

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

Submitted to Synod in May 2012

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**REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND
MORALS COMMITTEE
Convener: Rev. D. Campbell**

INTRODUCTION

AS in previous years, the report has two main sections, the first dealing with the work of the Committee during the year and the second the state of religion and morals.

1. REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Meetings

The Religion and Morals Committee met for the usual two meetings in October and March and carried out its business according to the usual expectations of the Synod. While the Committee continues to operate without a written remit or constitution, an attempt has been made to regulate our affairs with a draft constitution in line with what has become standard practice. At the last meeting of Synod there was not sufficient time in the fourth Sederunt to discuss the draft constitution and one or two suggestions were raised in connection with it. The Committee had another look at the draft constitution and agreed that an amended version which simply reflected the accepted and current practice would be sufficient in the meantime for its obligations to the Synod. While the Synod may not wish to formally debate it in its amended form, the Committee wishes to act on the assumption that it will be the basis of the relationship and accountability between the Committee and the Synod.

Report at Synod 2011

The Committee wishes to stress the need that when the Church Interests Committee sets the draft Synod agenda, sufficient time be allowed for the matters raised in the report and other documents to be discussed fully. The usual practice of the Committee's business being dealt with on Wednesday evening has been suitable in the past, but with the additional business inserted into this Sederunt at the last meeting of Synod, very little time was given for the remaining agenda items affecting the Committee. Considerable work is required to present the report to the Synod and it is disappointing when the business is rushed on account of an overloaded agenda. The fact that the public are also usually present suggests that this matter be attended to as a matter of some importance. For the sake of the attending public, draft copies of the report might be made available at the time of the Synod meeting to those who attend so that they can easily follow what is being said. An alternative arrangement would be to provide a draft copy of the report on the Church website before the meeting so that the public will have access to it before it

is discussed. The Committee is of the understanding that, as with other Standing Committees, its ordinary meetings are public and that its report and its minutes may be made available to the public unless instructed to do otherwise by the Synod.

Catechism of Church Principles

The Committee made progress with editing the Catechism of Church Principles in accordance with the decision of the Synod. Presbyteries were notified that the March meeting of the Committee would implement any necessary final changes or alterations offered. At the time of writing the Catechism remains in draft form but a verbal report will be given to the Synod on the progress made. It is expected that the Catechism will be completed in time for the Synod and that funding will be made available for having it published and distributed among the congregations of the Church. The Committee appreciates the time given by Presbyteries to the review of the Catechism and hopes that its circulation will inform and confirm the rising generation in the principles of the Church. We ought to consider it a high honour and privilege to assert as well as to maintain and defend these principles because they are biblical and Reformation principles. The Committee believes that there is a need for this catechism in the Church and that there would be an appreciation of it among our people. It will also be of use in expressing to those outwith our borders what our principles are.

Scottish Government Consultation

The Committee responded to the “Scottish Government’s Consultation on the Registration of Civil Partnerships and on Same Sex Marriage”. There was some discussion at the committee over whether such a document was entitled to the legitimacy of a response, but it was agreed that an accompanying letter be written in protest against the consultation process and qualifying the answers offered. This letter was made available to the national press and also appeared on the website of the Christian Institute. The Committee contended that the Scottish Government had no right or warrant to consult or to legislate in this area and repudiated both civil partnerships and what is called “same sex marriage”. The protest pointed to the Scripture portions which condemn sodomy and affirmed the determination of the Church to preach against the sin and against any laws that may be passed promoting it or giving it protection. At the time of writing the Scottish Government has not yet produced any concrete proposals for legislation. If and when this is done, a further consultation would be required.

It was heartening to see that there was significant opposition to the proposals in the consultation and that many groups and Churches responded. It is, however, alarming that any law which affects morals and religion in the nation would be passed on the basis of a democratic majority. Even if such a majority were to be obtained in this instance, we contend that morality is not a matter of numbers but of principle and truth. It is, therefore, disturbing to see

that various bodies and individuals have called for a referendum on this subject. "Solas", a Dundee-based Christian organisation, has made such a request in their response and this has been endorsed and applauded by ministers, including the editor of the Free Church (Continuing) magazine. However well intentioned this call may be, we utterly reject the legitimacy of a referendum or the wisdom of such a request and hope that a referendum will not take place. The law of God is never open to democratic whim and this gross sin can never be legitimised by such a process.

