

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

Submitted to Synod in May 2011

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INDEX

Report of the Religion and Morals Committee.....	page 5
Sabbath Observance Committee's Report	35
Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee's Report.....	38
Jewish Report	40
Ingwenya Mission Report	42
John Tallach Secondary School Report	44
Zenka Mission Report	47
Nkayi Mission Report	48
Zvishavane Mission Report	49
Mbumba Mission Report	50
Mbumba Mission Hospital Report.....	51
Bulawayo Mission Report.....	60
Zimbabwe Presbytery Translation Committee's Report.....	62
Thembiso Children's Home Report	63
Zimbabwe Mission Administrator's Report.....	65
Transport and Building Projects Report.....	70
Kenya Mission Report	72
Kenya Mission Clinic Report.....	75
Dominions and Overseas Committee's Report.....	76
Australian Report	78
New Zealand and Singapore Report	80
Eastern Europe Mission Report	82
Training of the Ministry Committee's Report	86
Welfare of Youth Committee's Report.....	87
Ballifeary Residential Care Home Committee's Report.....	88
Leverburgh Residential Care Home Committee's Report	89
Outreach Committee's Report.....	90
Magazines Report.....	92
Publications and Bookroom Committee's Report	93
Church Archives Committee's Report	95

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REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev. D. Campbell

INTRODUCTION

THIS report consists of two parts, following the pattern adopted last year. The first part details the work of the Committee during the past year and refers to actions taken in response to Synod decisions and to decisions reached at the meetings of the Committee. The second part of the report contains a brief review of the state of religion and morals in Scotland. In previous years this second part of our report made up the entire report and varied from year to year. Last year's religion report, for example, was extensive in its aim and had many references to the state of religion beyond Scotland and the United Kingdom. In other years the religion report has focused on more theological concerns than on the practical. The Committee has agreed to this new format and, while some reservations were expressed, we offer our two-fold report to the Synod in the hope that besides acting as a stimulus to prayer for the Church of God in our land and for the nation in which the Lord has placed us, a degree of accountability between Committee and Synod would be encouraged.

1. REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

As in previous years, the Committee met twice in October and in March. Generally speaking it was felt that the items on the agenda could be adequately addressed in the new two-hour slot given to the Committee. There have been occasions when larger studies and documents have been before the Committee that this arrangement has been deemed inadequate, but so far the Committee has not felt the need to arrange another meeting.

The Committee consists of six ministers and three ruling elders, but not all the Presbyteries are equally represented, there being no ministerial member from the Northern Presbytery and no ruling elder from either the Western or the Outer Isles Presbytery. It may be that this anomaly should be remedied, but the Committee has not felt the need to formally petition the Synod in this regard. It has been represented to the Synod on a previous occasion that the Committee contains a predominance of younger members and would greatly value the appointment of more senior office-bearers to assist and help in its deliberations.

In response to the decisions of the Synod in 2010, the Committee concluded its responses to the issue of the then intended Papal visit and also the End of Life Assistance Bill at that time before the Scottish Parliament. Various items of correspondence followed the Synod meeting and the outcome of these has been more or less as would have been expected. The Papal visit went ahead and reference is made to this in our report below. The response from the government departments written to did not seem to convey the impression that

they grasped the enormity of the offence caused to Protestants by the Papal visit or the outrage against the constitutional obligations of our Sovereign Queen.

The Committee discussed the terms of the Synod decision that all Committees confer over the possibility of joining with another Committee. It was noted that most members of the Religion and Morals Committee were also members of the Sabbath Observance Committee. The Committee agreed not to propose joining another Committee.

Items of Correspondence

Following remarks made about the Pope on public radio by Rev. David Robertson, Free Church minister in Dundee, the Committee wrote to Mr. Robertson advising him of the widespread concern over his comments and calling on him to retract them. The Committee received no response from Mr. Robertson so communicated with his Presbytery to inform them of his views. These remarks were complimenting the Pope, welcoming his visit and honouring his person as a fellow Christian. The letter to the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth detailed the remarks in their context with a full transcript and identified the portion of the *Westminster Confession* which these remarks contradicted. The Committee received no response from the Presbytery. The Committee notes that the *Evangelical Times*, February 2011 edition, carried an article which highlighted their representations to the Free Church over the same issue with a similar failure to respond resulting.

The Committee also wrote to the Christian Institute Director regarding certain statements in the Articles of belief of the Christian Institute which suggested at best a weak stance on the exclusive claims of Christianity. The Committee's letter sought to commend the Christian Institute for its work but expressed concern that this statement of belief suggested that Christianity being established in the United Kingdom was something which was vulnerable to democratic repeal. It was also expressed as a matter of concern that the Christian Institute made use of Roman Catholic representatives in its public statements and that it made no attempt to raise a Protestant voice in connection with the Papal visit. The response from the Christian Institute was detailed and courteous but on the points raised was unsatisfactory.

The Committee is pleased to report that while its representation to the Scottish Parliament on End of Life Assistance did not lead to an invitation to give public evidence, the Bill was not accepted by the Parliament and fell at the first stage of scrutiny. This is cause for much thankfulness. It should be noted, however, that the new Scottish Parliament may well receive an amended version of this Bill from the same or another source and that therefore the Committee ought to remain vigilant in responding to any potential legislation.

The Committee received a communication from the General Medical Council entitled *Treatment and Care Towards the End of Life: Good Practice in Decision Making*. This booklet outlines new guidance for doctors and other health professionals relating to palliative care and end of life issues. Because

this communication was primarily intended for members of the medical profession the Committee referred it to Dr. Robert Dickie for advice and his response was that nothing has substantially changed in this area which would be reason for concern. This is to be noted with thankfulness.

The Committee also reviewed the current guidelines for the new Scottish Education curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence*, as it related to religious and moral education in Scottish Schools. The Committee felt that the guidelines were vague and undefined as to the nature of true religion and, while commending the Bible for study, made no express reference to the only source of morality – the law of God. Of particular concern was the complete avoidance of any reference to Reformed Christianity. Accordingly the Committee wrote to the Education minister, Mr. Michael Russell in the following terms in February 2011:

Inter alia

Our Committee is, however, concerned that while frequent mention is made of the need to recognise the place of Christianity in the Scottish context, there is no express reference in the explanatory notes to our Scottish Reformers and the Scottish Reformation. Religious figures within the Christian tradition that are mentioned include Popes, Patriarchs and Saints but not Scottish Reformers. It is incomprehensible to us how the historical and heritage factors can be taught without the pivotal event of the Reformation and its repercussions being central to the teaching material. We would be grateful for assurances that this aspect of our heritage will be expressly included in the Curriculum guidelines in future.

In any future review of the Curriculum we would welcome an opportunity to present ways in which the Protestant Church in Scotland differs in fundamental ways from various other Christian traditions. We are concerned that not all teachers in Scottish Schools are equipped to give a full and fair representation of Reformation principles and would therefore welcome further dialogue with the Scottish Government on how this might in practice be incorporated into the Curriculum.

Our Committee is also concerned about the inclusion of Christian religious observance in Scottish Schools. We would welcome from you the detail of what is the most recent guidance to Local Authorities on this subject and also what measures are taken to ensure that religious observance of a Christian nature is actually being delivered in Scottish Schools.

The response of the Minister indicated that the means by which religious education and religious observance is delivered in schools “is for schools and local authorities to determine based on local needs and circumstances”. The Government representative responding to the Committee’s letter asserted that

while the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 remains unchanged, “the subject is vastly different from what was envisaged in 1872”, and that “by no means is it about promoting one faith”. The extent to which the Curriculum conforms to the Act may be a subject of further interest, but on the present advice from the Government to Local Authorities, it seems expedient that the Presbyteries of the Church take up an active role in pressing for the provisions in the Curriculum to be practiced in every school. The Committee include this as a recommendation to the Synod.

An area of recent concern has been the collusion in 1973 between the then Government and the Roman Catholic Church, identified by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. The Ombudsman’s report was published in August 2010 and press coverage at the time made the connection between the practice of the Roman Catholic Church in moving suspected IRA priest, James Chesney, to another parish and the more recently uncovered practice of moving priests guilty of child abuse. The collusion of the State in the Northern Ireland case is shocking; any secret understanding on the child abuse scandal would be a very grievous betrayal of justice. The Committee wrote to the Ombudsman for clarification of some of his statements and also to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State for Home Affairs and the Justice Secretary for further information and assurances.

The letters to Cabinet Ministers requested the following information:

Is there any present intention by any Department of Government to investigate further alleged criminality on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in allegedly shielding Father James Chesney or any other alleged terrorists or other alleged criminals; and is there any collusion of any kind presently known to your Government Department, (such as was identified in the report) between the UK Government or the Police in the UK and the Roman Catholic Church, which protects the identity of or shields from the ordinary processes of justice, any Roman Catholic Priest or other Roman Catholic Church official?

The letter to the Home Secretary was treated as a freedom of information request and received an emailed response that the Home Office was not aware of any intention to investigate further alleged criminality on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in this case and that it had no information regarding collusion with the Roman Catholic Church in protecting the identity of Roman Catholic priests. The response also referred the Committee to the Police Ombudsman who would clarify matters raised in our letter.

The response from the Justice Secretary merely alluded to the fact that the letter would be dealt with by the Police Ombudsman. To date the Committee has only received an acknowledgement but no response from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland or from the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, but if these are forthcoming, the Synod will be informed.

Other Committee business

A point of clarification arising from the last Synod may be appropriate here. It was not the Committee's suggestion that the proposed Day of Prayer in September 2010 should either replace or embrace the annual Synod appointed Day of Prayer. However, the need for a Day of Prayer with respect to specific concerns in the nation such as the then intended papal visit was clear. We are thankful that this Day of Prayer was observed throughout the Church. Reference was made at the Synod in May 2010 to some congregations treating Days of Prayer as they would an ordinary prayer meeting evening. The Committee notes that in June 1914, when a Day of Prayer was called over Irish Home Rule, members and adherents of the Church were advised as far as possible to abstain from ordinary business on that day, and further that two consecutive days were specified and the choice of which to observe was left to each congregation (see *FP Magazine*, Vol. 19, p. 130). It may be that the Synod would wish to advise congregations and Presbyteries regarding this practice so as to promote uniformity.

Prior to the papal visit to Scotland, the Convener was contacted by a representative of Flemish public television in Belgium who wished to conduct an interview after having heard of our Church's opposition to the visit. The Committee is grateful to Rev. Hugh M. Cartwright for agreeing to carry out this interview in which he presented the case against the papal visit. Mr. Cartwright provided the following summary of the responses he gave in this interview:

Four Reasons for objecting to the Pope being granted a State Visit to the United Kingdom

- (1) The pope is the head of a religious system which contradicts the Biblical and Protestant Faith established in this nation and does not regard the Scripture as the supreme authority for faith and practice, without tradition and the church. To give only two examples, the mass is claimed to be a repetition of the offering which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made of Himself on Calvary to atone for the sins of His people and reconcile them to God and so denies the intrinsic and infinite value of that unique sacrifice – and anyone who denies that the bread and wine in the sacrament are converted into the body and blood of Christ is anathematised according to the Council of Trent. Also, the Council of Trent specifically condemns anyone who maintains that a sinner is justified by faith alone in Christ alone, which is a fundamental Biblical and Protestant doctrine on which the salvation of sinners depends.
- (2) The pope claims to be the head of the Church on earth and so takes the place which belongs to Christ alone and is antichrist, the substitute for Christ. He allows himself to be blasphemously called by names which belong to God alone such as Holy Father and he claims powers which belong to God alone.

- (3) The pope claims supremacy over every ruler and magistrate and this nation has specifically repudiated the authority of the pope in civil matters as well as in religious. That is the main reason why our supreme magistrate, the monarch, cannot be a Roman Catholic.
- (4) The pope is at the head of a system which, although it makes statements on moral matters, has certainly not promoted true holiness or morality. It has again in more recent times been exposed as the harbourer of men who claim to have power to bring God down from heaven in the mass and to be able to secure the forgiveness of the sins of others and yet have perpetrated the most horrible abuses against vulnerable youths to whom their position has given them access.

An opportunity was also given to present the view of the Church on the papal visit and on the proposed End of Life Assistance Bill for Gaelic radio and television and the Committee thanks Rev. John MacLeod for agreeing to contribute these interviews. It is not at all clear that the visit of the Pope to this country has been viewed as a great success, even by Roman Catholics. The protests in London certainly reflected significant opposition from various quarters and the cost of the visit continued to cause anxiety within the Roman Catholic Church. It was revealed in October 2010 that churchgoers were being asked to increase the level of their donations to make up a national shortfall of £4 million as bills for the visit were settled. The expected numbers in Scotland at the public Mass in Glasgow did not materialise. Perhaps we should take more comfort than we might otherwise do from these things, but we can be comforted in the sure fact that Popery will fall in the Lord's appointed time.

The Committee discussed further a proposal raised last year to prepare a Constitution outlining the remit of the Committee and its orders for conducting business. The Committee is proposing this constitution for adoption by the Synod and would encourage discussion of its terms so as to reach a final form which would fully reflect the accountability of the Committee to the Synod and the limits of its remit on the Synod's behalf. One significant request in this new constitution relates to the securing of funds for work commissioned by the Committee. It is not at present envisaged that much money would be required, beyond printing costs and such like, but the Committee is conscious that issues may arise which require expert advice for which payment would be needed and would prefer to pass on responsibility for this decision to the Finance Committee in the appropriate way.

The Committee also discussed a revision of the historic *Catechism of Church Principles*, published by the Church in the *Young People's Magazine* from August 1942. After considerable editing (the exact nature of which can be scrutinised by any person interested), the Committee agreed on the form and content of the document now proposed for publication by the Committee. It is proposed that the Synod will send this document to Presbyteries for further suggestions and it is hoped that the Synod will authorise this Catechism to be printed by the Publications Committee with the various accompanying

documents and for quantities to be sent to every minister of the Church for distribution among young people in every congregation.

The Committee have also prepared a Resolution on the subject of Exclusive Psalmody in Public worship which is intended to draw the attention of our people to our historic position and to our constitutional commitment to exclusive Psalmody. This resolution is offered in response to recent developments in the Free Church of Scotland which have led to the overturning of its 20th century legislation regarding purity of worship. The Committee is aware of a rapidly changing series of events within the Free Church in connection with this decision and of an intended Protest to the Assembly of 2011 seeking to overturn the Plenary Assembly decision. In the light of this fluid state of affairs the Committee have thought best to refrain from further comment or analysis on this occasion but is preparing a more detailed discussion of the whole subject for publication.

2. REPORT ON STATE OF RELIGION AND MORALS

Introductory

This part of the report is generally confined to a consideration of the state of religion and morals in Scotland. It is in Scotland that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland lays express claim in her constitution to the rights and privileges of the historic established relation with the State. Scotland is also the country in which our Presbyterian structures have a complete and biblical form with a supreme court of review. The Committee believes that this Presbyterian structure is the model for Church government in every nation and that our presence as a Church in other nations implies that we aim at fully established Presbyterian structures within these nations. The Committee would welcome separate reports on religion and morals to be sent to the Synod from Overseas Presbyteries.

Church and State

We are bound by the terms of our constitution to seek the recovery and restoration of our national establishment whenever God in His holy and wise providence may give a suitable opportunity. While that time does not seem to have come, we believe that the assertion of this claim should be expressed frequently and that we should take great care not to abandon the principle of establishment, even if the circumstances may be very adverse to its

outworking in practice. While we recognise the Government of the United Kingdom as that power ordained of God and as that ordinance to be obeyed for the Lord's sake, we lament the abandonment by the State of the Establishment Principle. It certainly reflects the low state of religion nationally that this principle is rejected by our rulers. It is indeed sad that it is also rejected by many professing affinity with the principles of the Scottish Reformation. It remains true that the Church of Christ in our land is treated as no more than a mere voluntary organisation. Our claim to the rights of the established Church of Scotland remain the same as it did in 1842 and in 1893 and our prayerful desire is that this nation and its rulers will honour that claim.

There are disturbing signs that those who desire a fully secular State with the complete separation of Church and State in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, are steadily gaining adherents. It is written of the Church of Christ that "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isaiah 60:12). We should pray for the day to dawn when true religion would be supported in practical and legislative endorsement by the national Government of our nation.

The Reformed Churches in Scotland

Churches claiming identity with the historic Church of the Reformation are five in number within the confines of Scotland. This situation is inherently schismatic and to be deplored. Many view the determination of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland not to share pulpits with ministers from other Scottish denominations as un-brotherly and divisive. We consider the contrary to be the case. If the high and solemn responsibility of preaching can be shared between denominations it strikes one as strange that other lesser responsibilities may not also be shared. The schism is therefore to be traced to those who remain separate ecclesiastically but who share in the highest duties as though no separation was necessary. The question of how exactly the principle of Church unity should be worked out in practice in the present day is far from being easy to resolve. There is no doubt that we have a duty to seek unity with brethren but that unity must only be scriptural and according to our solemn ordination vows and constitutional commitments. We are sorry that others do not see the reasons behind our position but we feel that much that is advanced as promoting unity may, however inadvertently, be schismatic and divisive.

(i) The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

If we are to be faithful, we must examine the state of religion among ourselves. It may be questioned if this forum is the best place in which such an analysis should take place, as the Religion and Morals Committee acts on behalf of the Synod in areas which cannot be addressed by Presbyteries or Kirk Sessions. It is, however, interesting to note that the first Religion and Morals Report, presented to the Synod in 1915, was restricted to the bounds of one part of the Church and was largely confined to a discussion of the state of religion within our own Church. Historically reports on the state of religion in each parish

were contributed regularly to Presbyteries who also saw it as their yearly duty to visit congregations within their bounds. (See Act, Assembly 1638, September 23, 24; Act XVI, Assembly 1706; Reports to Free Church Assembly, 1845, 1846; and Manual of Practice, pp. 61, 62) This commendable custom of Presbyterianism has been dropped and its resurrection might be an advantage among us. This brief overview only takes cognisance of the general state of religion within the Free Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

In the nation generally there is presently “a famine . . . of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). There is “a great forsaking in the midst of the land” (Isaiah 6:12). Comparisons with previous times may not always be useful but it is instructive to report that in the Report on Religion and Morals in 1915 it is observed that it is gratifying and encouraging to notice that those who despise, to their own hurt, the instituted ordinances of the Lord are comparatively few, and that general, if not universal, obedience is outwardly given to the apostolic precept, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is”. What a great change has come over our people in the intervening 100 years! Non-attendance at the public means of grace on the Sabbath Day is probably the single most accurate indication of the low state of religion in a nation. Certainly the ways of Zion do mourn when “none come to the solemn feasts” (Lamentations 1:4).

Within our own Church in Scotland we have only a small number of congregations with over 100 souls of all ages attending the regular public worship of God each Sabbath day. This does not mean that more do not come under the pastoral oversight of our ministers. In many congregations there are elderly and infirm people and also very many who have ceased to attend Church services, but who are recognised as Free Presbyterians. However, the figures attending public worship should be a stark reminder of the great forsaking among ourselves. Prayer meeting attendance is similarly very low indeed throughout the Church, in some places now down to single figures where once many dozens gathered. Our question must be whether we have sins to confess and wrongs to put right as a body so as to enjoy again the gathering of men and women to the worship of God. In particular we need the blessing the Holy Spirit in such assemblies and even where two or three are gathered in Christ’s name, we can crave His presence in the midst.

Further indications of the low state of religion in our Church may also be identified. Firstly, there is a very noticeable fall in the numbers of people seeking admittance to the Lord’s Supper and consequently full communicant membership in our congregations. We deplore the tendency in many Churches to lay great emphasis on the number of new communicants, especially where little or no discrimination is exercised as to the nature of the religion professed. Yet we lament how few there are in our congregations who are coming under the power and authority of the truth and are inclined as a consequence to obey Christ’s dying command to remember His death at his Table. Disobedience to Christ’s dying command is a sin among our people, however difficult it may be to assess the extent of it.

A further comment in the 1915 report makes for a sad comparison with our Church of today: "In regard to extraordinary occasions, such as a Communion season, none, except those who are placed in circumstances over which they have no control, absent themselves, and these solemn seasons are usually looked forward to with eager expectation." It is sad to report that there has been of late a marked decline in the number of persons attending Communion seasons in our congregations. Fewer still travel outwith their own congregation to Communion seasons. This old practice, so greatly blessed by God to generations in this country from the Reformation period, reflects the unity of the Church of Christ and makes provision of the Sacrament for those who would otherwise be unable to observe it but once or twice in the year. While we recognise that small congregations need to be supported by their people and that many in them feel unable to be absent, yet we heartily commend the practice to communicants in particular. Our young people would also, we believe, derive spiritual benefit from attending gospel preaching at such times. Nothing of this world can replace the advantage gained by gathering to worship God and hear His Word.

Perhaps the most telling comment on the change that has taken place since 1915 relates to family religion. The first Religion and Morals Report, confining itself to Skye, states, "with regard to family religion, there are few families if any, belonging to our denomination, in which family worship is not regularly observed. . . . Families as a rule, grow up to revere the religious sentiments and convictions of their parents." The report then goes on to sound a note of caution about "outside influences having a deleterious effect" on the family. As a witness to the truth in a community, family religion is possibly the single most beneficial influence, apart from preaching, that the Church of Christ can bring to a society. It is greatly to be deplored therefore that many children of Christian parents, brought up to follow the religion of their parents, have departed from that way. Many Free Presbyterians have joined with the world in the pursuit of vanity to the complete abandonment of religion. Sabbath Observance in our own Church may be a further cause for concern, but it is not in the remit of this Committee to report on that.

We would not wish to discourage the Lord's praying people in our congregations or His servants who spend themselves in His cause, but we believe it is the confession of many of the Lord's own children that prayerlessness is our great sin. It is written, that "if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face . . . then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). The Lord honours the diligent use of means and we have no warrant to first wait for evidence of the Spirit's influence among us before we set ourselves to the duty of particular and concerted prayer.

It is most instructive to note from the pages of our magazine (Volume 18, pp. 281-2) that shortly before the First World War broke out, a special call to prayer was made to the congregations of the Church. This call, proposed by Rev. Neil Cameron, was in response to a letter of apology for absence from

Rev. Donald MacFarlane, and declared the need for all congregations to seek a revival of true religion within our own Church. Mr. MacFarlane's letter, printed in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, closed with the pertinent and applicable remark, "Our own Church is not so living as at the beginning and needs a revival". Having himself lived through a revival in 1860, this witness knew what he spoke about and should be heard today. "He, being dead, yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4). We would do well to follow the practice of our fathers who saw social and concerted prayer as a God appointed means of grace to be used by the Church in all circumstances and on all occasions of decay, declension and departure from the old paths.

(ii) The Associated Presbyterian Churches

It is sad to consider the fact that the schism of 1989 has persisted for over 20 years and shows no sign of being abandoned. The duty of all within the APC is to return to the Church that reared them, not for the sake of custom, history or mere human loyalty, but because it is the Church that represents the Reformed Scottish Church in this nation. The APC have some six or seven ministers and about 16 congregations in Scotland. Three of these congregations have joint worship with the Free Church and one or two seem to have no services at present. Professedly still Presbyterian, they form a Scottish Presbytery. They also have representation overseas in Vancouver.

