March 2007; *NBC*, 30 March 2007; *Seattle Times*, 21 April 2007. <sup>79</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 10 & 16 August 2007; *The Scotsman*, 17 August 2007. <sup>80</sup> *Fortean Times*, p. 5, January 2008. <sup>81</sup> *The Times*, 28 May 2007; *International Herald Tribune*, 5 June 2007; *The Observer*, 10 July 2007; *The Independent on Sunday*, 19 August 2007; *The Kentucky Enquirer*, 11 November 2007; *The Guardian*, 5 April & 10 October 2008. <sup>82</sup> *Fortean Times*, pp. 30-33, March 2009. <sup>83</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 154, p. 4. <sup>84</sup> *Fortean Times*, pp. 28-30, October 2008. <sup>85</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 160, p. 2. <sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, No. 164, p. 2, *Evangelical Times*, May 2009, p. 2; July 2009, p. 2. <sup>87</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 169, p. 8. <sup>88</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7760, p. 1. <sup>89</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 174, p. 4; *English Churchman*, No. 7781, p. 4. <sup>90</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 174, p. 1. <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, No. 169, p. 1. <sup>92</sup> *Fortean Times*, January 2008, p. 55. <sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, January 2009, pp. 46-51. <sup>94</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 154, p. 1. <sup>95</sup> *The International Herald Tribune*, 21 June 2004; *Sunday Times*, 30 June 2004; *The Independent*, 30 July 2004; *The Independent*, 13 October 2004; *The Guardian*, 12 April 2004; *BBC News*, 23 November 2004; *The Independent*, 24 November 2004. <sup>96</sup> *The Guardian*, 1 July 2000. <sup>97</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 16 September 2008. <sup>98</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 171, p. 4. <sup>99</sup> *The Independent*, 4 April 2008; *New York Times*, 8 June 2008. <sup>100</sup> *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Scotsman*, 19 March 2009. <sup>101</sup> *Fortean Times*, p. 15, October 2009. <sup>102</sup> *News Zimbabwe*, 23 April 2006; *BBC News*, 2 July 2006. <sup>103</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 7-8 January 2009; 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Churchman, No. 7770, p. 7; *Evangelical Times*, October 2009, p. 9.<sup>157</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7760, p. 3; *Evangelical Times*, April 2009, p. 7.<sup>158</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 9 February 2009; *English Churchman*, No. 7763, p. 3.<sup>159</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7763, p. 3.<sup>160</sup> *Evangelical Times*, May 2009, p. 3.<sup>161</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7763, p. 4.<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7769, p. 3.<sup>163</sup> The Christian Institute, *Institute Update*, Summer & October 2009.<sup>164</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7760, p. 1.<sup>165</sup> The Christian Institute, *Institute Update*, Summer 2009.<sup>166</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7770, p. 4.<sup>167</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 161, p. 2.<sup>168</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7778, p. 3.<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7780, p. 7.<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7770, p. 4.<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7770, p. 4.<sup>172</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 175, p. 1.<sup>173</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7772, p. 1.<sup>174</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 173, p. 5.<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, No. 168, p. 8.<sup>176</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7763, p. 3.<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7771, p. 3; 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*British Church Newspaper*, No. 167, p. 8.<sup>202</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7763, p. 3.<sup>203</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 175, p. 2.<sup>204</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7764, p. 4.<sup>205</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7772, p. 4; *British Church Newspaper*, No. 166, p. 6.<sup>206</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 161, p. 8.<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*, No. 167, p. 9.<sup>208</sup> *ibid.*, No. 174, p. 8.<sup>209</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7773, p. 1.<sup>210</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7777, p. 6.<sup>211</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7775, p. 1.<sup>212</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 154, p. 8.<sup>213</sup> *ibid.*, No. 162, p. 6.<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*, No. 163, p. 7.<sup>215</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7766, p. 3.<sup>216</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7780, p. 3.<sup>217</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 167, p. 9.<sup>218</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7778, p. 1, *British Church Newspaper*, No. 174, p. 3.<sup>219</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 173, p. 9; *English Churchman*, No. 7780, p. 4.<sup>220</sup> *English Churchman*, No. 7771, p. 7.<sup>221</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7773, p. 3.<sup>222</sup> *ibid.*, No. 7775, p. 4.<sup>223</sup> *British Church Newspaper*, No. 168, p. 7; 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## SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

It was Robert Murray McCheyne who said, "a well-spent Sabbath we feel to be a day of heaven upon earth". But how many of us are able to enter into this? How many of us in the professing Church have as great regard to the Christian Sabbath as we should? How many of us are keeping the Sabbath as it is meant to be kept? How many of us are benefiting from the provision that the Lord has made for our souls? We should lay to heart the pressing need that we have of being in the Spirit on the Lord's day as the Apostle John did (Revelation 1:10). Only when we ourselves are affected with an earnest and lively zeal for the Sabbath and its benefits can we hope to influence others in the keeping of this most holy day.

Over the last 12 months the Committee has sought to uphold the Sabbath Day wherever and whenever possible. The new Convener, on taking over in May 2009, was informed that over the previous years many recipients of the Committee's letters had objected to receiving them on the grounds that the Clerk and Convener issuing the letters did not reside in the locality of the event or organisation complained against. The Committee have sought to address this by developing a system similar to that used by the Christian Institute, where local congregations and individuals are encouraged to raise issues directly. This method also has the advantage of increasing the number of letters sent out over any particular issue.

To assist in this the Committee has undertaken to produce and distribute a number of information leaflets covering the following areas:

*The Sabbath – the duty of parents;*

*The Sabbath – the duty of children;*

*The Sabbath – duty of visitors;*

*The Sabbath – our legal rights;*

*The Sabbath – the duty of the Civil Magistrate.*

A recent statement made by Rev. Ian Galloway, Convener of the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council and reported in the *Stornoway Gazette*, shows us how much ignorance there is concerning Sabbath Observance among many. He said that, "a couple of months ago I was in Germany and one Sunday I visited a town where not a single shop was open. People were out and about with their families. That is the value of Sunday that is above money. It's time to be with those we care about and reclaim the Sabbath for what it is." How careful we need to be to maintain the Sabbath not merely as a family day (although the keeping of this day will be a great blessing to any family) but for the worship of God in private and public. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it *holy*" (Exodus 20:8).

The main work of the Committee in the summer of 2009 was to object to the then proposed sailing of the Ullapool to Stornoway Ferry by Caledonian

MacBrayne. Letters were sent to all Board members, along with local and national politicians. The responses received were courteous but less than encouraging and in the end the Ferry began regular sailings on the Sabbath to the detriment of all involved. If only they would give heed to the Lord's words in 1 Samuel 2:30: "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

To date this has had a limited knock-on effect, with at least one connected business, Citylink, requiring their Stornoway-based bag handler to work seven days. The Committee were keen to write to local businesses to encourage them to remain closed on the Sabbath; however, this, in the end, was not possible.

The Convener, with others, received a "Christmas Card" from Royal Mail in mid November, which stated, "In the week leading up to Christmas, we'll be delivering in the evenings and on Sunday the 20th". On phoning the Royal Mail help line he was referred to their web-site. On checking the website he was informed that they were planning to do extra Sunday deliveries throughout December. A letter was then issued to the people of the Church, via Ministers, using this information and asking them to write to Royal Mail and their local MP. It was later discovered that the deliveries were not to be as universal as first advertised. However, the general response received both from the Royal Mail and elected members were both courteous and, in a small measure, encouraging. Even although the deliveries were not as widespread as first anticipated, it was, we believe, still beneficial for Royal Mail to have received such correspondence after being in open breach of the Fourth Commandment. It is our duty to condemn Sabbath breaking nationally as well as locally. "Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon" (Jeremiah 50:34).

It is interesting to note that on 8th February Channel 4 broadcast an investigative documentary called *Post Office Undercover*, in which the accusation was made that during the Post Office strike at the end of 2009 some households did not receive any mail during the week and that it was eventually delivered on the Sabbath. Post Office management later dismissed these claims as a "lie". This documentary was available on the internet until mid March.

The Committee would greatly appreciate being kept informed of local Sabbath issues by the people of the Church, as it is impossible for its members to be aware of every event, and we would encourage our people to remain mindful of the Committee's work at the throne of grace. The prayer of faith is our best and greatest weapon, for the Lord "is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).



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

**Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod**

### ***General***

Over the past year, our missionary activities in Zimbabwe, Kenya and Israel have substantially followed the same pattern as reported year by year in recent times. The seed continues to be sown, but we are not able alas! to report that it has in any remarkable, observable way brought forth fruit in the hearts of hearers. We believe that it will do so in His time, when prayers are answered and refreshing showers come from on high. Meantime, we are encouraged to persevere and not become weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

### ***Zimbabwe***

Now that the South African Rand and the American Dollar have replaced the Zimbabwean Dollar in day-to-day business transactions, the difficulties associated with rampant inflation have eased and the necessity of having to go across the border to Botswana to purchase goods unavailable in Zimbabwe has ended. The introduction of a new currency has, however, led to the surfacing of other problems. The Government's insistence on its national workers wages structure being implemented has greatly increased our costs and if the trend continues, it is to be feared that these costs may well become unsustainable. Were it not for the increasing generosity of our friends in Holland, curtailment of mission activities would have by now already occurred.

Hitherto, however, the Gospel is still preached from our pulpits in Zimbabwe; the John Tallach Secondary School (soon, it is hoped, to be raised to six-form status) continues to function as a first-class educational institution under the capable direction of Mr. B. Ncube as Head and Miss N. B. MacLean as Deputy Head, the latter having to carry the additional burden of caring and providing for the 300+ boarders on the premises; the Mbumba Hospital continues to provide much needed and much appreciated medical and nursing help with Dr. J. Snoek and her staff often working beyond the call of duty, while the Thembeiso Home continues to provide a loving, compassionate roof for abandoned children and orphans. It is now undergoing administrative restructuring with Mr. S. Mpofu and Miss Petra Beukers at present overseeing the implementation of the change, but they are soon to be joined by Miss Margaret MacAskill, who has agreed to go out for a period of four months to help train staff there. We are sure her expertise will be much appreciated.

The Translation Team and Bible Revision Team, under the guidance of Mr. Teus Benschop, having completed the Ndebele New Testament revision have now reached the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament and are hoping to complete the work in 2011. Miss K. M. MacAulay, since her retirement, has contributed to the work from her home in Breasclate and is at present back in

Zimbabwe for a few months to join the team round the table. The Mission is much indebted to her. Revision of the Shona New Testament Bible has now begun and has progressed as far as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The same Gospel preached from our pulpits is that which is introduced to the minds of children and adults in the institutions referred to and that, indeed, is the reason for our sustaining them. Other reports submitted to the Synod will provide a more detailed account of the work being done.

Mr. Hugh MacKenzie as Mission Co-ordinator continues to supervise mission projects, ensuring that as far as possible prior programming is adhered to. The Committee are deeply indebted to him and to his wife also whose behind-the-scenes contribution to the work is by no means negligible.

Mr. J. Verhaar is due to return to Holland when his contract ends in October and the Committee would place on record its appreciation of the excellent work that was done by him at Mbuma over the years. We wish him well and the Lord's blessing as he resumes employment in the Netherlands.

Miss Jacqueline Freeke and Miss Naomi Rowland are now settled at Ingwenya and are of great help in teaching Bible Knowledge and in reducing Miss MacLean's burden by taking on certain day-to-day routine duties. We are also indebted to the teams of young men – most of them skilled tradesmen – from Holland who have freely and willingly given of their time and labour to carry out mission maintenance work – at Ingwenya on this occasion. It is also to be noted that Mr. Melusi Mpofu has now settled in as the Mission's Administrator.

We are glad to report that the Rev. Petros Mzamo is still able to preach from time to time and that our other ministers, Rev. Z. Mazwabo, Rev. A. B. MacLean, Rev. M. Mloyi and Rev. S. Khumalo, continue to attend to their abundant and multifarious duties at their respective stations and do so, thankfully, without let or hindrance. The quest for a site for the proposed new church at Zvishavani has so far proved to be elusive, but the new church at Maware is going on apace. The congregation there are to be commended for the degree to which they have contributed to the project by providing material and free labour.

### ***Kenya***

As in Zimbabwe, the sowing of the good seed of the kingdom has continued to be sown in Kenya over another year. The principal mission station and administrative centre is at Sengera, but outlying stations are not neglected. The oversight of the spiritual work and also – to a large extent – the administration of the mission, remains in the capable hands of the Rev. K. M. Watkins. He has many burdens to bear. We are glad that he continues to be sustained in good health and that, whatever difficulties may be encountered (are they not to be expected wherever the god of this world finds his kingdom and rule threatened by the Gospel?) he will ere long discover that his labours are not in vain in the Lord. Mrs. Watkins' linguistic and organisational skills are also harnessed to the mission and her contribution to the work as well as that of Andre Ploeg and Elizabeth Munns (temporarily) is much appreciated.

It is to be noted that the sacrament of baptism was recently administered and we hope that the remembrance of the Lord's death will follow as a result of the Gospel being accompanied with power. As mentioned in last year's report, the Mbuma Zending Board have indicated that they have funding in hand specially designated for the building of a new purpose-built church building on the vacant ground adjacent to the Sengera compound. It is hoped that the construction work will begin towards the end of this year and that it will be supervised by Mr. John G. MacLeod of the Inverness congregation.

The Omorembe Clinic continues to provide all possible nursing and medical aid as the report to the Synod will undoubtedly show. While appreciating the fact that Mr. Watkins faithfully attends to the spiritual side of the work, we believe much more might be accomplished if we had a Christian doctor and nursing staff in place who would also be able to speak to patients concerning their souls' salvation.

### ***Israel***

In Israel, the Rev. J. Goldby has returned to Jerusalem and is holding services there as well as in Jaffa, where he was based for some time. He has now the presence and support of Mr. and Mrs. Al Hembd, both members of our Texas congregation, who arrived in the city towards the end of 2009. Mr. Hembd, an accomplished linguist, is employed by the Trinitarian Bible Society and is presently, among other things, studying modern Hebrew with a view to becoming fluent and proficient in it. We would hope that we as a Church would continue to do what lies within our power to bring about the conversion of the Jews. Through the labours of Mr. Goldby we have contributed to the work of providing them with copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in their own language as well as helping to put in their hands the Word of God in as faithful and pure a translation as possible. These are important projects which are worthy of our support and it is surely desirable that we should continue to show our interest in them by maintaining a presence in Israel. Mr. Goldby will be submitting his own report and we are sure that it will give details of the services which he holds in Jerusalem and Jaffa. As in every other part of our Church, at home and abroad, we are in Israel sowing in the hope of a harvest at last. It is our duty to do so; it is the Most High alone that is able to give the increase.

### ***Conclusion***

Although the Committee cannot present a glowing report of success in bringing sinners to the light of the truth, it can report that, by the grace of the Saviour, doors of usefulness have remained open. To our friends in Holland we once again express our appreciation of their support. The generosity and interest of the Mbuma Zending Board is increasing year by year. May He whose cause they support recompense them! We are sorry that it is not possible for them, on account of other pressing duties in their homeland, to send representatives to this year's meeting of Synod. We appeal to the Lord's people among us to pray

earnestly that our endeavours to spread abroad the fame of Christ as Redeemer would be blessed by Himself and that the whole earth would soon come to be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

## **JEWISH REPORT**

**Rev. J. L. Goldby**

“WHAT think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They [the Pharisees] say unto him, The son of David. He [Jesus] saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David in spirit call him Lord, how is he his son?” (Matthew 22:42-45). Jesus here addresses Jewish leaders, whom He knew did not understand this prophecy of the Messiah from Psalm 110:1 (see also Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44, Acts 2:34,35, 1 Corinthians 15:25). They knew that He was to be the Son of David, a doctrine taught in many scriptures, but they did not understand nor believe the Scriptures which teach that the Messiah is a divine person who is the Son of God and who would take the nature of man into union with His divine person.

These questions, asked of the Jews in Israel, two thousand years ago, are as relevant and important today in Israel, and elsewhere, as they were then. Now, to a large extent, the same darkness remains in the minds of the bulk of the Jewish people concerning the person of the Messiah. Many Rabbis, however, (as also the Jewish leaders of Jesus time) from the Talmudic sages onwards have, at least, recognized that Psalm 110:1 is a prophecy of the Messiah. A certain Rabbi Yoden wrote, “In the age to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, makes King Messiah to sit on His right hand for it is said, The Lord said sit on my right hand” (Midrash Tehillim on Psalm 18:36).

What think ye of Christ? is a question relevant not only for the Jewish people but for all of us. The right or wrong answer to this question will mark the difference between everlasting life and everlasting death. We need to believe in the real Messiah. Any doctrine of Christ which is contrary to that revealed in the Scripture will carry souls into a lost eternity with a lie in their right hand.