The Christian Institute

In a circular that encouraged supporters to respond to the consultation questions on same-sex "marriage", the Christian Institute made available their "recommended answers". Sadly, these suggested at best an ambiguous position. Various questions in the consultation clearly imply that the Scottish Government believes it has, in theory, a right to legislate in a way that forces a position on religious bodies, such as the Christian Church in Scotland. For example, question 6 asks, "Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to register civil partnerships if their religious body has decided against registering civil partnerships?". To this the answer ought to be a most decided rejection of the question's legitimacy. The question implies an assumption of authority which no Government or Parliament has been given or should be given. The Christian Institute, however, recommended that the answer should be "yes". However politically expedient this may be, it is playing into the hands of unscrupulous politicians who arrogate to themselves rights and privileges which do not belong to them. It is perfectly possible that the Scottish Government could use this new proposed power to disallow individual ministers acting according to their conscience, in any kind of legislation that it favours.

More astonishing still was the Christian Institute's answers to questions 8 and 17 which recommend what was defined as "option 2". This option, together with option 1, was not spelt out in the Christian Institute literature and to find what was being recommended, one would require to read the accompanying document in the consultation itself. The option 2 which was recommended by the Christian Institute is as follows:

Option 2 would be to set up a new procedure, separate to that for the solemnisation of opposite sex marriage, under which all religious bodies who wished to register civil partnerships (Q.8) [or same sex marriage (Q.17)] could advise the Registrar General which celebrants they would like to be authorised to register civil partnerships [or same sex marriages Q.17]. It would be made clear that it would not be discriminatory to decide against seeking approval to register civil partnerships [or same sex marriages Q.17].

This is an appalling suggestion and completely sells out on any principled opposition to both civil partnerships and same sex marriage. It would in effect

endorse both practices as legitimate in the civil sphere and provide for religious bodies to perform these unions on behalf of the State, as at present with marriage. There is very little doubt that this is precisely what the homosexual lobbyists have been looking for as a break-through. It is equally likely that the present Church of Scotland will indeed make use of any such legislation and “new procedure”. It is sad to think that this would have been positively encouraged by the Christian Institute. The option of answering this question with “neither” was given, as was the option of disregarding the question entirely. Yet the Christian Institute has circulated possibly thousands of Christians in Scotland to encourage them to respond by selecting “option 2” with all its implications.

In total, the responses recommended by the Christian Institute differed in 8 instances out of 19 from the responses given by the Committee and indeed by others such as the Free Church (Continuing). The Convener wrote to the Christian Institute over this matter because its recommended responses were being circulated among the congregations of the Church in the last week of the consultation. No response was forthcoming.

The Christian Institute and Romanism

A further concern over the Christian Institute arose in connection with this matter when they agreed to join the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Scotland to campaign for the preservation of marriage in Scotland. Setting up a new campaign – “Scotland for Marriage” – in which they shared platforms with atheists and Romanists, the Christian Institute has further undermined its witness in Scotland. The Romanist doctrine of marriage and its known practical tolerance of sodomy within the priesthood world-wide should be sufficient to ensure that Protestants take nothing to do with Roman Catholics in their hypocritical pronouncements on moral issues. Sadly the Christian Institute seems to be taken in by, or has become immune to, Romanist propaganda on this issue. Together with giving its hierarchy a voice, the Institute now establishes closer links with it in the name of defending the ordinance of marriage. In an attempt to conciliate its Protestant supporters the Christian Institute wrote to the Convener of the Committee prior to the campaign launch. The letter may be considered in the light of previous correspondence on the issue of Protestantism and the Synod’s decision to restrict our funding to the promotion of Protestant principles. The Synod may now wish to review again the decision to support this organisation financially.

Anti-sectarianism and freedom of speech

The Committee took very little to do with the Scottish Government’s legislation designed to curtail religiously motivated hate crimes in connection with football matches in Scotland. Comment on this in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* largely explains the position adopted by the Committee. A letter was written to the Scottish Government requesting further information on the

proposed legislation. The Convener and Rev. Allan MacColl took the opportunity, when meeting with the Western Isles MSP, Dr. Alasdair Allan, over the “same-sex marriage” consultation, to also raise with him concerns over the then proposed bill on religious hatred. After an exchange of opinions and of various letters it was ascertained that a clause has been introduced into the new bill which purports to preserve freedom to religious bodies to criticise other religions. It is a sad day indeed when the Scottish Government thinks that the Church of Christ requires its say-so in order to expose and condemn error, but this is what the new clause in the bill amounts to.