There appears to be considerable activity in the APC's relations with the Church of Scotland and other denominations overseas. The November 2009 issue of the *APC News* carries a brief account of "a unique and historical induction" which took place in Edinburgh which resulted from an initiative between several "evangelical ministers in Scotland and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of the USA". What seems to be the work of "a new presbytery of churches" is managed by an advisory Committee including two APC members. The ARPC of the USA seem to have licensed and ordained a minister to preach in Leith in Edinburgh and it is hoped that a new Presbytery will be formed to take over the oversight of new Church planting. While the end may appear laudable, the methods adopted seem to be strongly suggestive of an independent form of Church government.

Useful work is being done in the wider cause of religious truth by the two organisations which were set up within the Free Presbyterian Church but which are now under the care of those adhering to the APC. The worldwide charity work of Blythswood is worthy of commendation and support as it seeks to provide for the needs of the poor and destitute in countries far beyond our shores. Similarly the continuing and expanding effort to publish Reformed literature for all ages which is carried on by Christian Focus Publications is welcome. We cannot endorse all these publications, but we are thankful for the work that is done to make available in good quality print material from our older divines in particular. A more truly reformed perspective might have the effect of curtailing some of the activities pursued, especially relating to

Sabbath observance, worship practice and the observance of Romish holidays such as Christmas.

(iii) The Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

There has been very little public comment on this denomination in our own publications. There is possibly a degree of uncertainty among some as to the way in which this Church and the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland view each other. It seems prudent that we would not enter into the internal disputes of other Churches unnecessarily and for this reason we do not comment further on the events which led to its formation beyond questioning the constitutional legitimacy of their present position. There should be no ambiguity concerning our firm adherence to our Deed of Separation. This remains the notable difference between the two Churches at a Constitutional level. All office-bearers in the Free Presbyterian Church vow that they approve of that Deed of Separation. It is manifest that exception is taken to this stance when others do not desire to join us but profess to adhere to our position in doctrine, worship and government. This lamentable situation is one over which we should wait patiently for the Lord's time. It is He who can cause men to see eye to eye in matters of such high importance.

We welcome the fact that, as far as we can judge, the Free Church (Continuing) gives a credible witness to the Reformed faith and worship in its congregations in Scotland. A degree of discipline continues to be exerted and some consistency in practice is generally preserved throughout its bounds. We welcome the efforts to encourage outreach within the towns and cities which show evidence of zeal and prayerful diligence. There are, however, several significant obstacles to unity between the Free Church (Continuing) and the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It would be prudent for the Synod to list these in an orderly manner for the sake of openness and for the benefit of our people who may be confused over this issue. The Committee has agreed in the past to prepare an updated version of the Synod approved Statement of Differences of 1962, but due to the rapidly changing nature of ecclesiastical events in Scotland at present, it was felt necessary to postpone this work. It may be useful at this point to outline where such a document would likely lay emphasis in connection with the Free Church (Continuing):

- (a) The exact attitude of this Church to the nature and content of the Declaratory Act and its fruits as also to the Deed of Separation of the Free Presbyterian Church and her stand taken in 1893.
- (b) The use of alternative modern versions of Scripture.
- (c) The suggestion of schism in the practice of using preachers from other Scottish denominations, particularly the APCs, independents and anti-paedo Baptists.
- (d) The issue of an alleged continued right of protest against decisions by supreme courts in a Presbyterian Church which became a constitutional

distinctive and the continued use of property which in law seems to belong to another party.

- (e) The continuing unrest within this denomination regarding the nature of the free offer of the gospel and its alleged denial by some as a scriptural requirement, as also alleged hypothetical universalism in others.
- (f) Practical issues relating to the doctrine of the Church, and Church membership, including baptism vows, examination of communicants, and also the views held by office-bearers on the six-day creation, the nature of antichrist, the ingathering of the Jews, Sabbath observance, issues about Christian education, and the dress of women as required by Scripture principles.

In connection with the differences between the Free Presbyterian Church and other Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, it is important to remind ourselves of our formal position, which has often been misunderstood or even misrepresented. Rev. Neil Cameron, when moving the motion regarding Union with other Churches in 1905 stated that “he was not opposed to union, and as soon as a Church could be found fulfilling the requirements of the motion he had submitted, he would consider it his duty to consider the matter of union with it” (*FP Magazine*, Vol. 10, p. 283) The resolution of Synod on the subject is as follows:

The Synod refuses to consider any motion for union with any Church which does not hold the absolute infallibility of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, both in her profession and practice; and it warns the office-bearers of this Church of the danger of following divisive courses contrary to the solemn engagements under which they came at their ordination, and, further, it instructs the Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to maintain order and discipline in the several congregations under their charge, in accordance with the constitution of the Church, as necessity may arise (1923 Booklet, No. XIII).

(iv) The Free Church of Scotland

The significant development of November 2010, when the Free Church Plenary Assembly enacted to abolish its position on purity of worship, will be dealt with in a publication presently being prepared by members of the Committee. The rapidly changing events in the Free Church suggest that full comment on the situation cannot yet be offered. The 2011 General Assembly is to consider a “Memorial and Protestation” against the decision from office-bearers, communicants and adherents. Several have threatened to leave the denomination if this measure proves unsuccessful.

An internal survey of congregations in the Free Church of Scotland in 2006 revealed that there were then about 12,000 persons of all ages attending public worship on the Lord’s Day in this denomination. This considerable number

(but relatively tiny proportion of the Scottish population) is now riven into factions which represent conflicting stances on doctrine, worship and practice, with some congregations reflecting a very serious declension from biblical standards. This declension is most noticeable in worship, since the recent decision already alluded to, but includes Sabbath observance, open involvement in worldly practices and pursuits, rejection by office-bearers of the Protestantism of the Westminster Standards enshrined in her constitutional documents, and an increasingly indiscriminate admittance to the Lord's Supper as a matter of principle. The widespread use of modern versions of Scripture is a relatively old practice in the Free Church, but the newest version of the metrical psalms which follows the style of modern versions of Scriptures, might seem, from the recent decision on worship, to be doomed to a short life.

The preaching of many Free Church pulpits is now available on the internet. It is clear that a wide diversity of doctrinal emphasis and evangelistic approach is to be found. In many Free Church pulpits the emphasis is no longer placed on the total depravity of man, the absolute need of regeneration and its nature in the soul, or on the definite nature of the atonement. The doctrine of election is similarly given little room in preaching. What seems to be conspicuous for its absence is that searching discrimination between true and false professions when a mixed assembly is addressed. In the light of this we feel it is appropriate to issue a serious caution to those who may unsuspectingly listen to modern Free Church sermons available on the internet. The danger of a distorted emphasis having a leavening effect on hearers is a real one in an age of mass communication.

Our remarks here are not intended to suggest that preaching among ourselves is all that it should be, nor that the endeavours of others who have undoubted gifts is to be rejected for the sake of common infirmities. We would do well to remind ourselves of the importance of these fundamental truths in our preaching and to preserve a witness to them in Scotland according to the plain terms of our Confession and our ordination vows. It is alarming how fully the doctrines advanced in the Declaratory Act of 1892 have permeated the evangelical world and we ought to be resolute in lifting up a loud voice against this trend.

Another gauge of the state of religion and morals in the Churches is what social networks reveal of the use made by people professing godliness of the world of entertainment. The popular internet site – *Facebook* – now has many millions of users world-wide and doubtless has great advantages for young and old. However, what it reveals as to the current practice, taste for and use of modern music, film, television and sport, gives a disturbing glimpse of the priorities of many. The life of a Christian ought to be one of separation from the world. Conformity to the world in its norms of behaviour, in its habits, choices and priorities is evidence of serious spiritual declension or evidence of hypocrisy. Today many young people professing Christ are encouraged, by ministers and others, in the name of being good witnesses to Christ, to pursue

sport to the highest level, to immerse themselves in the cultures of music and theatre, to attend the public house, and to make full use of the productions of the modern film and television industries. Watching football on television on the Lord's Day is also common among young Free Church communicants, as are other forms of open Sabbath-breaking. The comments of some of its ministers in the public press on Sabbath sport must also be condemned.

The Committee believes that the baneful effect of modern licence and worldliness is clearly seen in the Free Church. The Committee therefore takes this opportunity to warn parents of young people in our own Church to be watchful in protecting their children from the leavening influence of the world, and particularly from those forms of entertainment which make sin in its many forms either glamorous, attractive or matter of jest and amusement.

(v) The Church of Scotland

The extent of moral decay within the bounds of the Church of Scotland has been brought starkly to public view with the recent decision to allow an openly homosexual man to continue to be a minister. It is clear from his words and his works that this man was never born again and is not taught of the Spirit of God. Consequently he ought not to be recognised as a minister until he repents of the sin he is living in. The attitude of the Church which has appointed him to that office and has refused to remove him, is a telling sign of its inner rottenness. Many within the Church of Scotland await the decision of the Assembly in 2011 which is due to arise from a report of a special commission set up in 2009 to deal with the question of practising homosexuals in office. A former Free Presbyterian minister, Rev. Dr. Angus Morrison (who seconded the motion appointing the commission), is a member of the Commission that will report.

Whatever the outcome of the special commission's report, the decision already taken (which is very unlikely to be reversed), testifies to the fact that the Church of Scotland is now proclaiming its sin as Sodom. Like all others who promote this form of wickedness, that body must come under the woe of the Word of God (Isaiah 3:9). The duty of all who love the truth is to depart out of this increasingly apostate body, and to acknowledge the dishonour done to the God of truth in its midst. The liberal theology and corrupted worship of that Church only serve to emphasise the need it has of a more thorough reformation. Perhaps that need is even greater than was required in the days of John Knox. Any evangelicals remaining (and we have no doubt that there are some) are now hopelessly compromised, with some openly acknowledging that "instead of evangelicalism quietly infiltrating the national church (as had been hoped), evangelicalism has been infiltrated by Biblical liberals". The people of Scotland increasingly view our national Church as a disgrace to religion and to morals.

The efforts at ecumenism within the Church of Scotland were again brought to light in the visit of the Pope to Scotland in September 2010. To the initial embarrassment of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator was not present to

greet the Man of Sin on his arrival at Holyrood Palace. This fortuitous release from a grievous sin was, however, quickly squandered and a private audience was arranged. Because there is no communion between light and darkness, one can only assume that the result of this meeting was and will be the darkness for which Rome is famed.

The Church of Scotland is gravitating with alarming speed towards the errors and superstitions of Rome. Many things serve to highlight this but the attitude of Rome herself towards it is perhaps the clearest evidence of the unreformed nature of the Church of Scotland. In an article written in advance of the papal visit to Scotland, Prof. Patrick Reilly of Glasgow University (who was awarded the Papal Knighthood of St Gregory the Great in 2008 by the present Pope), declared that “among their best friends and allies Scottish Catholics can now number that same Church of Scotland who once clamoured for their eviction”. While doubtless being a piece of clever opportunism, this avowal of friendship speaks volumes concerning the present state of religion in the Church of Scotland.

We have no hesitation in denouncing the present Church of Scotland as an unreformed Church with no right whatever to the heritage of the Reformation Kirk and to the securities contained in the Act of Union of 1707 or the privileges of establishment for which our Reformers fought at such a cost. We assert our constitutional claim to that heritage and are prepared to demonstrate that the body now called the Church of Scotland has long since ceased to represent Christ or His truth in this land.

Religion outside the Reformed Churches

Popery

The Word of God teaches that the Pope is Christ’s chief enemy in the New Testament dispensation and is “that antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God” (*WCF* 25:6). There can be little doubt that the Vatican continues to pursue its claims on universal dominion over the faith and life of men and women in all nations, and that Scotland remains a high priority in its struggle to assert its supremacy. While there is evidence of much falling away from Rome in Central America, Asia and even in Europe, the advances of Rome in the United Kingdom and in Scotland ought to cause concern and alarm to Protestants. With bluster and self-confidence in view of the Papal visit, the previously quoted writer – Prof. Patrick Reilly – sneeringly remarks of Protestants in Scotland that “regrettably, there are still pockets where the old hatreds persist but these are Rip van Winkels who have slept through the changes and are oblivious to the world transformed. They are no longer significant. Their day is over and their sun has set.” The words only serve to remind us of the proud boast of Rabshakeh (Isaiah 36), whose end and destruction was closer than he had envisaged. Our response should be that of godly Hezekiah, “Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that

all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only” (Isaiah 37:20). Rome’s end will be like that of Assyria and Babylon as most clearly intimated in the Word of God.

The dreadful evil of Romanism protecting paedophile priests is still being uncovered by the authorities in the United Kingdom and in many other countries. The former head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, is implicated in this. He is alleged to have covered-up for a priest – Michael Hill – whom he had also appointed at a time when he had full knowledge of some of his crimes. It is our view that this kind of behaviour by senior Roman Catholic figures merits police action. It was for this reason the Committee Convener raised the issue with the Home Secretary and the Justice Secretary. In December 2010 it was reported (*The Times*, 30.12.10) that a priest from Belgium who had been promoted as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize of 2011 had been found guilty of the depravity already mentioned. The former head of the Roman Catholic Church in Belgium, Cardinal Godfried Danneels, who admitted trying to suppress the scandal, was questioned for four hours by Belgian MPs. The revelations which followed prompted 475 complaints from other victims of abuse. Rome is demonstrating continually that she is that “mystery of iniquity” spoken of in the Word of God.

The *Free Presbyterian Magazine* continues to bear regular witness against the evils of Romanism and we refer readers of this report to the articles and comments which have appeared throughout the year. According to Rome’s own system of numbering, which is doubtless an inflation of the reality, the following statistics have been offered for Scotland: Number of Roman Catholics – 667,017 (out of a population of 5,168,500); Priests – 740; Dioceses – 8; Parishes – 452; Baptisms (in 2008) – 8,270; Marriages (in 2008) – 1,949; weekly attendance at Mass – 185,608.

It is well known that Rome claims every baptised person as under her command and that those who are married by a Romish priest, together with their offspring, are bound to the Roman Catholic Church for life. This tyranny over conscience and liberty is reflected in the statistics and it may well be that many of those identified by Rome as her followers are in fact of no religion whatever, or may even adhere to a Protestant Church of some kind. There is also an acknowledged problem in the recruitment of priests and many of those serving in Scottish parishes have an Irish background. How we ought to pray that the Lord would open the eyes of our rulers to the dangers of Rome in this and in the more spiritual dangers of false doctrine, so that our Protestant heritage would again be given the protection and encouragement established as its right at the Reformation. Our prayer ought also to be that light would enter the souls of the many blind priests of Rome, as it did in the sixteenth century, and they might rise up to testify against the mystery of iniquity for which they presently labour. The urgent need of those bound in Romish error and superstition is of the gospel of God’s free grace. Establishing a missionary endeavour to Scottish Roman Catholics may be something Presbyteries could consider.

A witness against Rome is an important mark of the true Church of Christ in our day and it is therefore very sad to find that silence, indifference and even open recognition is often the response in professed Reformed and Evangelical bodies. Notice has already been taken of the remarks made by Rev. David Robertson of Dundee Free Church and of his failure to respond to the Committee's approach. Sadder still perhaps is the complete failure of any Free Church office-bearer or court to take this man to task for his remarks. The inference that must be drawn from this silence is that the terms of the *Westminster Confession* regarding the nature of the papacy are no longer believed in the Free Church. Thus the seeds of the Declaratory Act, which relieved consciences from strict adherence to the Confession, have produced their fruits. We are similarly saddened by the silence of the Christian Institute regarding Rome and her pretensions. On the other hand, we welcome the witness of others, including the Scottish Reformation Society, the Protestant Truth Society and the Free Church (Continuing).

Islam

The Committee agreed to assign to different members the duty of producing material for the report and the following was contributed by one member regarding the religion of Islam.

Islam is the second largest of the world religions and is the major religion in about forty countries, claiming over 900 million adherents, which is about one-sixth of the world's population. These statistics ought to cause us concern when we consider that the very nature of this religion cannot live and let live.

At the beginning of 2010 Geert Wilders, a member of the Dutch Parliament, delivered a speech at "The 4 Seasons", New York, in which he stated, "There is a tremendous danger looming, and it is very difficult to be optimistic. We may be in the final stages of the Islamization of Europe . . . throughout Europe, a new reality is rising: entire Muslim neighbourhoods where very few indigenous people reside or are even seen. And if they are, they might regret it. This goes for the police as well. It's the world of head scarves, where women walk around in figureless tents, with baby strollers and a group of children. Their husbands, or slaveholders if you prefer, walk three steps ahead. With mosques on many street corners. The shops have signs that you and I cannot read. You will be hard-pressed to find any economic activity. These are Muslim ghettos controlled by religious fanatics. These are Muslim neighbourhoods, and they are mushrooming in every city across Europe. These are the building-blocks for territorial control of increasingly large portions of Europe, street by street, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, city by city."

While Wilders is no Christian and his speech undoubtedly was designed to stir up hostility against Muslims, yet his assertions cannot be denied or ignored. What ought to be our response as Christians to this rise of a religion which is quite intolerant to any word of opposition against it? First we ought to recognise the hand of God in all this. Just as heathen nations were raised up at other times to punish Israel for her departure from Him, so Islam has been

raised up to punish our own as well as other western nations. Recognition of this ought to bring us to our knees before God in repentance. Secondly, however, we ought to see our opportunity and obligation in this to use all the means at our disposal to bring the gospel to those people who are in such great need of knowing the freedom that Christ alone can give. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Criticism of Islam is often described as Islamophobia – meaning "fear of Islam". Being a religion associated with blood and oppression from its first rising, it is not surprising that civilised nations have always feared its advance. However much our rulers are persuaded by modern Western Islamic scholars and leaders that Islam inherently promotes peace, there is plenty evidence world-wide that it is still the religion of the sword. What is of more concern, however, is the falsehood and spiritual oppression which this system of lies spreads throughout the world. Denial of the doctrines of the Trinity, the Person and work of Christ and the way of salvation revealed in Scripture, renders Islam nothing more than a deceit. It is, however, an extremely pervasive and encroaching deceit. An alarming report which appeared on a website and was contributed by another member of the Committee, highlights the same trends in the progress of Islam throughout Europe:

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Germans have failed to grasp how Muslim immigration has transformed their country and will have to come to terms with more mosques than churches throughout the countryside, according to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* daily. "Our country is going to carry on changing, and integration is also a task for the society taking up the task of dealing with immigrants," Ms. Merkel told the daily newspaper. "For years we've been deceiving ourselves about this. Mosques, for example, are going to be a more prominent part of our cities than they were before."

Germany, with a population of 4-5 million Muslims, has been divided in recent weeks by a debate over remarks by the Bundesbank's Thilo Sarrazin, who argued Turkish and Arab immigrants were failing to integrate and were swamping Germany with a higher birth rate. The Chancellor's remarks represent the first official acknowledgement that Germany, like other European countries, is destined to become a stronghold of Islam. She has admitted that the country will soon become a stronghold. In France, 30% of children age 20 years and below are Muslims. The ratio in Paris and Marseille has soared to 45%. In southern France, there are more mosques than churches.

The situation within the United Kingdom is not much different. In the last 30 years, the Muslim population has climbed from 82,000 to 2.5 million. Presently, there are over 1,000 mosques throughout Great Britain – many of which were converted from churches. In Belgium, 50% of the newborns are Muslims and reportedly its Islamic population hovers around 25%. A similar statistic holds true for The Netherlands. It is the same story in Russia where one in five inhabitants is a Muslim.

Muammar Gaddafi recently stated that “There are signs that Allah will grant victory to Islam in Europe without sword, without gun, without conquest. We don’t need terrorists; we don’t need homicide bombers. The 50 plus million Muslims (in Europe) will turn it into the Muslim Continent within a few decades.”

What Muammar Gaddafi and many other commentators fail to consider is the God of truth. He has left it on record for the comfort of His Church in every age that “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him” (Psalm 22:27). Whatever shaking of the nations may precede that glorious advance of the cause of Christ in the world, we are sure that “. . . men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed” (Psalm 72:17). It is indeed instructive to note that within a year of Gaddafi making this proud boast, so reminiscent again of the vanity of Rabshakeh, both his own and several other Muslim countries were thrown into civil chaos and strife in an attempt of their people to remove their tyrannical rulers from power. “Verily upon the earth a God to judge there is” (Psalm 58:11, metrical). The end of these things is not known to us, but rulers and kings should be wise and learn the lesson taught to Nebuchadnezzar that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will”, and that “his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Daniel 4:32, 34, 35).

Cults and Sects

There is little space in this report for the details concerning the many false forms of religion which the devil engenders in the world. Details concerning many of these are widely known and have been referred to in previous reports to the Synod. It is sad to reflect that as true religion is excluded more and more from national and family life and as our rulers endeavour to exclude it from the world of politics and education, men and women become increasingly ensnared by falsehood. The religious nature of the human soul finds expression in religious sentiment and in forms of religious worship or veneration. This can be seen in the strange gods devised by our modern world as much as in the pagan religions of history. Modern heresies and abominations such as those promoted by the Russelites (so-called Jehovah’s Witnesses) and Mormons are expressions of the false religion which is native to the heart of man. The worship practiced by the Hindus, Buddhist and eastern religions is not essentially different to the forms of religious fervour evidenced by some in the modern environmentalist movement. The humanism evident in this movement has striking aspects of nature worship in it and while many environmentalists would repudiate any religious sentiment, by their fruits they are to be known.

There is also a religious element to the more fundamentalist elements among the advocates of evolutionary theory. The fervour and charismatic drive

of such modern false prophets as Richard Dawkins evince a religiosity of spirit which is as manipulative and ensnaring as many of the false religions which he vilifies in his blasphemous book, *The God Delusion*. Like these false prophets and false religions identified in Scripture, the religion of Richard Dawkins requires a degree of credulity that assaults the reason of most thinking people. The fury with which he and others attack the Scriptures of truth plainly reveal the working of natural conscience. The zealous adherents of atheism – a religion of the heart of man like every other falsehood – should not be feared any more than the hosts of Romanism, Islam and Hinduism, which are yet to be overthrown and destroyed by the power of gospel preaching. The deliverance of souls from these systems of bondage and delusion is the earnest crave of that large prayer taught to the disciples of Christ, “Thy kingdom come”. It is comforting to be instructed that in that petition we pray “that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel-officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate . . .”, etc., and that “He would be pleased to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends” (*Larger Catechism*, Q.191).

Our Houses of Parliament

The General Election of members to the Parliament of the United Kingdom which took place in May 2010 removed the Labour party from office and after significant delay (during which negotiations took place over the Lord’s Day), the first political coalition since the Second World War was formed between the dominant Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats. This turn of events does not auger well for the religion and morals of our land. The leader of the Liberal Democrats (a party priding itself in secular ideology) – Nick Clegg – professes to have no religion and is openly in favour of homosexual marriage, which he has endeavoured to advance into law. It is sad indeed to report that the other party leaders are equally taken in or overwhelmed by the pressure from the aggressive pro-sodomite lobby groups in this country. The Committee will make every possible representation opposing any change in the law which would legalise sodomite marriage.

The present difficulties of our nation in financial matters are not within the scope of this report. More expert analysis would be required to contribute a meaningful discussion. However, there seems little evidence of gracious humility, repentance or dependence on the Most High for help on the part of those requiring to deal with the problem. This is deeply to be lamented and, were it not for the remnant of praying people in Britain, we believe the situation would be much worse. The Lord may yet have sorer chastisements for our nation than financial pressures presently being experienced, but our prayer should be that our people would learn to turn to Him.