### ***Mr. and Mrs Albert Hembd***

Albert and Rebecca Hembd, who have been members in our Church in North America for many years, arrived in Israel in December and are now residing in a small flat near to us in Jerusalem. Both are currently studying modern Hebrew in Ulpan Milah. Mr. Hembd also plans, God willing, to attend Hebrew University where he hopes to study towards a doctorate in Hebrew. Mr. Hembd works as a Bible Consultant with the TBS and is currently involved in a number of projects. One of his tasks is to review the work we have been doing

here in revising the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament. As a former computer programmer his computing skills are being put to good use in his work here. It is very helpful to us to have Mr. Hembd with us as, among his other functions, he serves as our regular precentor in the Church services in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

#### ***Services in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv***

Since our return from Jaffa to Jerusalem in November last year, services have been held each Sabbath at 11 a.m. in the YMCA in West Jerusalem and at 7 p.m. in Tel Aviv. The morning service is attended, on average, by about eight persons and the evening service by around eighteen. Both services are conducted in English but the evening service is translated into Russian, sometimes also with a Hebrew translation. Four, and sometimes five, of us travel on Sabbath evening to Tel Aviv which is about an hour's journey. For our worship we have some Russian Psalms which we can use but more Psalms need to be put into verse in a suitable metre. One young man of Russian origin has good English, Hebrew and Russian. He is keen to try and put some Russian Psalms into a suitable metre. Meanwhile, we await with interest to see if he will be successful. One family of regulars in our YMCA service at present are members of the Canadian Reformed Church. The husband is currently engaged in doctoral research on the works of Josephus at the Hebrew University. Another regular is a lady from Cochin, in southern India, who is working here. Various individuals passing through Israel as visitors, or on short working appointments, attend the YMCA service.

We are also pleased to see an increasing number of visitors from our own congregations. In September we had the pleasure of meeting the den Boer family from New Zealand. In November Rev. Neil and Mrs. Ross joined us for a short visit before and after their participation in a tour of Israel. Mr. Ross, who is a member of the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee, attended our translation and revision work meetings in Gedera and Yad Hashmona. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hayden from Barnoldswick also attended a service on 6th December. Such visitors stimulate interest in Israel and the work here and we appreciate this support.

#### ***Westminster Confession of Faith Translation Project***

The *Westminster Confession* has now been translated into Hebrew. However, the work of carefully checking and adjusting the translation has only reached chapter ten, which is about one third of the *WCF*. We had hoped to have it with the printer by July but it is doubtful now whether this can be achieved by this time. Proof reading, typesetting, adding the Scripture verses and cover design are yet to be done before the printing stage. We plan to print around 500 copies initially. The projected cost (after the translation) to complete the first printing is estimated at around £6,500.

### ***Doctrine in Messianic Congregations of Israel***

Once again we stress the great need for sound doctrinal teaching in Israel. There is much error and doctrinal confusion among the Jewish Christian community. Many Jewish believers will not call themselves Christians but refer to themselves as Messianic believers, or Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah. This is partly owing to the anti-semitic persecuting legacy of false Christianity, from the Crusaders and the Roman Catholic Spanish Inquisition, to the connivance of Pius XII with Hitler during the holocaust of World War II. Some deny the Trinity whilst many others are mixing Christianity with Judaism. There is widespread Charismatic influence and dispensationalism is rife. Some think that Old Testament believers were saved by works and few understand Covenant Theology. Some assert that the words of Jesus are of more authority than other parts of the Scripture and that there are mistakes in the teaching of the Apostle Paul. Not many of the Messianic Pastors have had proper theological training and no one in this community, as far as we know, keeps the Christian Sabbath.

The Regulative Principle in NT worship is nowhere to be found among the Messianic Congregations. The Judaism of today, like the Judaism of Jesus' time, looks for a Messiah who is a mere man yet to come. On the other hand, sadly, there are some among Jewish Christians who deny the real humanity of Christ and say that He was not of Mary's substance and therefore not the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), nor of the Seed of David according to the flesh. This is an old heresy of the second century AD which was revived by some of the Anabaptists at the Reformation. Other errors arise from these views, such as the confusing of the two distinct natures of God and Man in Christ.

Having said all that about our Church's work in Israel, we may mention that there is also a small nucleus of congregations and individuals in the country who are Calvinistic. They are trying to develop a Reformed fraternity for mutual support. Among them is Victor Smadja, the Jewish printer, who continues to print and circulate large quantities of good Christian literature and Bibles. Friends from Holland continue to do what they can to teach Reformed doctrine. Last year 500 copies of the *Heidelberg Catechism* in Hebrew were printed, and in the last few weeks a children's catechism in Hebrew was published by HaGefen in Rishon Le'Tsion.

### ***Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament Revision Project***

This project has now been running for a little over a year and a good and methodical system of the revision work has been developed under the auspices of the TBS. The first revised draft of the Gospel of John has been produced and work on the Gospel of Matthew has begun. The TBS and supporters from Finland each contribute a half share in the finances, whilst the involvement of Rev. J. Goldby is supported by our Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee. Addresses on this work were given to TBS deputies and staff in London on Monday, 1st December, by Rev. J. Goldby and Mr. Albert Hembd.

The revision team, until recently, consisted of Dr. Gershon Nerel, Mrs. Sara Nerel, Rev. J. L. Goldby and Mr. T. Jamison. Dr. and Mrs. Nerel had special responsibility for the Hebrew, Mr. Jamison is especially responsible for indentifying discrepancies between the TBS Greek edition of the Textus Receptus and the Delitzsch Hebrew Text. Mr. Hembd acts as a consultant, especially for the Greek, and reviews the recommended changes made by the team. The tables showing the recommended changes and the reasons for them are also sent to the Finnish representative in Beer Sheba and to the TBS in London. Recently it became necessary for Dr. and Mrs. Nerel to leave the work and the team is now being advised by a new Hebrew language consultant. This Israeli lady was a formerly a lecturer in Hebrew Literature at the University College of London and the team recognizes that the linguistic advice being received is of a very high quality. The whole team are of the view that the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament will be much improved by this revision, not only because of more accurate adherence to the TBS Greek Text but also from the modernization of obscure words and phrases. At the same time a Biblical style and harmony with the Old Testament is being carefully preserved.

During the year opportunities arose to give addresses on the work in Israel in two of our home congregations. At the present time we are looking forward to receiving various visitors, among whom is Mr. Paul Rowland, General Secretary of the TBS. We continue to interact with Jewish neighbours and friends and many interesting discussions take place as opportunity occurs. We appreciate the prayers and support of friends not only from the home church but from many parts of the world. We acknowledge the Lord's kindness in it all and can say that despite our many infirmities, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us".

## **INGWENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. A. B. MacLean**

A DAY will come when a long succession of annual reports of spiritual darkness prevailing will change to one of a reviving of the Lord's cause. In the meantime, the duty is to be instant in season, out of season (2 Timothy 4:2). Although in winter little work is usually done in the fields, in a time of spiritual winter the work of the gospel must continue. Some of the more advanced farmers here do what is called dry planting, that is, planting the seed before the rains come and when the ground is still dry. When the rains come and the seed germinates, they usually get more food than other farmers. So in a difficult day the work of the gospel may be viewed in this way. The doctrines of the Word of God are sown in the heart without the rain of the Holy Spirit and there is no immediate fruit. But when His blessing comes, these doctrines will be blessed. Most of those who have undergone the saving work of the Holy Spirit can

testify that when the work began, texts of Scripture were occurring to their minds that had been put into their memory long before. There will yet be a spiritual harvest.

The previously mentioned cycle of preaching at Ingwenya and its outstations was more or less maintained during the year. The attendances are consistent in most places, but a decline is observed in the case of some who attend in order to get something from the mission. When such persons are asked to renew their attendance, they say they will do so or they just smile. Last year, food was abundant and therefore no food was given out, and so the attendance of some dropped off. But attendances have improved this year already because the rains have been poor in some parts. What is preached is, we believe, according to the Word of God. The doctrines of ruin by sin and salvation by Christ are the doctrines that the Holy Spirit will bless. The effect of these doctrines in the heart of man by the work of the Holy Spirit is what makes the new creature. He that ploweth should plow in hope (1 Corinthians 9:10).

The kirk session here continues to be busy. Cases come up one after another it seems. On one Sabbath, because a driver was unavailable, I myself drove the car to collect some older people and bring them to church. At the house of one communicant member I discovered a superstitious ceremony in connection with the dead taking place, with the member present. On the same day another member in another village was present at a similar ceremony. Both members were excommunicated. Many people still approach the kirk session for membership, but if a person does not know, for example, what is the second book of the Bible or the answers to similar simple questions then, of course, he or she is refused the privilege. Two children of a female communicant were baptised on her profession.

Dr. Tallach visited us during the year on mission business, and he conducted prayer meeting services both here and at Cameron. It was nice to see him, and it would be good if the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee was able to send out deputies more regularly.

As mentioned above, the rains were generally much lower than average in this area. The Bembesi river has not flowed this year and the recorded temperatures in February were higher than can be remembered. Late rains have occurred which may help some, but a problem here is that the crop grown is mostly maize, which fails every few years due to lack of rain. The persistence of the people in growing it and in bringing up their children to do the same thing is difficult to understand; they are perpetuating hunger and suffering from one generation to the next. More drought-resistant crops, which gave food more reliably, were grown here in the past (and still are by some) but the majority of the older generation will not change for the benefit of the younger generation.

However, it is a spiritual harvest that is most needed. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38).



## **JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Miss Norma B. MacLean**

AFTER the previous few years of serious economic difficulties in Zimbabwe, with rampant hyper-inflation and all its destructive consequences, the official introduction of foreign currency to the economy at the beginning of March brought dramatic and immediate improvements: inflation stopped almost overnight, by the end of the month all the basic foods were again freely available and industry slowly began production. Now, at the time of writing in 2010, there is no comparison with the situation in 2008 and early 2009. We look back and wonder how survival was possible through these difficult times and have to acknowledge that the Lord was undertaking for us in ways that we did not know.

Now that the school fees can be charged in foreign currency, the situation at the school has been transformed over the course of the year: staffing is stable, the diet in the dining hall is now better than it has been for years, it was possible to embark on a major textbook replacement programme and general maintenance was resumed.

Academically it was a difficult year, due to the delayed opening of schools in March when teachers were at last persuaded to abandon the national stayaway and return to work. This meant that the children had 2 terms in which to cover the work of 3 terms: to try to achieve this a punishing pace was kept up, which was exhausting for both staff and pupils. The O level results for 2009, however, bear testimony to the fact that this extra effort was largely successful.

### ***Staffing***

The staffing situation continued to improve throughout 2009 and the school was able to open for the new accademic year in January 2010 with a full complement of trained staff. It was a relief to have the Science Department fully manned after 3 years of high staff turnover and an extended period with vacant posts which had meant that a large proportion of our pupils had no science tuition for almost 3 terms.

The Parents' Committee played an important role in encouraging trained and experienced teachers to remain at the school. After schools reopened in March, several of our experienced staff were "headhunted" by higher fee paying schools and colleges in Bulawayo offering attractive packages. The Headmaster held an emergency meeting with the parents to inform them of this and they unanimously agreed to pay an extra levy to finance incentives for teachers. This reduced the attractiveness of these offers from other organisations and encouraged the teachers to remain at John Tallach. This incentive scheme, which is paid entirely from parents' funds, is paid out according to years of service at the school, posts of responsibility and is used when necessary to reward extra effort and to penalise poor performance.

It has had a positive effect on staffing at the school and has dramatically improved the morale of the staff so that none of them joined any of the subsequent teachers' strikes. Without it, there is no doubt that it would have been difficult to retain staff, whose salaries on average only amount to around \$160 per month.

Miss J. Freeke and Miss N. Rowland arrived from the UK to join the teaching staff for Term 3. As there were enough staff by that time in the Science and Mathematics Departments, it was possible for them to be timetabled almost entirely for Bible Knowledge. Miss Freeke also teaches computing and remedial maths, while Miss Rowland has been given the responsibility of the Library and the Dispensary. They also jointly manage the Tuckshop, so they have a busy programme.

### ***Pupils***

One casualty of the introduction of foreign currency has been the school enrolment. The fees are, of course, expensive when compared with the average monthly income: many of our parents are public servants earning on average around \$160 per month so, without another source of income, it is difficult to afford the fees. For this reason some boarders have transferred to day schools elsewhere but a large proportion of local children have left school because their parents were either unable or unwilling to pay the fees. When schools opened in January 2010 enrolment was 519 pupils which is 68 less than the opening figure for 2008.

### ***O Level Results***

Given the loss of one term's tuition in 2009 and the high staff turnover of 2008, the O Level results for 2009 were very pleasing. The overall pass rate was 84%, individual subjects as follows:

Accounts .....	96%	History .....	92%
Agriculture .....	84%	Integrated Science .....	70%
Bible Knowledge .....	87%	Literature in English .....	100%
Biology .....	100%	Mathematics .....	53%
Commerce .....	19%	Ndebele .....	97%
English Language .....	99%	Physical Science .....	92%
Fashion & Fabrics .....	71%	Woodwork .....	40%
Geography .....	77%		

One boy scored 10 As, four pupils had 9 As and six had 8 As. A total of 31 pupils had 5 or more A passes.

### ***Finance***

Throughout 2009 all school fees were collected in foreign currency, which has transformed our daily operations. After being heavily subsidised throughout 2008 in particular, the school reverted to the pre-inflationary situation of being

able to finance all of its own running costs from fees' income. The average fee per child for boarding is \$350 per term.

### ***Developments***

The renovation of the old Form 1 boys' dormitory is still continuing, although the boys were all able to move in in January 2010, by which time all the bedrooms had been completed. Work is still continuing on the external security and painting. An emergency exit is to be installed in the bathroom block. This project ran over budget and is being completed from school funds.

The new school bus was ready for use just after schools opened and has done excellent service since then. It is a pleasure to have a reliable vehicle – we depend on it so much for the school's weekly food supplies.

The ceiling replacement programme continued: one dormitory block at the girls' department was completed.

The installation of rainwater tanks also continued during the year, with a total of four 2,500 litre tanks being installed at various houses: one 10,000 litre tank was installed at a classroom block and two 5,000 litre tanks at one of the girls' dormitories.

The solar water heating programme also continued, with the installation of four further units at the teachers' cottages. This is a very successful project with a lot of hot water being provided, even on dull days. The teachers who benefit are delighted to have the hot water.

During 2009 the school was at last granted the extra land needed for the development of Form 6. This land has now been fenced off to enclose it in the mission compound.

A new digital printer was purchased for the school office, 109 new chairs for classrooms, 20 beds for the dormitories and 2 freezers for the school kitchen.

A ride-on mower was also purchased to help with the maintenance of the school's playing fields and athletics grounds.

A second volunteer group arrived from Holland in November 2009 to continue the work started in January. Scripture texts were painted on the sitting room walls in all of the teachers' cottages but the major work undertaken was in relation to the electricity system. All of the dangerous issues were dealt with and two of our own workers were trained in basic repairs, which has been an enormous help to us since then. Like the first group who were here in January, these were impressive young people and it was a pleasure to have them with us.

### ***Conclusion***

We are deeply indebted to the JFMC and Mbumba Zending for the continued generous support. Thanks is also due to the many individuals who support the work in different ways.

While so many of the children who pass through the school achieve impressive results, it is a continual disappointment that so few show any real signs of having been affected by the Word during their time with us. We request that all who read this report would pray that the Lord, by His Spirit, would work among the children here so that they would be convinced of the Truth, “for what shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”.

## **ZENKA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. M. Mloyi**

HOW wonderful is the Lord to His creatures! He gives life to both human beings and the brute creation. Thus the wonder of the providence of God as he controls nature by His wise counsel.

The time seems to be passing speedily as we near eternity. The trumpet of the Word of God is sounding as the Apostle says: “I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Thus 2009 has passed so hastily, with many swept into eternity without hope. Yet the trumpet was sounded. Escape for thy life!

The doors at the preaching stations were kept open to the end of the year, both weekday and Sabbath. The two local schools, Mabayi and Fudu, granted us permission to use their classrooms to hold prayer meetings. Mabayi prayer meeting is on Wednesday and Fudu on Tuesday, both held at 2 p.m. We are thankful for this arrangement with these schools. The Mabayi congregation, which had been traveling to Zenka for a weekday prayer meeting, has now been relieved. The two congregations of Fudu and Mabayi have been encouraged by the Deacon’s Court to begin contributions towards their own church buildings, as they are currently using the classrooms, so we hope and trust they will co-operate for the success of these structures. Bricks will be moulded, using local soil and then they are baked for durability.