The Christian Institute is to be credited with ensuring that the legislation was not hurried through the Parliament and that it was given full scrutiny. It also campaigned successfully for the introduction of a clause purporting to protect religious freedom, encouraging its supporters to similarly campaign for this. The Committee did not seek to encourage the inclusion of this so-called “freedom of speech” clause and rejects the need for any such legislation at all. It is the opinion of legal professionals and politicians of various parties that the law as it stands is perfectly adequate to protect the lives and property of citizens from mindless violence and from threatening language or behaviour.

What is disturbing about the new legislation, and the freedom of speech clause in particular, is that for the first time in our national history express legal protection is given to blasphemy and to the spread of pernicious and heretical religion. This is a backward step and sadly it was actively promoted by the Christian Institute which seems to pay scant regard to the historic Establishment Principle so intimately connected with our Protestant and Presbyterian heritage. The Protestant Church does not need the securities of a government bill to afford it a right to preach the truth in Christ’s name. This right and liberty comes from the Head of the Church alone and has been recognised already in our land at the time of the Reformation. However much the state will treat the Church of Christ as a mere voluntary body, our vows forbid us to concede the point or to submit to the degrading and insulting yoke of the state controlling or policing our preaching.

Religious Observance in Schools

In the meeting with Dr. Alasdair Allan, MSP, the Convener and Rev. Allan MacColl also raised the subject of government guidelines for religious observance in Schools. It was heartening to receive a letter from Dr. Allan stating that his opinion was that an act of worship was an integral part of Religious Observance. This position is worthy of note because it is at variance with the most recent guidance to Schools. It is the only feasible position on the subject and represents the previous position adopted by the Scottish Executive and, prior to that, by the Westminster Parliament’s Scottish Office. The legislation from 1872 protecting religious observance in Schools was last reviewed in 1980 and forbids the discontinuance of religious observance in any Scottish school. It is now the case that the Scottish Government has accepted a definition of religious observance which virtually excludes acts of

worship. The new definition makes little sense, but it does come with guidance which requires head-teachers to arrange with local ministers of religion about the content of religious observance. This issue ought to be a national concern to the Presbyteries of the Church and efforts should be made by ministers of the Church to hold schools and local authorities to account for any non-compliance with legal requirements.

It is often assumed that state schools in Scotland are secular. Legally this is not the case. All schools are required by law to provide religious observance and religious education. In the new *Curriculum for Excellence*, religious education is to consist of instruction in Christianity and a maximum of two other world religions and learning outcomes should include proof of Bible knowledge. The Committee will continue to pursue this issue in whatever way it can and will seek to watch against any erosion of the present legislation.

Divorce

At the March meeting of the Committee it was agreed that the Convener circulate an updated version of a previous Committee discussion document on the subject of divorce. Since the passing of the Family Law (Scotland) Act in 2006, the legal situation regarding divorce in Scotland has been seriously eroded and this has very significant implications for Church courts and ministers. It is becoming increasingly clear that for the purposes of Church courts and to preserve uniformity in doctrine and practice within the Church, serious attention needs to be given to this subject. We are committed to assert, maintain and defend the position on divorce and desertion enshrined in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. At the very least further consideration needs to be given to a definition of desertion and also to the rights of parties wrongly divorced against their will. The implications for re-marriage and the duties of ministers are very serious indeed. The discussion paper only raises the matter and further study seems to be required.

The Committee feels bound to stress that the Synod is in a new position in relation to the civil magistrate since the passing of the 2006 legislation and that desertion is no longer defined by the courts of the land. What is described in the *Westminster Confession* as “desertion which can in no way be remedied by the church or the civil magistrate”, must now be the business of Church courts alone to adjudicate on. Very careful consideration would need to be given to this if uniformity is to be maintained. The Committee will continue to pursue the matter and may report in future in the form of a discussion paper with a view to making more concrete proposals to the Synod. In considering the subject of divorce, the Committee also reviewed the discussion presently taking place in the Free Church of Scotland on this issue. In a move away from its previous 1988 guidance to ministers on the subject, a Study panel of the Free Church has contributed a document which erodes the Confessional restrictions on lawful divorce. Attention is drawn to this in the body of the Committee’s report.