The involvement of our armed forces in fields of conflict ought ever to be a burden to the Church of God in our land and we should pray for a speedy end

to their deployment and a return to peace. That hundreds of our young men and women in the armed services have already lost their lives fighting in foreign fields and at the hands of evil men is cause for great sorrow and grief. As in every conflict and war, God's judgements are to be recognised. Yet our sympathy for the bereaved and our desire for their consolation and comfort needs to be shown. We hope that this matter being highlighted in this report will serve to remind our people of the need for prayer on behalf of our fellow-countrymen exposed to such dangers and to death.

The Scottish Parliament

By the time this report is presented to the Synod, another election of members to the Scottish Parliament will have taken place. The outcome as yet is unknown. It is sad to report, although it will not be news to many readers, that the previous administration has shown little regard to true religion in its deliberations and decisions. We are grateful to the Lord for the two matters already identified in our report – the failure of the End of Life Assistance Bill and the limited but continued provision for teaching Christianity in the Scottish education curriculum. Yet we have little confidence that our rulers in Scotland, any more than in the UK Parliament, desire to acknowledge the authority of Scripture at any level. Our prayer is that the Lord would raise up godly men to bear rule; such as fear His name, loving truth and hating covetousness. A godly Parliament in Scotland would be a great blessing and benefit and while we must never trust in princes, we are commanded to pray for “. . . all in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:2).

It is the duty of rulers to legislate against the open breach of both tables of the moral law of God and so it ought to be of particular sorrow to us that the commandments of God are all regularly and frequently broken, many of them with the approval or connivance of our rulers. The suppression of false religion and the maintenance of the true religion is a duty of rulers and is part of that righteousness that exalts a nation. The unrestrained and unqualified tolerance of all forms of false religion, superstition and gross idolatry, which in practical terms our rulers promote, is an offence to God and in conflict with our constitutional provisions. The name of God is continually every day blasphemed in our nation and while we have a law concerning blasphemy on our statute books it is seldom, if ever, enforced. The world of entertainment in particular is very guilty of this heinous sin, concerning which the Lord has solemnly warned that He will not hold those responsible to be guiltless. The sanctity of the Lord's Day as provided for in the fourth commandment is notoriously ignored and trampled underfoot. We pray that our endeavours as a Church to promote Sabbath Observance will not be altogether without fruit.

REPORT ON MORALS

While these provisions of the first table of God's law ought to concern rulers, it is often the matters which come under the terms of the second table that most exercise their attention. We therefore turn, in the remainder of this report to such matters which can be categorised as the Committee's report on the moral state of our nation.

Crime statistics

While many in our land deplore the crime statistics and while our rulers attempt one solution after another, few recognise the authority of the divine law in connection with crime and fewer still admit that the law of God is the source and guide for all human judicial authority and justice. The principles of God's Word being applied to present day evils is the only source from which a resolution of society's acknowledged ills will come. Of primary use in the reformation of offenders is not prison or even recovery programmes or rehabilitation schemes, but the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. A ministry to criminals and offenders is a great need in our country and we might well pray that the Lord would raise up and equip godly men for this task.

The following collection of statistics is given here from the Scottish Government website and relates to Scotland only. The statistics are included in this report to illustrate the fact that our prayers for our nation are as needed now as before, particularly that equity and justice might again flourish and peace and security be enjoyed. It is for this in particular that our prayers for rulers should be offered (1 Timothy 2:2 quoted above). Government surveys charting the risk of being a victim of crime (measured as the proportion of adults who are the victim of crime), and of public perception of crime, can only be taken as reliable guides to actual crime if all crimes are reported and known about. This is certainly not the case and therefore government statistics must be understood in that light. However, the eyes of the Lord are open to all evil in our land and he has perfect understanding of evil-doers and those oppressed by them. It is a solemn consideration that at last the Judge of all the earth will do right in avenging wrong.

Crime

Domestic abuse seems to be an increasing problem in Scotland. The government report states that "there were 53,681 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2008-09 . . . an increase of 8% from 2007-08". It goes on that "just over half of the incidents (55%) recorded in 2008-09 led to the recording of a crime or an offence (29,283) and of these, 64% were reported to the procurator fiscal". How sad to consider that the security and sanctity of the home and family would become so violated as to make it a place of terror, fear and injury. In Scotland in 2009-10, "there were 78 cases of homicide involving 79 victims". While this represents a decrease over the past 10 years, it is still a very sad statistic. That sadness is only heightened by the following

record – “Over the last 10 years, the most common method of killing has consistently been with a sharp instrument. In 2009-10, around half of those accused of homicide were reported to have been drunk and/or under the influence of drugs at the time.” A further reflection on the dangers faced in our streets is in the use of firearms. “In 2009-10, Scottish police recorded 839 offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been used. . . . The number of offences in which a firearm was fired and killed or caused injury to a person increased from 137 in 2008-09 to 154 in 2009-10.”

Combating crime

This is one of the primary functions of the civil magistrate and we believe that the resources of government ought to be mainly channelled in this direction instead of being wasted on frivolous and often sinful schemes and entertainments. The number of full time police officers in Scotland as of 30th September 2010 was 17,371, which is an increase over previous years. It is, however, a little concerning that the number of crimes recorded by these police officers is the lowest in 30 years, at around 900,000 crimes. The question must be asked if this is the real picture. Even so, the figure is staggering. The type of crime recorded gives a sad reflection on the moral state of our nation. Government statistics record that, “non-sexual crimes of violence, and crimes of indecency, account for only 3%, and 2% respectively, of all crimes recorded. Crimes of dishonesty, which include housebreaking and shoplifting, account for over two fifths of the overall total (45%). Fire-raising and vandalism account for 28% of all crimes and ‘other’ crimes, which includes handling of offensive weapons, drug crimes and breaches of bail conditions, account for just over a fifth of all crimes.” The Scottish Police success rate in clearing up crimes, so as to lead to prosecution, is a very mixed affair. Only 26% of some crimes are cleared up while 98% of “other crimes” are cleared up. Under 40% of crimes of dishonesty are cleared up.

Drugs and Alcohol

According to the above mentioned Government summary of statistics, “there were an estimated 55,328 problem drug users in Scotland in 2006”. In response to this terrible blight on our nation, it is also recorded that in “2006-07, the total number of drug seizures saw a decrease of 17% compared with 2005-06, from 25,314 to 20,938”. These figures strongly suggest that the Scottish government and law enforcement is not in control of this menace which blights the lives of so many and involves so many victims, particularly young children in the home. The evil of drunkenness is similarly a growing problem and Scotland stands out among the nations of Europe for the prevalence of excessive drinking of alcohol. One way of accounting for this must surely be the prevalence of licensed premises. At the end of 2007 there were 17,021 liquor licenses in force in Scotland. As many as 37% of these were for off-sale premises and a further 30% were for public houses. A reduction in the number of licenses granted for off-sales and public

houses would surely contribute something to addressing Scotland's problem with drunkenness.

In 2010 an attempt was made by the Scottish ruling party – the SNP – to bring in legislation setting a minimum price for alcohol. This proposal may have had advantages, but does not address the real problem. Indeed the danger might well be that the poor drunkard would impoverish himself and those dependent on him all the more if the source of his addiction was more expensive. The proposal was defeated in the Scottish Parliament and while this may appear to be a set-back in the fight against drunkenness, we believe that the only real solution to this, as to every other sin in our land, is the Word of God and its authority in the lives of men and women. Until our rulers acknowledge their need of that Word as their guide and as the guide of our nation's morals, all social and political schemes to address the ills of society are bound to fall short.

Prison and Re-offending

One indicator as to the truth of this is the rate of re-offending in Scotland. While statistics cannot give the full picture, it is surely reason for our rulers to take far more radical action when around 45% of offenders released from custody are found to re-offend. Doubtless many more re-offend and are not re-convicted and many offenders are never caught. Government statistics show that “the total number of persons convicted in Scottish courts increased from 108,600 in 2000-01 to a peak of 134,400 in 2006-07 before falling to 120,800 in 2009-10”. The aim of our government is to have fewer cases brought to court needlessly and to have more dealt with by non-court actions, where it is more appropriate to do so. While we might have reservations concerning this policy as open to abuse, it is surely appropriate that certain crimes would be dealt with on the spot and without the waste of public money involved in court action. Non-court disposals by the Procurator Fiscal Service, which include anti-social behaviour fixed penalty notices have also increased by 26% from 48,400 in 2008-09 to 61,000 in 2009-10.

The prison population in Scotland continues to increase and this is yet another indicator of the moral decay of our nation. It should not be a wonder to us that this is so, and while it is common to lay much blame at the door of rulers, who certainly have their own responsibilities, we believe that the primary cause of moral decay is to be laid at the door of the professing Church of Christ.

The uncertain sound issuing from many pulpits in Scotland and the practical anti-nomianism of many who profess to follow Christ is doubtless one of the leading causes of lawlessness more generally. The doctrines of sin, of eternal punishment and of the absolute authority of the law of God over the lives of all men are truths seldom heard in pulpits today. Our duty as a Church is clearly to preserve a testimony to these truths, but how we ought to be stirred up to seek a new Reformation in Scotland such as our fathers in the sixteenth century witnessed. Besides praying for this, it will ever be our duty to pray for

those in authority that grace and wisdom would be given to them in these matters of law and justice.

Abortion

The following summary of the state of affairs regarding abortion was submitted by a member of the Committee who takes responsibility for researching this field.

The Department of Health statistics for 2009 reveal a fall of 3.2% in the total number of abortions for England and Wales – 189,100 compared to 195,296 in 2008. In Scotland the total comparable figure was 13,005, down from 13,817 in 2008 with 3,214 abortion procedures carried out on girls aged 19 and under. Although these figures are all less than the previous year they are still adding significantly to the sin of our nation and yet more blood of the unborn is on our hands. God, who says, “Thou shalt not kill” applies His Word to those who take the lives of unborn babies as well as to those who take the lives of their fellows.

It appears that, of these figures, 63,309 women in England and Wales and 3,658 women in Scotland have had at least one previous abortion. The *Daily Mail* of 25.5.10 reports that dozens of women in the UK have possibly had as many as seven abortions. However unbelievable it may seem, abortion can be seen increasingly as a form of contraception. No wonder Norman Wells, the Director of Family Education Trust, says that, “the high UK abortion rate is an inevitable consequence of a society that has made an idol out of sexual pleasure”.

There has been a sharp rise in the number of NHS Trusts offering early abortions (up to 9 weeks). One GP magazine states that there are now 17 Trusts about to offer the “service”, so further opening up opportunities to make abortion easier and in an oblique way acknowledging the failure of sex education, free condoms, morning-after pills and other God dishonouring methods.

One evil but bold move by the pro-abortion movement, this year (2010) has been to advertise on Channel 4 TV. The Marie Stopes clinics were allowed to promote their abortion programmes in spite of protests by Mediawatch UK who said: “we have issues because women who have an unplanned pregnancy are in a vulnerable position”. The Broadcasting Committee of Advertising Practice also wanted to put the adverts on hold; however, Marie Stopes sought legal advice and got permission to go ahead on the basis, it is said, that they are a “non commercial organisation”. Such a claim is astounding as they receive £30 million in funding per annum from the NHS and charge from £80 per consultation up to as much as £1,775 for a private (i.e. a non NHS funded) abortion.

Marie Stopes is believed to be carrying out 65,000 terminations a year in the UK and also has an international dimension. There can be little doubt that the aim of the advert was to sell abortion to vulnerable women. Marketing Director, Julie Douglas, attempted to defend it by saying, “the ad is all about

providing information so that women can have the confidence . . . to reach people who will be non-judgemental". Michaela Aston from "Life" counters this by saying "to allow abortion providers to advertise on TV as though they were no different from car companies and detergent manufacturers is grotesque . . . by suggesting that abortion is yet another consumer choice it trivialises human life". A pro life Alliance spokesman claims that the adverts are breaking broadcasting guidelines stating that, "the purpose of an abortion commercial is to sell abortion". This is hardly conducive to making the "informed sexual health choice" which Marie Stopes claims to provide.

All this evil is further compounded by the increasing availability of the "morning after pill". It can be bought for around £25 without prescription and whereas it had previously required a GP or pharmacist to dispense it after a consultation with the woman, it can now be obtained more easily. The pill can be bought on the internet from Lloyd's Pharmacy (and soon from Boots) by credit card. Neither consultation nor details of the buyer are necessary. Promiscuity will inevitably increase and the result will surely be an increase in disease. Dr. Trevor Stammers, a GP and lecturer in Health Care ethics, so wisely says, "the morning after pill is fuelling an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases . . . the fact that it will be available over the internet is a further proof of our increasingly sexualised society". Thankfully at least current legislation still allows pharmacists to refuse to prescribe the pill on conscientious grounds.

The hardness and cruelty of our society is shown by a recent medical study on a baby's awareness of pain in the womb. This study asserts that, contrary to results of previous research, babies do not feel pain at 24 weeks in the womb. It then goes on to say that terminations can take place without anaesthetics. This further demeans life and ignores accounts of babies being born at 22 weeks.

An English Minister correctly explained recently that "any society which can tolerate these things, let alone legislate for them, has ceased to be civilised". He goes on to say that, "one of the major signs of decadence in the Roman Empire was that its unwanted babies were 'exposed' or abandoned and left to die. Can we claim that contemporary Western society is any less decadent because it consigns its unwanted babies to the hospital incinerator instead of the local rubbish dump? Indeed modern abortion is even worse than ancient exposure because it has been commercialised, and has become, at least to some doctors and clinics, an extremely lucrative practice. But reverence for human life is an indisputable characteristic of a humane and civilised society."

In light of this it is encouraging to learn that efforts are being made in the UK Parliament to tighten existing legislation on abortion. The *Telegraph* of 25.03.11 (online version) reports that, "A cross-party alliance of MPs will launch a fresh bid to tighten the rules on terminations. Nadine Dorries, a Conservative MP, and Frank Field, a former Labour minister, will table amendments to the Health and Social Care Bill now passing through the Commons. Supporters of the amendments say that passing them would lead to

a dramatic reduction in the number of abortions that take place in the UK. The first amendment would create a new precondition for any women having an abortion to receive advice and counselling from an organisation that does not itself carry out terminations.” The report goes on to say that, “The second amendment that will be tabled next week would strip the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of its role setting clinical guidelines on abortions. Instead, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence should advise doctors on when to allow an abortion, the MPs believe. The RCOG is currently drawing up new clinical guidelines for terminations. Anti-abortion campaigners say the college is biased towards favouring abortion and should not be allowed to set the rules.” It remains to be seen if these provisions will become law.

National family life

This part of the report is a brief review of items from national newspapers that were contributed by various members of the Committee and reflects only a small portion of what may be generally available in this branch of the media. This report does not endorse all that is advanced through the media as fact and merely cites the articles as representative of events that take place as the media views them.

Smoking

On the rarely discussed problem of smoking, the *Scotsman* (15.09.10) reported that, “tobacco is still Scotland’s biggest preventable killer”. It is felt by many that it is time to explore new ways to continue to reduce the harm caused and Government reports reveal that 34% of all deaths (13,500 adults) in the 35-69 age group are linked to smoking. It is widely understood now that thousands of others suffer smoking related illnesses. Scotland’s most deprived areas seem to suffer the most from smoking related illness. With the growing body of evidence for the harm caused by this addiction, it may be that more support should be given to government initiatives in this area.

Death

The lack of biblical teaching that this generation has received is finding expression in many different ways, not least in attitudes to death and the world to come. In a very harrowing report the *Scotsman* (22.12.10) reported on a mother who had entered a suicide pact with her husband so that “one of them could be with their son following his death in a car accident”. The past was put into effect with the death of Allan Hogg at the age of 30, leaving a doubtless doubly traumatised daughter to endure the pain of bereavement with her mother. Such reports only call for deep pity and grief at the lack of understanding and the suffering which ensues. A feature in the *Times* (30.06.10) on the subject of how to explain death to young children perhaps illustrates how fundamentally empty our society is of answers to these great and ultimate questions. It is sad indeed to note that the use of anti-depressant

drugs rose again in the past year – by 7% – with over 40 million prescriptions from medical professionals. How greatly our nation needs the good news of salvation.

Marriage

Marriage and divorce in the United Kingdom and in Scotland in particular has been thrown into great confusion with the passing of unbiblical legislation sanctioning no-fault divorce. It is reported in the *Times Magazine* (25.09.10) that in 2008 there were 22.8 divorces per 1,000 married men of ages 25-29 and 26 divorces per 1,000 married women of the same age group. A *Scotsman* report (14.10.10) gave evidence of what is widely recognised but seldom admitted in relation to marriage and the behaviour of children. A recent survey revealed that “youngsters living with a single parent or in step-families are at least twice as likely to exhibit serious behaviour problems as those living with their natural parents”. In a separate but related area of marriage, the *Scotsman* (18.09.10) reported on attempts being made by some lawyers involved in matrimonial cases to criminalise men who marry women who have been forced into wedlock by their parents. This menace is largely confined to Asian communities in the United Kingdom, but is well known to be taking place in Scotland.

The sin of pre-marital fornication is widespread in our country. The *Telegraph* (16.04.09) carried a report with evidence from the Office of National Statistics revealing that women are more likely to give birth before they turn 25 than they are to get married. The traditional (and biblical) family unit of a married couple with children of their own is no longer the norm in our society. The number of married couples hit the lowest levels in England and Wales since 1895. It is reported that some 1.66 million children are being brought up by an unmarried couple – up from 1 million 10 years ago. The number brought up by married parents dropped from 9.57 million to 8.32 million over the same period. These figures were released only two months after statistics showed that the annual rate of teenage pregnancy in England and Wales had risen to 42 in every 1,000, despite a £286 million government campaign to tackle the problem.

Children

A landmark report for the Children’s Society, entitled *A Good Childhood*, published in 2009, details extensively the influences to which every child is exposed. This study would make worthwhile reading for those wishing to understand how government policy is being shaped in this area in years to come. The study itself raises plenty of points which gives a negative answer to the question it poses – Is childhood all it should be? Statistics for the lifestyle of modern children should give cause for real concern. We learn, for example, that the average child aged 8-11 spends over 17 hours per week watching television. Sadly the answers offered to the questions raised, while being common sense in many instances, are not founded in the Word of God.

The suffering of children is a subject which ought to trouble any society and it is clear that much work continues to be done to seek to prevent the abuse of children in every sphere possible. Poverty is often blamed as the root cause of the suffering of children, but this does not seem to explain all the issues. A report in the *Scotsman* (13.10.10) revealed that “more than half of children polled in Scotland have noticed signs of suspected neglect in other youngsters they know”. Neglect, as well as being criminal, is seriously damaging to young people. That neglect is also to be seen in the lawlessness of children. A further *Scotsman* report (15.06.10) revealed that 192 children under the age of 8 years were caught for offences such as vandalism, fire-raising and robbery. Children as young as 6 and 7 have been caught assaulting people and even 4-year-olds have been found with knives. The number of children deemed to be offenders increased in Glasgow by 45% in three years. This blight on young lives must be laid at the door of parents. How great is our need as a nation to turn again to the Lord from whose law we have so deeply revolted.

CONCLUSION

The Committee’s report is not to be considered as anything more than a limited and general analysis of some facts and trends which reflect on the state of religion and morals in Scotland. The Committee is well aware that members of Synod are well informed already of the situation in the nation as to these and many other matters of concern, but believe that this forum is a useful place to summarise the condition of our nation. Our primary purpose in writing this report is to encourage prayerfulness among our people in the pursuit of reformation. How greatly we should long for a restoration of what we have departed from as a nation. We trust that it is not in the spirit of self-righteousness, nor of despising others, that we write, which spirit is so largely condemned in the Pharisees by the Saviour. We tremble to think of the judgements of God which we, together with our guilty nation, richly deserve and offer this report to the Synod with the warning of the Apostle before our minds and upon our consciences: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). We also offer it in the fervent and expectant hope and prayer that the day will dawn in Scotland and among the nations of the world that Christ’s kingdom will be established and many will go and say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths” (Isaiah 2:3).

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

THE special place that the Sabbath Day should have in the heart of the believer has been emphasized many times and in many different ways in the history of the Church. From the very beginning particular emphasis has been placed on witnessing for the Sabbath in the pages of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. The Magazine has also taken a more active stance in openly protesting against incursions into the sanctity of the Lord's Day.

In 1943 the Rev. D. J. Macaskill, when giving a paper on the subject of the Westminster Assembly, stated the Church's position:

As the other bulwarks of Christianity had to be defended in former ages, the Sabbath is assailed to-day from all quarters, and we are called to contend earnestly for it. The doctrine of the Westminster Standards, on which entire agreement was come to, was that the whole Sabbath is to be passed in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy. It will be a good day for Britain when she returns to these old paths once again, as we hope she will, and all other nations of the world. Meanwhile we hold our heritage, handed down to us from martyred forefathers.

By God's grace we must endeavour to sincerely maintain the same position today. The Committee is therefore progressing in its work of producing informative tracts on some of the main issues raised in regard to Sabbath Observance.

Over the last year the Committee has also been issuing a large number of letters in its attempts to encourage others to a greater observance of the Sabbath. The work has covered three main areas, Business, Sports & Leisure and Politics.

Local Government

As reported last year, Glasgow City Council has begun a seven-day refuse collection service. The Committee wrote with its concerns to Mr. George Black, Chief Executive of the Council. This letter was copied to Mr. Robert Booth, Land and Environmental Services, and to all elected members. A single response was received from Mr. Black who, in his letter, acknowledged that this seven-day collection might be opposed to the religious beliefs of some but made it clear that the Council would not be changing its policy. The Committee sought a second time to bring the issue before Mr. Black but without success.

Sabbath Ferries

Caledonian MacBrayne has been repositioning the Tarbert-Uig Ferry on the Sabbath Day for the last number of years during the winter timetable. The Committee wrote objecting to this in November 2010. However, the winter

timetable for 2010-2011 advised that a passenger service would operate on the Sabbath on 26th December 2010 and 2nd January 2011. It was later announced that CalMac was seeking to place the current repositioning of the ferry as a passenger carrying service in future timetables. The Committee wrote to Mr. Peter Timms, Chairman of CalMac (copied to the other ten board members), David Taylor, Regional Manager, and the Tarbert Pier-master, objecting to the planned service and any future Sabbath services. The responses received though courteous, made it plain that CalMac intended to run the timetabled services for 26th December and 2nd January as intimated. They also advised that they were currently involved in a consultation with the relevant bodies as to whether or not they would timetable future Sabbath services between Tarbert and Uig.

The Committee also wrote to Mr. Angus MacNeil, MP; Mr. Alasdair Allan, MSP; Cllr. Catherine MacDonald; Cllr. Morag Munro and Cllr. Philip MacLean, seeking their assistance. Positive responses were received from Mr. MacNeil, Mr. Allan and Cllr. MacDonald. Cllr. Munro especially continues to be an active campaigner against the running of Sabbath Day ferries.

Royal Mail

Royal Mail intimated that they would be making a special delivery on Sabbath 19th December 2010 where it was required. The Committee wrote to Mr. Donald Brydon, CBE, and three other prominent Board members, raising their concerns. A polite letter was received in return, advising that no offence was intended but that such a service was necessary to ensure that their customers received their packets and parcels in time for Christmas. However, a positive element in their reply was a promise that they would not be making any Sabbath deliveries on the Western Isles.

Party Political Conferences

It has become common over the last few years for the main Political Parties to hold their Party Conferences over the Sabbath. The Committee wrote to the Conservative Party, Green Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrat Party, Scottish Green Party, Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish National Party. An acknowledgment was received from the Scottish National Party and a reply from the Conservative party, who endeavoured to justify holding their conference on a Sabbath as an opportunity for Christian members of the Party to have fellowship with each other.