The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was dispensed twice as usual in February and August. The contributions from the congregations enabled the Deacon’s Court to go through the two communion seasons by meeting costs.

We are thankful to the Most High as 2009 had a good rain season. Most people had food. Though non-Governmental organizations gave food aid, this was not on the same scale as past years. The congregations gave something from the harvest to the Deacon’s Court. This helped a lot at the August communion season and extended also to the February communion. There were financial constraints on the locals to source this by foreign currency but it was

difficult to get as most people are not working. Some may wish to sell their produce from their fields and gardens but the flow of foreign currency limited them. Contributions to the Fuel Fund were limited, as also were donations to the Sustentation Fund. The little contributed, however, had a high value which enabled us to purchase goods. Sabbath classes were conducted in between services on Sabbath. We are thankful for the drawn-up syllabus and hope it will be implemented.

While we were saddened by the death of a local elder, in September, we also lost a deacon, Mr. Moses Dlamini, after a long illness. He struggled on for more than twenty years with diabetes. A church member, employed as a gateman at Zenka, was fatally assaulted, which resulted in his death later in the hospital.

There is a cry of our people now settled in the farms in the Bubi district. They desire us to visit. It would be better for them if there was a professing male member with them to conduct worship. Presently manpower is limited to a great extent. We hope their plea will be answered, DV, as was the cry of the people of Macedonia. They cried to the Lord and were heard when the Apostle Paul visited them.

We desire that the Word of God would dwell richly in the hearts of many and that they would grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour Jesus Christ.

## **NKAYI MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. M. Mloyi**

THE psalmist expresses the goodness of God toward His own people in Psalms 34.8: "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." We have every reason to say that the Lord has been kind to us in sparing us to see another year. Thankfully the strain of finding food, especially for communions, has not been too difficult for the deacons. The fields also flourished, providing a variety of crops as the rains were so good. We do thank the Almighty for His rain, meeting the needs of both people and caring for all His creatures.

The doors in all preaching stations were kept open at weekday prayer meetings and Sabbaths. The places here were only visited once a month, as my strength and God's grace allowed. The elder and deacons have helped a great deal in supplying during my absence.

Our fervent prayer is that Nkayi would have a pastor to shepherd the flock, if it pleases the Owner of the Vineyard. The area is wide, so my satisfying the needs of the twenty-two congregations falls short. The spiritual growth needs to be catered for in these congregations by regular visits.

For the first time there was no Communion season at Nkayi in the beginning of January 2009 due to an outbreak of Cholera. The congregation failed to meet the hygiene standard, so the sacrament was held in June and at Donsa Dam church as usual in May.

There is a plea from Donsa to be part of our Mission if the situation normalizes. The teaching staff there are helpful in providing us with accommodation at Communion seasons. The school also has a great desire to be retained by the Mission.

The sacrament of Baptism was held at Manomano. It was encouraging to see a young man and a woman coming forward to profess the Lord.

Sabbath classes have now begun in these preaching places. They are conducted on Sabbath between church services by the elders. Children are taught Bible stories, the *Shorter Catechism* and the *Mother's Catechism*. It is desirable that a syllabus for Sabbath classes reach all congregations so that the material taught be the same. We pray for spiritual blessings upon the Word sown to both young and old. Thus the prayer and desire of the church is that our people would be saved. The light of the gospel has come in order to break the darkness of the world. Christ said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The voice of death rages; young and old pass to eternity – some with hope but many without hope.

At the end of the year, one of our deacons, Mr. Mhlambelo, from Donsa, was hurt in a Scotch cart drawn by oxen. Amongst his injuries he sustained a broken femur. He was on his way to a local clinic when the incident happened and was rushed to Nkayi District Hospital for medical care. We pray for his recovery in God's grace.

Nkuba congregation have set themselves the task of constructing a church building. It is a commendable effort and the Field Committee have granted them a little help by supplying the remains of the Lobengula manse. Roofing materials will hopefully be delivered to them soon.

## **BINGA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. M. Mloyi**

FROM the 18th to 21st September 2009 I visited the Binga Mission, accompanied by Messrs. L. Ndlovu of Lutsha and N. Khumalo of Mbuma. The Binga people have a desire to learn but presently there are few to often nourish them with the true, living gospel.

Two adherents keep the doors open. Those who are able to read need Tonga Bibles and Psalms. We supplied them with Ndebele New Testaments. Old people cannot read. It is the Zimbabwe Presbytery's desire to have a

missionary at the Mission to cater for the Binga people. We also have some adherents at the Binga Centre who cry for a preaching station to be opened for them. This could only happen if there was a resident preacher there. The attendance at the two places of worship we visited had an average attendance of thirty. The Tongas need the gospel. They need also to be delivered from darkness and superstition and brought to the teaching and knowledge of the truth. There is a lot of false teaching and knowledge around them from those deceiving sects that preach and worship during the night. We fear for our people less they be swept away by their deceit.

Financial constraints have frequently hindered us visiting Binga. We desire to visit this place at least once a month, though even this is not sufficient. There is no manpower to do so. We pray that the light of the gospel and a downpouring of the Holy Spirit would take place in our land.

## **ZISHAVANE MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. Z. Mazvabo**

WE stand desperately in need of the prayers of the Lord's people at all times, especially in the present day, when there is a thick cloud of spiritual darkness over us. In this respect, however, it is encouraging to know that there are many who always remember us and the Mission at the Throne of Grace. For a long time now we have noticed a sweeping flood of false prophets coming into our midst. They are in the form of sects of divers types, such as Zionists (Mapositora) and many other names picked from the Bible such as Berea or Acts of the Apostles, but have nothing to do with the Bible. In fact, one brand of the Mapositora do not read the Bible at all. These sects grow very quickly, then they divide and sub divide and so increase rapidly. They are very zealous, "desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Timothy 1:7) and it is true of them that they are blind teachers of the blind, coming in sheep's clothing but "inwardly they are ravening wolves". "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14).

What is most disturbing about these sects is that they are the authors and custodians of every superstitious way of worship. They claim to be healers and foretellers and have a remedy for every problem. They point out the problem and provide the "remedy", all of which magnifies the name of Satan. It is heart-breaking to notice that, what we consider and refer to as main-line churches, such as Methodist, Baptist, Calvinists, Church of Christ, Lutherans and Anglicans, etc., privately consult these sects when they have a problem,

such as illness or death in their families. They emulate their practices and introduce their ways of worship into their churches, such as beating of drums, dancing, and even ancestor worship. In this way the world is ushered into the church. Of course, it is not all who do this, but those “whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) but there is no running away from the fact that the state of the gospel among us is greatly compromised. We still endeavour to bring the gospel to our different stations and wherever we have opportunity to do so. We pray and sincerely ask all those who have an interest in the cause of Christ here and everywhere to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We stand in need of many things but here is what we need above all – an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It is with a heavy heart that I have to report that we are once more overtaken by a severe famine. All our congregations without exception are affected. The rains just failed totally and both the early and late crops failed miserably. We always say that this famine is a bad one but I am afraid that this one is the worst. Rivers and wells, as well as small dams, are dry already. In fact, many dams never got any water. Boreholes are starting to fail and the few that are working are over used. Unless the Lord gives us much desired rain there will be no pastures for cattle nor water for them to drink. We have sinned against the Lord our God because we have forsaken Him and served other gods and it is as if the Lord our God were saying to us: “Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation” (Judges 10:13-14).

Our congregation of Munaka, which is our youngest congregation and the only one across the River Runde in Masvingo Province, was visited by death recently. A woman of good standing in the congregation, and we very much hoped a gracious woman, died. The circumstances of her death were as follows: Her husband who had been working in Harare had finally come home on pension. While the husband was in Harare, and the woman at the home, it did not cause friction that the husband went to the African Reformed Church and the wife now belonged to the FP Church. But now after the husband had come home it became the talk of the community. They said: “He wants to join his wife in the F.P. Church.” We decided not to take any sides, except in prayer. After giving careful thought and consideration, the husband decided to join his wife in the F.P. Church. This was before the Chiedza Communion in November. As both of them could not attend at the same time it was agreed between themselves that the husband, who was very anxious to be present at an F.P. Communion, would go. But something which was beyond their control prevented the husband from going. It was agreed again between themselves that, come the New Canaan communion, in January, the good lady would go and the husband would look after the home. She was very faithful at attending communions. “You have lost your opportunity,” she said with the determination of a desirous soul, “I will not give you mine.” At the prayer meeting on Wednesday both of them were present. The good lady was



complaining that she was not very well. The next morning news came that she had passed away. She is greatly missed by all who know her. As she did not go to New Canaan after all, we hope that she went to be with Christ which is far better.

There is a woman in the lines of New Canaan who surprises us very much. We all know that she is a member of the Roman Catholic church and when we meet the priest on the New Canaan Road we know that he is going to or coming from her home. When it is communion at New Canaan she attends all the services from Thursday to Monday. The elders have since observed that she contributes towards the expenses of the communion. She has been doing this for a long time. We can only pray that she is caught in the net of the gospel. There is nothing impossible with the Lord.

We are in the process of building a church at Maware. The congregation is excitedly looking forward to the day when it will be ready. The much desired site for the Ebenezer congregation at Zvishavane is yet to be realized.

The need for labourers becomes more and more conspicuous. "Then saith he unto his disciples, 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).

By the time this report came back to me for proof-reading, we had received very good rains, so that the supply of water to drink and pastures for cattle have improved very greatly. Thanks be to God.

## **MBUMA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. M. Mloyi**

"I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help". This is how the Psalmist expressed his help from the Lord, without whom he could do nothing. Surely the harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few – this is the situation at Mbuma. The twelve congregations desire my visit on weekday prayer meetings and Sabbath but my strength to do so is limited. At least once a month these stations are visited and on Sabbath, if I'm there, I take services at Mbuma, the main station, and one outside. The elders help a lot during my absence to keep the doors open, though it's hard for Mpakama and now Mr. Solomon Ncube, who is alone and with failing health. I now often help him, the elder Mr. M. Dube, from Mbuma, and the catechist too is of great help to him also. All in all there is a supply to all the congregations.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed at the Mbuma Station twice as usual in April and October. It was a great joy to have Rev. J. R. Tallach in our midst in October to preach during the Communion. We felt very much refreshed by his sermons. The former resident minister, Rev. P. Mzamo, took the Saturday Communion Service and the second Table address. It was also

very wonderful to see him preach with vigour – the Lord strengthening him that time in giving such a delivery of the Word of God.

Two of our members, once hospital staff nurse aids, were suspended for breaking the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not steal”. We pray that the Lord will enlighten them concerning their sin and give repentance.

The Sacrament of Baptism was held at two stations – at Mbuma an old lady and at Singwangambe two children. The parents had asked for their baptism as per the Acts of the Apostles 2:39.

Sabbath classes have been revived also in these stations. Professing members recommended by the Kirk Session take these and also elders in their respective places. If time permits, the children are to be divided into different age groups but at present they are taught as one group. Some that are grown up need relevant teaching for their age group.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was also dispensed in August at Somakatana. The school does not belong to the church but the teaching staff are so kind to accommodate us at Communion. This school also has a great desire to be retained by the Mission once more. For infra-structure they say they will bear the burden, only they need to be administered by the Mission for the furtherance of the Word of God among its pupils.

It is very hard to visit this place because of the condition of the road. Only a four-wheel drive car is suitable but the car I use presently cannot cope with such terrain. Because of the attacks of white ants on the roof, the congregation is encouraged to persevere in its maintenance.

## **MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT**

**Dr. A. Snoek**

IT was on a Sabbath afternoon. Quite a number of the staff present had turned up for the Bible Class. We were dealing with the gospel according to John and the discussion concerned the question of where sin was coming from. “It is the devil who is making me to sin.” Heads were nodded in agreement. “So the devil is to blame for our sins?” Some hesitated, but more were agreeing. After we had looked into Jeremiah 17:9 and Psalm 51 we continued with our chapter. It was a week later when one of the nurses admitted that it had been the first time that she had understood that it is our heart where sins are coming from. She always thought, like many others, that it was Satan who was always tempting the people. Sin then is something that is overcoming you. You cannot help it really. But this was a completely new view.

It is the Lord who enabled us to continue with the work in and around the hospital. Under the guidance of Mr. Nkiwane and with the help of other male church members, the daily worship, ward visits and the Bible Classes were held. Currently we have a Bible Class for the contractors, the workmen, the domestics, the Primary School teachers and two for the Nursing staff, all dealing with different portions of Scripture.

Where in the past there has been quite some resistance against the Bible Classes, now they have become part of the daily routine and more and more are appreciated by the attendants. Bible classes with the expectant mothers in the waiting-mothers dorm were guided by either Sr. Celia, Sr. Gilia or Mr. Nkiwane. The attendance at the Bible class for children has increased considerably. More than a hundred children are coming on Saturday afternoons. They are divided into two groups, which are taken by Sr. Celia and Sr. Gilia, with the help of other staff members.

#### ***Administration and finance***

The introduction of foreign currency as the local currency made a big difference to previous years of hyper-inflation. Besides the ordering of drugs and materials at local suppliers, we continued to place a bulk order at IDA, a Dutch supplier, which is still cheaper despite the extra transport costs.

No governmental grant was received, except a one-off grant of US\$3,000 in October. Due to the fact that extra money was needed for the salaries of our staff and because of changes in the development plans, only 55% of our capital budget was used for the original purposes.

The following local donations were received:

- 1 desktop computer and printer with toners and drums from the Government.
- Different amounts of money for medication which were ordered at NatPharm Bulawayo.
- 2 Donations from Unicef with medication and medical assortment, including 2 microscopes.
- Donation via ZACH<sup>1</sup> from a church in America with medication and medical assortment.

#### ***Capital projects and maintenance***

The building of two new staff dorms for nurses, a project which was started in 2007, is still not finished. One of the buildings was erected and only needs a finishing touch. The other building is expected to be built in 2010.

It was planned to erect an office block and extend the OI Clinic in 2009 because of the lack of space in these two departments. In the course of the year this plan was changed and it was decided to use the present buildings and re-allocate the offices and the OI Clinic, using one of the bigger dorms. Instead of erecting a new large building for staff, which is likely to develop cracks and far more expensive, it was proposed to build small units of one room. Ten of these huts were erected in 2009 and more are expected to follow in 2010.

During the year leaking water tanks have been replaced by plastic ones at the hospital, washhouse and at the big water engine. Besides this, water meters have been placed at all the tanks, to monitor water consumption. The project is to be continued in 2010.

A both wired and wireless computer network has been put in place, together with a server for central file storage and backup. Besides this software to support the administration, OI Clinic and a Home Based Care department in Mbumba Mission Hospital has been developed and implemented.

The increased maintenance of the generators has proven to be successful. Significantly less electricity and water problems were experienced during the past year.

A Toyota Landcruiser was added to our fleet of 4 well-performing vehicles (Lorry, Tractor, Ambulance and Staff car). This car is used for the outreach work of the Home Based Care team and has been a great help in reaching the community.

**Staffing**

We started the year 2009 with two doctors. However, Dr. P. Mawere left after 4 months for another, less remote hospital in Zimbabwe. Two trusted senior Nurse Aids, 1 junior Nurse Aid and 1 contractor were dismissed after theft was discovered.

After a lot of effort to convince the Health Authority of the workload in Mbumba, our qualified personnel was extended with 5 Primary Care Nurses. This brought the total number of qualified nurses on 5 RGNs<sup>2</sup> and 17 PCNs<sup>3</sup>, besides our 32 Nurse Aids, including Counsellors, Microscopist and Pharmacy assistants. This number is still not sufficient to cover the different health services, therefore we will continue to lobby for more staff. Four student PCNs were attached to our hospital in the course of the year for practical training and two Nurse Aids went for Primary Care Nurse Training.

Sr. Gilia van Wijngaarden, Sr. Erica van Breda, Dr. Anneke Snoek, and Sr. Willie Geurtsen went on furlough in January, March, June and October respectively. Mr. Johan Verhaar went on sick leave in September after an operation but was enabled to continue his work in October.

**Hospital**

Due to the fact that only in the first three months of the year there were doctors at the District Hospital, Mbumba Mission Hospital had to cater for patients from everywhere in the district during the remainder of 2009. Floor-beds therefore again became very common throughout the year.

Out of the 2,326 admissions, 160 patients were referrals (brought in by ambulance), while a much larger number of patients from outside our catchment area arrived with their own transport (therefore not tallied as referral-in).