Statement of Differences

At the October 2011 meeting of the Committee it was agreed to set up a sub-committee to pursue the revision of the Synod Statement of Differences which was last reviewed in 1962 – 50 years ago. The need for this is increasingly apparent and we believe was formerly considered as an obligation placed on the Church towards other Presbyterian denominations. The sin of schism is flagrant in Scotland with the setting up of new and competing denominations, most of whom, in practical terms, are willing to act as if no differences existed. We would be liable to the same charge of schism if we did not plainly state our testimony and the reason for our continued separation. This is best done in a Statement of Differences which we hope will eventually recommend itself to the Synod for adoption and circulation.

In connection with the decision of the Synod of 2011 to send the Religion and Morals Report to the Free Church (Continuing) in answer to the letter from that bodies' ecumenical relations committee, the Committee received a letter from within our own Church asking for clarification regarding some of the statements made in connection with the Free Church (Continuing). The Convener replied by stressing that the list pointing out areas of difference was intended to be a *preliminary notice* of what the forthcoming Statement of Differences would be *likely* to deal with. It was not intended as a final statement of our differences with the Free Church (Continuing). To avoid any further confusion on this matter, the Committee wishes to stress that it has not yet prepared the Statement of Differences between the Free Presbyterian Church and the Free Church (Continuing).

Letters

The Committee wrote letters to various politicians in connection with specific issues. The matters that the Committee deals with were researched by all the members of the Committee and are addressed by these members in the body of the report. The following letters were sent and, at the time of writing, responses are awaited.

1. To Rt. Hon. David Cameron, Prime Minister, re Satisfaction with some of his remarks concerning Christian Britain and the Authorised Version.
2. To Rt. Hon. David Cameron, Prime Minister, re the Act of Settlement, Protestant Succession and the securities of the Reformed Church in the light of a need to preserve the unity of the United Kingdom.
3. To Rt. Hon. William Hague, Foreign Secretary, re Persecution of Christians in Muslim Countries.
4. To Rt. Hon. William Hague, Foreign Secretary, re Continued Diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Vatican.

5. To Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health, re Statistics relating to Abortion, calling for a review of practice and tightening of legislation.
6. To Rt. Hon. Nicola Sturgeon, Scottish Minister for Communities, re Alcohol consumption in Scotland, calling for action to warn of the moral harm of Scotland's drinking culture and the need for Scripture principles in tackling it.

2. REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION AND MORALS

Introduction

The spiritual state of Britain is described for us in the Scriptures and we have reason to be ashamed and to blush for our nation and its rulers. The words of the prophet Isaiah seem to be increasingly applicable to our country. The circumstances in which they were uttered are also very similar: "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isaiah 3:8-11).

Our duty of confession

We ought, like Daniel (chapter 9) and Ezra (chapter 9) to confess the sins of our nation and of the Church of God in it. There are sins of the tongue against the Lord, such as open and public atheism, and blasphemy. When there is freedom of speech granted to the teachers of false and lying religions such as Popery, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and other cults, then our nation is in breach of the third commandment. Blasphemy and cursing of the Bible and the gospel in the public press, in media outlets generally and on the internet, is also a sin to be confessed. In the Church heresies and false teaching and false worship permitted and promoted are breaches of the commandments of God which must be repented of. We have sinful deeds to confess also, most evidently in our breaches of the fourth commandment – a commandment which underpins public religion. Sins against our fellow men in breaches of the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth commandments are more numerous than can be reckoned and when viewed in the light of the full terms of the *Larger Catechism* must indeed be cause for shame.

That we have come to be identified with the sin of Sodom as a nation has not happened suddenly. We have, as a nation, been guilty of the spiritual sins of Sodom for many years in our pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, and haughtiness (Ezekiel 16:49, 50). The sin of uncleanness is especially

offensive to the eyes of God's holiness. When such uncleanness is open and flagrant by way of entertainment, free discussion, conditioning and teaching of children, boasting and public display (such as the sins of the flesh and sodomy have now become), the sin has many aggravations. But our nation is also guilty of defending and promoting evil openly. It is "the show of their countenance . . . they hide it not". Even the Church is to be condemned for haughtiness, stretched forth necks, wanton eyes, ornamentation and outward evidences of worldliness (Isaiah 3:16-26). Certainly we have rewarded evil to ourselves.