Agricultural Show

The Oban Show & Sale of Highland Cattle took place on Sabbath 10th October. The Committee wrote a letter of concern to the President of the Society who responded positively advising that some members of the Society were themselves endeavouring to prevent the recurrence of the sale on a Sabbath. The Committee also wrote to another member of the Society who had publicly objected to the sale taking place on the Sabbath and commended them for their stand.

Screen Machine

The Committee wrote to the operators of the Screen Machine, a portable cinema that regularly shows films around the Highlands on the Sabbath. Two separate responses were received, which made it clear that the operators respected the beliefs of the communities in which they lived but would only consider not operating on the Sabbath if they received representations from the relevant communities.

SPORT

Snooker

The Committee wrote to Mr. Barry Hearn, of World Snooker, to complain about the World Open being played in Glasgow on the Sabbath. No reply was received.

Motor Sports

The Committee wrote to Mr. Tony Andrews, Chairman of Motor Sports House, to object to Rally for Scotland being held on the Sabbath. No reply was received.

Golf

The Committee wrote to Richard Hills, of the Ryder Cup Office, over the Ryder Cup being played on the Sabbath. No reply was received.

Rugby

The Committee also wrote to the two main Scottish Rugby clubs, Edinburgh Rugby and Glasgow Warriors, over playing matches on the Sabbath. No replies were received.

Football

The Committee wrote to Aberdeen, Celtic, Dundee, Heart of Midlothian, Hibernian, Inverness Caledonian, Kilmarnock, Motherwell, Rangers, St. Johnstone and St. Mirren Football Clubs over playing matches on the Sabbath. Replies were received from Hibernian, Kilmarnock and Rangers Football clubs. Two of the replies received stated that the kick-off times and dates of the games were set by the Scottish Premier League in agreement with the broadcasters. The Committee hopes to write to the SPL and Broadcasters at a later date.

Running

The Committee wrote to the organisers of 29 different running events. Several replies were received but in general these were negative, some being confrontational and provocative.

In total 160 items of correspondence were issued by the Committee. Although the majority of the responses received were negative in nature yet, as a

Committee, we believe that this only makes our work all the more necessary. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20).

JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod

General

This Report is presented year by year and is intended to keep the Synod abreast of what is happening on the Church's mission fields in Africa and Israel. We wish that we had this year to report that much spiritual fruit had been produced as a result of our labours in these foreign fields, but alas we have no such glad tidings. The seed has continued to be sown, however, and we trust that in due time it will become apparent that this was not done in vain. Those immediately engaged in the work, whether in the pulpit, school class-room, hospital ward, kraal-home, market-place, or wherever the opportunity of bringing the minds of sinners into contact with the Word of God presents itself, continue to plant and water in the hope that God will, in His time, give the increase. Our friends in Holland continue to lend increasing financial support to the work in the African countries and their generosity and interest are much appreciated. The expenses incurred in regard to the work in Israel are met solely from the Church's own resources.

Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean ministers have been sustained in health over another year and have continued to labour in the harvest field and, in particular, within that portion of it allotted to each one respectively. We are thankful that that is the case. It is hoped that Mr. Nopel Sibanda, will soon be settled in one of the vacant charges. The Rev. Petros Mzamo, although retired, is still able to take occasional services and it is hoped that having fully recovered from his recent indisposition he will be able to continue to do so. Reports submitted by the settled ministers Rev. A. B. MacLean, Rev. Z. Mazvabo, Rev. S. Khumalo, Rev. M. Mloyi personally, will cover the measure of success which they have enjoyed as harvest labourers as well as encouragements or discouragements they may have met with over the past year. In view of this, it is unnecessary to place anything further on record here.

The general administration of the mission is in the hands of Mr. Melusi Mpofu and his staff located at 9 Robertson Street, Bulawayo. This requires a high degree of competence and we are happy to report that this is what is observed and reported of the work being done at that location. Mr. Hugh

Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, continues to keep an eye on building projects and in many other ways provides help in staffing arrangements and in other areas of mission administration. His expertise and input is much appreciated.

The Thembis Home is now being divided into five separate units to give it a more family-orientated character. Four of these houses have been built and the fifth is under construction. This entailed much extra work in organizing the change and we are grateful to Mr. Stanford Mpofu and Miss Petra Beukers for their hard work. Miss Margaret MacAskill made a valuable contribution in helping to train the house mothers required by the reorganization. We hope that all will go well under the new Superintendent, Mr. Busiso Mapala, and his staff.

The John Tallach School still continues to be a centre of educational excellence at Ingwenya. This is largely due to the competent and dedicated work of the Headmaster, Mr. Bonakele Ncube, and Miss Norma B. MacLean his deputy. Such is the standard achieved and the results produced that, in this past year the school was ranked seventh among like schools throughout the whole of Zimbabwe. We trust that when it becomes a Sixth-Form school its standing will become even higher. The help given by Miss Jacqueline Freeke and by Miss Naomi Rowland was very much appreciated. Again, since a separate report will be submitted, it is not necessary to add anything further in this one.

At Mbuma, the hospital, under the competent supervision of Dr. Anneke Snoek, continues to provide much-needed and also much appreciated medical facilities in the community. The nursing staff, Willie Geurtsen, Celia Renes, Gilia van Wijngaarden, Erica van Breda, along with local nurses, continue to fulfil their duties with unabated zeal. Mr. Johan Verhaar, who rendered sterling service to the mission in the post of Administration and Technical Manager at Mbuma, completed his tour of duty in September. We are most grateful to him for all that was accomplished by him, not least his setting in place a communication network within the compound. Mr. Leendert Boon has been appointed to this post and expects to begin work in July. An Assistant/Successor to Mr. Boon, Mr. Mthokozisi Ncube, has been appointed and it is hoped that he will begin work in 2012.

The revision of the entire Ndebele Bible has now been completed and the team, Teus Benschop, Mr. Buthi Mziya, Nathaniel Mpofu, Tricot Mwedzi and C. M. MacAulay, are to be commended for their diligence and perseverance in bringing this about. Work will now begin on a revision of the Shona Bible. Mr. N. Mpofu has been appointed as a second catechist at Mbuma Hospital. We believe the work of translation will be much more appreciated in times to come when the Spirit shall be poured out from on high and multitudes will be brought under concern for their souls' salvation.

Kenya

In Kenya, under the superintendence of the Rev. K. M. Watkins, the mission continues to diffuse Gospel light in a very dark part of this fallen world.

Satanic opposition may be expected when inroads are made into his kingdom and the possibility of sinners coming to be aware of their state of bondage exists. With the departure to Holland of Andre Ploeg, after three years' faithful service, the burden of mission administration has no doubt increased and in this connection we are grateful for the help provided by Mrs. Watkins and also her work in the translation department. Elizabeth Munns, from the London congregation, was of great help for nearly a year assisting in various ways and, not least, in instructing children. It is hoped that a new church will be built at Sengera, the funding being already earmarked for this purpose by the Mboma Zending Committee.

The Omorembe Clinic continues to provide, within limits, a valuable service.

Israel

The Rev. John Goldby will give in his own report to the Synod. He is due to return home for good in May, but it is hoped that he will still be able to contribute to the projects that are still on-going, such as the revision of the Hebrew New Testament and the very important work of translating the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, for the first time, into Hebrew. Mr. Al Hembd, a communicant member of the Texas congregation, who is in the employment of the Trinitarian Bible Society, remains, with his wife, in Jerusalem. We are grateful to Mr. Goldby for all the work that he did over the (almost) seven-year period of his sojourn in Israel. We hope and pray that the seed sown will yet bear fruit for His Word shall not return unto him void.

Conclusion

We are grateful to all who serve on our mission fields and we would hope that they are continually remembered by the Lord's people among us, whether at home or abroad. We are deeply indebted for the support given and especially for that of the Mboma Zending in Holland. May there be unity among us in praying for the coming of His kingdom and the hastening of the time in this world's history when the promise shall be fulfilled: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

JEWISH REPORT

Rev. J. L. Goldby

IT is of the Lord's goodness that we have been enabled to work in this challenging mission field with the support of the Committee, Synod and the prayers and interest of many over a number of years. Hitherto a door of opportunity has been opened for us to witness on the side of Christ among the Jewish people. May the Lord Himself water the seed sown. This is the seventh

year of our work in Israel and, according to my reading of both providence and Scripture, it appears that the time has come for me to return to the UK. I have intimated this to the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee. The decision to return has been accepted by the Committee and this has been reported in the April *FP Magazine*. The JFMC has encouraged me to continue to maintain my contacts and work among the Jews as far as this will be compatible with being resident in the UK and my duties there.

The work of the church in Israel has been continued over the past year with services being held in the YMCA on King David Street in Jerusalem at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Numbers are small with few regulars but some visitors from outside Israel like to have a place of Reformed worship. At my last service there were ten persons present. Mr. Albert Hembd is a member in full communion with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland who is resident in Israel at his own expense. Whilst being employed by the Trinitarian Bible Society, he is willing to keep services for us at the YMCA.

It is important that despite relocation to the UK, our work on behalf of the church continues. I have requested, therefore, that for the interim period at least, I be permitted to remain as the Free Presbyterian Church Representative to Israel (i.e. to the Jews, whether in Israel or elsewhere) and to make use of the experience gained.

The Delitzsch Hebrew NT revision continues and John's Gospel is on course for publication later in the year, DV. It is proposed that my involvement in these projects is maintained by Skype, telephone and occasional visits to Israel.

The Hebrew translation and checking process of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is nearing completion (at the time of writing we are working on chapter 27) and the translators have recently been paid the bulk of their fees for the work. A figure of £6,500 has been provisionally agreed for type-setting, printing, and publishing. It is proposed to circulate the translated *WCF* to Universities and Colleges, interested individuals and congregations in Israel. The publication would be in booklet form with a relatively low unit cost. Perhaps a flyer might be included offering a free copy to any person who wished to apply. A meeting could be organised to launch the *WCF*, possibly with a visit and lectures on the *WCF* by ministers from the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee.

I have already sought membership of the Jewish Historical Society of England as well as having membership of the Israel Branch of this organisation. Through such means we may find opportunities to enter dialogue with British Jews. I accompanied one of our Jewish neighbours to a recent interesting meeting of this Society in Jerusalem, when a lecture was given by Sir Martin Gilbert (Churchill's biographer).

"H", a Jewish neighbour, told me that he had been awake in the night and was reading, in the September 2010 *FP Magazine*, an article on the subject of Justification and wished to discuss the difference between Justification and Sanctification. Of the many Biblical passages discussed, the one which has

impressed him most is, “without shedding of blood is no remission”. This gentleman is keen to keep up our frequent discussions on the Bible after my return to the UK.

Recently we spent time with a Jewish friend from Greece. This elderly lady lost most of her family in the Nazi holocaust of WWII (96% of the Jews of Salonika were murdered by the Germans). “D” is of a secular persuasion. She happens to have been born in the same place as Alexander the Great and our conversation was focused on the prophecies of Daniel (written during the Babylonian captivity) concerning the rise and fall of the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, the predicted time of the coming of the Messiah and the overthrow of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews by the Romans. The language of the book of Daniel is Aramaic and was introduced among the Jews during the Babylonian captivity. The book of Daniel presents clear evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures. During our recent flight from Israel there was an interesting conversation with a young ultra-orthodox Jewish Yeshiva student by the name of Ephraim on a variety of Biblical topics.

In order to build on the experience of these years of living and working among the Jews and to “roast that we have taken in hunting” (Proverbs 12:27), it would be desirable to make visits to Israel, perhaps four times in the year: Each trip might be a week and a half duration, depending on circumstances and other duties. My current visa is for two years and will not expire until December 2012. Although resident in the UK, and until called to a congregation, I would prefer to retain a status as the Church Representative to (rather than in) Israel. Should I be called to a congregation my first duty will be toward that congregation but it is expected that the arrangements re the Jewish Mission work will be discussed by the Synod in May, God willing.

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

“WHAT is man that thou art mindful of him?” The infinite distance between God and man in being and nature brings this question. The question springs from the fact that the Most High is mindful of man. His mind is seen in His image, the Mediator between God and Man. Christ is the image of the invisible God. The whole application of the work of redemption is seen in the spread of the gospel throughout the world. This is the spread of the knowledge of Christ giving the knowledge of the mindfulness of God.

The preaching cycle was more or less continued to all stations throughout the year. The rural roads in Zimbabwe are in very poor condition. This year, due to heavy rains, they have degraded further. Journeys take longer than before. Sometimes supply was not possible due to the car being off the road for repairs. Sometimes the car gets stuck in the mud. Recently, after getting stuck, the people who came from Ingwenya to help commented that there was

no road in the place. But these are the surfaces that have to be used. The attendance at all stations has held up. At Ingwenya there is more of an irregular attendance but it is pleasing to note that a number of new people now attend. Another encouragement is the attendance of men. Although it is mainly women who attend, there are a good number of men who attend more or less regularly. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper continues to be administered on two occasions at Ingwenya, once at Cameron and once at Nyati. Rev. K. W. Watkins, Kenya, was the assisting minister at the second Ingwenya communion. His services were very much appreciated by the people. No new members were received.

A large part of the congregation during school term includes the pupils from John Tallach Secondary School. They are surprised, no doubt, at the preaching they hear. The true doctrines of the Word of God are not known by them, although many are attached to mainstream denominations. It would seem to be the case that many come to an intellectual acceptance of the truth. The instruction of these young children also through the Bible Knowledge classes and Sabbath School classes connected to the school are a very effective means of planting the good seed of the kingdom in young hearts. An exceeding great army can be raised up with the blessing of the Lord upon His own Word.

An attempt was made to start services at a place called Glengrey, located between the Gadade and Insiza stations. The initial request for services came from individuals at Glengrey. However, despite several visits it was not actually possible to hold a service. On the last visit for a scheduled service the people said they were unable to attend because they were attending another meeting. It was decided not to return.

During the year the Presbytery received and adopted a petition which encouraged females to conform to the Biblical pattern of having long hair without chemical enhancements. The ladies at Ingwenya received and acted upon this petition in good part and a visible difference has been noticed in the length of their hair.

The rise of false religious organisations continues rapidly in Zimbabwe. One of the reasons for their growth seems to be their claim to the gifts of signs and wonders. Another reason is that they allow a synthesis of Christianity and superstition within their organisation. Most of the mainstream denominations are losing people to these organisations. One adherent at Ingwenya left to attend an organisation called the "Seven Apostles of Battlefield". She was urged to return and still is urged to return when she is seen in the village but so far has proved obstinate. A witness is raised against these organisations and their claims from the pulpit.

The church building at Insiza has proceeded slowly but it is hoped to finish it this year, DV. The Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee very kindly approved a request for funds (\$2,200) to complete the roof. The Ingwenya congregations themselves have made substantial contributions. So far they have given over \$1,000 in form of maize which was sold to obtain cash. Cash was also donated. The men and women of the place laid the slab of the church

with their own hands. The Presbytery received a request from the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee for more substantial contributions for congregations towards Mission expenses. One of the immediate actions of the Presbytery was to begin paying 50% of the fuel costs for ministerial cars. Ingwenya comfortably met the request for this funding. Over 50% was again obtained from maize donations which were sold to obtain cash. Cash was also given. People are willing to give. Some loathe the culture of dependency.

The rains here were very good up to the end of January. A dry spell then developed that lasted for three and a half weeks. This has resulted in the expectations of a bumper harvest being reduced to an adequate harvest. However, people are generally happy at the prospects of more food than last year. We do not deserve a drop of water because of our sins but the Most High in His providence provides for His people. Others benefit from the same gracious providence but unless they repent of their sins it will be as coals of fire upon their heads.

Rev. N. M. Ross visited during the year on Mission recruitment business. He had a very busy schedule so was unable to take services on this occasion at Ingwenya. My thanks are due to the elders and deacon who fulfilled their various duties throughout the year. They do so diligently and without complaint and I am completely indebted to them.

“Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Psalm 68:31).

JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

THE work of John Tallach School continued as in previous years. Although there is always some modernisation here and there, the school routine is more or less the same as it has been for decades. Each year after 4 years of being under the Gospel among us, over 100 children leave us to further their education elsewhere and another 150 children join us to begin the 4 years of instruction. Every class has a lesson of Bible instruction on 4 days out of 5; every pupil attends Sabbath School on Sabbath mornings as well as all the church services, weekday and Sabbath. Worship is held with our large family of 504 boarders in the school dining hall each morning and evening and the sound of their singing wafting over the Mission compound is an impressive reminder of our duty to worship God. It is to be hoped that this will become a lifetime's habit for the children so that each one individually would say, “While I have being to my God in songs I'll praises give”.

Staffing

Staffing at the school remained stable throughout 2010 for which we were very thankful. Miss J. Freeke completed her contract in August while Miss N.

Rowland extended hers until December in order to remain assisting at school during Miss MacLean's furlough. Miss Freeke and Miss Rowland were welcome additions to the teaching staff: both were hardworking and flexible members of staff who formed good relationships with our local staff and were very popular with their pupils. Their departure has left a gap in the Bible Knowledge department for which we urgently need to recruit one or two suitable Free Presbyterians. It is an ideal opportunity for suitably qualified serious-minded young people in the church to help with the work of the Mission while at the same time enhancing their CVs. In the meantime we are pleased to have been able to employ a prospective university student who belongs to the Nkulumane congregation: Miss Vuma is a former head girl of the school and we hope she will be able to remain with us until August this year as the university academic year begins in September. Our local staff continue, on the whole, to perform acceptably under the direction of the Headmaster, Mr. B. Ncube. We still have 5 members of staff who have remained with the school for over 15 years: these gentlemen play a very important role in passing on the ethos of the school to the newer recruits on the staff. Among them only the Headmaster is a Free Presbyterian, but they are to be commended for their loyalty and commitment to the principles and practices of the school.

Pupils

As mentioned in previous reports, we have been experiencing a falling school roll but a recovery has been noted this year: enrolment currently is 539 pupils which is 20 more than at this time last year. This is largely due to a drop in pupil transfers to other schools because of failure to afford the fees.

Our children continue to come from a wide variety of backgrounds, both religious and socio-economic, and it is a cause of never-ending wonder that it is still possible in this day and age to gather together such a diverse group of children with complete freedom to instruct them in the truths of the Gospel: it is our ardent desire that, as the children are instructed in church and in the classroom, they would receive that priceless instruction of the Holy Spirit enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ. We see much *moral* fruit from our work among them – reports from Form 6 schools which enrol our pupils make clear that most of our former pupils display a level of discipline and hard work which sets them apart from many of their peers – but we would desire to see *spiritual* fruit.

O Level results

In November 2010 the school was visited, for the second time in recent years, by the Secretary for Education, Dr. S. M. Mahere. Dr. Mahere came from Harare to give the school the Secretary's Award in recognition of outstanding performance throughout 2009. This is a prestigious award and it is the third time in the history of John Tallach School that this award has been received, on this occasion with a gift of \$2,000 (US).

The overall pass rate for the 2010 O Levels was an astonishing 92.6% which meant that the school came 7th in the national league tables for the 2010 O Level results.

Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	100%	History	92%
Agriculture	33%	Integrated Science	73%
Bible Knowledge	96%	Literature in English.....	100%
Biology.....	100%	Mathematics	69%
Commerce.....	100%	Ndebele.....	100%
English Language	96%	Physical Science	100%
Fashion and Fabrics	57%	Woodwork	80%
Geography.....	98%		

Two pupils had 9 As, seven had 8 As and a total of 37 pupils had 5 or more A passes.

Our application to be a Cambridge centre has recently been granted, so we hope that this year we will be able to offer O levels both with ZIMSEC and with Cambridge.

Finance

The financial situation remained healthy so no increase in fees was necessary: the average fee per child of \$350 per term for boarding has remained unchanged since 2009. This is a reflection of the improved stability of the economy and, of course, careful budgeting at the school. At the time of writing, however, the costs of foodstuffs in particular seem to be on the rise again so the situation needs careful monitoring. The school managed to pay for all its maintenance from school funds.

Developments

The replacement of faulty ceilings was completed during 2010.

By the beginning of 2011 all teachers' cottages had been fitted with solar water geysers.

A new photocopier was purchased for the school office.

The installation of rainwater tanks continued with the erection of two 5,000 litre tanks at the Form 3 boys' dormitories. The value of the rainwater collection system was proved during Term 3 in 2010 when the supply of electricity to the Mission was cut for several weeks and it became difficult to pump enough water from the boreholes without the use of the electric pumps.

At the end of 2009 we were shocked to discover that our water was not fit for human consumption: investigations began so as to establish the best way of purifying the water. This was a long process, largely because of the specialist stand with access ladder which had to be built onto the existing water storage platform. A chlorine-based system was eventually installed and working by the end of 2010. The water is now bacteria-free but we have been

struggling with high levels of chlorine as we learn how to regulate the purification unit.

The major ongoing development, of course, is the preparation for Form 6. An access road to the proposed site of the new Science block is now ready and the extension to the church for the prospective Form 6 pupils has been completed. At the time of writing there is much activity in finalising the building plans and working out a building timetable. Work is scheduled to begin on the Science Laboratory complex and a teacher's cottage during Term 2 this year, DV.

Conclusion

As always we put on record our thanks to all the donors who support the work here, especially the JFMC and Mbuma Zending. Our status as a "church supported school" is very precious to us as it is because of this status that we have such freedom in the religious instruction of the children and that is the reason for the success of this school. We would encourage all our donors to support the work here at the Throne of Grace, so that the hearts and minds of the children and all who work here would be convinced of the truths of the Gospel.

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

WE are very thankful to God for His care of us. Although we are unworthy before Him because of our sins, He protects us and provides for us.

Another year has come and gone. How swiftly our days are passing by, and eternity is drawing nearer every moment. As careless sinners are swept along to eternity, unaware of their danger and without hope, the gospel trumpet is sounded to awaken them: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Genesis 19:17), and they are pointed to Christ as the place of safety for their souls.

As we preach the gospel to sinners each Sabbath and at weekday prayer meetings, we pray for strength from the Lord to hold us up, as Moses was supported when Israel fought against the Amalekites. By the strength of the Lord those enemies were defeated. Such strength we pray for to carry out the Lord's work in His vineyard, for we are just feeble creatures.

We are thankful that the doors of the places of worship at Zenka and its stations were kept open throughout the year. The sacraments were dispensed; the Lord's Supper twice, at the February and August communion seasons; and Baptism was administered in the congregations of Katasa and Mabayi to three old ladies and a boy and a girl.

Fudu and Mabayi congregations have started to collect funds towards the construction of church buildings, and the Deacons' Court has encouraged the

four congregations, Zenka, Katasa, Mabayi and Fudu, to work collectively for the success of these projects.

The rainy season began as early as November and early planting has been successful for some, but many people planted late and the resulting later crops were hard hit by the dry spell in February. The total harvest therefore is likely to be low this year.

Sabbath School classes are still held in Zenka between the services, and we hope to engage some of the female members to help in teaching the children as there are few professing male members. On Mondays, Scripture is being taught to the children in the primary school by some of our professing members and a few adherents, before normal lessons begin.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to bless the means of grace to poor, needy souls. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (Psalm 110:3).

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

“BLESSED be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore” (Psalm 113:2). The Lord is to be praised for His wonderful care shown to us. Although we are still spared on mercy’s ground, many have been hastened to eternity, even in our own congregations. Thus there has been the fearful awakening voice of death in our midst, warning sinners of the danger of sin and of dying without Christ and without hope.