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Admissions</b> .....	2,278	2,326
General.....	1,213	1,196
Paediatrics.....	526	465
Maternity .....	539	665

	2008	2009
<b>Bed occupancy rate</b>		
General.....	80%	89.7 %
Paediatrics.....	105%	59.5 %
Maternity .....	19%	26.8 %
<b>Deaths</b> .....	208	217
General.....	154	175
Paediatrics.....	43	34
Early/Late Neonatal.....	9	12
Maternity .....	2	1

The main diagnosis of patients admitted in the general ward is still HIV related opportunistic infections, whereof Tuberculosis and Cryptococcal meningitis are most common. The number of admissions in the Paediatric ward did drop dramatically, most likely due to the stabilising economic circumstances and the fact that a new malnutrition programme has been introduced. In the past, malnourished children were commenced on special milk, which was difficult to prepare and therefore could be given in the hospital only. Now children are only admitted to be stabilised with milk still being used but as soon as they begin to improve they return home with a food called “PlumpyNut”, which are sachets with ready-to-use therapeutic food. Children who are malnourished but not yet very ill are not now admitted. The sachets are donated by MSF<sup>4</sup> and since our hospital is doing well in providing reliable statistics we get very regular supplies.

<b>Paediatric Ward</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Admissions	526	431
Referrals in	14	34
Deaths	43	34

<b>CMAM = Community Management of Acute Malnutrition</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Admissions onto programme	–	21
Admissions in ward	182	109
Readmissions	13	6
Total	195	136

<b>Outcome for CMAM</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>%</b>
Cured	83	42.6	63	46.3

The number of institutional deliveries increased by 14% while the number of reported home-deliveries remained the same. We had 12 (Early) Neonatal Deaths in 2009. Eight of them were severe premature babies. The one

Maternal Death in 2009 was a HIV-positive lady, who was diagnosed with PCP in 28 weeks of pregnancy. She passed away one day after delivering a still birth of 700 grams.

<b>Births</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Live births	559	649
Still births	4	9

<b>2009</b>	<b>Hospital deliveries</b>			<b>Home deliveries</b>			<b>Total live births</b>
	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	<b>Total</b>	TBA <sup>5</sup>	Other	<b>Total</b>	
	78	571	649	52	58	110	759

<b>2009</b>	<b>Still births</b>			<b>Neonatal deaths</b>			<b>Maternal deaths</b>		
	Fresh	Macerated	<b>Total</b>	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	<b>Total</b>	Hospital	Home	<b>Total</b>
	3	6	9	8	4	12	1	Unknown	1

Of all pregnant ladies visiting our ANC<sup>6</sup>, 16% are found to be HIV positive. To reduce the transmission of HIV during delivery, in the past HIV-positive mothers were offered 1 tablet of an ARV<sup>7</sup>, which reduced the transmission rate by 84%. In the course of 2009 a new regimen of ARV's<sup>8</sup> was introduced, which is supposed to reduce the transmission by 94%. A research programme will be carried out in 2010 to prove this figure for our catchment area.

The milk project whereby HIV-positive mothers were supplied with artificial milk from 6 months onwards to allow early weaning to reduce the transmission during breastfeeding, was stopped in 2009 due to the fact that we ran out of the milk.

The Caesarian Section rate for 2009 was 5.2%. For a rural hospital it should be less than 5% but, due to the fact that we get referrals in from the District Hospital, it is a bit higher. The number of other procedures increased by 12%.

All dental cases were referred to the District Hospital because they have a dental technician there.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Theatre/OPD</b>		
Caesarean section	39	34
Major cases	78	120
Minor cases	397	419
<b>Dental services</b>		
Number of patients	64	–
Number of procedures	53	–

The number of X-rays taken dropped by 60% because of shortage of films and an increasingly unreliable X-ray machine. In 2010 we hope to purchase a new one.

Laboratory services increased by 30%, mainly due to HIV related investigations.

The HIV pandemic is going hand in hand with the TB epidemic. Despite the fact that the TB ward (Isolation Unit) has been extended from 12 to 18 beds in the past years, the number of new TB cases (365) is so high that it is impossible to admit all of them. Instead of receiving DOT (Directly Observed Treatment) in the hospital, most of the patients are now sent home straightaway and relatives or Home Based Care Workers are instructed to observe the intake of their tablets. Despite this, the cure rate (which should be >80%) was 83% for the first quarter of 2009.

At the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 a major Cholera outbreak hit Zimbabwe. Although Nkayi District was affected and 6 patients in our catchment area passed away due to suspected cholera, we can be thankful that it did not have such a large impact as it had in other parts of the country, especially when taking into consideration the poor water and sanitation circumstances in our area. To improve on the number of toilets in our community, a toilet building project was started in the most affected villages of our area. Depending on the results the project will be extended to 200 toilets in 2010.

	2008	2009
<b>Radiology services</b>		
Number of films	1,928	783
<b>Pharmacy</b>		
Number of attendances	19,528	17,880
<b>Laboratory services</b>	6,809	9,691
Number of lab tests	3,550	4,649
Number of HIV tests	3,259	5,042
<b>Environmental Health department</b>		
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	316	365
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	73	50
Number of deaths due to malaria	1	–
Number of diarrhoeal cases with dehydration (in Jan./Feb.)	–	30
Number of deaths due to suspected cholera <sup>9</sup>	–	6

Lab services	Malaria	Sputum <sup>10</sup>	Asot <sup>11</sup>	Urine	Stools	Gluc	RPR <sup>12</sup>	Preg	Hb	HIV	CD <sub>4</sub> <sup>13</sup>
No. of specimen	689	1,384	19	159	20	391	1,147	73	–	5,042	767
% positive	7.3	12.1	–	–	–	–	0.95	32.9	–	1,095	–

The outreach clinics for expectant mothers and child welfare in Magazi, Sivalo and Lukampa were continued during the year and are still increasing.

	2008	2009
<b>ANC (Antenatal Clinic) attendances</b>	3,401	3,508
<b>CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances</b>	5,567	6,059

Out of the 5,042 HIV tests which were done, 1,095 were found positive. Most of these patients are started on Cotrimoxazole, an antibiotic which prevents opportunistic infections. But sooner or later these patients have to go on to ART, the special treatment for HIV. Therefore, despite the fact that we managed to start 451 patients on ART this year (which is a big achievement if we take into consideration the few staff in the AIDS clinic), we are still more than one thousand patients behind.

<b>OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)</b>	2008	2009
Number of OIC visits	5,893	9,223
Number of patients started on ARVs	131	451
Number of patients alive till date	98	555
Number of patients who died while on ARVs	27	30

To improve on the care for people living with HIV and AIDS, in 2008 a comprehensive Home Based Care plan was made, which is being implemented over a period of 5 years. In 2009 most of the goals set were reached. One of the major objectives was the training of Village Health Workers and Home Based Care Workers. 4 training weeks were arranged. 123 community workers passed the test and were attached to the hospital for a practical training of one week. Besides this, workshops for Free Presbyterian church members and local traditional leaders were organized.

From September till December, Harmke van den Dikkenberg, a Social Science student from Holland, conducted a research study of our HBC programme.<sup>14</sup> The outcome will be reported on in due course.

One of the other objectives of the Home Based Care Plan is the care of orphans. With the help of overseas donations, 41 orphans are able to attend either Primary or Secondary School and receive regular support visits from the hospital. It was during these and other community visits that it was realised how little knowledge people have of the Bible and biblical truths. We therefore hope and pray that more church members would be made willing to serve the Lord in going out to reach the people here with His Word.

<sup>1</sup> ZACH = Zimbabwean Association of Church Related Hospitals.

<sup>2</sup> RGN: Registered General Nurse.

<sup>3</sup> PCN: Primary Care Nurse.



<sup>4</sup> MSF = Doctors without borders.

<sup>5</sup> TBA = Traditional Birth Attendant.

<sup>6</sup> ANC = AnteNatal Clinic.

<sup>7</sup> Nevirapine STAT.

<sup>8</sup> MER = More Efficacious Regimen (Zidovudine/Lamuvudine/Nevirapine).

<sup>9</sup> None of the cases in our catchment area was confirmed by laboratory test.

<sup>10</sup> Sputum for AAFB, for diagnosing Tuberculosis.

<sup>11</sup> Test to detect Streptococcal Antibodies.

<sup>12</sup> Rapid test for Syphilis.

<sup>13</sup> Test to assess the immune status of HIV infected patients.

<sup>14</sup> Research question: "To what extent does the HBC programme 2009-2014 of the Mbumba Mission Hospital in Zimbabwe meet the needs and expectations of the stakeholders at the level of the households, community and health care sector?"

## **BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. S. Khumalo**

WE have come to the end of the year and now begun another in time in the land of the living and in the room of mercy. When we look back we should be thankful to the Most High for His goodness to us in that when many fell in the course of the past year, yet we have been enabled to see another. As we observe these things what should pass through our minds is the certainty of our pilgrimage to eternity. The question that should arise from each one of us is, What shall our eternity be like? The Word of God sets before us two ways: the way of life and the way of death. These are made plain. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Having these truths before us, it therefore becometh the duty of true preachers of the gospel to proclaim that God now commendeth all men everywhere to repent, for this reason that, "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). This is what we, by the grace of God endeavour to do, blowing the trumpet of the gospel in all our pulpits and whenever the opportunity arises.

This is our prayer to God: "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out" (Song of Solomon 4:16). We continue by the grace of God in an endeavour to lift up Christ and Him crucified in the gospel, though it is disheartening to see false doctrines springing up like a dark cloud and threatening to cover up the light – this is what is happening in our country. The Lord has therefore warned of them: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:1-2).

Bulawayo, the 2nd largest city in Zimbabwe, is the field of my labour. There are five preaching places – Lobengula, Nkulumane, Thembiso, Umguzi and Mahatshula. Lobengula is the main station where the church and the manse are situated. At present, the manse is being extended and is nearly completed. I am happy about this as it is now more spacious with better accommodation. Thanks are due to the JFMC, Mbumba Zending and the Field committee who made this possible. I am presently staying in a rented house and, though comfortable, the extra travelling is strenuous during communions. It will be most pleasing to see the project finished soon, all God willing.

At Lobengula, services are held each Sabbath at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and the prayer meeting is on Fridays at 4 p.m. It is also the place where we have our communions, which take place in June and December. It was encouraging to see young people coming before the session, being accepted, and added to the communion roll. To others, the sacrament of baptism was administered. I am very thankful to the Most High for that. My prayer is that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this, I pray as did the apostle Paul, saying: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

Nkulumane is the 2nd preaching station. The services are held on Sabbaths at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and the prayer meeting is on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. Umguzi is one of the old stations on the outskirts of Bulawayo. There is one service held on Sabbath at 9.00 a.m. and the prayer meeting on Thursdays at 3.00 p.m. A new station has been opened in Mahatshula. We still have no formal place of worship and are using a private house, for which we are very thankful to the owners for offering us the use of their home. We are in the process of acquiring a stand which has already been identified and applied for and are still waiting for approval from the city council. The services are held at 11:30 a.m. on Sabbaths and the prayer meeting at 3.00 p.m. on Saturdays. As for Thembiso, there are no services on Sabbath as the people come to Lobengula; the prayer meeting is held on Tuesdays at 9 a.m.

At all our preaching stations the attendance is encouraging. I would like to thank the elders who help with the supply on Sabbaths as I alternate in these stations. I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr. J. R. Tallach and Rev. K. M. Watkins, who helped to supply our stations during their visit. Also worth thanking is Rev. P. Mzamo who, though retired, whenever his health permitted, helped with the supply.

Lastly we thank the FMC, the church at large, our Dutch friends and the TBS for their support both in spiritual and material needs.

Psalm 98:2-3: “The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”

## **TRANSLATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. S. Khumalo**

THE translation work is being done under the supervision of the Presbytery, the translation team consisting of the following persons in alphabetical order: T. Benschop, Hebrew and Greek languages; C. M. Macaulay, semi-retired and working from Scotland or Zimbabwe; N. Mpofu, Ndebele translator; T. Mwedzi, Shona translator; and B. Mziya, Ndebele translator.

### ***Ndebele Bible Translation***

Much ground was covered during the year of 2009 so that by the end of the year the translation team had reached the second half of Ezekiel, aiming to finish by next year, God willing.

### **Shona Bible Translation**

A start was made on the work. The first part of the year was spent learning translation principles and digitizing the Bible to be revised. During the rest of the year preparatory translation was being done, till the book of Ephesians was reached at the end of the year.

Several publications came off the press and were given to the Presbytery for distribution: *Line upon Line*, part 2, in Ndebele, The Psalms in metre in Shona, Ndebele Psalms in metre in large print, the *Peep of Day* in Ndebele, and five different leaflets in Ndebele and three in Shona.

The translation team is aware of the need of being continually guided by the Lord in this difficult work, and wishes the Lord's blessing upon all who read the publications.

## **EBENEZER SCRIPTURE MISSION AND THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT**

**S. B. Mpofu**

IT is hard to believe that we are now in 2010, when one considers what we experienced in 2009. The Most High has kept us going, though we have experienced a number of challenges. A suitable prayer for the Thembiso inhabitants to use is Psalm 6:2: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed." We need double healing from the Almighty.

The major conversion of the home from dormitories to family units is now in progress, with houses 1 and 2 almost ready for use. Mr. C. Moyo and Sr. Petra will soon move to the matron's house for offices. This is presently being renovated. Staff training for house mothers and assistant house mothers is

expected to start in April, DV. For the next four months Thembiso will turn into a hive of activity with the conversion work and staff training progressing. Close monitoring will be needed if these things are to succeed.

### ***Children***

We are thankful that we went through 2009 without loss of life. Many fell sick but, worse of all, was little Angella who had to be hospitalized at Mbuma Mission Hospital. This involved cost, in that we had to arrange for workers to take turns to be with her whilst we also had to have workers' replacements at home. We as management had to visit her occasionally so as to make sure she still felt part of us. Her grandparents were educated in the need of her remaining in hospital. We felt that if she were removed to the rural area, as they wanted, she would not survive. Thankfully, instructions were adhered to and all were happy when she rejoined us again at Thembiso. Last month she went back to Mbuma for her review, when the results pleased us a lot. Now, though above two years of age, she is beginning to crawl.

Birth certificates are still hard to obtain. We have at times to travel to rural areas to look for children's relatives to assist us, as Social Welfare cannot manage the journey because they are financially impoverished. Sr. Petra and I recently travelled more than 400km to beyond Gwanda to meet grandparents brought to Gwanda offices for this purpose. However, we managed to get the birth certificates and an identity document for Prudence, who has now turned 17 years of age. We have to be thankful that each trip undertaken has had positive results.

With a full year completed with Sr. Petra monitoring the children's diet, their health has greatly improved. This has been possible through hard work and constant communication with the children. Mr. C. Moyo, who joined us during the year, has had a steady hand on the controls. All items to be used are now distributed in an accountable way with occasional close monitoring. It would seem Mr. Moyo would be a suitable candidate when the Home Superintendent retires during the year, DV.

This year we did not have so many outings with the children. However, we managed to visit Great Zimbabwe, where the children spent two nights in lodges. Some boys went fishing in Lake Kyle, though it was late in the evening. We still hope to go fishing in the Khami River one Saturday, especially when schools are closed. On our way back the children enjoyed a nice meal in a hotel.

Each day in the home still begins and ends with family worship. It is very encouraging to find even the smallest child well behaved during worship. On Tuesday morning staff and children attend the weekly prayer meeting. On Sabbath, apart from the normal church services, there is morning Bible study in four groups, according to age. Schooling was badly affected by a teachers' strike, which meant that children had very few lessons during term time. Arrangements with private tutors were made for extra lessons. This arrangement saw one of our boys qualify for Form 1 entry at John Tallach

Secondary School – a thing we are proud of. With much attention on extra lessons, our children are slowly improving academically.

### ***Staff***

During the year, some of our staff, especially the groundsmen, left for South Africa because what they were getting as a salary could not sustain them and their families. We tried to provide them with transport for some months but stopped when we could no longer afford this. The mission supplemented by means of grocery packs. This became better when the Government's relaxation on the use of foreign currency to conduct business transactions came into being – the mission also opened an account which made things better when salaries were paid in foreign currency. Workers are still hoping that the mission will increase their salaries.

### ***Food supplies***

Thanks to the Most High our children never went without a meal, as was experienced by some neighbouring institutions. Charity organizations like World Vision assisted for some months but this ceased for reasons outside their control. For part of the year we made purchases in Botswana, when payments were organized by Mr. H. Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator. With this help our children looked healthier than others.

### ***Bookroom***

Sales in the Bookroom were not very good for the early part of the year. Though books were available, people did not have the foreign currency to use. Some of our orders were placed out of the country, which made the selling prices high. As the year continued, however, things improved and the bookroom was then able to pay its rents from the sales. At the time of writing, the Bookroom is now under the supervision of the Mission Administrator, which has been a great relief to the Home Superintendent. During the budget some money was allocated to the Bookroom to boost its orders and it is hoped it will now be able to sustain itself. Religious books will now be ordered when Rev. A. B. MacLean returns from leave.