It is clearly taught that the Church has a positive duty in connection with these things. The duty of the Church of God is to declare righteousness and sin to the nation. The ministry of the Word is the chief instrument in the Lord's hand to declare and reason of "righteousness, temperance and judgement to come" (Acts 24:25) and this report is not intended to supplant that ordinance but rather complements it. Sin is a reproach and shame to any people; it is a harbinger of most solemn and grievous judgements on a people. Particular sins of particular classes, as those of rulers, those ruled over, the Church, its officers, professing Christians, public servants, parents, families and children, are to be confessed as such. Confession of sin and repentance are essential to the reversal of judgements. This is also the way by which the Church will be brought to know that abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the preached word, which will usher in the fall of Romanism and the ingathering of the Jews and the fullness of the Gentiles (Romans 11:22-32; Zechariah 12:9, 10)

REPORT ON RELIGION

This report follows the same pattern as previously. This year, each of the members of the Committee has submitted a section rather than the entire report being left to one or two individuals. While this breaks up the report, we believe that it gives a wider and deeper picture of what is the present state of religion and morals.

Romanism

The Reformation in the 16th century delivered Scotland from the yoke of Romanism and the established religion of our nation is Reformed and Confessional Presbyterianism. There can be no doubt that this fact is a source of great annoyance to the Romish hierarchy in this country. A disturbing aspect in the increasingly successful efforts of Roman Catholicism to break down the work of Reformation is the place and status given to it by politicians, churchmen and by media outlets. It has become common for our Scottish leadership to consult with Romish bishops and cardinals when considering policies and laws and it is now accepted that the voice of Rome on issues of morals gets more publicity than that of any other religious body. The moral and spiritual vacuum left in our national life and public media by an apostate Church of Scotland has been all but filled by Romanist dogma. It is a sad

declension indeed when its many errors are advanced and promoted without a contrary voice against it. The shame of this must be laid firmly at the door of the professing Christian Church and of so-called Protestant Churches in particular. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland must be unashamedly Protestant in its adherence to the gospel and to the work of Reformation from which Scotland has so grievously departed.

In spite of the glorious work of Reformation brought to this nation, it is now a sad reality that, in both England and Scotland, historic Protestantism is viewed with disapproval and Churches recoil from being identified by that name. The success of Romanism has extended also to Northern Ireland where, doubtless in the interests of the peace process, the Protestant First Minister has defended his attendance at a requiem mass. Such betrayal and departure distresses the people of God who feel increasingly that the Church of Christ is carried captive and is in a "strange land" where they can no longer sing "the Lord's song". We reject entirely the necessity for any politician or other public figure to give attendance at a requiem mass in order to show respect to the dead or sympathy to the living. The political reasons for Peter Robinson's attendance at a mass may prevail with some to bring them to endorse or defend his action. The Word of God requires of Christians that they "flee from idolatry". The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has always contended that public figures are bound by the law of God in their offices and positions and that attending a Roman Catholic mass as a public office-holder is a sin with several aggravations and, therefore, more rather than less heinous than attending in a private capacity.

The Free Church and Romanism

Spurious arguments defending declension prevail in many circles today. The *Free Presbyterian Magazine* has drawn attention to declension from historic Protestantism within the Free Church of Scotland in recent times. This was in evidence in 2011 when the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland joined with a Roman Catholic priest and a Church of Scotland minister at two separate ecumenical services in Lewis which were broadcast in the media. Rev. James MacIver defended his actions and denied that the services were ecumenical, but for every ordinary observer they could be considered as nothing less than this. Whatever attempt is made to justify such diluting of principle, whether for evangelistic ends, to court popularity or to prevent unfounded impressions of sectarian division in communities, the action was a departure from Reformation standards. This action of the Moderator of the Free Church follows closely on the public welcome offered to the Pope by Rev. David Robertson of Dundee Free Church, which the Committee referred to in its report last year. Other indications of departure from Protestant principles, such as joint funeral worship and memorial services with Romanist priests, display the decline in the Free Church. Prof. Donald MacLeod has publicly defended these joint services and scorns the opposition voiced against them.