In the kindness of God the year 2010 began with good rains, crops grew well, and there was a good harvest for many (although some crops were hit hard by the pest worm, a maize stalk borer). More importantly we need and pray for the downpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our land so that there would be a great revival and that souls would turn to Christ. The work of the Spirit is greatly needed in the midst of the darkness and declension of the people so that they would desire the sincere milk of the Word as newborn babes. Around us there is much false teaching, which young and old are taken up with, but when the day of Christ’s power will come, people shall be willing to submit to His rule. We desire that the Lord would hasten such days.

The Lord’s Supper was dispensed twice at Nkayi station, in January and June, and once at Donsa Dam, in May as usual. One young man was baptized.

We are very thankful to the Lord that the Deacons’ Court has been able to erect a church at Nkuba, and that they had the use of material salvaged from the old Lobengula manse for roofing the building. Nkuba now has its own place for worship, and we commend the congregation for its effort. At present, the member residing at Nkuba, who helps in the absence of elders, is unwell and is seeking treatment in South Africa. The minister and elders who go there to take services have much difficulty in reaching the station because of the muddy, slippery road and flooding of the Shangani River.

In the midst of all things pertaining to the spiritual work our prayer is, “And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it” (Psalm 90:17).

ZISHAVANE MISSION REPORT

Rev. Z. Mazvabo

ZIMBABWE is a farming country, and all the people in our congregations are subsistence farmers. They live in what is called Communal lands, where they share common grazing land and own a few head of cattle – goats, sheep and donkeys – and are allocated a small piece of land to cultivate. They are only able to grow a little every year, enough or sometimes not even enough, to take them to the next ploughing season. They depend upon rainfall, for food, clothes, and money to pay school fees for their children, and indeed for all the expenses of the family. The rainfall is very unpredictable and therefore makes it difficult for the poor farmer to know when he should put his seed in the ground. Usually January is said to be a hot and dry month, and farmers are called to exercise all their wisdom, in arranging their crops, so that the month of January finds them at a certain level. If the month of January finds the crop very low, the crop might survive, but if the crop is found at an advanced stage it usually fails. This is a difficult farming game to play. This year, however, every farmer was trying to be cautious about the game. The rains came in mid November in some places, and late November in others.

Farmers wanted to wait for early December to plant, but this was a mistake because once the rain started, it continued through December and January. February became a dry month so, again, farmers went wrong in their calculations and their crops were left just about to ripen, but the result is the same – another famine. We are thankful, however, that this season’s famine is not going to be as bad as last season’s, because the very first planters, though they are few, will at least harvest something. The grazing is still good but, because the rains stopped rather too early, it will not last. The sun will soon dry it and the white ants will complete the job by eating it up. Although we can say all this, yet it is not the main hindrance of the gospel, for between the winter and the summer of the soul, the winter is better ground for the cultivation of the gospel in the soul.

The churches of Macedonia were in a “great trial of affliction” and “deep poverty”, when they abounded in the grace of giving. But the power of false religion, the worship of ancestors, and the superstition that accompanies it, has such a powerful hold upon our people that nothing will free them from this spiritual bondage except the grace of God. This is war, against which, all the people of the Lord should join hands, to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I am on the ground, and I watch daily, with jealousy, how the witchdoctors easily succeed among our communities, thankfully not among

the converted, in making followers of the people, and in making them pay oxen to appease the spirits, to be given magic to protect their homes and in many foolish superstitions. Some witchdoctors are in the courts of the country, answering for the robbery they have committed by collecting much from the people. There are so many schools of these witchdoctors and false sects and they are all prospering. But when you come to the true gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ – may the Lord have mercy on us – you hit on flint.

The only remaining lady of the very first of those who started with us is nursing a sprained foot. She slipped and fell while she was drawing water from the Runde River. She had to spend some days in Harare receiving treatment, but we thank the Lord that she is back in the congregation, although walking with the help of crutches.

The elder at Munaka is not keeping very well. He is over 80 years of age. Munaka has never been short of men nor of women. Among the men of Munaka was the late Mr. Chitera who, when he was told that it was wrong to have two wives, sent away the second wife. Recently we were joined by Mr. Matinhure, whom we respect as a man of integrity and, with the blessing of the Lord, we hope will be of help to the isolated congregation of Munaka.

Mr. Siziba is still keeping well, and still of great help at New Canaan.

Mr. Mashavakure is of great help at Chiedza, Ingezi and Maware. Both these men could do more if they had faster means of conveyance. Regarding my eyesight, mist is increasing around me and I fear that very soon I shall not be able to travel far but the work does not depend upon me. The Owner of the vineyard will soon send other labourers to continue in the work.

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

“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). This is our prayer for Mbuma congregation and its stations, and for Binga also. They greatly need a resident nursing father for their spiritual welfare.

I desire to help as much as possible but my lack of enough strength hinders me. I can hear the call of the people of these places and their concern to have a shepherd, like the cry of the Macedonians: “There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:9).

It is our prayerful desire and hope that this vacant charge of Mbuma will be soon filled in the wisdom of Almighty God. The destitution of Mbuma and its stations in their need of a minister is like an open wound which needs the

utmost care or, like a pastorless flock, it is in danger of being scattered mercilessly by wolves. It is good that the hand of our sovereign God is in control of the situation and that He is the keeper of Israel. "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul" (Psalm 121:7).

Widespread as they are, Mbuma and its stations have been kept open on Sabbaths and for weekday prayer meetings. In my absence the elders and deacons have carried the burden of conducting the services. The Sabbath afternoon service at Mbuma itself is conducted by the Catechist, and Sabbath School classes and Bible classes are held in between the services. The Mbuma elders now go to Sikhaleni to conduct worship each Sabbath afternoon and Thursday, because the lack of suitable transport prevents us ferrying people, as we once did, from there to the main church at Mbuma.

The sacraments were dispensed; the Lord's Supper twice at Mbuma in April and October, and once at Somakantana in August. Baptism was administered at Gampakalata.

The Mbuma manse is no longer habitable due to severe cracks in the walls. Another site has been chosen for the new manse and, with help from experts, it is hoped we shall have a long-lasting structure.

Binga was visited once. There are a few at the Binga centre who desire us to preach the gospel to them and to establish a permanent place of worship there, but we are handicapped by the shortage of manpower.

We cast all our burden on the Lord, and pray that He will hear our cry for a shepherd. "Help, Lord . . ." (Psalm 12:1).

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

LIKE Samuel of old it is good to take a stone and name it Eben Haezer. It is the Lord alone who enabled us to continue with all the work in and around the hospital.

Administration and finance

Financially 2010 has been a stable year. The ordering system was back to normal. Many suppliers have email and Skype these days and ordering was done using these contact possibilities. Most items were available in Zimbabwe again. In general the prices were stable and quite reasonable, except for drugs. Some medication was not restocked due to extremely high prices. We continued to place one large order at IDA, the Dutch pharmaceutical supplier. A few other items, which were difficult to source in Zimbabwe, were imported from South Africa or Botswana.

The delivery time also has improved considerably. Most suppliers are able to deliver within a few days, which really helps in the smooth running of the hospital.

The budgeting for the revenue remittance was reasonably correct. The budget for some of the capital projects was adjusted in the course of the year, whereby some smaller projects were cancelled and the money of these projects was used to cover the over-expenses of bigger projects. Out of the total of 40 projects (34 new, 6 ongoing), 6 were cancelled and the money reallocated.

The following donations were received, either via the government, other NGOs or from overseas:

- 1 desktop computer for the TB programme;

- Different amounts of money for medication which were ordered at NatPharm Bulawayo;

- PlumpyNut supplies for malnourished children were received until August, when we had to go back to our own donation programme funds;

- 2 containers with the following items: hospital beds, mattresses, laptops, meeting room table and chairs, ambulance beds, and some medical assortment.

Capital Projects and Maintenance

In our aim to upgrade the hospital to a maintainable level, 2010 proved to be very successful. Many projects were undertaken and finished. Because of the several projects running at the same time, quite a number of local contractors were temporarily employed, besides our normal workforce, which was much appreciated by the community.

We also got help from volunteers from Holland. In February two men, Kees Wemmers and Evert van Ettikhoven, came to assist in the upgrading of the kitchen. Worn out surfaces and cupboards created unhygienic conditions, which was not very advisable for a hospital kitchen, therefore a restructuring of the inside walls, replacement of cupboards and tiling of the walls was done. The volunteers brought the money which was needed for this exercise and they tried to share their expertise with our local men.

To get a more sustainable solution for the problems with our never-ending cracks, it was thought wise to get a proper evaluation of the soil and building strategies in Mbumba. An engineer from Holland, Maarten Vroegindewey, was found willing to come and visit us. He encountered different reasons for the several cracks and wrote a comprehensive report, which will give us some guidance for the erection of future buildings. One of the objectives of his visit was a survey on the Mbumba manse. Based on his and a Zimbabwean engineer's advice, it has been decided to demolish the current structure and build a new manse.

The fourth volunteer was Niels Wemmers, who came to assist in upgrading our site plan. Because many changes in buildings, electricity and plumbing systems happened in the course of the years, the old maps of the Mission were not up-to-date anymore. Using GPS all different structures were entered into a computer programme, which created an easy-to-hand-over overview.

The extension of staff accommodation in the form of small, easy-to-maintain units, was continued and resulted in a total of 30 huts. The staff who moved in, gave the place the name New Makhaya (= New Home), showing their appreciation of the facilities and the quiet environment. However, 10 of the huts are not yet occupied, because it was found that the contracted builder had used the wrong type of wood for the roof, which contained woodworm. These roofs, therefore, have to be replaced, which means that some of the staff still have to share accommodation for the time being.

The erection of two new houses for qualified staff, a project which started in 2007, was finally finished. The houses are occupied by PCNs now. To prevent cracks, a special foundation was made, according to the advice of engineers, whereby soil was removed and replaced by solid gravel. Despite the immense effort this took, the first house, which was erected two years ago, has developed its first serious cracks. Besides these new buildings, two other existing buildings were upgraded, which resulted in 4 family units and 3 rooms for qualified male staff.

One of the existing dorms was changed to a new AIDS clinic, because the old AIDS clinic had become too small for the number of patients served. In September the official opening was celebrated with several local dignitaries, who positively commented on the Biblical approach we use in Mboma of the AIDS pandemic. One of the rooms in the new building has become the library, which is equipped with 4 computers as well, which are used for training of the staff.

A general upgrade of the hospital was done, whereby leaking roofs were repaired and ceilings replaced, besides filling of cracks and external painting of the entire hospital building.

One of the dorms, the Upper dorm, had developed serious cracks and advice from the engineer was sought to find out what to do with the building. The building was found strong enough to be upgraded. All the cracks were therefore filled and, hopefully, it can be used for some more years.

The gatehouse was still in good condition as far as constructional strength was concerned. But as the watchmen were using firewood stoves inside the building, the whole building had become dirty with smoke. To avoid having this smoke inside after having painted the interior, a veranda was constructed where they could do their cooking. Besides that, the electricity was rewired, as was the telephone system.

As flushing toilets inside the hospital buildings were requiring a lot of maintenance and often caused unhygienic conditions, most of them have been replaced with Blair toilets. These Blair toilets (improved ventilated pit latrines) are easier to clean and the patients are more familiar with the use of them.

The hospital has been suffering from lack of water during breakdowns of pumps and other parts of the water system and, therefore, the following was done to improve the reliability of the water supply: replacement of old water storage tanks by new plastic ones, drilling of 2 new boreholes and the installation of an electrical submersible pump which is running on the main

generator. Besides this a start was made to replace the underground pipes, which needs to be continued during the coming years. Water in Mbuma has been heated by burning firewood in so-called donkey chimneys. This has been an effective way of getting hot water for many years but the systems are old now and starting to leak. Besides this it is quite labour intensive to acquire enough firewood. Therefore, a more firewood-economical type of water heater, which has been used in the Kenyan Mission, has been imported and tested. The good results, in combination with information from the Kenyan Mission, resulted in the decision to gradually replace the donkey chimneys with these Kuni boosters, of which so far two have been installed.

Even though tight restrictions on the use of electricity were in place for our two 9kVa engines, the electricity load was about to grow, due to extension of the hospital and staff accommodation. To be prepared for this growing demand, a new generator was chosen of 18kVa. This generator is also used to power the new electrical water pumps. The fuel that is saved – because the engines for the water pumps are not needed anymore – is used to run the new generator. Altogether the diesel consumption is staying amazingly low, keeping in mind that both electricity and water has to be generated on site.

Because the generator does not run 24 hours to keep the diesel consumption low, the hospital relies on solar power for lighting during the night; besides this the solar system powers the computer equipment and telephone system. During the year the system has been upgraded and expanded. A backup charging system has been installed so that the batteries are charged, even during cloudy days.

In the previous years, a lot of effort has been put in simplifying and updating the electrical wiring and system. Some minor remaining issues have been undertaken in 2010, together with the installation of the new generator.

A new telephone system was to be installed as there was a requirement for more internal lines. This has been done and also the existing cabling has to be put underground in shielded cables as the overhead lines were prone to damage.

Software development has continued to make record-keeping of patients and office processes easier and more centralized. The following departments are using this computer system now: Dispensary (stock-keeping of drugs and other consumables), Home Based Care (patients records, defaulter tracing and supervision of all the volunteers, statistics), Opportunistic Infections Clinic (record keeping, defaulter tracing, statistics), Ordering (record-keeping of orders, quotations and backorders), Finance (record-keeping and reporting about all the financial transactions), and Human Resources (record-keeping of employees). To enable the various departments to use this centralized system, some hardware has been brought into place, like a small solar-powered server, backup system, wireless and wired network.

As the mission paths tended to look more like rivers than paths, part of the Mission has been levelled and gravelled. This project needs to be continued in the next year.

There is no electrical cooling in the mortuary nor did we like to install it, as this keeps the load off the generator and diesel consumption low. However, it sometimes happens that patients who have passed away in the hospital cannot be collected immediately. A plan, therefore, was made to use natural cooling. The building that has been erected has layers of soil covering the sides and top. In the dry time of the year this layer of soil is kept wet daily; the water evaporates in the hot African sun and the process of evaporation cools down the mortuary considerably.

For many years our labour ward has been one of the most busy places of the hospital. However, the level of privacy and hygiene did raise some questions. It was, therefore, decided to move the wards and do some internal alterations to create a more spacious maternity unit. The upgrade was started in December and, hopefully, will finish soon in the course of 2011.

The lorry (UD 40) became increasingly unreliable, therefore it was replaced by a bigger one (UD 70), allowing more goods to be transported from Bulawayo to Mbuma at any one time.

Staffing

Because of the fact that the working environment in Mbuma, and in Zimbabwe in general, is still not attractive for qualified staff, we continued to put effort into training and upgrading of our staff via our Staff Development Programme. This resulted in 2 staff members who finished their Counselling Training and two PCNs who managed to achieve a Diploma in HIV/AIDS management. For all staff an in-house training for certain blood tests, AIDS refresher course and weekly case presentations were done. A Red Cross training was conducted for 20 students; practical training also continued in the course of the year as usual. Seventeen external workshops, organised by the Ministry of Health and NGOs, were attended by 25 staff members.

Two ex-Nurse Aids came back after finishing the PCN training. One RGN transferred from a clinic and started working with us. A Nurse Aid went for PCN training and another for Microscopist training. This brought the total number of qualified nurses to 6 RGNs and 19 PCNs. The other 31 members of the nursing staff consist of Nurse Aids, Counsellors, Microscopist, Health Orderlies, Pharmacy assistants and Clerks.

Mr. A Mdlongwa, our foreman, retired in August and his post was filled by Mr. T. Moyo, one of our drivers.

During the year 4 employees were moved from the Mission pay list to the Government list, to fill empty posts. Besides this we continued to lobby for an extension of our establishment, but so far have not met with success. At the moment, out of the total number of 81 employees, 27 are Mission paid and 54 are paid by the Government.

Sr. Celia Renes, Sr. Gilia van Wijngaarden, Sr. Erica van Breda, Dr. Anneke Snoek and Sr. Willie Geurtsen went on furlough in January, March, June, September and November respectively. Mr. Johan Verhaar finished his contract and left in September 2010. We are thankful for the large amount

of work he was able to realize in the past 2 years and we are looking back on a pleasant time of working together. The vacancy he left was advertised for.

Hospital

The hospital remained as busy as it has been in previous years. The total number of admissions increased, mainly because of the increased number of deliveries.

The number of deaths is slightly going down. We hope that it is the first sign of the effectiveness of our AIDS programme, whereby our main aims are to prevent new HIV infections and to diagnose the infected persons at an early stage, when treatment is still possible.

	2009	2010
Admissions	2,326	2,524
General	1,196	1,180
Paediatrics	465	485
Maternity	665	915

Bed occupancy rate		
General	89.7%	88.9%
Paediatrics	59.5%	63.0%
Maternity	26.8%	55.4%

Deaths	217	209
General	175	150
Paediatrics	34	40
Early/Late Neonatal	12	15
Maternity	1	0

The number of admissions to the Paediatric ward increased slightly. The number of children enrolled in the Malnutrition programme were less, because we did not receive PlumpyNut supplies during the last 4 months of the year. However, the cure rate for the children who were treated did improve a lot.

Paediatric Ward	2009	2010
Admissions	431	458
Referrals in	34	27
Deaths	34	40

CMAM = Community Management of Acute Malnutrition	2009	2010
Admissions onto programme	21	4
Admissions in ward	109	64
Readmissions	6	2
Total	136	70

Outcome for CMAM	2009	%	2010	%
Cured	63	46.3	61	87.1

Many children were born in 2010. The number of institutional deliveries increased by 39%, while the number of reported home-deliveries increased by 50%. We are happy with the increased number of institutional deliveries; however, we are still far from our goal of no home deliveries anymore.

We had fifteen (Early) Neonatal Deaths. Eight of them were severe premature babies. Four mothers of these eight preterms were HIV positive.

Thankfully there were no Maternal Deaths in 2010.

Births	2009	2010
Live births	649	901
Still births	9	14

2010	Hospital deliveries			Home deliveries			Total live births
	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	TBA ⁵	Other	Total	
	65	836	901	81	140	221	1,122

2010	Still births			Neonatal deaths			Maternal deaths		
	Fresh	Macerated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
	10	4	14	8	7	15	0	Unknown	0

We continued with our PMTCT program, to reduce the transmission of HIV during pregnancy and delivery, using a so-called More Efficacious Regimen, which contains three types of ARVs instead of one. Research was done by Wilmar Karels, a Medical student from Holland, to find out if this new regimen is indeed more efficacious in our catchment area. No significant decrease in the incidence of vertical transmission was found, besides a significant increase of preterm deliveries with the new regimen. However, the number of included women was too small to deduce strong conclusions.

The Caesarean Section rate for 2010 was 4.7%, which is quite alright for a rural hospital. The number of other procedures (the minor procedures are mainly the treatment of fractures, suturing of wounds, drainage of abscesses and the insertion of catheters and chest drains) increased by 17%.

Theatre/OPD	2009	2010
Caesarean section	34	40
Major cases	120	93
Minor cases	419	515

Despite the fact that our new X-ray machine did not arrive as expected, we managed to make quite a number of X-rays, although the quality sometimes was only moderate.

During past years a lot of effort was put into counselling and testing people for HIV, to make them aware of their status and lifestyle. So many people have been tested, that these days the number of patients who come into contact with any health services who never have been tested for HIV before, is much lower than in previous years, which explains the decrease in the number of HIV tests this year.

The cure rate for TB patients who finished their treatment in 2010 was 87%, which is quite high. However, the increased number of TB patients shows that we are still far from the eradication of TB.

Despite the fact that few patients were found to have malaria last year, we lost two adolescents – one due to delay experienced from the clinic to the hospital, the other due to severe anaemia.

Radiology services	2009	2010
Number of films	783	912
Pharmacy		
Number of attendances	17,880	18,639
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	4,649	4,332
Number of HIV tests	5,042	4,167
Environmental Health department		
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	365	549
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	50	14
Number of deaths due to malaria	–	2

To improve on the care for people living with HIV and AIDS, during 2008 a comprehensive Home Based Care plan was made, which is being implemented over a period of 5 years.

In 2009, Harmke van den Dikkenberg, a Social Science student from Holland, conducted a research study of our HBC programme. The thesis was received in 2010 and the conclusions were as follows:

The current HBC programme provides an important entrance for Biblical and medical teaching in the community;

The HBC programme educates people about several diseases and the ways to prevent them;

It is a good way of educating “healthy” people in the community (primary prevention) instead of informing patients in the hospital how to deal with their disease (secondary and tertiary prevention);

Besides this, the HBC programme is a way of decreasing the workload at the hospital. People who are in need of palliative care can stay at home, cared for by a trained volunteer, instead of in the hospital.

It was recommended to extend the programme according to our 5-year plan, to move towards a more bottom-up programme, with more support for the stakeholders and more evaluation, and to improve the education methods.

One of the major objectives for 2010 was decentralization of part of our programme. Until mid 2010 all the HIV-positive patients were supposed to come to the hospital to collect their treatment. This changed when, in collaboration with the community leaders, 11 places equally spread over our catchment area were chosen. The community was asked to build simple structures to provide shelter for our outreach team. Instead of the 3 previous outreach places (Magazi, Sivalo and Lukampa) now the 11 other places are visited once a month and the following services are provided: ANC, CWC, VCT and dispensing of Cotrimoxazole, which is, of course, much appreciated by the community as it significantly reduces their travelling distance.

	2009	2010
ANC (Antenatal Clinic) attendances	3,508	4,135
CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances	6,059	5,440

We continued with initiating patients on ART and managed to reach our target of 1,000 patients at the end of 2010. Quite a number of other clinics started to distribute ARVs in the course of the year, which meant that 44 patients transferred to other places near their own homes. Sadly, 24 patients came too late and, although they were commenced on the treatment, they died. Together with 6 transferrals-in this brought the actual number of patients to 916.

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2009	2010
Number of OIC visits	9,223	14,229
Number of patients started on ARVs till date	548	1,030
Number of patients who died while on ARVs till date	30	54
Number of patients transferred out till date	22	66
Number of patients continuing on treatment till date	494	916

The care for orphans, one of the other objectives of the Home Based Care Plan, was continued. The programme was extended to 80 orphans, who were

helped to attend either Primary School, Secondary School, Advanced level or Vocational training. They continued to receive regular support visits from the hospital and are encouraged to attend the Church services and Sabbath school. The Sabbath schools in Mbumba are accommodating approximately 100 children, divided into three groups now, with one for teenagers, who hardly leave their places empty.

Most of above report concentrates on temporal matters and bodily needs. But how much we need to pray that it may work out for the good of people's souls. Mr. Nkiwane, our Catechist, continued to look after the spiritual needs of our patients and staff. Besides the work in the hospital he also went out into the community on a regular basis. In Singeni, after several requests from the community and after discussion with Rev. Mloyi, representing the Kirk session, a Bible Class was started fortnightly on Tuesdays and services were held on Sabbath once a month. More and more the need for an extra Catechist was felt. The request for an extra post was granted; the post was advertised and, hopefully, will be filled soon.

PCN = Primary Care Nurse

Rapid Syphilis Test and PCR HIV test

RGN = Registered General Nurse

TBA = Traditional Birth Attendant

PMTCT = Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission

Research question: What are the consequences of the MER for neonatal health in Mbumba Mission Hospital?