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

**M. A. Mpofu**

I ASSUMED duty as Mission Administrator on 6th November 2009. I came into office when there had been some unexpected changes which meant that I was not able to enjoy the hand-over/take-over experience with the former holder of the post. Be that as it may, I had to find my way and limp along. Mr. H. Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, gave me invaluable insights into the administration of the Mission and also helped me to settle down. I'm really

greatly indebted to him. I need also to mention that my former employer showed a lot of understanding, as I was allowed to leave when the examination session was at its peak.

Four days after assuming duty, I attended my first Sub-committee meeting and immediately took over the role of Clerk to the meeting. Although one could argue that I was thrown in at the deep end, the meeting actually helped to calm my early fears.

From the outset I tried to understand the operations of the office in particular and the Mission in general so that I could quickly make my presence relevant to the system.

I highlighted to my colleagues some observations I had made during my short stay and we agreed that there were certain issues that needed urgent attention; for example, improving the security in the office, creating a strong-room for Mission valuables and confidential documents, and also putting in place stringent controls on the use of motor vehicles and fuel consumption. This deliberate approach was aimed at realizing maximum utilization of resources.

#### ***Field Committee and Sub Committee***

The Field Committee continued to oversee the operations of the Mission departments. Since the Field Committee meets only quarterly, the Sub Committee meets once a month and executive business is dealt with. Resolutions of the Sub Committee are reported to the Field Committee on scheduled meetings.

#### ***Staffing***

The Mission has a total of 133 people on its payroll, this list includes retired ministers and ministers' widows. Naturally the large work force attracts a huge wage bill.

In Zimbabwe wages and conditions of service are negotiated nationally at the National Employment Council and are legally binding. In 2009 the Mission made an appeal because it could not afford the gazetted wage structure. Up to now NEC has not given a verdict, although they wrote telling us to try and improve the wages of our workers.

The Field Committee has since recommended that employees be awarded a pay rise as a way of cushioning them against the high cost of living.

#### ***Expatriate staff***

Currently there are 12 expatriate members of staff employed at the various Mission stations. Applications for work permits for different staff have been made. Applicants need to exercise great patience with Immigration offices in Zimbabwe because delays can take up to six months.

During the course of the year the Mission received groups of volunteer friends from Holland who undertook various repair and maintenance jobs at Mbumba and Ingwenya.

The Mission hopes to welcome Miss C. M. Macaulay and Margaret MacAskill from Scotland sometime shortly. The two ladies will assist with Bible translation and training of House mothers respectively.

Rev. K. Watkins also made business visits to the Mission.

Mr. H. Mackenzie made his usual trips to co-ordinate Mission activities in the country. This is a welcome development, since he has a lot of experience in Mission administration.

### ***Finance***

The Mission continued to receive funds from the General Treasurer in Scotland. A deliberate effort is being made to try and stick to the budgets. The wage bill and motor vehicle maintenance are the heaviest consumers of our budget. Systems to control the use of vehicles have been put in place. It is hoped this will reduce the high repair bills.

The 2008 financial books were not audited because no accounting firm could be engaged to do the work. They all cited the collapse of the economy as an inhibiting factor. The office is making its own internal arrangement to come up with a document that will show the application of the funds remitted in the year in question.

The 2009 books of accounts will be audited by Ernst & Young shortly. It is doubtful, though, that their report will be ready for the 2010 Synod.

### ***Capital projects***

A number of capital projects had to be postponed because of the large wage increases brought about by the adoption of the US Dollar and South African Rand in place of the collapsed Zimbabwe Dollar. Some projects were completed by the stipulated time; others are due for completion in the first quarter of the year.

### ***Communication***

The installation of internet and email software has greatly revolutionized communication in the Mission. All these gadgets are working very well and serving their purpose effectively.

### ***Reformed Bookroom***

The management of the Bookroom came under the portfolio of the Administrator in January 2010.

We have started an aggressive re-stocking exercise after stocks had dwindled due to the economic melt-down in 2008. The supply of Bibles and other religious literature is fairly healthy. Rev. A. B. MacLean has taken a keen interest in the Bookroom and ordered some books for us while on furlough at the beginning of the year.

### ***Primary schools***

<b>School</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Qualified</b>	<b>Untrained</b>	<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>Results</b>
Ingwenya	343	9	7	1	1	18%
Zenka	844	22	14	7	1	21%
Mbuma	623	16	12	2	2	15%
Lutsha	548	15	7	8	0	14%
Thembiso	435	11	9	2	0	68%

The collapse of the economy in 2008 had a knock-on effect on the education system in the country. Teachers went on industrial action, demanding higher wages and other benefits. This resulted in children not being taught for a good part of the year. The issue of wages has not been resolved, consequently no one can expect good results this year either.

The two ladies who were officially appointed head teachers at Thembiso and Ingwenya have now been promoted to take up higher posts in government. Their departure means we have to recommend the current acting head teachers to be confirmed as substantively appointed.

It is sad to note that there are very few of our people who can be considered for appointment in our establishments.

In conclusion I wish to extend my gratitude to all colleagues who assisted me to settle down in my new post. I believe that if people choose to work together as a team they achieve greater success.

Despite all challenges and discouragements we met in our daily lives, we got great encouragement from the Word of God. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 41:14).

## **TRANSPORT AND BUILDING PROJECTS REPORT**

**P. Mzamo**

THE year 2009 has been a good year to the people of this country as is demonstrated in Psalm 127:1: "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." This is more than a fact that in all we do, the hand of the Lord must be there and it shows that His hand is with us, because countrywide the fields flourished and the economy showed signs of improvement, although we ourselves we are unworthy because of sin.

### ***Transport***

*Head Office:* In our Head Office we have four Mazda Pickups and two are in good condition – those used by the Administrator and by the Transport and Building Projects Manager – the other two are always in and out of the garage



– the one used for orders by the office and the one which used to be the Transport and Building Projects Manager, which is kept for back-up; it would be economic to dispose of these two.

*Ingwenya:* Has six vehicles; two Nissan Pickups are still in good condition, although the Mission staff car was involved in a minor road accident but has since been panel beaten. The Minister's car still has a very good engine but, because of the bad road, other components are falling apart. The big lorry has been in and out of the garage recently and was impounded by Government Vehicle Inspectors for a variety of defects though, at the time of writing this report, we have managed to put it back on the road. This is another vehicle which must be considered for disposal, because of its maintenance costs which are going up every time. The other vehicles: Mazda BT50 Double Cab used by the Head Master; UD40L Nissan used by the School for their stores and transport for teachers and pupils; and the big DAF Bus – all these are still in good condition.

*Mbuma:* Has four motor vehicles and two tractors. The Toyota Hilux Double cab used by the staff is still in very good condition and the Toyota Land Cruiser for the Home Based Programmes is still new. The Toyota Land Cruiser Ambulance is in a fair condition and the Nissan UD40L lorry truck, used for orders and ferrying essentials for the Hospital and Mission, is always on the road and has done extremely well considering the state of the roads it is driven on. There is a proposal to buy a bigger lorry that will be used to ferry heavy loads, though the UD40L will still be used for smaller errands. One tractor is still very new and serving the purpose it was bought for, ferrying firewood and taking maize to the grinding mill. The other tractor is old and unserviceable and is kept at Thembiso Children's Home in Bulawayo, pending a decision on what to do with it.

*Thembiso:* Has three vehicles. The Toyota Hiace mini Bus used for staff, children and collecting orders. This vehicle is in a fair condition, bearing in mind the high mileage it covers when doing orders for the Home. The Toyota Pickup used by the Superintendent of the Home is still very good. The Nissan Double Cab used by the Home Nurse is still very new.

*Translation:* The Mazda Demio used by Mr. T. Benschop is still in a good condition.

#### *Congregations:*

Bulawayo: Lobhengula, the minister's Toyota Pickup is still roadworthy. The Ford Triton Bus used for carrying people to church is no longer roadworthy.

Zenka: Minister's Toyota Pickup still has a good engine but other body parts are a problem because of poor roads in the area.

Zvishavane: The Toyota Vigo Pickup used by the minister had a serious engine breakdown towards end of last year. It was towed to Bulawayo and has since

been repaired by Dennis Paul, although one wonders how long it will last, considering the long distances and bad terrain it covers.

### ***Building Projects***

*Head Office:* All building projects were postponed to 2010.

*Ingwenya:* Project I713, the modification of the Form 1 Dormitory, started in 2008 and is almost complete. The existing structure was sub divided to smaller rooms; there was an extension of ablution facilities, and a verandah was erected at the front. The final touch-ups, painting and erection of burglar bars is still going on but the building was occupied when school opened.

*Mbuma:* Project M720, the Nurse staff houses – the project is still going on though delays were experienced because of steel reinforcement which had to be done on the foundation. Mbuma has poor soils, hence every care has to be taken when putting up the foundation so that the superstructure does not crack. It is hoped that this project will be completed this year.

*Themviso:* The conversion from dormitory to Home set-up started after the approval by the Local Authority. The Contractor started very well in the initial stages but messed up the work when it came to plastering the two houses. Meetings were held with him and it has been agreed that he should correct his mistakes. We are looking forward to engaging another Contractor who, we hope, will finish the remaining work without giving us problems.

*Congregations:* Lobhengula Manse Upgrading – work to upgrade the manse started in mid March 2009. Lobhengula has bad soils like Mbuma and a lot of steel reinforcement was put into the foundation. This took quite some time but thereafter construction of the superstructure went on smoothly. Now the manse is almost complete, with only the fitting of burglar bars and glazing to be done. The Minister should move into the refurbished manse by end of March, DV.

## **KENYA MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. K. M. Watkins**

IN the spiritual work, this year has been notable for four reasons, all of them new in the recent history of the Kenya Mission. Firstly, the sacrament of baptism was dispensed in January 2010 for the first time in many years. Of the many who applied to the Kirk Session, three persons were granted baptism for themselves and two fathers for their children.

Secondly, we began translating portions of prose Scripture into Ekegusii. An Ekegusii translation of the whole Bible exists, but the accumulated evidence of our continued researches has revealed it to be so inaccurate and even heretical, that we have stopped using it in worship. This has necessitated the translation

of those portions which are to be read in public worship. Work on the Ekegusii psalter has continued and a new edition was printed in September 2009.

Thirdly, in November and December 2009 we held conferences for the young people who attend our Sabbath School classes in Sengera and those who attend church services in our three outstations. Five two-day conferences were held for the different age-groups, from four years old up to 18 years old. In the older two groups, those who came from far stayed on the mission compound for two nights. The time was profitably spent in Bible teaching and related activities suited to the age groups, all on the theme of water (the flood and Noah's ark, crossing the Red Sea, Jonah, and the Saviour's miraculous catch of fishes), along with some appropriate physical recreation. We are planning for another, fully residential, conference for the oldest group in April. And we hope to repeat the exercise for all five groups in August.

Fourthly, a service of worship was held in a new place – a growing town called Nyakoe, on the other side of Kisii town. One of the men attending the pastors' courses had started a small church there, singing psalms without musical instruments, and trying to teach the *Shorter Catechism* to his people. At the time, the two elders from Zimbabwe were with us, so we were glad to be there to conduct a prayer meeting.

After much liaison with the education authorities, the staffing at the mission-sponsored Rianyakwara Primary School was improved and our input to the school has correspondingly increased, including obtaining an ample daily supply of safe drinking water in conjunction with a non-government organisation's project. With the arrival of Elizabeth Munns from the London congregation in September 2009 for a temporary period, our work with the young has stepped up a gear all round, with daily assistance at the school nursery class, computer classes for some of the teachers from the school and young people from the congregation, examination practice sessions every Saturday for our young people, whatever school they attend, and an English reading class every Friday, going through John Paton's biography as recently published in the *Young People's Magazine*.

The recent Kirk Session meetings for candidates for baptism brought into sharp prominence our people's great difficulties over secondary schooling. Where secondary schools are involved, it is difficult to obtain assurance that any promise to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord can be kept. Children with ability go to boarding schools, as local day schools leave so much to be desired. However, the boarding schools are religiously-sponsored, usually by Seventh Day Adventists or Roman Catholics. As at Ingwenya, where the pupils live in the pervasive atmosphere and according to the principles of our own church, so in these schools the pupils are immersed in the principles of their various sponsors, with obvious undesirable consequences. Even many day schools require the pupils to attend on the Christian Sabbath and the girls to shave their heads. I have just written a letter to such a school after one of our children was caned for not attending classes on the Lord's Day.

Therefore we are tentatively, but seriously, considering the feasibility of the mission beginning a modest non-boarding secondary school, particularly for the children from our own congregations. An adequate supply of Kenyan secondary teachers is available. However, an able expatriate teacher from the church, with experience of school administration and management, would be essential to head the school, especially in the early years. The potential benefits are obvious, in that our young people would be under the church's teaching and influence at this vital stage of their lives. Our Sabbath School conferences at the end of last year gave a brief but encouraging experience of what can be done by putting more input into our young people.

At times we feel like the apostle Paul when he said to the Jews that seeing they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, therefore he turned to the Gentiles, only we feel the pressure of turning from the adults of Kisii land (many of whom have played a hypocritical game with the gospel all these years) to their children, hoping that the Lord will bless endeavours to mould their young and tender minds before the pervasive corruption and dishonesty of the general culture destroys them also.

Many suffer from a fatal misunderstanding of the fundamental nature of the gospel. Therefore, during the morning services at Sengera a series of sermons was begun at the end of 2008, preaching verse-by-verse through Paul's letter to the Romans, the part of God's Word which so clearly lays out the gospel's essential features. With some breaks here and there we have reached the middle of the second chapter, looking to the Holy Spirit to convince souls of sin and misery as those doctrines are expounded. In the afternoon services we have been surveying the Psalms which are in our Ekegusii Psalter, and have reached Psalm 16. At the Magenche outstation, we have been going through the Beatitudes, as there is so little conception of what true Christian character is. At Maiga outstation we have been going through Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12, the section of God's Word which was so wonderfully blessed to an African (the Ethiopian eunuch) so long ago, as recorded in Acts 8. At Ogembo outstation, we have been much in Acts, looking at different conversion experiences.

The beginning of 2010 saw us busy in the local schools distributing Bible calendars as usual. Thousands of these calendars were again kindly donated by the Trinitarian Bible Society. Five of the men from the pastors' courses attend worship with us faithfully every Sabbath. They want to bring their families as well, but the mission vehicle which collects them limits that to only one relative each. We would like to have a larger vehicle to bring them all. Some of the other men have fallen by the wayside, sadly. After a number of security issues, our own security staff and associated workers (10 in all) were made redundant in July 2009, and guarding the compound was outsourced to an international security firm. The spate of pilfering and tampering with the electricity and security systems ceased immediately, vindicating the rather drastic action that was taken. Security will always remain an issue, as evidenced by a nasty attack last week on our ambulance driver as he made his way home in the dark after taking a patient to hospital. Thankfully his life was

spared, but his assailants tried to chop his head. This brings our commitment to a 24-hour ambulance referral service under review. The building project on the new land has been held in abeyance, while we await a suitable builder to come to supervise. On the existing compound, a major overhaul has been undertaken to upgrade and make safe the whole electrical system.

A number of visits were made to Zimbabwe, for the Presbytery and also to assist with the accounts in the office. We were thankful at the March 2010 Presbytery that a petition concerning female hair, based on the Synod Resolution on the subject from 1970 and repeated in 2003, was accepted by the Presbytery for thorough implementation throughout its bounds.

Few of our activities would have been possible without the committed support of our Mbuma-Zending friends in Holland. We are also thankful to all the staff, both African and European, and to Mr. Ben Fiddes, who covered for the furlough of Mr. Andre Ploeg, the Mission Treasurer, and to Mr. James MacLeod, who came briefly in February 2010 to overhaul our computer systems. While we cannot count much in the way of spiritual fruit as yet, the work of the Kenya Mission goes on and we look to the Lord to bless the mission's endeavours to His glory and to the good of souls.

## **KENYA MISSION CLINIC REPORT**

**Rev. K. M. Watkins**

OMOREMBE HEALTH CENTRE has continued its activities for another year under the oversight of the in-charge, Mrs. Gladys Asande. The current staff complement is: 4 qualified nurses (including one paid for by the Ministry of Health; another resigned to continue further studies in March 2010); 2 locum nurses; 2 part time laboratory technicians; 4 support staff; 1 clerk; 2 part-time cleaners; 1 ambulance driver; and 1 voluntary community health worker. Much of the work has gone on as before, but the dominating feature has been a marked decrease in the number of maternity deliveries, as explained below.