The *Westminster Confession* closely follows Scripture language in its definition of the Pope as “that antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition” and Romanism as the spiritual Babylon and so a “synagogue of Satan”. It also exposes the very many heresies of Rome which fundamentally invalidates its profession of Christianity. That one of the services mentioned above marked the celebration of the Romanist festival of Christmas is enough to expose its unscriptural basis. That a priest of Rome led devotions highlights the spiritual darkness prevailing at the event. A Roman Catholic priest, according to Scripture, promotes the “working of Satan” and however unaware individual priests may be of it, they all suffer from “strong delusion” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11). It may well be asked “what communion hath light with darkness?”. It should be no surprise that the people of God are left questioning the direction of ministers when such communion is defended or treated as a matter indifferent. We therefore utterly condemn this practice and resolve to expose such departures in future as dangerous to Protestants and to the interests of the Church of Christ in our land.

While concessions to Romanism of this kind have been gathering pace on the Scottish mainland for some time, the practice is new in the professedly more conservative Free Church Presbytery of Lewis. It is clear that in this further concession to Rome the Free Church has lost credibility and authority, however ardently she desires to take the place nationally of the fallen Church of Scotland. At such a time as this it may well be asked what useful purpose the Free Church of Scotland serves in the promotion of the Protestant Reformation. It is becoming an increasingly schismatic ecclesiastical asylum for those fleeing discipline in other Churches or unwilling to tolerate the now century-old decline of the national Church. To all appearances the Free Church is on the same slide towards liberalism and declension and we can expect further revisions of its adherence to Protestantism and the Confession in the near future.

Scottish Independence

The following section of the report on this subject was prepared by Rev. Allan MacColl and reflects on a subject which the Synod may wish to make further direct representations to the Government on.

While we make no attempt to meddle with party political matters, there are some wider political issues which have such bearing on the cause of Christ that it is the duty of the Church to speak out concerning them. If there is anything that fits into that category, it is surely the future of the relation between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. The First Minister of Scotland, Mr. Alex Salmond, has announced his plans for a referendum on full independence for Scotland, which he hopes will take place in 2014.

What should the attitude of Christians be to this issue? Whatever political party we may support, it should be clear to us that the cause of Christ ought to take precedence in the formulation of our opinions over any secular interest. It is because of our overriding concern for the position of the Christian

religion in the nation that we must voice our serious concerns about independence. While there are many arguments which could be put in favour of retaining the Union, we will content ourselves with a few outstanding points at present.

Firstly, if Scotland became an independent nation state, what kind of constitution would it have? There is no doubt whatsoever that it would be a secular constitution which would give no recognition to the rights of Christ as King of Nations nor any significant place to the Christian religion and to Christ's Church in the life of the nation. While Britain is undoubtedly a most ungodly society, our constitution is still firmly Christian and Protestant, and we believe that that simple fact may be a means of hindering greater evils from coming upon us than already have. We pray for a day when our constitution may become an instrument in the hands of the Lord for guiding figures in public life in the direction of the Bible and the implementation of godly legislation. There will be no means of doing that in the secular political climate envisaged by Mr. Salmond. The removal of an avowedly-Christian constitution would be a most provoking act against the Most High. "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Proverbs 24:21).

Secondly, the position of the Church of Rome would be greatly strengthened if Scotland left the Union. Although the Church of Scotland still has more nominal adherents, the Roman Catholic Church has by far the greater influence on politicians and the media in Scotland today. But in Britain generally, though the political influence of Rome is all too strong, it is mitigated to some degree by the fact that the clear majority of the population are nominal Protestants. The Scottish National Party has been quick to court the Roman Catholic hierarchy in recent times in order to win over the Roman Catholic vote. They know that the underlying source of the Labour Party's electoral dominance in Scotland in the 20th century was the Roman Catholic vote in the central belt and they now greatly covet that for themselves. An independent Scotland would be a small nation in which the Roman Catholic Church would swiftly become the leading religious body and this would leave the rest of the population exposed to the power of Roman Catholicism in both political and religious life.

Another reason to oppose independence is the fact that it would inevitably mean that Scotland would be drawn into closer ties with the European Union than at present. It seems to us that there is a fundamental inconsistency within Scottish nationalism itself which nationalists never attempt to address. That inconsistency is simply the fact that, in leaving the United Kingdom, Scotland would depend more and more on the European Union. If independence from Britain is such a desirable goal, why immediately give away that independence into the increasingly unaccountable and unstable EU? Of course, our principal objection to the EU is that it plays into the hands of the Pope of Rome and his schemes to regain political and ecclesiastical hegemony in Europe. How pleased the Pope would be if the nation with the largest Protestant population

in Europe disappeared from the map! A vote for independence, therefore, is a vote to increase Roman Catholic influence one way or another, at the national and international levels.