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

ANC = Ante Natal Clinic

CWC = Child Welfare Clinic

VCT = Voluntary Counselling and Testing for HIV

ART = Anti Retroviral Therapy

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

THE year 2010 has come to an end and another one has begun. It becomes a time when one would look back and be thankful to the Most High for His goodness and preserving mercies.

As I write this report, I look back at all the events I could remember and I find that there were some disappointments and some encouragements. David of old encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Bulawayo congregation is composed of mostly young people and it is good to see young people coming to the means of grace. What is disappointing is, that after having been brought up under the true doctrine of the Word of God

in the church, some end up going away in search of employment and further studies in places and countries where there are no Free Presbyterian churches. This is a great concern to the God-fearing parents. There are some who, after having brought up under the Word of God, are taken away by the lusts of the world and by the diverse cults, especially Pentecostalism. Nevertheless, the Lord has promised that, of all those whom the Father has given Him, none shall be lost.

A striking story from last year is of a 5-year-old girl belonging to the Nkulumane congregation. I did not know where she was coming from, or her parents. She was attending every Lord's Day service and each prayer meeting. Although she could not read the New Testament Bible that was given to her, whenever she would come to church, she would not leave it. One of the ladies at Nkulumane church went with her to her home so that we would get to know her parents. It was discovered that she stays near the church and that her mother is a widow.

I then visited their home and asked the mother how it came about that the little girl attended church. She then explained to me that it was her own desire to come to church. The mother said that she had first refused her daughter's request because she had no one to look after her in church. The young girl continued to ask her mother if she could go to church, until the mother finally let her go. She has continued coming to church ever since. What is pleasing and encouraging is that she has been joined by 7 of her friends. "Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

I look at this and say that the Lord is speaking loudly to the community bordering the church at Nkulumane, who neglect the gospel when it has come to their doorstep – knocking and no-one being there to open.

It is not only that alone. In Lobengula a woman started attending and when I asked her how it came about she knew of our church, she told me that she once stayed with her grandmother near Ingwenya Mission and her mother was either a member or adherent in the church – she could not ascertain. Her grandmother, in the late 1970s used to say to them that if they grew up, she would want them to go to the Ingwenya church. She was then reminded of her grandmother's words when she saw the church and has since started coming to the means of grace. She has been joined by 3 other ladies with their children, which is very encouraging. They all come from around Lobengula church.

Sometime back I started a Bible study, held on Saturdays at Lobengula. However, due to the economic hardships, it became difficult to travel and thus we could not continue. However, recently the young people approached me saying they wanted to study the Bible and Confession of Faith, so we now hold this class after the church services every Sabbath. This has been very encouraging, as it has also afforded me the opportunity to measure their knowledge of the doctrine of the Word of God and to help them where they need to be taught. It is the Word of God only that can keep our young people from the many falsehoods that have taken our country by storm.

It is my prayer also that the Lord Himself would bless these endeavours, though they are done in weakness. He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness".

We still have our 5 preaching stations in Bulawayo, namely: Lobengula, Nkulumane, Mguza, Mahatshula and Thembiso (prayer meeting only). Attendance is good in all these stations, although in some relocations are slightly affecting attendance, but generally, we are happy and thankful that the whole council of God to save sinners is declared. I am kept busy as there is a prayer meeting each and every day of the week, with the exception of Monday. On Tuesdays at 08.00 the prayer meeting is at Thembiso, Wednesdays at 16.00hrs it is held at Nkulumane, Thursdays at 15.00hrs it is held at Mguza, on Fridays at 16.00hrs at Lobengula, and then Saturdays at 15:00hrs at Mahatshula.

On Friday mornings I usually visit Thembiso Primary School, to have Bible and Catechism study with the children.

Bulawayo communions have been well attended, with some men and women received and added to the communion roll. To some, the sacrament of Baptism has been administered.

It is good to have Rev. P. Mzamo among us, whose love for the cause of the gospel and the church is undoubted. With the help of the elders and some professing men, the work of the gospel is going on unhindered. We were also thankful to have Rev. N. Ross amongst us, albeit for a short time, but he managed to take the prayer meetings at Thembiso and Mguza.

The Mahatshula stand has been allocated to us, so that we can build our place of worship, and we are thankful to the Lord for that and the congregation is now busy collecting funds to start building as soon as the funds permit. We commit all things to the Lord.

In conclusion, I would like, on behalf of the Bulawayo congregation, to thank the church overseas and our Dutch friends for their prayers and support for the cause of the Gospel in our land.

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

ZIMBABWE PRESBYTERY TRANSLATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. S. Khumalo

IN 2007, the Ndebele New Testament translation from the Received Text was printed by the Trinitarian Bible Society. The Translation Team continued to translate the Old Testament into Ndebele. The Committee is pleased to report that this has now been completed. A manuscript of the whole Bible, including

an updated New Testament, has been delivered to the Trinitarian Bible Society for printing. The grateful thanks of the Committee are given to the various members of the Translation Team for their work in completing the task. The main members of the Team were Mr. T. Benschop, Mr. N. Mpofu, Mr. B. Mzia and Miss C. M. MacAulay. They carried out the translation in a serious and diligent manner becoming the solemnity of the task. The Committee also thanks the various other people in Zimbabwe who assisted in the translation project in many ways. These included typing, proof reading and language expertise. The committee also thanks the Trinitarian Bible Society for their assistance in the project. This included expertise in the original languages. They are also to be thanked for bearing the considerable cost of printing the new Bible. It is the prayer of the Committee that the Most High would use His Word for the conversion of sinners and the edification of His people. We are quite sure that the people of the church in Zimbabwe will be glad to receive the whole Word of God in one volume. It will be adopted as the Bible for worship within the bounds of the Presbytery.

During the year under review the translation of the Shona Bible from the Received Text continued. The main translator is Mr. T. Mwedzi. He is a member in New Canaan and a former primary school teacher. It was decided that during 2011 an assistant translator would be employed. The funding for this was included in the 2011 Development Plan. It was also decided that the Shona based workers would relocate to Zvishavane and that the translation work would be based there. This should be achieved later in 2011, DV.

THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT

B. Maphala

I ASSUMED duty as Thembiso Children's Home Superintendent on 3rd January 2011. I was privileged to be under the stewardship of Mr. S. B. Mpofu, who had retired from office with effect from 31st January 2011. He gave me an invaluable insight into the administration and supervision of Thembiso Children's Home institution.

With the help of the Lord, I hope I shall be able to work according to the expectations of the Mission. As the Psalmists puts it, rightfully so, in Psalm 31:3: "For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me." I got into office when the Home was a hive of activity. A lot of construction was underway, including the conversion of dormitories into family units. House numbers 1, 2, 3 have been completed, house numbers 4 and 5 are just underway. As I write, these houses are nearly complete, they are just doing some finishing touches. Hopefully children will move in at the end of March 2011. Sister Petra is to monitor how they settle in. The official opening of the family units will be in May 2011, DV.

Children

The diet of our children has improved greatly from that of the previous year, due to the stability of our economy – food is now abundant in our local shops at affordable prices. A few HIV cases are under control. We still experience hardships in trying to obtain birth certificates for our children but we are trying our level best to get them all, God willing. This year we had two outings for children, one for the oldest to Victoria Falls and the other for our little ones to the Railway Museum. They had a wonderful time out there. Each day in the Home begins and ends with family worship, when all children, including the small ones, attend.

Sabbath Day

A new 30 seater bus was bought to ferry children to and from the church services at Lobengula on the Lord's Day. Soon after family worship on the Lord's Day there are Scripture lessons conducted by the Superintendent with the assistance of the professing house mothers.

Bible study

We have 13 children who attend lessons conducted by Rev. S. Khumalo every Lord's Day after formal services between 4-5 p.m.

Scripture exercises

Some of our children take part in the *Young People's Magazine* Scripture exercises. Quite a number got awards. We would like them to do that yearly if the Lord will help us.

Schooling

All school age going children are attending lessons; small ones in our school near by. All the bigger ones are at Luveve Secondary School, except one of our boys who is in Form 2 at the John Tallach Secondary School.

We have 2 girls who are doing Red Cross theory and we hope they will do practicals at Mbumba Mission Hospital. One boy is doing a crash course in order to supplement his O Level in June 2011, DV. One girl is doing a 2-year course in Art at Mzilikazi Art Centre. All the Primary school children from Grade 3 upwards receive extra lessons after school hours, which improves their academical performance. The secondary school children get extra lessons in Maths, English and Ndebele.

Departures

One of our girls, Sothile Moyo, was reunited with her mother at Siganda area. The Home assisted in building a house and a toilet for her through donated funds. She was assisted with a sewing machine to kick-start her adult life and equipped with sewing skills prior to her departure. Two other small girls were taken by a foster parent through the Social Welfare department – Dube Juliet, a Grade 4 pupil, and Tariro Zivaishe, a Form 1 pupil. Blessing Midzi was taken

by his mother. Respect and Avriel Ncube were taken by their grandfather and grandmother respectively. Shylet Pinky Dube was taken by her aunt with Social Welfare permission/approval.

Staff

As we move closer to a new structure in the Home we shall soon retrench some of the staff and remain with 12 trained house mothers. The house mothers were trained for four months at Thembiso and they did their practicals for 2 weeks at Mbumba Mission Hospital, trained by Sister Petra Beukers assisted by Sister Margaret Macaskill.

Conclusions

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all workmates who assisted me to settle down – in particular, Mr. H. Mackenzie who gave me invaluable support. I was touched and remembered the words of David in Psalm 133:1: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” I hope that the spirit of oneness will prevail, DV.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

M. A. Mpofu

IT is difficult to realize that it is now well over a year since I wrote the last Synod Report. The speed of time constantly reminds one of the truths in the Word of God which clearly describe this phenomenon. But we are slow to comprehend how quickly the years go by; “swifter than a weaver’s shuttle” (Job 7:6). However, all our Mission Institutions are seeking to impress this solemn truth and all that is relevant to it upon the minds of all that come into contact with them.

Field and Sub Committee

The Field Committee held its quarterly meetings to oversee the operations of the Mission Institutions and Departments. The Sub Committee also met monthly to deal with the executive business of the Mission. Resolutions of the Sub Committee are reported to the Field Committee on scheduled meetings and by the circulation of minutes.

Mr. S. B. Mpofu, who had been Chairman of the Sub Committee from its formation, retired at the end of January 2011. During his term of office Mr. Mpofu proved that he was a very prudent and humble leader, always executing his duties professionally and diligently. We all wish him the Lord’s blessings as he returns to his rural home in Nkayi. Mr. M. A. Mpofu is now the new Chairman of this Committee.

Staffing

The Mission has 121 employees on its payroll, 21 of whom are non-graded, which means their salaries are not determined by the National Employment Council. John Tallach Secondary School pays its own workers, although when it comes to wage negotiations we try to bring everybody together.

The wage bill accounts for a large portion of our yearly budget. The Field Committee has resolved that employees removed from the pay system through natural attrition should not be replaced unless it is absolutely necessary. The thrust now is to use casual labour wherever possible for any jobs that come up.

In 2010 the Mission had to deal with wage disputes, particularly at Ingwenya, because of the influence the workers get from the city. When workers alleged underpayment, Head Office management engaged these workers in negotiations to try and resolve the dispute or to assist them in understanding the effects of the harsh economic climate on the institutions and, indeed, on the country they are operating in. The use of the more stable currencies was different from the Zimbabwean Dollar which could be printed easily. The two parties agreed on \$150 for the lowest grade with a 10% difference between the grades. Workers demanded that salaries be back-dated to January 2009. The employer explained that this was not affordable and the issue reached deadlock, being referred to the National Employment Council for arbitration. Providentially, before the matter was dealt with by the arbitrator, the Employers' Association advised that all wage structures that had been awarded in 2009 had been challenged in court by the Association and the judgment of the Court was in the Employers' favour, consequently a stay of execution had been granted.

A new wage structure was negotiated nationally and agreed to by all parties in December 2010: the lowest grade would get a basic wage of \$210 and the differences between the Grades would be 10%. These wages were back-dated to September 2010. It has to be understood that over and above this basic wage, employees are entitled to housing and transport allowances plus what is termed service award, which is 1% of the basic wage multiplied by the number of years a worker has served. Consequently a long-serving Grade I can actually get almost double his basic wage.

The Mission realized it could not afford these wages which are, in fact, higher than those of the Civil Service. An application for an exemption of these wages could be made after negotiating with workers and making them understand that this huge wage bill would be unsustainable. One is happy to report that after protracted negotiations, the workers accepted our offer of \$160 for the lowest grade with 10% difference between the grades. This will be back-dated to September 2010 and all is within our 2011 budget. The Mission signed a memorandum of agreement with all employees at Ingwenya, Mbumba and Thembiso, and an application for exemption from the national award was made on the strength of these agreements.

Retrenchment at Thembiso

Due to the reorganization of Thembiso Children's Home from the dormitory set-up to family units, at least 10 staff members will become redundant; consequently they have to be retrenched. The retrenchment package would have been concluded at the institution if there was a Works Council. In the absence of this Council, all the processes were referred to the National Employment Council. An application was made in September 2010 and to date the matter has not been dealt with. We have since made an appeal requesting that the matter be finalised without any further delay because the conversion work is almost complete and the affected workers have to get their dues and be removed from our payroll. At law the National Employment Council should have dealt with the matter within 30 days. Failure to do so meant that the matter should have been sent to the Retrenchment Board. It is a violation of the law on the part of the NEC that this matter has taken so long to be finalised.

Expatriate Staff

Currently there are 8 expatriate staff members employed at various Mission stations.

Work permits take a long time to be granted and renewed, but all our staff has been able to continue working as they wait for their permits. Once an application has been submitted and payment accepted by Immigration no problems are experienced. One just needs to exercise patience. Three members of staff – Johan Verhaar, Naomi Rowland and Jacqueline Freeke – returned home after their contracts terminated in 2010.

The Benschop family also had to go back to Holland when Mrs. Benschop took ill. Mr. Benschop has since left Mission employment through mutual agreement with the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee.

Rev. K. Watkins and Mr. H. Mackenzie made the usual trips to attend to Presbytery matters and to co-ordinate Mission activities respectively.

Miss K. MacAulay and Miss Margaret MacAskill came to the Mission to assist in Bible translation and training of the Thembiso Children's Home house mothers respectively.

All staff who were due furlough were able to take their well deserved rest.

Visitors

Rev. N. M. Ross visited the Mission as a Deputy in November 2010. The purpose of his visit was to chair the interview meeting for the post of Superintendent of Thembiso Children's Home. The interview went very well: Mr. B. Maphala was successful and assumed duty in January when Mr. S. B. Mpofu retired. The Mission is grateful to Mr. S. B. Mpofu for the faithful service he rendered for over a decade.

A number of expatriate staff received family members and visitors during the course of the year.

Finance

The General Treasurer continued to send the monthly financial remittances to the Mission.

Motor vehicle repair bills and salaries continue to draw the bulk of our budget. Controls have been put in place to try and reduce expenses and one is happy to report that our fuel budget has remained the same, despite the fact that fuel prices have gone up. Departments are given an allocation and if they exceed this they have to pay for the extra fuel. The use of vehicle log books is now mandatory and this helps to monitor the mileage covered and amounts of fuel drawn, particularly by pool vehicles.

An analysis of the current fuel consumption trends indicates that we should be able to pull through the year and to build some reserves from surplus: this situation might see us reducing the fuel budget in the following financial year.

The auditors are busy with the Mission accounts for 2009 and 2010 and it is hoped these will be ready for presentation at this year's Synod meeting (DV).

Capital projects

A significant number of capital projects were completed as scheduled; others are due to be completed in the first quarter of the year. Of note is the conversion at Thembiso Children's Home.

The John Tallach Form 6 level extension is one of the few major projects that will be undertaken during the course of this year.

Communication

All communication installations and systems are working well and serving their purpose effectively. It is disappointing, though, that at times service providers fail to provide a reliable service and this adversely affects the Mission's communication network.

Bookroom

The Bookroom has managed to sustain itself in terms of purchases, orders, payment of utility bills, rates and rent. In 2010 part of the funds that had been budgeted for recapitalisation were vired to other projects. This was after the Bookroom had built a healthy bank balance from the sales. Rev. A. B. MacLean continued to assist with the overseas orders for Bibles and religious books. We are now contemplating advertising our religious books in the Press so that postal sales can be done for clients who live in other towns and cities.

Primary Schools

<i>School</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>	<i>Staffing</i>	<i>Grade 7 Pass Rate</i>	<i>(2009)</i>
Zenka	912	21	57%	21%
Mbuma	631	14	11%	15%
Lutsha	540	15	21%	14%
Thembiso	414	8	50%	68%
Ingwenya	334	9	45%	18%

Mr. M. Dube, Headmaster of Mbuma Primary School, retired at the end of 2010. He was replaced by Mr. M. Ndlovu, an adherent from Mpakama. It is hoped Mr. Ndlovu will help Mbuma improve its results.

Mr. B. Maphala resigned as headmaster of Thembiso Primary School to take up the post of Superintendent of the Home. He has been replaced by Mrs. Q. Moyo, a member in full communion in the Bulawayo congregation.

Zenka Primary School is under the headship of Mrs. E. Ndebele, a member of the church at the same Mission.

Ingwenya Primary School is headed by Mr. J. Mpofu, an adherent from Manomano in the Nkayi District; his grandparents were members of the Church there. He got his secondary education at John Tallach and first taught at Zenka before his appointment as Acting Head. One would safely assume that he has adequate knowledge of the doctrine and teachings of our Church. Miss S. Nkomo, the Acting Head of Lutsha Primary School, has no strong connection with the Church, except that she began her teaching career at Mbuma and has thus been exposed to our Church doctrines and practices for a long time.

The Church has problems when it comes to the appointment of head teachers at her institutions. We do not have professing people who are suitably qualified to take up these posts.

In the past our primary schools have benefited from the financial support given by the Oikonomos Foundation. This organization has since withdrawn its support: consequently the Church will provide support for building projects.

Thembiso Primary School received a donation of building materials for a classroom from the Parents' Association, which has also promised to pay the builder who will erect the classroom. Ingwenya and Mbuma Schools hope to build classrooms and toilets respectively during the current year. Zenka Primary School received a donation of cement from the Red Cross for the construction of a multi-compartmental toilet; parents will provide the labour during the construction.

The Schools Development Committee has agreed that all pupils in our schools should do the Scripture and Catechism Exercises; because of the large numbers of pupils the papers will be marked locally after marking guides are sourced from Scotland and it is hoped some scripts will be sent to Scotland for examination.

The Bible Quiz, introduced a few years ago, is still part of the school calendar. In 2010 Ingwenya hosted the function and this year Mbuma will be the host venue. Questions will be set from Exodus and Acts of the Apostles. Thembiso Primary School has come top for the past two years.

Conclusion

I wish to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all Heads of Departments for the support they gave me and my staff in the Mission Head Office – we really worked as a great team. Mr. H. Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator,

needs special mention for the support he gave all Heads of Departments. We owe him a lot for fine-tuning the 2011 Development Plan and Budget. Our gratitude to him is better felt than can be expressed.

We could have experienced disappointments and anxious moments during the course of the past year but we got encouragement from the Master of the Field. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

TRANSPORT AND BUILDING PROJECTS REPORT

P. Mzamo

IN Proverbs chapter 18, verse 24, it is said "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother". In difficult times some people become tired of other people but the Lord Jesus Christ is always with His people; as we are spared up to now it shows that the Lord Himself never gets tired of us as sinners, He is closer to us as individuals, as families, and more as a Church and we have to be thankful to the Lord for His spiritual work among us.

TRANSPORT

Our transport fleet as a Mission has not gone well for us in 2010, especially the old vehicles which have been in and out of the garages now and then. Again, the factor of bad roads in our rural areas, where most of our mission work is, had an impact on our transport fleet in terms of damages, tear and wear.

Head Office

had four vehicles last year – all Mazda pickups. Two old Mazda pickups were disposed of during the course of the year and a motor cycle was procured for the office use. The other two remaining pickups are still in good condition; one is used by the Administrator and the other by the Transport and Building Projects Manager.

Bulawayo congregation

has two vehicles – one used by the congregation as a bus, since they are situated in an urban situation. This vehicle is old and unroadworthy. The other Toyota pickup, used by the minister, is in good condition.

Thembiso Children's Home

has four vehicles – one Toyota pickup, used by the Superintendent, a double-cab Nissan, used by the Nurse for the Home, a Toyota Hiace, used as a mini

bus for the children and orders, and a newly-purchased 32-seater Nissan Bus for the children of the Home. All the above vehicles are still in good condition.

Ingwenya Mission

has six vehicles – two Nissan pickups, one used by the minister which has been in and out of the garage for some repairs due to the terrain it travels over, which is certainly not in good condition, the other Nissan being used by the Mission staff and, although it had some panel beating here and there, is still in good condition.

The big lorry, which has carried the responsibility of developing all projects in all Mission Stations throughout the country, is now defunct and plans are underway to get an engine from Holland to render it roadworthy.

There are three vehicles for the school – a Mazda double-cab for the Headmaster, a Nissan UD40, used as bus and for orders, and a big Daf Bus for ferrying schoolchildren; all these are still in good condition.

Mbuma Mission Hospital

has five vehicles – a Toyota Land Cruiser Ambulance still in good condition, a Toyota Land Cruiser, used for home-based care outreach, which is still in good condition, a Toyota Hilux double-cab, used by the staff, which is still good condition, a newly purchased Nissan UD70 7 tonne lorry, still new, and a Nissan UD40 small lorry which has some defects and, at the moment of writing this report, it has been transferred to assist the Lobengula congregation since they have a problem with their bus. A further vehicle is a tractor, used for refuse and firewood collection, which is in good condition. There are three motorcycles for health assistance in the hospital, one of which is at a garage for repairs.

Zenka Mission

has one car for the use of the minister. This car is not in good condition because of the roads and it has been in and out of the garage.

Zvishavane

has one truck and trailer for the use of the minister. This is not in good condition but has been overhauled. However, being overturned, it sustained minor dents which need to be attended to.

BUILDING PROJECTS

A Head Office boundary wall for the town office was constructed during the year and completed – the other project of kitchen, bathroom and toilet renovations was carried forward to 2011.

Ingwenya Mission

Extension of Church for the development of Advanced Level at John Tallach Secondary School. The extension has been done and completed.

Themviso Children's Home

The renovations, started in 2009, were carried over to 2010, although there have been some technical problems (contractors not doing the work properly but corrections were amicably made). To renovate a building is a considerable task because you have to demolish and start afresh – constructing a new building is faster with less cost. As of now the construction part of it has been completed at Themviso and only final touches need to be done.

Maware Church

Whereas the congregation and the Mission had previously to meet halfway, the structure has been completed, with only floors, painting, the benches and pulpit needing attention.

Zvishavane Church Stand

The Church Stand in Zvishavane was finally allocated to us in 2010 after about 27 years on the waiting list and we have started to make some developments on the Stand. It has been fenced, building plans are being processed and, hopefully, construction will start this current year.

KENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. K. M. Watkins

THE Art of Man-fishing. That was the title of Thomas Boston's manual of advice to preachers on the principles involved in fishing for the salvation of souls, based on the Saviour's words in Matthew 4:19: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." In Kenya there is a lot of man-fishing these days. But not the kind that Christ and Boston had in view. In a recently-published tract entitled *Fishers of Men?* we exposed the way so many self-appointed pastors and charlatans in Kenya (and especially in Kisiiland) use the internet to find churches in the West, and send fraudulent emails to obtain assistance. Western Christians are easily deceived by begging that purports to come in the name of Jesus and, like blind Isaac of old, they easily succumb to the plausible requests of these deceitful Jacobs. But the heart-rending cries of poverty are exaggerated, the orphanages non-existent, the religion a sham, and the churches mere shells whose only reason for existence is to cheat the unsuspecting. And all this is done in the name of Him "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22).