The outpatients department has been running as usual, dealing with malaria cases, stomach and chest infections, and accident injuries. A number of patients continue under our long-term care and supervision, including TB and HIV/AIDS patients, who come regularly for free routine drugs, blood tests and support and advice. Our nurses continue to identify and refer cases timeously that are beyond the clinic's capacity to deal with. Referrals are done by private means or by our ambulance service. Even with this, a few deaths were recorded. The support group for people living with HIV/AIDS expanded so that there are now two groups each month. A time of worship and spiritual teaching is held at each meeting. The demonstration garden is maintained, producing food of high nutritional content. Free medication is given to all such patients, whether they attend the support group or not, as well as especially wholesome porridge flour. The laboratory, open from Monday to Friday,

continued its services. TB diagnosis, with a donated fume chamber, was begun, which means that patients no longer have to travel to a government facility. The supply of various medicines and consumables free of charge by the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) has become even more intermittent and unreliable than before. The last delivery contained nothing except a few malaria drugs (which were already overstocked) and many boxes of condoms which, of course, we refused. The non-governmental organisation has not been faithful to pay our community health worker his small salary every month, but he has worked on faithfully with a little help here and there. He still works mainly with TB and HIV patients.

As mentioned above, there was a sustained fall in the demand for some key revenue-producing services offered by our clinic, especially maternity deliveries. What was considered a temporary reduction at the start of 2009 and at the time of the 2009 Synod report, has proven to be the onset of a more permanent trend. There was a little recovery at the turn of the year, but this proved to be short-lived and there has been a return to seriously low figures since February 2010. Even though the actual delivery numbers have reduced so dramatically, the ante-natal clinic continues to be very well attended, with an average of some 80 mothers-to-be attending each week, almost 20 of whom are new clients. Likewise, the child welfare clinic on Mondays and Tuesdays continues to see high numbers attending. These sustained figures serve to emphasise the fall-off in our delivery numbers, and tell us that this has certainly not been caused by any decline in the birthrate.

After years of decline, the local Roman Catholic health centre made a concerted effort to re-establish itself at the beginning of 2009, conducting more than 10 deliveries per month, a sizeable proportion of which would have come to us. But more importantly, the local government hospitals (about 4 miles away both to the north and to the south of us) have been substantially upgraded, offering improved services by doctors and clinical officers at reduced prices. This, we believe, was the main cause of our decrease in numbers. For a brief period at the turn of the year, there was a major shortage of medicines and consumables at the government facilities, and that was when we saw a temporary recovery of our numbers. Patients forsook us again as soon as the government facilities were back up to speed. Other factors may have been involved, but these seem to be the main causes.

There has been a major push to improve government-based health services in Kenya. Outside donor funding is being channelled increasingly in that direction, and all the faith-based health facilities are suffering as a result. It would seem that some of our medical services are no longer required at the current level, and we are considering appropriate adjustments. After all, we do not feel the need to provide medical services in Britain where the government provides health care.

Concerning the medical work overall, one sometimes wonders whether the health centre really does operate as a handmaid to the gospel or is a distraction from it. Over all the years of its operation, whether as a hospital or as a health

centre, whether under the charge of Europeans or Africans, none of us can think of a single person who has become an adherent of the congregation because of the medical services they or their families have received. It should be remembered that to attend a different church in this area almost always involves attachment to heresy of one form or another. A handmaid must justify its existence by showing a contribution at least outwardly to the furtherance of the gospel. It would seem that Omorembe Health Centre is not doing that. It would seem that it never has. However, our duty is to cast the bread of God's Word upon the waters; we might find it after many days.

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

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

IN the early days of the Church's gospel work in New Zealand and Australia, there were only a few families in New Zealand and one small congregation in Australia connected with the Church. These were anxious to have deputies from the home church sent to them and, therefore, a number of ministers were able from time to time to supply these far-away places. This meant a long journey by sea, whereas now a few days' travel by air takes deputies speedily to these distant parts.

From these small beginnings to the present time the Church has expanded to become the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery, with four congregations in New Zealand, two in Australia and one in Singapore, two of them with settled ministers. At one point there were three ministers, and now in the good providence of the Lord there are again three ministers.

On Tuesday, 2nd March, Rev. George MacDonald was ordained and inducted to the Sydney Congregation; the first resident minister in the congregation since regular Sabbath services began thirty-one years ago. Rev. Edward Rayner says: "Services were held in Sydney, prior to a settled ministry in Grafton, when deputies sent from Scotland supplied our people in Australia from 1935. These included Revs. John P. MacQueen, Donald Beaton, Finlay MacLeod and Donald J. Matheson. They ministered to such well-remembered people as the MacGregors, the Livingstones, Farquhar Matheson and the Shaws in Sydney. Some of the services in the early years were in Gaelic and these drew many Gaelic speakers not identified with our Church. After Rev. William MacLean was settled as minister in the Gisborne congregation in 1963, he supplied Grafton occasionally as interim moderator and also held services in Sydney on an irregular basis. It was not till he became the minister of Grafton in 1973, that a regular pattern of services was established, when he sought to supply the Sydney people with a weeknight service once a month when possible, having to travel by train for eleven hours to do so. The services were held in central Sydney but there was a growing number of our people situated in the western suburbs. A number of people outwith our denomination

also attended these services. Mr. MacLean's settlement in Grafton was thus significant for both Grafton and Sydney. After Mr. MacLean returned to Scotland early in 1976, Rev. E. A. Rayner, Aberdeen, was settled in Grafton in November the same year. The same pattern of monthly weekday services continued. However, it became expedient to relocate these services in a rented building in Parramatta as those who attended the services were mostly resident in the western suburbs. During a visit of Rev. D. Campbell, Edinburgh, in 1979, it was decided that regular Sabbath services be established. Alistair Shaw, Sydney, was elected an elder. The place of meeting was moved from Parramatta to Granville for the greater convenience of young families in the western suburbs. After some time there was the election of deacons and then elders. The congregation, being now more established, needed a church building of its own, and in 1987 a most suitable church was purchased in Riverstone, convenient for the majority of our people. Then a manse was also bought. Very recently the congregation elected two deacons so that presently it has two elders and two deacons. Efforts were made to call various ministers, and it is remarkable that the Lord has answered the prayers of the congregation in that Rev. G. Macdonald, probationer, was led to encourage them to Call him to be their pastor. We pray that the little one would become a thousand and that the addition of another minister will prove a great strengthening to the Presbytery."

The Presbytery requested that the Rev. D. Campbell, North Tolsta, attend Mr. MacDonald's ordination and induction. He did so, and also gave pulpit supply in Sydney. The Presbytery also requested assistance with the cost of his fare and the Committee decided in favour of the request. The Presbytery is very grateful for the help given by Rev. D. Campbell and the Dominions and Overseas Committee.

Other church work in New Zealand, Australia and Singapore goes on as normal and two reports, one by Rev. E. Rayner and the other by Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp, tell of the ongoing work of the gospel. We note with sadness that the Wellington Congregation has had to curtail services due to the difficulty of obtaining regular supply. We hope the Lord will graciously bring matters back to normal.

While the ministers have to travel great distances throughout the Presbytery to continue their work as interim moderators, they could not possibly do this without help from the elders, on whose shoulders, therefore, falls much of the burden of keeping places of worship open. This burden is all the heavier where elders are in situations of isolation and also have to attend to their weekly employment, as is the case in Singapore, for example.

During the year under review, we were not able to send deputies to any of the Overseas Congregations. Two ministers on different occasions were asked if they would go as deputies to North America but, after considering the request for some time, they had to regretfully decline, much to the Committee's disappointment. However, the work of the gospel is in good heart in Chesley and Santa Fe, for which we are thankful. The burden of caring for



the Chesley Congregation falls on the interim moderator, the Rev. R. MacLeod, Glasgow. In Santa Fe, Rev. Lyle Smith continues at his post, faithfully preaching the everlasting gospel. Vancouver no longer functions as a congregation and the money obtained from the sale of property is set aside for the furtherance of the gospel in North America as opportunity arises.

Since the last report to Synod there was no visit to Romania, but there was a visit to Odessa, Ukraine, in June and the usual mission business was brought forward and up-to-date. Thankfully the work of the gospel goes on, the congregation continuing to worship on Sabbath and weekday. During my attendance, the inevitable additional persons arrived for the Sabbath services in the knowledge that a visiting minister was there.

It was the intention of Mr. Lucio Strata and myself to visit the group of believers in Fornaci di Barga, who in the past made up our Free Presbyterian Congregation in Italy and from whom we still regularly receive requests to preach to them, but we were unable to go. Hopefully we will be able to do so in the not too distant future.

Our contact with worshippers in the Philippines has not developed, although we continue to send small amounts of literature from time to time to interested parties. However, in some instances it seems that there is a large post office fee required from the recipients of our parcels and it is difficult to know how best to proceed with this work.

As was noted at the last Synod, there has been a request from a small group in Holland to come under the wing of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Rev. John Macleod, along with a number of young men from his congregation, has been able to visit this group, and the prospect looks promising. The house-church there has contributed to costs connected with the visit.

It is obvious that because we are hard pressed in the home church to supply our own congregations, there are limitations to what we can do to supply congregations abroad; nevertheless for the sake of the gospel we continue to do what we can.

May the Lord in His goodness bless the Committee's endeavours to help maintain and expand the work of the gospel abroad; and may He send forth more labourers, as He has done of late in sending a pastor to the Sydney congregation, and to Santa Fe last year. The Lord continues graciously answering our prayer, "Thy Kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10).

## **AUSTRALIAN REPORT**

**Rev. E. A. Rayner**

WHILE there is little change in congregational attendance either in Sydney or Grafton we are thankful to be able to report that the Lord has maintained our witness as a Church in these parts. It is somewhat encouraging to note that

some of the young in both congregations have expressed concern about spiritual matters and shown interest in the gospel. May the Lord perfect that which concerns them and cause another generation to “follow in the footsteps of the flock”. There was one new communicant in each congregation.

The pulpit supply of Rev. G. MacDonald in Sydney late last year was encouraging and his ministry much appreciated. The congregation was encouraged by him to proceed with a Call to him and his settlement, DV, will be of great help to the Presbytery also.

There is the constant need to stand firm on the religious and moral principles of the Word of God, especially when every effort is being made by lobby groups to undermine and eradicate what little of these principles remain in society. Presently, the push is by the homosexual lobby as it seeks to extend its boundaries by obtaining the legalising of immoral relationships. The last century has seen a great deal of change on the part of ecclesiastical modernisers. It is also clear that churches, which have reinvented themselves in accordance with the sentiment of the age, are the ones that are in spectacular decline. In general terms, those who seek to stand on biblical moral standards are the most stable and are the salt of the earth. Influential groups of cultural conservatives, such as the Sydney evangelical Anglicans, still have, it is believed, a voice that has some impact. Nor must we underestimate the prayers of the Lord’s people in small groups like our own denomination, for the Lord has promised to raise up a standard when the flood of iniquity comes in.

Another concern in Australia is the rapid growth of Islam. The whole western world is greatly affected. Because of low birth rates in developed countries, the workforce is supplemented by immigration, which was 90% Islamic in Europe in 1990. Large numbers of Islamic immigrants are also making their way into Australia. When I first came to Australia 1976 it was a rare sight to see the Muslim dress. Now, in many parts of Sydney and other large cities, the Muslim culture stands out. Some studies show that in five to seven years Islam will be the dominant religion of the world unless the Lord prevent it. Islamic domination must be of real concern to Bible-believing Christians when the record of its persecuting influence is apparent in history and around the world today. What a need there is for the gospel to be blessed so that Australia and other nations would be turned to the Lord in a day. May the Lord revive His work in the midst of these years of apostasy and may He in wrath remember mercy.

## **NEW ZEALAND AND SINGAPORE REPORT**

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

ONE aspect of the annual reports is the amount of information made available to the Synod and to the church at large about our congregations in distant places. The great benefit accruing to these places undoubtedly is the volume

of prayer offered up at the throne of grace for these congregations. All are dependent on this one source of divine blessing for their maintenance, increase and preservation. It is a matter for thankfulness, therefore, that the prayers that have been offered up have not been in vain. All services have continued to be maintained in the various congregations, in spite of the stresses to which the cause of God is subjected in all its locations.

In Auckland I am indebted to Mr. Ken van Kralingen and Mr. Cornell van Kralingen, who share taking the services there. The usual two communion seasons were conducted, one in June and one in January, coinciding with extended weekends. Gisborne also had two communions in connection with public holidays, falling on a Monday or on a Monday and a Friday. The other congregations, that is, Singapore, Tauranga and Wellington, have only one communion. Both Singapore and Tauranga have only one elder so that in these locations the burden falls on Mr. Bernard Yong and Mr. Dick Vermeulen respectively.

Wellington now also comes into this category so that here the weekly services have become the responsibility of Mr. Hank Optland. His travelling time to church is usually between 75 and 90 minutes from door to door. In Wellington the communion season was restored after a lapse of two years and conducted again in July 2009. At the November Kirk Session meeting, however, the Session decided to have the communion in future on the third Sabbath of November to make use of more favourable weather at that time. Also the weekly prayer meetings were reluctantly but necessarily reduced to one a month, to be held on the third Wednesday, except during secondary school vacations. More seriously, some of the Sabbath services will have to be curtailed during some of the vacations, when Mr. Optland will be away to visit family in Auckland, Sydney and Grafton. This took effect when the church doors at 4 Rewa Terrace, Tawa, closed on 6th December 2009 after the evening service. This was the first occasion in nearly thirty years of services in the capital city that the public worship needed to be suspended for a number of Sabbaths.

The only baptism this year was administered in Singapore. It reminds us that our congregations are small. The other concern is that the two present ministers in our Presbytery are advanced in age. The last death I have to report is the passing of Kenneth MacPherson, elder, at Gisborne. He was physically a strong man until within a few weeks of death. He was felled by a stroke soon after the beginning of the New Year 2009. Then he was reduced to bodily and mental weakness until the end came on Sabbath, 22nd February 2009; which for him was the beginning of perfection, we believe, since at death the soul of the believer is made perfect in holiness.

It is therefore a matter for encouragement that at the time of writing, there appears to be a good prospect of a settlement of a young minister in Sydney. May we all be burdened with the need of labourers as the harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few (Matthew 9:37). Also we have a special warrant given us to ask and to persevere in asking: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

## **TEXAS REPORT**

**Rev. L. Smith**

MEMBERS of Synod will remember that the tie between the congregation in Texas and the home Church in Scotland began largely with a visit by the Rev. Keith Watkins in November of 1997. The expense of his deputation was kindly borne by the Dominions and Overseas Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Following that initial contact, the group in Texas was strengthened and encouraged through the blessing of the Lord upon the labours of additional ministers sent to labour here from time to time.

Through the kindness and forbearance of the Most High, the work continues here, in a land where the distinct witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is so greatly needed. August of 2008 witnessed many notable events in the congregation, with the settling of a pastor, the election of a local elder, and the closing of the Rev. Neil Ross' term as interim moderator, a post at which he diligently laboured for many years, and for which the congregation is very grateful. It was a privilege to have Rev. Neil Ross with us to dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the congregation in December 2008, which was the first communion after the settling of a pastor here.

The Lord's Supper was dispensed in the congregation in June of 2009 by the Rev. John MacLeod, London, and again in December of the same year by the Rev. Wilfred Weale, Staffin. The labours of both were greatly appreciated by the pastor and the members of the congregation. It is very encouraging on such occasions to also have with us assessor elders, such as the home missionary, Mr. A. MacPherson, Messrs. David Kuiper and Gilbert Zekveld of Chesley, Ontario, and Mr. Calum Finlayson, who is presently residing in Louisiana. Their labours, as well as that of the local elder, Mr. Joseph Smith, are greatly appreciated. We must mention as well, that it is both an encouragement and strength to the congregation when friends visit on such occasions, in addition to other times during the year.

Just before the beginning of 2009 one communicant was added to the communion roll and two more in 2009 itself, with the year witnessing five baptisms as well. Employment obligations have removed some from the congregation and doctrinal differences some others, yet we are thankful to the great Head of the Church that the Sabbath still finds as many as forty or more worshipping here in Santa Fe, Texas. Services continue to be held on the morning and evening of the Sabbath, as well as the midweek prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings. In addition to the worship services, a Sabbath school class is conducted before the evening service by the local elder, Mr. Joseph Smith.

We cannot but acknowledge the debt of gratitude that we owe to the Most High as well as to the home Church for the continued support of the work here. We would earnestly ask a place in the prayers of those who endeavour to make a constant use of the great privilege of a throne of grace, praying that the Lord

would uphold what He has planted with His own right hand and increase it. May He do so in all the places of the earth where He has established a testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, and establish the same where there is none.