It is not long since Mr. Salmond was holding up the Republic of Ireland as a model of how an independent Scotland should run its economy. We don't hear him saying that today however! If we had been an "independent" nation within the Euro-zone over the past decade we would be in as great straits as the Irish are today and perhaps much worse. The financial crisis in the EU is a salient reminder of how dangerous further European integration would have been for us all. The last thing an independent Scotland ought to do is to throw in its lot with the Euro and the EU. Of course, a Scottish currency would be unsustainable and liable to be destroyed on the financial markets. Clearly, the only viable and sane alternative is to stick with the Pound Sterling. Thus, the logical conclusion follows that Scotland should stay within the Union because if we leave the Union and yet retain the Pound we will have absolutely no democratic influence over the fiscal policies which would control our currency. We have never heard any nationalist politicians address these points satisfactorily and until they do, we regard the case for independence as economically naïve and dangerous to our political and religious interests. The eighth commandment forbids "whatsoever doth *or may* unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate" and that is precisely what we fear will happen very quickly in an independent Scotland where the dominant political influences would be those of atheistic socialism and Roman Catholicism. "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks and look well to thy herds" (Proverbs 27:23).

Another reason to retain the Union is the fact that the Lord has blessed Britain in the past as much as any other country in the world since the Reformation. To break the Union would be to break the spiritual bond which the Covenanters aimed to form between the nations of these islands. The vows they took in the *Solemn League and Covenant* stand as a witness to the obligations of the rulers and people of Britain to honour Christ as Head of the Church and as the Prince of the Kings of the Earth down to the end of time. We have no right to do anything to weaken that vision and obligation. The Lord will require it at the hands of this unthankful generation if we undermine the Protestant foundations of our United Kingdom. The Treaty of Union guarantees the Protestant religion as the religion of these islands in perpetuity and no Government in Edinburgh, London or Brussels has any right to change such provisions. We are well aware that many of the godly in Scotland at the time of the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 were against that Union, including the eminent Thomas Boston. However, the Presbyterian people of Scotland very soon came to see the link with the rest of Britain as a vital bulwark against the return of the tyrannical House of Stuart and against popery and poverty. The Union has been a great blessing to Scotland, especially in times of war. Who, for example, would have stood against Hitler in 1940 if Britain had not been a United Kingdom?

The final point in our case for the Union is that we desire future generations to enjoy the same liberties, prosperity and peace that we have known in the United Kingdom. Independence is a terrible risk to the future prospects of Scotland, both spiritually and temporally. In leaving the Union we would be, in effect, saying that we are dissatisfied with the blessings that the Lord has showered on us as a people. We have no confidence that the politicians – of all parties – who occupy the Scottish Parliament are of sufficient calibre to bring Scotland into the future age of golden temporal prosperity that they might dream of. In our opinion, the desire to break the Union smacks very much of the sin of discontentment and murmuring at the Lord’s dealings with us as a people. Furthermore, gambling is a heinous sin in God’s eyes and gambling with our nation’s future would be an act of criminal folly of the highest magnitude. Needless to say, without the Lord’s blessing, the future of Scotland spiritually and temporally is bleak indeed – whether in the UK or independent – but the dangers especially involved in independence make us tremble for the generations to come. “Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set” (Proverbs 22:28).

The Middle East

In the report to the Synod of 2011, reference was made to the proud boast of Muammar Gaddafi, the then leader of Libya who predicted that “the 50 plus million Muslims (in Europe) will turn it into the Muslim Continent within a few decades”. The unrest in Libya and Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries resulted in the removal of Gaddafi and others from power and the Libyan leader met his end in a most brutal manner. The unrest seems to be spreading now to other countries and it is shocking indeed to see the brutality of the ruling power in Syria towards its own people, suppressing what began as a relatively peaceful protest. The scourge of civil war seems to loom over these nations and the danger of a wider conflict in the region is real. Several factors in the events of 2011 in the Middle East suggest that the eventual outcome might not be as favourable to the Church of Christ or to Western peace as may have been at first envisaged. Firstly, the hand of those extreme elements of Islamic militancy seems to get stronger when civil unrest emerges in Middle Eastern countries. The internal divisions within Islam between Sunnis and Shi’ites is largely responsible for this, but it is clear that the more fanatical elements have a very aggressive policy towards Christianity and if they were to gain political power the consequences for small Christian groups and Churches in the Middle East would be catastrophic. Professing Christians in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Libya are all experiencing a rise in persecution as a result of the upheavals which their countries have gone through in recent times. We should be stirred up to fervent prayer for the Lord’s cause and people in these lands.