At least the temporary disciples of John 6, who sought only temporal benefits, had the honesty to go back and walk no more with Christ when they realised they had no spiritual taste for eating His flesh and drinking His blood. But nowadays in Kisii, Christ's enemies, Judas-like, continue apparently with Him, but only because they are thieves and want to get the contents of Christ's bag – the resources of western Christendom's churches and missions.

It is not only pastors but also professing Christians who play this game. Our own mission work constantly faces the problem of people pretending to be fish, getting caught in the net of gospel truth, but really they are fishermen themselves, with motives and ends as far distant from true man-fishing as it is possible to be. With the bait of their professed interest in the gospel, they seek to hook the mission's money. We can never take anything at face value.

The last few months have been worse than ever. One who was helped by mission connections through secondary school but left the church when rebuked for his grievous Sabbath breaking, joined forces with a known thief. Together they call themselves pastors, with money coming from the West. Then a most promising young man in the congregation, one we hoped we could use in secondary school teaching, impersonated his brother in the national Secondary School examinations. Quite rightly, this is an imprisonable offence in Kenya. But it is a frequent phenomenon in Kisii land.

Then the nurse in charge of our clinic handed in her notice two days before leaving, instead of the month her contract required, in the full knowledge that our government-seconded nurse was away sitting examinations, leaving us with only one qualified nurse for three weeks. She left the area, leaving behind her a trail of recently-contracted (and now untraceable) debts in the community. On the day of her departure two men arrived at the mission demanding repayment from her final dues of a large loan they had given her only one week before. Others were not able to recover their money, including one worker and his wife who guaranteed a loan she contracted early on the day she handed in her notice. And some years ago the mission had paid everything for this nurse's training! Then the mechanic who was sacked almost two years ago for prolonged stealing from the mission, and afterwards attended church only two or three times, wanted to speak to me. I had just preached on Zacchaeus, including the duty of restitution. Had he heard about that? No. He wanted me to write a letter confirming that he was fully part of our church, and could not understand when I refused. This is typical. Many want an association with a church only for some temporal advantage. Then a man who had been guarding the mission at night for a long time died in hospital, two days after murdering a local woman and then turning the knife on himself. These things do nothing to portray our mission in a good light.

Worse was to come. The latest mission to arrive in Sengera – just 100 metres from our own mission gate – proved to be “gay affirming”, believing in same-sex marriage and other evils. The pastor from Canada was himself a sodomite, with his church's website speaking of “his husband Peter”. It is a grievous abuse of the gospel to claim that true Christians can be homosexual, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, provided they are in a faithful covenant to just one partner! But that was the brazen effrontery of this man and his church. We personally warned him to repent of his wicked way, especially quoting Isaiah 55:7, but he was convinced he was committing no sin. “The whole have no need of a physician.” He accused us of “preaching a gospel of hate”. No, we explained. All are welcome to Christ, but those who name the name of Christ

must depart from iniquity. Anyway, before preaching to warn the people of the evil on our very doorstep, we informed the local authorities, in case there was any trouble. In Kenya, a mob can easily lynch such a person. Then we found that an American woman with this group (another so-called “pastor”) was a lesbian, with a female spouse. Our outspoken witness against this unheard-of evil in Sengera produced a threatening email being sent to Scotland against me, entitled “Take this man back to his own country”! Provided the money keeps flowing, this latest outrage is being tolerated by many in this supposedly Christian community for “filthy lucre’s sake”, with support even from some previously connected with our own mission.

People wonder why it took so long before baptism was administered in Sengera, and why the Lord’s Supper has still not been dispensed. Here is the answer. Even in front of the Kirk Session bare-faced lies can be told. Discerning the true grace of God is so difficult when so many people are deliberately cheating, making the gospel a cover for secular gain. However, the gospel is for sinners. Christ “came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). Even for deceitful sinners. Jacob was a deceiver, but the Lord met with him at Bethel through Christ the Mediator, the only ladder to reach between heaven and earth. And Jacob was never the same again. The same can happen in Kisii. So we continue, with an ever greater focus on the Word of God itself. Healing sick bodies, educating ignorant minds, and assisting impoverished people, all have their place, but only the Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit has been appointed by Christ as the direct means for saving His elect.

So we were delighted to publish an expanded book of Ekegusii metrical psalms in December 2010. Some 10% larger than the previous one, now 46% of the psalter has been translated. Various tracts pertinent to the Kenyan situation have been written and printed. Further passages of Scripture have been translated into Ekegusii for reading in public worship. And the TBS calendars were distributed once again.

The Word has been preached at Sengera and at the outstations. In the Catechism Class, we again reached the end of the *Shorter Catechism* during 2010 and since then have been over-viewing all the books of the Bible, with the people memorising the books in order. The five Sabbath School classes have continued each week. The first Sabbath School Conference was held in December 2009, and then three more during 2010. For the older ones these are residential, so that for two or three days from morning to night our young friends are taught the Word of God and have opportunity to ask questions on the issues they face in a culture that claims to be Christian but opposes anyone who seeks to implement Biblical principles fully. One wedding was conducted, and nine customary marriages were regularised with the issue of legal certificates.

We are thankful that there were no security breaches during the year. Buildings have been maintained in a state of good repair, although the majority of the underground water tanks are no longer holding water. With rainfall less

reliable, large plastic tanks are being considered, to maintain adequate water storage. The three vehicles are running well. Electricity supply has been problematic, and we are still pushing the suppliers for repairs to equipment. The new land has been partly walled, and we have received architects' plans. We enjoyed the visit of John G. MacLeod and his wife Mary last summer, with a view to his overseeing the construction in 2012. Mrs. MacLeod's teaching at the school was much appreciated. Advertisement is being made for an Administrator, to do the higher-level administration work, so that the two existing expatriate staff will not be so distracted from the work of the ministry, and translation and publishing.

At Rianyakwa Primary School, a number of projects were completed, including staff room restructuring and the furnishing of a library. Fencing the perimeter of the grounds has begun. The examination results were much improved, being the top government school in the zone. This brought an influx of more children, requiring extra desks, benches, and so on. Ministry officials from the Province conducted an inspection in March 2011, and were much impressed with the school's progress, along with the mission's support.

We greatly valued the help of Elizabeth Munns, who completed her gap year in August 2010, and also of Justin van Kralingen, who volunteered for a few months, assisting with practical projects. And we express our appreciation again to all who support the work here from afar. There must be a time appointed by the Lord, in which He will favour souls in this part of the world. And it will be the very truths currently promulgated by our Kenya mission which He will then use.

KENYA MISSION CLINIC REPORT

Rev. K. M. Watkins

THE past year witnessed an unavoidable but necessary adjustment in the services offered by our Omorembe Health Centre. As reported at the Synod last year, maternity delivery services were withdrawn in May 2010, in response to the ever-decreasing numbers making use of them. The 24-hour ambulance service had been withdrawn already over unresolved security concerns in the community, following a serious and almost deadly panga attack on the driver one night. A consequent reduction in clinic staff has been made, and the current compliment is: 2 qualified nurses (including one paid for by the Ministry of Health); 1 part-time laboratory technician; 1 full-time and 2 part-time support staff; 1 clerk; 2 part-time cleaners; and 1 voluntary community health worker. There had been 3 qualified nurses until January 2011 when the in-charge left abruptly. Her departure has not had any effect on the range of services offered nor the numbers of patients attending.

The outpatients' department now operates Monday to Friday, daytime only, treating malaria, stomach and chest infections, accident injuries and other

common complaints. A number of patients continue under long-term care and supervision, including TB and HIV/AIDS patients, who come regularly for free routine drugs, blood tests and support and advice. The support group for people living with HIV/AIDS now has more than 70 people coming each month. Their garden on the compound produces nutritional food. The laboratory is open from Monday to Thursday. The supply of various medicines and consumables by the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) continues to be unreliable. The ante-natal clinic sees an average of some 80 mothers-to-be attending each month, about 35 of whom are new clients. The child welfare clinic on Mondays and Tuesdays has more than 300 attending each month.

After another year, we still have to report that Omorembe Health Centre has failed to show any observable contribution to the furtherance of the gospel. Much help has been given. Much support has been afforded. Much money has been spent. Many resources have been absorbed. But, as has been the case throughout its history, almost no one is drawn even to attend a single church service.

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

REPORTS from ministers in our overseas congregations give us some impression of the extent of their work in the gospel. We are thankful to the Most High that they are able to continue in it and can report some progress.

Of all our congregations in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, the Grafton congregation in Australia is the oldest. It was known as the Grafton-Bushgrove Presbyterian congregation (of another denomination) prior to joining the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1911. In the kindness of the Lord it continues to the present. Its minister, Rev. E. Rayner, reports that the congregation has a balanced mix of ages, ranging from ninety years to babies. In the past year some new communicants were added to the roll, and a number of baptisms have taken place.

The Rev. G. Macdonald is now well established as minister of the Sydney congregation and, since September, is also happily settled in marriage. In this congregation also a number of new communicants have been received, and one child has been baptised. Mr. Macdonald's arrival in Sydney has been a great help, not only to the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery but also has greatly relieved Mr. Rayner from his many year's oversight of the Sydney congregation.

In New Zealand also, where Rev. J. van Dorp labours in a wide field, there have been new communicants accepted. It is expected that Rev. Jett Smith, having received and accepted a call from the Auckland congregation, will be

settled there in the the not too distant future. At the time of writing, Mr. Smith awaits a residence permit from the New Zealand authorities. It had been the intention of the Committee to send a deputy to the induction, but it seems that this is not now possible.

We are pleased that the Wellington congregation, although diminished, continues to worship regularly and had a communion season. In the town of Tauranga (which is about 180 miles north of Gisborne), our small congregation meets for public worship every Sabbath and for a prayer meeting every Thursday. The pastorless congregations in New Zealand are faithfully supplied by our elders, except, of course, when the interim Moderator can visit them or when ministers are present at communion times. In Napier a family belonging to our church regularly meets to listen to recorded sermons.

Once again there has been a Youth Conference in Sydney, which appears to have been a happy occasion with over thirty young people attending, including one visitor from Scotland. Youth conferences, of course, are not intended to displace public worship but are a handmaid for the furtherance of the gospel among the young.

We were pleased that the Rev. John MacLeod, London, was able to visit the people of our Singapore congregation, who were grateful for his visit and his preaching of the Word at the communion services.

We were glad that Mr. MacLeod was also able to take take the communion services in Chesley, Canada, in September. He also visited Vancouver where he met some of the old friends of the now disbanded congregation, including Mr. John A. MacLeod, who has done noble work in the past in maintaining our witness there. We hope that a door may yet be opened in Vancouver for the resumption of Free Presbyterian services. Rev. R. MacLeod continues to be the interim Moderator for Chesley Kirk Session, which is much appreciated by the congregation.

The Chesley congregation, like Singapore, is in good heart and we pray that the Lord will provide pastors after His own heart for both of them, as He has done for Sydney and Sante Fe.

Apart from Rev. John MacLeod, no other deputies were able to visit our overseas congregations, but it is the committee's intention that, God willing, at least one deputy will be sent abroad this year and next.

In Santa Fe there have been a number of communicants accepted; also a young man was recommended by the Kirk Session to the Presbytery with a view to his studying for the ministry in the Church. It is now three years since the Rev. Lyle Smith was settled in the Sante Fe charge, and the congregation has remained almost the same.

While there is a degree of spiritual prosperity in the congregations we have mentioned there is much reason to bemoan the low moral and spiritual state of the nations in which they are found. However, we are encouraged that our congregations in these countries seek to continue faithful to the doctrine, worship and practice required by the Word of God, and it is our prayerful hope that their witness will be blessed to many outwith their bounds.

We are sorry to report the passing away of Miss Lilian Marchi, of Fornaci di Barga, Italy. Lilian was, we believe, the mainstay of the small group there and is deeply missed by them and us. Lilian, it seemed to us, did more than most to keep the door open for the Free Presbyterian Church to hold occasional services in Fornaci di Barga. The group appreciated our small contribution but is now supplied by other churches, as it is of no fixed abode ecclesiastically.

Mr. Backhurst in Holland is still anxious that he and his family would belong to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He continues along with some friends to have public worship each Sabbath in Nijmegen. He has requested that our ministers supply the group from time to time but those ministers whom we have asked since Rev. J. Macleod's visit to the group have been unable to give supply. Mr. Backhurst appears to have a genuine desire for reformed worship, and we feel constrained to help him as we would any other group of Christians desiring to make their spiritual home in our Church. He is in contact mainly with Rev. John Macleod, and visits his London congregation from time to time.

As is shown by the report on the Eastern Europe Mission, in the goodness of the Most High we continue our mission work in the Ukraine, despite difficulties with bureaucrats and changes in the political scene which at times are detrimental to the work. The congregation is still small but it is good to see that its leaders are encouraged by the truth and are confident that the Word of God cannot return empty but will bear fruit by and by. The fact that we now have a Church website in Russian has broadened our work in those parts.

May all these gospel activities prosper more and more. Any spiritual prosperity whatsoever arises from the kindness of the Lord to his Church; therefore to Him be all the praise. "The Lord of us hath mindful been, and he will bless us still" (Psalm 115:12).

AUSTRALIAN REPORT

Rev. G. B. Macdonald

HERE in Australia we can say "hitherto hath the Lord helped us". Another year of gospel ordinances has passed in our two congregations, which are located in Sydney and Grafton, both within the State of New South Wales. Any visitor to Australia cannot fail to be struck by the sheer size of the country, where distances between the major cities are very great. Australia has a rugged beauty and, being a relatively young nation, it has an attractive and well designed capital, in the planned city of Canberra.

It does not take long to realize that this is a prosperous nation in economic terms, but poor in spiritual terms. There is much worldliness and the love of money and this is most starkly manifest in the love of gambling in various forms. Yet at the close of 2010, serious flooding in Queensland reminded us all how quickly prosperity can be lost. Due to the pleasant

outdoor climate, sport is a popular pastime but, sad to say, the Lord's Day is used time and again for the pursuit of this pleasure. There is evidence of the advance of false religion, various cults having made inroads, largely due to the spiritual ignorance of many. But in the face of these discouraging signs we are to continue to preach the gospel and maintain a witness to the Reformed faith.

Sydney Congregation

The Sydney congregation meets in the suburb of Riverstone in the Western Suburbs of Sydney, which is a major population growth area of this sprawling cosmopolitan city. March 2010 marked the ordination and induction of the first minister in the history of the congregation. It was a happy and joyful event, and the congregation and Presbytery were delighted to have the presence of Rev. David Campbell from North Tolsta, and his fellowship and ministry were greatly appreciated by all concerned.

There was one baptism during the year, and encouragement was had with the addition of six new members to the communion roll. Due to the arrival of the new minister it was also decided to have a second Communion Season each year on the first Sabbath of March. A congregational website was started as a means of outreach and in the Lord's goodness it has already proved a blessing. Throughout the year the gospel was preached and we look in hope for the blessing which the Holy Spirit alone is able to bestow.

While the general attendance throughout the year remained largely unchanged at around thirty on a Sabbath, the congregation were encouraged by regular visitors throughout the year. We trust they too received a spiritual blessing from the Word preached. May the Lord give the increase on the good seed of the gospel.

It is expected that over thirty young people will gather in January for the second Australia and New Zealand Young People's Conference, which is due to be held in Winmalee in the Blue Mountains, not far from Sydney. It is hoped that this conference will be able to address issues which especially affect the young.

Mr. Rayner has kindly contributed the following section of this report which refers to his own congregation in Grafton.

Grafton Congregation

It is a great encouragement to have another minister in Australia and especially in the largest city. It pleases the Lord by the foolishness of preaching to save them which believe. Yet we are conscious too, that Paul may plant and Apollos water, but that it is God who gives the increase.

The congregation in Grafton has a balanced mix of ages, ranging from ninety years to babies. There are several very aged people and one in a nursing home. All of the older generation are still able to regularly attend the services. There are a number of young people, some of whom are completing their education. Others need further training and work outside the limitations of our

small county town. While we are thankful that a number are able to be educationally provided for locally, this is not always possible.

We had the assistance of Mr. Macdonald, Sydney, for our communion in April and Mr. van Dorp, Gisborne, in October. It has proved a help to have one more minister to travel the distances for such occasions. There were two new communicant members and one baptism during the year. Visitors from Sydney to the communions come as they are able. It is always encouraging in small congregations to have such support. Besides that, we had some from overseas who were mindful to include the Grafton communion in their itinerary. Three catechism classes continue to be conducted by the elders and a number of the children also do the Magazine exercises.

We trust that with the Lord's blessing there will be fruit following and that there will be a continued witness for the stand our Church has taken for purity in doctrine, worship and practice. May the Lord continue to bear with us despite our sins and provocations. May it please Him that the candlestick be not removed, but that He would cause the light of the witness to truth and godliness to increase.

In conclusion, we must acknowledge the Lord's great goodness to us here in Australia. The need of a Reformed gospel witness is very great. May the good seed of the gospel which has been sown be blessed.

NEW ZEALAND AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp

THE work has continued much as in previous years except that it has not been necessary this year to visit the Singapore congregation. This occurred through the travels of Rev. E. A. Rayner in visiting the Synod so that he had the opportunity to stop off and conduct services and also preside at the annual general meeting. In December 2010 Rev. John MacLeod kindly agreed to conduct the communion season. There was one new communicant in Singapore on this occasion.

This was also the case in Gisborne; one adult person was added to the communion roll at our last communion. I had the assistance of the Rev. G. B. MacDonald at our communion in March 2010, and Rev. E. A. Rayner assisted at the second sacramental occasion in October 2010. In October, Rev. Jett Smith, who was supplying Auckland for a period of four Sabbaths, was able to come through to Gisborne and conduct the Fellowship service and also the preparatory service on Saturday morning, following which he had to fly back to Auckland to conduct the Sabbath services for the last Sabbath he was there. We are all thankful that we had the opportunity to meet him in Christian fellowship. This fellowship is precious because it centres in Christ and all the precious truths that are His. "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). An attack on the truth is an attack on Christ Himself. The Auckland

congregation have a good number of young people and at present they are anxiously awaiting a reply to the approach that was made to the Rev. Jett Smith with a view to a Call to him.

I read a very alarming and revealing statistic in the Dutch newspaper, *Reformatieisch Dagblad* (Reformed Daily paper) recently, that is, that annually 88,000 members are dissociating from Christian denominations in the Netherlands. On a percentage basis the decline in New Zealand would probably be similar. Our denomination, however, holds a very unique position in that it endeavours to hold to the whole counsel of God. This uniqueness is not always appreciated by adherents born and growing up within the communion of our denomination. I noticed a drift recently of some young people in an adherent family towards the Reformed Church and the Grace Presbyterian Church. It is a development that occurred through the need to study at other places and consequently attendance at public worship in other denominations. I have identified several significant differences from the worship practices of other Protestant denominations and each difference is a sufficient reason for our separate position as a Christian Church.

The dissimilarities, many of a constitutional nature, are as follows:

1. The use of instrumental music in public worship;
2. The abandonment of the Authorized Version in public worship;
3. The abandonment of the psalms of David as the divinely given book of praise;
4. The adoption of a mutilated version of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 1647 in their constitutions so that the strictures against marrying certain of one's wife's kindred are removed (*WCF XXIV:IV*);
5. The Roman Catholic Pope is no longer identified as that antichrist, that man of sin (*WCF XXV:VI*);
6. The civil magistrate is no longer seen as the public authority that is required to support and uphold the true religion according to the Establishment Principle (*WCF XXIII:III*);
7. The abandonment of the scriptural gospel presentation and method of dispensing the sacraments as described, for example, in *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, by Rev. John Kennedy;
8. The resulting laxity in practice of many professing Christians in these denominations, particularly with respect to the Lord's Day.

In Wellington the services have continued and were supported by four Massey and Victoria University students, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Optland. At the communion In November 2010 there were some visitors present so that the numbers were up to sixteen or seventeen persons at most services. I am indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Optland for keeping this door open, which is important because for many years young people of our denomination have been studying in Wellington and have had the opportunity to attend the Free

Presbyterian worship which was available there on a continuous basis from 1979. The congregation has the status of a church-extension charge and has its own church building at 4 Rewa Terrace, Tawa.

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

SINCE our report to the last Synod, a visit was made to Odessa in June 2010 by Rev. Neil Ross and Mr. Edward Ross when, in the good providence of the Lord, a communion season was held in the congregation there. This was the only visit made since July 2009, but it is hoped that a further visit will be made in June 2011, God willing, when we intend to have a communion season and attend to mission business.

At communion times the congregation does have a few additional people attending who may be friends of the families in the congregation or from other churches. Apart from this, and the intermittent appearance of visitors, there has not been any substantial growth in the congregation. While the want of increase in numbers is discouraging we are not to lose heart since it is never in vain to continue sowing the good seed of the kingdom. As one member in the congregation says: "It is a pity to see chairs in our meeting hall empty, but what can we do? However, for the people who will come after us it will be much easier. I pray that the Lord will make all we are doing in the Odessa congregation work out for the saving benefit of sinners and the bringing of glory to our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

While our people there are naturally disappointed that there are no settled additions to their number, they are very glad to be under sound teaching. For them this is exceedingly important. They are persuaded, as they continue adhering to sound doctrine, that there is the assurance from Scripture that other people will yet be attracted to the teaching of the Word of God. "We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23).

It is encouraging that there is considerable response to our outreach work through the internet. It comes from people in several countries but mainly from people in the Ukraine, who appear to show a genuine interest in the Reformed teaching of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and Catechisms. Indeed, out of desire for these teachings, some people have expressed the wish to belong to the Free Presbyterian Church. Due to the great distance from Odessa and other circumstances this is not possible at present. In any case, it is felt that in the meantime our attention should be concentrated on the Odessa congregation, not only to encourage and strengthen it but also because we must work within our resources.

Our mission website, which Mr. Levitskyy maintains and updates with suitable material, has had free website hosting but this proved unsuitable because adverts were appearing on the site. We now pay for website hosting

and thus avoid such problems. All our printed pamphlets, tracts, and certain articles from our Church magazines appear on the website, and electronic copies of our books published in Russian can be freely downloaded. Since the website was set up it has had a large number of visitors. We trust the Lord will bless these attempts to disseminate Reformed doctrine among Russian-speaking people worldwide.

In response to the many requests for Bibles and literature from people in the Ukraine, Mr. Igor Zadoroshnyy has sent out 330 parcels and letters. In addition he has responded to many queries made by email. It seems from requests and questions by letters and emails that there are hungry hearts and minds anxious to grasp the truths of the Word of God. The literature is given without charge, and so far our funds allow for free distribution; one reason for our not charging is the inability of many people to pay. While undoubtedly some could afford to pay, we could not operate a retail outlet because of the time-wasting, bureaucratic and extremely complex system of state taxation we would come under. However, some people who receive our Bibles and literature do send a donation, and these donations for 2010 amounted to £459.04; this kept the postage fund afloat and obviated the need to top it up from mission funds.

The great burden of Bible and literature distribution is on the shoulders of Mr. Igor Zadoroshnyy, a work he unfailingly and timeously attends to, even if that necessitates deferring other pressing work. The number of Bibles distributed has fallen this year because we had problems in receiving Bibles by post from the Trinitarian Bible Society.