## **EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

IT is with thankfulness to the Most High that we are in a position to report that the work of the gospel continues in Odessa. It is regrettable, as was already reported, that we were unable to go to Romania with the usual load of Trinitarian Bible Society calendars, Bibles, and humanitarian aid. The reason for this was a deficit of approximately £8,000 in the Eastern Europe Fund. However, the large amount of calendars kindly granted by the Trinitarian Bible Society was sent by surface mail, while the Hungarian Bibles, which are presently stored in Laide, will go at a later date. The humanitarian aid, which was earmarked for Romania, had to be given to other charities.

The fund deficit has not prevented our gospel work from going on in Odessa, although it does prevent us completing the security wall and doing some minor finishing works to the building.

So, thankfully, the more important work of distributing the Scriptures continues unhindered. We are very much indebted to Mr. Igor Zadoroshnyy for his constancy in sending out Russian and Ukrainian Bibles to those who have asked for them, most of them by post. We also continue to send out Christian literature, the *Sermons of Rev. Donald MacFarlane* being a popular request. These books are distributed free, mainly because most of those who receive them cannot afford the cost. We may add that to set up a retail bookshop would be quite impossible because of so many problematic government regulations. We are very grateful to the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) for the large amount of Russian *Words of Life* calendars sent to Odessa each year. This year, 11,000 calendars have been distributed by the congregation there. The large TBS grant of Kulish Bibles, received some time ago, has now been fully distributed, but happily the TBS continues to have these in stock. It is encouraging that the demand for both Kulish Bibles and Russian Bibles continues to be high.

Robert Shaw's *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* is now in print. Mr. Dmytro Levitsky reported: "We have just brought home the whole load of Shaw on the *Confession*. I will start to unload. We got home in time, just before the snowfall came. The mini bus carried about a ton, which surprised me. The road conditions are bad, very slippery. We had to drive at 10 m.p.h. but we got home safe in the mercy of God. The Lord is gracious." The load amounted to 2,000 copies but a further 2,000 are to follow. However, the final 2,000 copies had the omission of one word which will take some months

for the printers to correct. These will then be bought by our Mission at about half the price of the first batch. The total cost of the 4,000 copies is £4,672. There is great need of a book of this kind in the Ukraine, where doctrine in the professing Christian Church is in many instances far removed from the Word of God. With the blessing of the Lord this volume will prove most helpful in promoting sound teaching in the professing church.

At the moment, Mr. and Mrs. Zadoroshnyy are proof-reading the Russian translation of the children's book, *Line Upon Line*. Because Rev. Donald MacFarlane's sermons have been so much appreciated, it has been decided to publish a volume of sermons by other past ministers of our Church. Mrs. T. Hopkins, our translator, has begun translating a selection of these, which will make a significant addition to our stock of sound literature. The amount of books translated and published by our mission is small in comparison to that of some other missions but, hopefully, our number of titles will increase in the not too distant future.

Mr. Dmytro Levitskyy, divinity student, was to sit his Certificate of Advanced English last December but the Examination Board, having decided that part of the examination be set on the Lord's Day, refused to allow Mr. Levitskyy to sit it on any other day. Sitting the exam had therefore to be abandoned. At the moment he is preparing to sit a Preliminary Entrance Exam for his Divinity Course. Mr. Levitskyy was also to appear before the Western Presbytery to sit Presbytery Examinations. However, the Passport Centre in Odessa was not able to provide a passport, due to an ongoing shortage of passport blanks; Mr. Levitskyy, therefore, was not able to come to Britain in time for the Presbytery meeting in March.

It is the intention that in June, God willing, Rev. N. M. Ross, Rev. Wilfred Weale, Edward Ross, Dmytro Levitskyy and myself, will meet with Mr. Popov, our Lawyer, to have the Mission building apportioned to the five of us acting on behalf of the Church. This is yet another step forward in the process of having the building under the ownership of the Free Presbyterian Church in due course. At the moment it is not practical to have the building in the possession of the local congregation because of the danger of it being taken over by the Local Council. How we need the Lord to go before us in these difficult decisions.

A communion season in Odessa has been appointed for the first Sabbath in June and it is expected that Rev. N. M. Ross and Rev. W. Weale will be the assisting ministers, DV. After the settling of legal matters about the building, I intend to return to Scotland and will not remain over for the communion.

I note, finally, it is because of the practical and prayerful interest of our people in mission work that, in the providence of the Most High, we began the Eastern Europe Mission and are enabled to continue. We are deeply indebted to our people for their constant help towards this Bible-based work. Over the years, a number of congregations in our church have partially or completely closed down, which is a distressing experience, not least for the few who find

themselves in these trying situations. So far, the Lord has graciously sustained our work in Ukraine, and for this we are humbly thankful. May the great Head of the Church, in His boundless mercy, continue His favour towards us, directing us in the work, preserving the work, and providing the necessary means for it. It is He “that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth” (Revelation 3:19).

**APPENDIX REPORT ON LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION IN  
EASTERN EUROPE  
Igor Zadoroshnyy**

IN 2009, the Eastern Europe Mission posted to Christians and ministers of the gospel in Ukraine, Russia, and other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as follows: 276 Table Bibles in Ukrainian, 185 Russian Bibles, 258 copies of *Sermons by Rev. Donald MacFarlane*, 296 copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Russian, and 234 copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Ukrainian, and 11,000 *Words of Life* calendars in Ukrainian and Russian.

The number of parcels, therefore, posted to those who sent us requests was 480 at 2kg and 46 at 10kg. Also, 466 letters were sent to Ukrainian correspondents. Some of our recipients of Bibles and literature donated a total of £383.85, which was enough to finance postage expenses. Door collections for the work amounted to £220.64.

In 2009, the Mission published 10,000 copies of the *Children's Catechism* (that is, the *Mother's Catechism* in the UK), which is very popular among Sabbath school teachers, even in Arminian Churches. At the beginning of 2010 we received from the printers 2,000 copies of *An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, by Robert Shaw, in Russian. With the use of modern technologies, the print quality is good.

We advertised Shaw's *Exposition* in a Christian newspaper and on the internet, which led to our receiving numerous requests for it, including many requests from both Reformed and Arminian churches, from students of Religion at the National Academy, and from the Rector of the Christian Humanitarian University, who wanted several copies for teachers of the university. We also took the opportunity to distribute literature at a Christian conference of the Lutheran Church of Odessa. The delegates received 80 copies of the *Children's Catechism*. Also, at the graduating ceremony of the Christian Humanitarian University, 200 students received a copy of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, along with their diploma.

Slavonic Christians are awakening from their spiritual sleep. The doctrines of the Reformation have awakened a considerable interest among Christians of different denominations. In the town of Lugansk, a group of members of the Baptist Church expressed their distrust of the Arminian theology and left

the Church. In the Irkutsk district of Russia, ten congregations followed the steps of Spurgeon, in that they left the Baptist Union of Churches and confessed their adherence to the doctrine of salvation by grace. In the Ukrainian town of Khmel'nitsk, a whole Baptist Congregation has embraced the Reformed doctrines. We had a phone call several days ago from the Poltava District, where a minister and his congregation wholeheartedly received the *Westminster Confession of Faith* as their subordinate standard of faith.

Our Mission also helps these congregations by giving consultations regarding establishing the biblical way of worship, so that they might be reformed in worship and practice as well as doctrine. After the Mission building was commissioned we had several ministers visiting our Mission from different districts of Ukraine, seeking spiritual advice. We are glad to report that our congregation is now fully registered with the State Committee of Nationalities and Religions under the name, the "Free Presbyterian Church of Ukraine".

In our everyday mission work we can see the presence of the mighty hand of God, who blesses us and directs our paths by His Spirit. We are very grateful to the missionaries of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland who, by the grace of God, have been visiting us during the past 14 years and have made us acquainted with the sound doctrines of the Word of God, so clearly set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the Catechisms.

In conclusion, we give below two letters received from people who expressed their gratitude for literature they received from our Mission:

*Good day, honourable co-workers of Christian Mission!*

*I have received your parcel today. Thank you for the parcel with calendars for 2010 and theological literature. I have posted calendars on the wall at my home and other copies I will present to my relatives. I have read through the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms and the contents of these books interest me. I have already started reading Sermons by MacFarlane. I will try to read them in my free time. Thank you again for the literature you sent. I am delighted. And thank you for your work and for helping people in such a hard time.*

*God bless you,*

*Eugenia Chursina*

*Respected Christian Mission!*

*I have visited recently my friends who showed me table Bible in Ukrainian translation by Mr. P. Kulish, which you sent her several years ago. I liked this Bible translation. It has a good type, intelligible*



*language and it is easy to read and to remember. If you still have this Bible in your mission stock would you kindly send me one copy.*

*I thank you in advance for this precious book, the Word of God, written in my native tongue.*

*With respect,*

*Maria Gritsa*

## **REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE**

**Rev. J. R. Tallach**

BETWEEN 8th and 23rd October I visited our Zimbabwe Mission at the request of the Foreign Missions Committee. Apart from helping by conducting services and renewing old friendships, there were two main reasons for this visit. The first was to assist in settling an administrator at the Mission head office in 9 Robertson Street, Bulawayo. This is a key position and an efficient administration of mission affairs is essential for the smooth running of the whole Mission. Working along with Mr. H. MacKenzie, Mission Co-ordinator, Miss Norma MacLean, and other Mission personnel, this matter was settled and Mr. Melusi Mpofu, a son of the late Rev. A. Mpofu, Bulawayo, started work as Mission Administrator in November. Mr. Mpofu is a member in full communion and held a responsible position in the Government Department of Education. We covet the prayers of the Church at large for Mr. Mpofu as he takes up a responsible and difficult post.

The second main reason for my visit was to assess a Programme called Home Based Care (HBC), operated out of Mbumba Mission Hospital and under the immediate supervision of Sister Erica van Breda.

There are many cases of AIDS and the 60-bedded hospital had 82 patients while I was there. The medical reason giving rise to this programme is to increase knowledge of AIDS in the community and to advise and treat patients in their homes. In this way a more healthy lifestyle will be adopted, patients treated at an earlier and more treatable stage, and pressure on acute services be relieved. The advantages as far as the Gospel is concerned are equally obvious. The lifestyle promoted by this Programme is according to the Word. This is in contrast to the methods advocated by an NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) also operating in the Nkayi area called Matebeleland Aids Council (MAC).

One of our drivers at the Hospital is a member in the Mbumba congregation and is able to take worship at the beginning of meetings held under this Programme, if the hospital evangelist, Mr. Nkiwane, is unable to be present. Tracts are given out and the Programme extends to areas where no religious worship is held and no contact with the Gospel has heretofore been made. This

work was started in a small way 5 years ago and is only now operating to full capacity. Around £8,000 in set-up costs have been spent but it is hoped that some, at least, of this money will be repaid by the Government. The Programme reaches 1,000 patients and involves 100 volunteer workers working in their own areas. As part of the work of the Hospital as a handmaid of the Gospel this Programme appears eminently worthwhile.

I assisted Rev. Mloyi at the Mbuma communion over my last weekend and it was particularly pleasing to hear Rev. P. Mzamo take the Saturday service and address the second table. Having taken services at Zvishavane, Bulawayo, Ingwenya, as well as Mbuma, during these three weeks I wish to record my indebtedness and thanks to all the Mission staff and members of our church in Zimbabwe for their kindness during my stay.

“Arise, O God, plead thine own cause” (Psalm 74:22).

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

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

THE Committee would first express their sorrow at the passing of Dr. D. MacSween who, as Clerk of this Committee for many years, did sterling work of a very high quality for the education of our students. He will be greatly missed.

Mr. J. Smith and Mr. N. Sibanda spent the last academic year of their three-year course in Theology studying under Rev. R. MacLeod, Glasgow. Mr. MacLeod submits his own report for the year but all reports suggest that this last year for the students and first for Mr. MacLeod as tutor has passed profitably for all concerned. Mr. D. Levitsky has continued his studies with a view to sitting a Trial Entrance Examination, adapted to suit the level he has so far reached in Greek and Hebrew. It is hoped that Mr. Levitsky will sit this examination during the first half of this year. Mr. Levitsky did continue his studies for the English examination mentioned in previous reports but on this occasion one of the five elements of the exam was scheduled for a Sabbath and he was unable to sit any part of the examination.

Sadly we have to report that, though there are many vacant congregations and almost half of our ministers in the United Kingdom are over normal retiral age, there are now no students studying theology in the Church.

The British Accreditation Council (BAC) conducted an annual inspection of the College in December 2009 and the inspector expressed himself as happy with what he found. Following on the BAC accreditation, the Government legislation requires us to be recognised by an existing educational body. The Committee will of necessity be investigating the issues raised by this matter in the coming year.

The Theology Conference was held in Glasgow in December 2009. There was lively discussion after all papers and it was considered an event worth attending by the 30-35 who were present. Both evening sessions were held in public. This year is the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation. It may be that the Pope's visit to Scotland this year is no coincidence and it is certain his influence among the legislators in the land is on the ascendant but we, for our part, own and acknowledge our great debt to the Scottish Reformers and, with this in view, the Committee plan to hold this year's Theology Conference in Edinburgh and the papers and speakers are to be as follows, DV:

*The Scottish Reformers' View of the Papacy*..Rev. D. W. B. Somerset  
*The Benefits to the Nation of the Scottish Reformation* ..Mr. M. Vogan  
*John Knox and the Preaching of the Gospel*....Rev. H. M. Cartwright  
*The Scottish Reformers and Biblical Church Government*.....  
Rev. J. MacLeod  
*The Course of the Scottish Reformation* .....Rev. D. Campbell

The Conference will be held in September and all the papers on this occasion will be in public, DV. Though we cannot hope to match the thousands who will no doubt crowd to kiss the Pope's toe, literally or metaphorically, on his arrival on these shores, we do hope that the attendance at the Conference will be good and that the Lord will be with us as He was with our noble Reformers who were true ambassadors of Christ on earth.

*Since the above was written, it has been agreed that the Church Conference would be held in Inverness on 7th and 8th December 2010, DV.*

## **THEOLOGICAL TUTOR'S REPORT**

**Rev. R. MacLeod**

THE course has three parts: (1) *Scripture*, (2) *Theology* and (3) *Apologetics*. The classes continue to meet each week, Tuesday-Friday, in the Vestry at St. Jude's, Glasgow. On each of these days there are four hours of supervised study. The classes began on 8th September 2009 at 9.40 a.m. They will meet for two semesters of 15 weeks each, ending in April. There are two students: Mr. Nobel Sibanda and Mr. Jett Smith.

### ***The parts of the course***

(1) *Scripture*. The Books from Job to Malachi were studied this year. The method of study has changed through the year. Now we are reading the whole text in the English Bible, with a brief analysis of each verse in its context from *A Survey of the Bible*, by Samuel Clarke, an English Puritan. We have tried to

complement the theological emphasis of the course by considering the main theological lessons contained in each chapter. To help nurture the skills acquired in the Greek classes, the students have also read and translated passages in the Greek New Testament each day.

(2) *Apologetics*. The aim of this part of the course is to help the student meet the challenges of atheism, comparative religions and the cults. The students have studied the classical arguments for the existence of God; Rev. D. MacLean's notes on the external and internal evidences of the claims of the Bible to be of divine origin; R. C. Sproul's *Defending Your Faith*; Boettner on *Romanism*; C. Hodge and a sermon from the *Cripple Gate Morning Exercises*, both of which are on the Antichrist, and K. Reed's analysis of "The Evangelicals and Catholics Together" movement. We have had an introduction to Mohammedanism and the students will study R. C. Sproul's *The Dark Side of Islam* in their own time. The students will produce two pieces of work to combat the Russellite (falsely called "Jehovah's Witnesses") sect: (a) a tract to inform the ignorant about the nature and dangers of the sect; and (b) an outline of polemical lectures. They will do the same with one other sect of their own choosing. As the year progresses we expect to do less in Apologetics and more in Theology in class (DV).

(3) *Systematic Theology*. The aim of this part of the course is to provide a theological key for the interpretation of the Holy Scripture. The principal source for Systematic Theology is the Bible. Our main textbook is *Outlines of Theology*, by A. A. Hodge. Other books have been referred to such as *Systematic Theology*, L. Berkhof; John Brown's (Haddington) *The Compendious View*; Fisher's *Catechism*, Francis Turretin's *Elenctic Theology*. Special studies include William Bates's *Harmony of the Divine Attributes* and Robert Traill's *The Doctrine of Justification Vindicated from the Charge of Antinomianism*.

The students have shown a very good grasp of the subjects studied so far. This was reflected in the marks achieved in exams at the end of the first semester. Our desire is that the Lord will make them burning and shining lights wherever they are called. It is not for us to say where that will be but wherever we look we are reminded of the words of the Saviour in John 4:35: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

We have much reason to be thankful to the Most High for His mercy towards us in carrying out the duties which these classes involve.

## WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

THE Youth Conference was held at the Scottish Youth Hostel, Park View, Glasgow. At some Youth Hostels where we have had conferences we had to share the premises with other groups – which presented its own problems. On this occasion, and at extra cost, we booked the whole building, thus allowing us more freedom for our conference activities.

Having had a number of requests to hold a youth conference in Bunyan country, we made a thorough search in Bedfordshire but several factors made it impractical to go there, so we decided to settle for the Glasgow venue. It was in 2000 that we last had a conference in Glasgow, when we made use of the Dalrymple Student Hall of Residence. Like many other student residences, this one is no longer available to outside groups.

The conference fees for two days with full board were £40 for those in full-time employment and £20 for others. The lower age limit of attendees continues at 16 years while the upper is not specified (although, of course, conference members reach an age when they feel that perhaps they should no longer attend).

At our conferences the young people receive spiritual fare firmly based on the Word of God, which includes not only daily worship, appropriate lectures, discussions, and a historical tour but also attendance, if possible, at the prayer meeting of our local church (this year we were located only a few hundred yards from our Glasgow church).

Of course, those who attend our conferences know that we have rules appropriate for a Christian conference. Conference members, being mostly from a Christian background, happily accept these guidelines. Occasionally there may be an overflow of youthful exuberance but conference supervisors address such issues and seek to wisely and kindly guide our young friends. It is also helpful that there are always experienced young people present who have an excellent moderating influence on others. On the whole we have much reason for gratitude to the Most High, and to the parents of the young people, that we have gatherings of young people who are well behaved.

The following is the list of the conference papers and events:

- 1. The Scottish Reformation of 1560**  
*450 years of blessing for Scotland*  
Rev. D. W. B. Somerset
- 2. John Knox**  
*His life and greatness*  
Rev. D. W. B. Somerset
- 3. A Promise of Good Things to Come**  
*The system of sacrifices in the Bible*  
Rev. J. R. Tallach

**4. Church History in Glasgow**

*A conducted tour*  
Rev. J. B. Jardine

**5. Prayer Meeting**

*In St Jude's Free Presbyterian Church*  
Rev. R. Macleod

**6. God's Faithful Servant**

*Lessons from the life of Moses*  
Rev. D. A. Ross

We often read of the wonderful role that the teachings in Christian literature has played in developing sound doctrine and true piety among the people in this and other lands. This is our desire and hope in teaching our young people by these Scripture-based lectures and activities. To be under the influence of the Word of God will in some measure affect us for good – unless we purposely and wickedly resist it. Our plea to the Most High is that He in His kindness may use this small work of the Committee for the good of all those who attend the conferences.

This is also our prayer with regard to the important work undertaken by those ladies who devotedly set and correct the Scripture and Catechism Exercises. It may seem to them at times to be somewhat fruitless and, indeed, can be very disheartening when little spiritual result is seen among our children and young people. But the Word of God shall not return unto Him void.

We repeat, as in former reports, our deep gratitude to every person involved in the spiritual welfare of our young people, whether that involvement is the task of preparing and correcting Scripture and Catechism Exercises, or the preparation and delivering of conference papers, as well as the excellent work done by conference housemothers.

**BALLIFEARY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME  
COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

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

ANOTHER year has passed and the work in Ballifeary has, in the kind providence of the Lord, continued, despite the difficulties which 2009 brought with it.

We record with sadness the passing away of Mr. Jack Knight on 15th June, Mrs. Mary Rose on 19th July, Mrs. Jessie Twiname on 23rd July and Mrs. Mary MacKenzie on 7th December.

The Rev. and Mrs. Donald MacFarlane became residents in August, Mrs. Mary MacRae in September, and Mrs. Margaret Ross in December.

The Matron, Mrs. Ellie MacDonald, suffered a period of ill-health during the latter part of the year but returned to work in December and is now working full-time and as busy as ever. During Matron's absence we were very dependent on the good-will and energy of the rest of the staff and especially the Assistant Matron, Mrs. Kathleen MacDonald, to provide the extra effort required. Mrs. Kathleen MacDonald retired in early January after 12 years of sterling and gracious service in the Home and she left with the good wishes and gratitude of the Home.

A new Assistant Matron started the day after Mrs. MacDonald left and, with other levels of staff being maintained by recruiting, the Home has a full complement of staff. Two Care Assistants are in training for SVQ2 and one for SVQ3 in Social Care. Training has also been provided for other members of staff in a variety of areas, such as palliative care, infection control, etc.

The Home had two inspections by the Care Commission during the year and the following grades were given: Care and Support – Good; Environment – Very Good; Staffing – Good; Management and Leadership – Good.

A new Remote Helpcall has been set up and some improvements made in the grounds during the year. Discussions are being held with a local architect with a view to further improving the physical environment of the Home for the benefit of residents and staff. It will be some time, however, before these changes are agreed, much less implemented.

As ever, we are indebted to the volunteers who come into the Home regularly to show kindness in a variety of ways to the residents. Above all we acknowledge the Lord's hand for good in the past year in the continued existence and further establishment of Ballifeary Home.

“Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:4).

## **LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE REPORT Convener: Rev. D. Macdonald**

ANOTHER year has passed in the history of the Leverburgh Care Home. Once again we seek to acknowledge the goodness of God in providing for the Home, both in the spiritual and temporal sphere. We are thankful that over the past two years the bed capacity has been almost fully utilised.

In 2009 our average bed occupancy for the year was 15; this greatly assists the overall financial aspects of the Home and our operations. In seeking to raise the profile of the Home we have our brochure in such public places as the Health Board and Western Isles Hospital. There is now more information on

the Church's website. The Home now produces its own newsletter, which is available to the general public.

We at the present time have a full complement of staff working in the Home, who are dedicated to their work and enjoy working within the atmosphere of the Home.

Mrs. Jane Morrison has tendered her resignation as Deputy Officer in Charge, on health grounds. She hopes to continue as a Care Assistant on a part-time basis. The Committee thank her for her years of service. Her successor, Mrs. Joanetta Grantley, was appointed to the post on 5th April 2010 and we wish her every blessing in her new responsibilities.

This report also has to record with sadness the passing away in the past year of some of the residents – these are: John William Mackinnon, Northon, Christine MacDonald, Lingerbay, Mary Ann Macleod, Scalpay, and Janet McDonald, Northon. We extend our sincere sympathies to their families.

The announced inspection by the Care Commission was very good; the possible grading ranges from 1 to 6 and the Home received grades 4 and 5 for all categories. In the unannounced inspection which followed, two of the grades increased to 6 – those for quality of care and environment. The Commission made no recommendations.

The care requirements in the Home have changed over the past number of years; residents now require nursing care due to the high level of dementia. This places a greater burden on staff. However, we are pleased to report that the Health Board has approved a £22,000 grant for improved facilities, such as profile or adjustable beds and a hydraulic bath, which will greatly assist the Home.

We would thank Mrs. Morag Munro, a local councillor, for her support; she is also associated with the Committee and appraises the performance of the Officer in Charge – a Care Commission requirement.

Intense training continues in such areas as palliative care, dementia, moving and handling, and fire safety. As well as long-term residents, the Home is providing respite care to give, for instance, a break to families.

All eligible carers have completed their level 2 SVQ training, with three having completed level 3. The Officer in Charge is now seeking to achieve level 4.

The Christian ethos of the Home continues to be maintained, with family worship morning and evening, and the services continue to be relayed from the church Sabbath and weekday. We would thank all who visit the Home and who hold family worship with staff and residents, also the local services who visit the Home at various times.

The Committee would wish to thank the Officer in Charge and her staff for their dedication and hard work, including Mrs. Margaret Macleod, who handles the administration and finances. We would also thank the local community for their support of the Home.



The global recession has had an influence in so many areas of people's lives and, although there are signs of recovery, the future is uncertain. If the recession deepens, institutions such as our Church Home could be affected. Pressure on local authority budgets may well have a serious impact on their willingness to fund future residents in the Home – this could have serious implications on the financial position of Home. The Committee would call for prayer over this matter in particular.

## **CARE HOME FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE CENTRAL AREA OF SCOTLAND COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Convener: Rev. R. MacLeod**

THE provision of Free Presbyterian care for its ageing people in the central belt of Scotland is desirable. However, several things now conspire to make that prospect look very remote.

### ***1. Demand***

A considerable amount of time has passed since this project was first raised by the Glasgow Deacons' Court. Since that time many of those who expressed an interest in this project have passed away or moved to other homes. The number of people showing an interest has therefore dwindled to the point which makes a venture of this size seem impractical.

### ***2. Staff***

It is doubtful if staff could be found who would appreciate the distinctive service our Homes seek to provide.

### ***3. Regulations***

It is feared that the legal imposition of current politically correct regulations would infringe on our freedom to run the Home as a distinctly Free Presbyterian Home. The experience of other Homes for the elderly has shown that issues of a compromising nature (hazarding their closure) could arise very easily in a city which has become more and more intolerant of Christian values.

### ***4. Site and cost***

The main options considered were (a) that we purchase an existing building or (b) that we purchase land and build a Home on it. The assistance of one who is experienced in the property market, who specialises in identifying sites for development in the Glasgow area, in the course of the two years since this Committee was set up, has not come up with anything that might meet the requirements of the Committee. If we were to buy property in the Glasgow

area it would prove very expensive. Modifications, to comply with existing regulations, would be an additional financial burden.

In view of the above facts it is recommended to the Synod, with regret, that this Working Group should now be disbanded.

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

**Rev. D. A. Ross**

WITH many of our congregations declining it is evident that there is the need, more than ever, for sowing the good seed of the Word of God. The Outreach Committee is endeavouring to do this in a number of ways, not least through the efforts of Mr. Alan M. Boyd, the Church's colporteur. His main work, as is well known, is going from house to house with our book van. While it is, of course, the duty of every believer to testify on the side of the Word of God, it is a great asset in spreading the Word of God to have a colporteur going from door to door. We are aware that the Word on its own is not sufficient to turn sinners from sin to salvation in Christ Jesus, and that it is necessary, therefore, that the Holy Spirit apply the Word. Nevertheless the Holy Spirit does not convert a sinner without the Word, and it is our binding obligation to distribute the Scriptures. Our regular prayer, therefore, is that this and the other work of the committee be attended with the Lord's gracious blessing.

The Committee believes the significance of colporteur work to be great and, as noted in our last report, agreed to make use of a second book van. It was intended that it would be parked in towns and villages throughout Scotland, and expected that persons belonging to the Free Presbyterian Church would take part in this extended work. Our plan was to use one of the Eastern Europe trucks, since they lay unused for part of the year. However, the trucks for Eastern Europe had to be sold but no doubt the Committee will devise plans for pressing forward with this scheme.

The second-hand Renault Master van, purchased last year from the Glasgow Deacons' Court and now fitted with bookshelves, has turned out to be a success; not least because it is so much more spacious and a number of customers, along with the sales person, can be inside at one time. The shelving is designed to help preserve the books as much as possible, which is not always easy when travelling from place to place. The shelving is made in sections which can easily be removed from the van, allowing it to be used for other purposes. Also the fact that the van runs on diesel fuel means that it is more economical than the previous van.

The sales from May to late autumn of last year amounted to £972.00, while travelling expenses, much of which goes in fuel, came to £512.46. It has been so that from the start of this work there has been no financial profit. While

indeed we very much wish that that would be the case, especially since it would evidence a greater interest among the people for sound literature, we must accept the situation for the sake of those who sit in spiritual darkness.

Last year, most of the visits by Mr. Boyd were done in the Skye area, and while he reports occasions of encouragement in the work, the sad fact is that the large majority of those visited have no interest in obtaining religious books. True, some do have a small library of similar books in their home but it is obvious that the majority have no proper regard for the Christian religion. Anything from meeting with indifference to receiving rude remarks is the common experience of our colporteur. However, wherever possible, a gospel tract is given at each home, and who can tell but that the Lord in His great mercy may bless the truth to those who take the trouble to read it?

The usual visits were undertaken to the Black Isle Agricultural Show and the Portree Agricultural Show. At Portree the book sales were so much better than the Black Isle. It would be quite impossible to manage the book stands without the help of others and for this we are very grateful. It is an easy matter to sit in the book tent and wait for interested parties to arrive; it is not such an easy matter to go from door to door and to spend days on end being rebuffed and, at times, to have some form of abuse hurled at one. There is need to remember at the throne of grace those who are engaged in such work, seeking that they would be given wisdom, grace and strength to endure graciously in the work.

The Church website continues to be a means of reaching out to others with the Word of God. We are indebted to those who are responsible for running the website, which involves constant supervision. No doubt many of our people are familiar with the website and the amount of material there but we remind them that there are many sermons from our ministers and that there is a distinct difference in the recording quality of the sermons of past ministers and that of present-day ministers, because recording techniques have vastly improved. There are many visits to our site which indicates that use is made of the sermons and other material, and the enormous field we have through the website to send sound sermons to the far-off ends of the earth. May the Lord bless this endeavour for the good of the church, to the sanctifying of the people of God, and for bringing unbelieving sinners to a saving interest in Christ.

The production and distribution of tracts continues but not as much as we would wish. Nevertheless, during the year 2009 well over 2,000 tracts were sent by post from the Bookroom, and a considerable number were procured by customers calling at the Bookroom. There has been little progress in other aspects of distribution. For some time, we have sought an outlet for tracts in German but with little success. We are considering translating some tracts into Polish, since there are many Polish immigrants in Britain. Also we would be pleased to hear from anyone who would be able to assist with translation and distribution.

These are some of the ongoing activities of the Outreach Committee engaged in on behalf of the Church. We gratefully acknowledge the Lord's help in the work and His provision for it through the donations of our

people. As is noted at the beginning of this report, while we do what we can to sow the good seed of the Kingdom we are absolutely dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit to apply the truth to the lost. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

## **MAGAZINES REPORT**

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

FOR another year, the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine* have gone out each month, and the *Gaelic Supplement* every three months. The objective is to provide material, for various age groups, that is instructive and, more especially, that will be of spiritual blessing.

The cost of printing the Magazines has remained unchanged for 2010 as a result of slightly reducing the number of copies produced but postage costs have again increased. However, the Committee decided for this year again to leave prices unchanged within the United Kingdom. The circulation of each magazine has dropped since last year.

I wish once again to thank all who have given help in various ways over the past year. I am grateful to all who have sent in articles and, in particular, to members of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* for their help throughout the year.

We trust that the Magazines are of some spiritual profit to those who read them. But we must be continually conscious of our absolute need of God's help and blessing if anyone is to derive benefit from them. Again we would ask the Lord's people to pray for God's assistance and direction in producing the Magazines and that they would indeed prove both instructive and spiritually profitable to readers throughout the world.

## **PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

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

### ***Publications***

The Committee is glad that, after a disappointingly-long delay in the production of John Colquhoun of Leith's excellent book on *Saving Faith* and Rev. Donald Beaton's little work, *The Reformed Faith*, we can look forward to them appearing, DV, before the Synod meets. Both titles have been reset; the former title is being produced as a quality hardback and the latter as a booklet.

It is hoped that a booklet will be published in the early summer giving six reasons why the Pope should not visit Britain. Each of the six chapters is being written by a different minister or elder of the Church.

In the course of the year it has been necessary to reprint the hardback edition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and Thomas Witherow's *The Apostolic Church*. Further copies have also been produced of Alexander Stewart's *The Tree of Promise*. Illustrations have been prepared by Mr. D. Elliott of our Texas congregation for a new edition of the children's book, *Peep of Day*, which went out of print some time ago; it is to be published in a sturdier binding and with suitable illustrations.

Sales of Free Presbyterian Publications books in 2009 were again much higher than in the previous year; this was the result of the Banner of Truth Trust taking a significant proportion of the reprint of the *Westminster Confession*.

Over the past several years, the committee has published in hardback the first 10 volumes of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. A new project undertaken in the course of the past year was to have subsequent issues of the Magazine scanned and placed on the Church website. The issues for the years 1906-1956 have now been reproduced in electronic form and most of them are already available for downloading from [www.fpchurch.org.uk/Magazines/fpm](http://www.fpchurch.org.uk/Magazines/fpm). It is intended soon to publish volume 11 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* as a hardback.

### ***Bookroom***

The Bookroom continues its work of retailing Bibles and sound literature; it is also responsible for wholesaling the books published by Free Presbyterian Publications. Sales in 2009 were up on the previous year, but the increase is due to the one-off effect of the large order for the *Westminster Confession* referred to above.

We would express our gratitude to all who have been involved in the work of the Bookroom, in particular those who have kept the Bookroom open on Saturday mornings and during the Manager's holidays.

We commend the work of this Committee to the prayers of the Lord's people. The circulation of the Scriptures and of other good books is a means of great potential usefulness; it has been much used in the past. May the Lord bless it today!