The main books sent out were the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (570 copies), and Shaw's *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (356 copies). There are, of course, other books distributed, such as Rev. D. MacFarlane's *Sermons* and *The Apostolic Church – Which Is it?*, by Witherow, as well as booklets, leaflets and tracts. It is only those who show a genuine desire for further teaching in the doctrines of Scripture who receive, for example, Shaw's *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*.

A small amount of Bible and literature distribution to Eastern Europe is done from our Church Office in Glasgow by Miss Norma Morrison and other helpers, to whom we are grateful, but quite a number of requests which come to us in Scotland are forwarded to Odessa, when appropriate, to be attended to by Mr. Zadoroshnyy.

We received the usual gift of *Words of Life* Calendars from the Trinitarian Bible Society. Due to the Society's difficulty in supporting their free distribution programme we received less than usual but, nevertheless, we were given 8,000 calendars which were distributed to government departments, hospitals, colleges, prisons and other institutions. We are indebted to the Society for their ongoing work of distributing the Scriptures as printed in their beautiful calendars. Our prayer is that the Lord will increasingly bless their work of spreading the Scriptures throughout the world.

While the laws of Ukraine grant freedom of religion, for which we are deeply thankful to the Lord, it is a fact that when it comes to the management

of church property, mission accounts and other related matters, there are tedious and time-consuming government regulations to contend with. We are unhappy that these burdens have fallen largely on Mr. Dmytro Levitskyy. It is also a Government regulation that we must employ a lawyer who in turn receives a monthly fee. However, employing a lawyer has the advantage of Mr. Levitskyy avoiding the never-ending task of communicating with government departments, often with no worthwhile results.

Mr. Levitskyy writes: "As you might remember, the Free Presbyterian congregation in Odessa was registered last year and the weight of responsibility for the Church's administration fell on my shoulders. In Ukraine, as you know, bureaucracy is somewhat inbuilt in the system of state government. All citizens, if they need some permission or when handing over of tax reports, will be met with an army of officials, making their life harder. The new system of taxation requires us as a registered legal body to hand over reports twice a month. Our accountant does the hardest job, because she is distributing these reports throughout various state departments. It is the hardest job because she needs to spend a whole day going from one end of the city to another and during the day she can travel over forty miles by public transport as well as sitting in long queues waiting to be received by the officials. I am glad that I am not doing that job; my job, in these matters, is to oversee what she is doing, subscribe reports, meet with some officials on behalf of the Church, going to the bank to collect monthly abstracts of our Church's accounts, etc." We add that if we had someone else to do these duties, and also other duties connected with the mission property, we would use him, but at the moment this is not possible.

We may mention at this point that the Odessa congregation collections for 2010 amounted to £424.85. Those in the congregation who have regular income are few and the amount they receive is much less than that of average wage earners in Britain. Nevertheless, we think their contributions need to be increased somewhat to be within the amount directed by the Word of God. This grace of Christian giving was much in exercise in the churches of Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8), and we trust it will continue to develop among our people there.

The work of translating sound Christian literature continues, and we have now completed the children's book *Line Upon Line*. By the time this report comes to the Synod it is expected that the book will be in print. The translating of the *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Donald MacDonald, Sheildaig*, is nearly completed by Mrs. Natasha Hopkins, who lives in England. Each chapter, as it is translated, is sent to Mr. Igor Zadoroshnyy for editing. All translated literature is edited at least twice.

Mr. Igor Zadoroshnyy also maintains his personal website which he set up a considerable time ago for the purpose of spreading the faith by writing Christian articles and religious essays, and through which he makes many contacts. One of his articles is based on Chapter 33 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, "Of The Civil Magistrate", Section 1, "God, the supreme

Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good: and, to this end, has armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers". The article, which was republished in the periodical of the Department of Religious Studies of the National Academy of Sciences, highlights the freedom of worship provided for by the laws of Ukraine, and at the same time deplores the attitude of some pastors in the Ukraine who are dictatorial. Mr. Zadoroshnyy says: "We hear, very often, that ministers in certain churches are teaching that all other churches are without grace and heretical and that only their church is true. A typical feature of sects is the claim of their ideological leaders to have the right to decide any matter in the sphere of belief and morality. They are requiring unconditional and absolute obedience in execution of all their instructions and are trying to isolate their supporters and followers from all possible contacts with different opinions." Mr. Zadoroshnyy's website has over 100 religious articles and 7,600 registered users.

Mr. Zadoroshnyy attended some reformed Christian conferences in such cities as Kiev, Khmel'nitsky and Kamenets-Podolskiy, in order to have the opportunity to present delegates with our Confessional documents plus the *Children's Catechism* (otherwise known as the *Mother's Catechism*). He also distributed copies of *Sermons* by Rev. D. Macfarlane and Shaw's *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Many of these delegates are teachers of others, and it is our prayer that they may benefit from, and impart to others, the vitally important teaching of our peerless *Confession of Faith*.

By the merciful providing and directing of the Lord we are able to continue as a Mission in the Ukraine. At the same time, the work could not be done without the contributions in money and time made by the people of our Church. Although our mission property in Odessa is completed, there will always be considerable costs in maintaining it. In addition we must meet the costs of paying subsistence to our workers, printing literature, and translating new titles. We trust that in the good providence of the Lord such vital giving will continue.

Once again we express our indebtedness to many friends in the Church and beyond for their help; and we are thankful to the Most High for putting it into the hearts of the friends of the gospel to continue their liberal giving. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psalm 68:11).

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

THE Church had no students studying theology over the past year but two students were accepted earlier this year, Mr. Caleb J. Hembd, Santa Fe, and Mr. Iain MacDonald, London.

Mr. D. Levitsky did not pass the Trial Entrance Examination but the Committee decided to set an Entrance Examination for him later this year.

As noted in last year's report the College requires the status of a sponsor in order for the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) to issue us with a visa for any of our students coming from outwith the United Kingdom or European Union to study in this country. Having gained an A rating from the UKBA on the basis of the report on the College by the British Accreditation Council (BAC) we require that the document stating that a candidate has passed the course be accredited by another academic body in order to gain the status of Sponsor. The Committee is still investigating this area but will require a resolution by September if any non-UK/EU students are to begin studying this year. We have been assured by the body overseeing the examination of bodies such as ours (the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, SCQF,) with a view to accrediting certificates of completion of the course, that any examination of the College would only take to do with the quality of the teaching and would not take to do with the substance of the course. In other words this examination poses no threat to the Doctrine, Worship or Practice as upheld and taught by the church.

The Church Conference was held in Inverness over 7th and 8th December. The weather was severe and attendance low. Two of the speakers were unable to attend and had their papers read on their behalf. This created a difficulty as far as questions and discussion after their papers was concerned. Considering that the Church has such a clear and almost unique voice in Scotland regarding the Roman Catholic Church, that the Conference was about the Reformation, and that the Pope had but recently been in the land, the response, even allowing for the weather, was not as fair as we would have liked. This year's Conference will be held in Glasgow over 1st and 2nd November, DV, and the proposed speakers and subjects are as follows; Rev. A. MacColl on "A Dying Man's Testimony to the Church of Scotland; James Durham's Treatise on Scandal", Rev. K. D. MacLeod on "Thomas Cartwright", Rev. R. MacLeod on "Providence", Rev. H. M. Cartwright on "The Authorised Version of 1611", and another speaker to be decided on "Amyraldism". The conference will be chaired by Rev. G. G. Hutton.

"The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. Macdonald

THIS is my first report for the Welfare of Youth Committee. We are indebted to our previous Convener, Rev. D. A. Ross, for his work for this Committee, and to both himself and his wife Catherine in the organisation of youth conferences over many years.

A major part of the Committee's work is the organization of the conference to obtain a suitable venue and the organization of speakers and the giving of papers.

This year the Conference is to be held at Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel, DV. We were to hold it at Carbisdale Castle in Ardgay, Sutherland. However, due to extensive frost damage to the Castle last December, which closed this venue until at least May, we had to go elsewhere.

The conference fees are the same as last year: £40 for those in full time employment and £20 for others. The lower age limit for those attending continues to be 16.

The following papers were given at this year's conference:

1. One More exact translation of the Holy Scriptures

The work of the King James Translators

Mr. Matthew Vogan

2. From Robert Moffat to Today

Missionary Work in and Around Bulawayo

Rev. D. A. Ross

3. Historical Tour

Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

4. Abraham the Friend of God

Lessons from His life

Rev. N. M. Ross

5. The Early Church in Scotland

Was it really Christian?

Rev. J. B. Jardine

6. The Power of God into Salvation

Paul's Missionary Journeys

Rev. K. D. Macleod

Also, as an extra item after the evening paper on Tuesday, we have arranged for Elizabeth Munns to show slides of the Kenyan Mission.

As it is a Christian conference it is strictly conducted on Christian lines, with family worship night and morning, also a Christian code of conduct is observed throughout the conference. We must acknowledge that the young people of the church are well behaved and on the whole there are no serious

problems. We hope and pray that the conference papers and activities will be blessed to our young people.

The Committee would thank those who are to give papers, and the House Mothers for all their help and hard work, also the Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel for housing our conference and the use of their facilities.

We as a Committee also thank all those who set and correct the Scripture exercises in the Magazine, both at home and overseas, which they do willingly.

Mrs. Sheena Campbell has resigned in the past year from this work because of family commitments and has been replaced by Miss Shona Gillies, Dingwall. Mrs. N. M. Ross, Dingwall, will be resigning this year from marking the overseas papers and is to be replaced by Miss Catherine Dickie, Edinburgh.

We thank those who are resigning for their years of service, and we wish those replacing them every blessing in the work. We hope and pray that the Scripture and Catechism exercises will be blessed to our young people.

I would wish to thank the Committee for their help; also Mr. Alan Boyd in taking up the duties of clerk to the Committee. We are grateful also to all that truly have an interest in the spiritual wellbeing of our young.

BALLIFEARY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

WE have to record, with a sense of our own indebtedness, the kindness of the Lord towards the Ballifeary Home over the past year.

It is with sadness we note the passing away of Mrs. Jetta McLeod on the 7th of March, Miss Helen Fraser on the 9th of March, Rev. D. MacLean on the 13th of August, Miss A. Grant on the 20th of August, and Mrs. M. Ross on the 7th of October.

The following ladies took up residence during the year: Miss M. MacKay and Mrs. E. MacDonald in March, Miss E. MacRae and Miss C. Urquhart in September and Miss M. Sutherland in November.

The Home maintained a full complement of staff throughout the year, with four care assistants in training for SVQ2 and two for SVQ3 in Social Care. Members of staff also undertook training in a variety of subjects, such as palliative care and fire safety.

The Home had two inspections by the Care Commission during the year and under the new grading system was awarded Very Good for Care and Support and Excellent for Staffing. Those were the only two elements of care assessed, but they faithfully reflect the dedication of the management and staff in the home.

Rising costs have begun to affect the Home and this, coupled with a reluctance by the Local Authority to raise fees in line with prices, has led the

Committee to depart from its rule of having Council fees set the rates for all residents. Even with an added supplement the rates charged are nearly half the rates of some residential homes in Inverness and well below the rates of others. If the Home is to continue we will have to keep a close eye on costs and respond accordingly.

We are very thankful to those who give of their time and talents to freely support the work of the Home. The residents appreciate their presence and interest and we trust these volunteers find a reward themselves for their kindness.

The passing of one of our senior ministers, the wife of another of our ministers and others who served their Lord faithfully and unobtrusively, over the past year, reminds us yet again of the blessedness of those who die in the Lord. "It shall be well."

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. Macdonald

THE work of the Committee has continued as usual over another year. The management of the Home is carried on by the Manager and her staff in a professional manner.

Once again the Home has been provided for although, with the global recession and financial downturn, there is an uncertain future. Local authorities are facing financial difficulties. It is reported that, as a result, fees for 2011-12 will be held at the same level as last year – £510.

For most of the year all beds in the Home have been occupied, and we now have a waiting list. This greatly assists the finances of the Home.

Mrs. Jane Morrison, who had been Deputy Officer in Charge, retired at the end of December 2010, on health grounds – we thank her for her years' of service to the Home and wish her every blessing in her retirement. Mrs. Joannetta Grantley was appointed as her replacement; we wish her well in her new responsibilities.

A number of staff who started work 22 years ago when the Home opened in 1988 will be retiring this year. The recruitment of suitable new staff may be a problem. The Committee decided last September to increase salaries by 10%, to make working in the Home more attractive, with a view to employing new staff and with the hope of retaining existing staff. However, we are still unable to compete with salaries in Council-run Homes. The Home is now planning to prepare a three-year Business Plan to present to the Local Authority; as everything now in administration is so bureaucratic, to have detailed plans down on paper may be a help to the Home.

The only death in the Home over the past year was Mr. Malcolm Shaw, formerly of Stirling, who was at one time an elder there. We extend our sympathies to his family.

Two more of the staff have completed SVQ level 3 and the Officer in Charge has completed level 4.

We thank all the local services for their interest and care of the elderly and the Fire Brigade who are in close communication with the Home about possible fire hazards; they have done a full mock evacuation.

The recent Care Commission inspections have gone well, the Home retaining grade 6 at the recent unannounced inspection.

We also acknowledge the support of the local community and the many expressions of kindness shown to the Home.

We again are indebted to the Officer in Charge and her staff for all their hard work and dedication to the Home, involving the elderly and the administration. Above all we should be thankful to the Most High for His goodness to us over another year.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

IT is with thankfulness to the Most High that we acknowledge that a door is still open in Britain to reach out to others with the Word of God. In some parts of the world, spreading the Word of God is impossible; among the worst are countries where Islam is the established religion. In the Lord's goodness, uninterrupted opportunity continues in the North of Scotland where we do much of our work through our colporteur.

We can report that we do continue to make progress in different branches of the work. For example, the large quantity of our Outreach tracts which were translated into German and which we had some difficulty in distributing in this country, have now been sent to Germany for distribution. Mrs. Maureen Roesner, formerly from Gairloch but now living in Germany, has undertaken to send the tracts to various outlets. We are very grateful that she has kindly undertaken to do this work.

For a time we lost contact with Pastor Gautam in Nepal who has been using our tracts translated into Nepalese. We are not quite sure how contact was lost but suspect it may have been due to political upheavals there. However, we are in correspondence once again. In the past we paid for the printing of our Outreach tracts in Nepalese and hopefully we will be able to assist again. This distribution work is done well beyond the borders of Britain but accords with the Divine directive to send the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We continue to receive enquiries through the internet for help and literature. These are more often from abroad than from people in the UK. Sometimes

there are requests for large numbers of Bibles, but if we are unsure of the genuineness of the request we first send a small quantity of Bibles and literature rather than a large amount. The principal piece of literature sent out is the *Westminster Confession of Faith* booklet. We were also given a grant of calendars from the Trinitarian Bible Society for distribution in the Philippines and we are indebted to the Society for the many calendars given each year.

The Committee has asked Deacons' Courts in our Church if they would be interested in obtaining a Windsor text edition of the King James Bible with metrical Psalms which would be purchased from the Trinitarian Bible Society at the reasonable cost of £3.90 (or less should the amount ordered exceed a given number). There has been a good response from congregations which wish this edition of the Authorised Version. It is cause for thankfulness to the Most High that we as a church persist to contribute to the circulation of the best version of the Bible in the English language – the version which continues to hold a firm place in the market against many other unsound versions.

We continue printing our gospel tracts – some of our titles had to be reprinted a few months ago. The previous large number of tracts lasted just a few years. These were used mainly by people not belonging to our Church who regularly engage in tract distribution. At the suggestion of one distributor, we have also printed larger format tracts with larger type for older people and this new format is very acceptable.

As well as the printing of gospel tracts we also intend to publish leaflets on a variety of religious subjects which will no doubt contribute to the furtherance of the gospel. Some people, who may enter our book van with a view to buying but do not readily purchase religious books, nonetheless may buy a small leaflet. Where appropriate the leaflets will also be useful for free distribution.

We record again our indebtedness to Mr. Alan Boyd for his voluntary colporteur work by going from door to door with the book van. The great pity is that the majority of households visited, and more so those outwith the Western Isles, showed little interest. Nevertheless, there are homes which appreciate very much the visit of our book van, not least because it is working in their area; godless homes are visited and, even if no purchase has been made a gospel tract has been given. Our colporteur can visit the homes in an entire village and not have one purchase made. For example, Sheildaig and Kishorn in Wester Ross, villages which once were brimming with godly people, have shown no interest. However, there are people in such places who have a small library of Christian books and therefore excuse themselves from purchasing additional books. In total, a reasonable number of books have been purchased but less than in previous years. In the numerous homes of the large Ferry district of Inverness not so much as a leaflet was purchased; nevertheless a gospel tract was given to each home visited. Whilst our society is becoming increasingly godless it ought to urge us more than ever to plead with the God of mercies for the success of our outreach work.

Last August, the Black Isle Agricultural Show was again visited, this time more successfully. The sale of books was the best yet, and we had more people

than ever enquiring about religious matters. The Scripture texts we displayed outside the Outreach tent testified to eternal realities, and we encourage ourselves with the assurance that the Lord can thereby bring sinners to consider the error of their ways and their need of the Saviour. Should they choose to ignore this testimony it will still be a witness for which they will have to give an account on the Day of Judgement.

We also attended the Portree Agricultural Show, but the noise of the vanity fair in the background was greater than that at the Black Isle Agricultural Show. Although book sales were slightly down in Portree from last year, considerable interest was shown by several people. And again, people passing by had the Word of God set before them with the Trinitarian Bible Society posters.

In conclusion, although the work of our colporteur can be most disheartening because of the disinterestedness of most people, it is amazing how a few folk visiting the book van or Outreach tent can have a heartening effect, especially if they enter into respectful religious conversation about eternal issues – such experiences are like a drink of water to a weary traveller. We are indebted also to Mr. Edward Ross for assisting in our work, including manning the Outreach tent at the Black Isle Agricultural Show, and we also thank Mr. Chris Lamont and others for doing likewise at the Skye Agricultural Show. We are grateful also to numerous other people who have helped in many ways to further the scriptural work of gospel outreach – a work which has the great purpose of bringing lost sinners to say, “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Psalm 119:63).

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. Even in an age of increasing departure from biblical principles, there are still those who appreciate the kind of writing which has always appeared in these Magazines. An attempt has been made this year again to provide a mix of contemporary writing and articles from the rich heritage that has come down to us from the past. I trust that comment on current issues leaves readers better informed about what is happening around them in the moral and religious spheres but, most importantly, I trust that the Magazines are of spiritual profit to their souls.

There was a further increase in the cost of printing the Magazines for 2011 and postage costs have again increased. As a result, the Magazines Committee raised the price of both Magazines by 10p per copy, and adjusted the cost of subscriptions. The circulation of each Magazine has dropped slightly since last

year. Advertisements for the Magazines were placed in three Christian periodicals last year, with only a small response.

I would once again thank all who have given help in various ways over the past year. I am also 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. Again I would ask for prayer for God's help in producing the Magazines during the future and for His blessing on those who read them.

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

Publications

We are glad that John Colquhoun of Leith's excellent book on *Saving Faith* was finally published last year. John Brown of Whitburn described it as "well calculated to promote the Divine glory, to illustrate evangelical truth, to build up believers in their most holy faith, and to excite sinners to pray for that faith without which it is impossible to please God". We are also pleased that Rev. Donald Beaton's little work, *The Reformed Faith*, has become available. Mr. Beaton's doctrinal understanding and his ability to communicate that understanding in writing should require no commendation to a Free Presbyterian audience. Both titles have been reset; the first of these is available as a quality hardback and the second as a booklet.

In time for the Pope's visit to this country, the Committee brought out *Pope Benedict XVI and the United Kingdom*, a paperback of 108 pages, edited by Rev. D. W. B. Somerset, who supplied an Introduction. There are five chapters by contemporary writers: (1) "Who is Benedict XVI?" by Mr. Matthew Vogan, (2) "The Pope and the Constitution of the United Kingdom" by Rev. H. M. Cartwright, (3) "The Pope as the Head of a False Religion" by Mr Roy Middleton, (4) "Papal Infallibility" by Dr. Alexander Ross, and (5) "The Pope in Scripture" by Rev. John MacLeod. The final chapter, "The Attractions of Popery", is by the noted American theologian of the nineteenth century, Robert L. Dabney. A number of copies were distributed free of charge to prominent national figures, in the hope of warning them about the spiritual danger faced by this country in the visit of the Antichrist.

A new edition of the children's book *Peep of Day* also appeared during the course of the year. It includes illustrations produced by Mr. D. Elliot of our Texas congregation and it has a sturdier binding, which makes it more suitable for the younger age group for whom it is intended.

As reported last year, the Committee, having published in hardback the first 10 volumes of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, had subsequent

issues of the Magazine scanned and placed on the Church website. The issues for the years 1906-1956 are now available for downloading from www.fpchurch.org.uk/Magazines/fpm. It is intended to print further volumes of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, beginning with volume 11.

Considerable progress has been made with the translation from Gaelic of the *Sermons of Archibald Cook*. Our thanks are due to Mr. A. Boyd for the large amount of work he has put into bringing this translation project, originally begun by Miss M. Dunbar of Tomatin, to its present stage. It is hoped that the Sermons will be available, as a hardback, before the end of the year.

Sales of Free Presbyterian Publications books in 2010 were significantly lower than in the previous year. One main reason is that during 2009 a significant proportion of last year's reprint of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was sold to the Banner of Truth Trust.

Bookroom

The Bookroom continues its work of sending out Bibles and other Christian literature to all parts of the world. Overall sales have suffered a significant decrease here also. One factor relates to the *Westminster Confession*, as already indicated. Another factor is the downturn in the retail book trade generally, which has led to a number of businesses ceasing to trade. In addition, we may be affected by the increasing tendency to order online, often directly from publishers; at the same time, a proportion of our orders comes through the internet, a factor which works in the opposite direction.

The most important matter is to have the Lord's blessing in the whole field of endeavour which is the responsibility of the Committee. Accordingly the Committee would crave the prayers of Synod members, and the Lord's people more generally, that the Lord would use the copies of the Scriptures and the other literature – particularly what is published by the Committee itself – which are being circulated through the Bookroom.

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. On this occasion we would particularly acknowledge the help of Mr. Roderick MacCuish, who over a period of many years has helped in the Bookroom on Saturdays. Now that he feels he is no longer able to continue, the Committee wishes publicly to express their sincere thanks.

CHURCH ARCHIVES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

THE remit of the Committee is to consider the preservation of Church archives. As a first step towards this, the Committee is endeavouring to draw up an inventory of the archives which are presently in the possession of the Church. This includes Synod, Presbytery, Kirk Session, Deacons' Court, and Committee records. The drawing up of this inventory is under way, with the focus initially on the records of Church courts in the UK. The purpose of the inventory is partly to identify items that may be missing and partly to facilitate the preservation of records in the future; so that, for example, in the event of the demise of a Session clerk, it is known what records he had in his possession. The Committee is grateful to Mr. Frank Daubney, who has listed the items stored in the safe in Glasgow. This list is of considerable interest and is available to any Synod member on request.

Apart from listing archival material, the Committee is also considering the safest way of preserving this material. The two issues are: (1) Where is the best place to store non-current records? (2) To what extent should such material be digitized so that, in the event of fire or flood, it is not completely lost? The digitization of records raises issues of access and privacy and the Committee is consulting the Highland Archive in Inverness, which stores many Church of Scotland records, for advice on these matters.