A further concern is the position of Israel in the whole region. The declared policy of Iran, for example, is to destroy Israel altogether and to eradicate the Jews as a race. While this can never happen because “the gifts and calling of

God are without repentance” and they are “beloved for the fathers’ sakes” (Romans 11:28, 29), we cannot tell what sufferings God’s ancient people may yet have to endure from their enemies. We can only look on with prayerful longing for their redemption and deliverance which will be “life from the dead” to the Church of God among the Gentiles. That this blessed eventuality is inseparable from their repentance the Bible makes very plain and while they presently possess part of the land of Canaan, we cannot assume that they have a divine right to it while they remain impenitent.

The people of God love the Jewish people and, wherever true religion is, the fervent desire for their salvation and grafting back into their own olive tree will be included in the prayers of the Church of Christ. The present attitude of the Jews towards their Gentile neighbours is the very antithesis of the spirit of Christ “who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). The only real path to peace in Israel and the Middle East is the proclamation of the gospel to these peoples and their subjection to Christ. Thus the middle wall of partition will be broken down and the literal walls that presently carve up the land of Palestine and over which so much blood has been spilt, will be no longer needed, for “they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion” (Isaiah 52:8).

Islam

The following section of the report was prepared by Rev. Barry Whear and details the true nature and effects of the religion of Muhammad which has spread itself so rapidly and which continues to threaten the world with violence and oppression.

Islam is the second largest religion in the United Kingdom, behind Christianity. It had close to 3 million followers according to the 2010 census, of whom 44,000 were living in Scotland. However, there are some who believe the number of Muslims in the United Kingdom exceeds 3 million, of which about 1.4 million are under the age of 25, and about 1 million are described as “active in the faith”. Most are of the Sunni tradition. There are 1,500 mosques throughout the United Kingdom, with a quarter of them being located in London. Also, there are about 80 Muslim schools, and 14 different Islamic organisations, such as the British Muslim Forum, the Muslim Association of Britain, the Ahmadyya Muslim Association, etc.; which are dedicated to the advancement of Islam, and the nurture of its communities.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that about 5,200 people converted to Islam in 2011. Those so doing were mainly young white British women, and approximately half of them were from London. The number converting to Islam appears to be steadily increasing annually. Muslim conversion merely requires the convert to recite a few words known as the Declaration of Faith (Shahadah), which is considered to be the Pillar of Islam, and states: “I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God, and Muhammad is his messenger.” This may be done either privately or, as others may insist, before two Muslim witnesses. This declaration is an intellectual assent to

worship a false god, and to acknowledge a false prophet (Muhammad) as his messenger. True conversion involves the soul being wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, usually under the preaching of the gospel, effecting that favourable change, whereby Christ becomes precious. This may be seen in the heart declaration of the woman of Samaria: "Come see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29).

Islam is a religion of violence, and persecutes professing Christians to death. The persecution of Christians is endemic to Islamic countries. Muslims are adept at slandering Christians and then persecuting them for alleged disreputable behaviour. Apostasy from Islam is treated in many Islamic countries as a capital offence. There are some Afghanistan observers who fear the Christians there are in danger of sudden slaughter:

. . . the very serious issue of the persecution of Christian minority communities in Muslim-majority settings, where daily innocent children, women and men are murdered or mutilated, and churches are burned, while Muslim minorities in the West remain silent in their enjoyment of freedom of religion.

Islam's presence and growth in the land, is a further cause of the Lord's wrath against this Kingdom. Islam is blasphemous, heretical and guilty of persecuting the truly godly and ought not be tolerated but suppressed by the Civil Magistrate. We are to pray that the devilish institution of Islam be destroyed by the Lord, and that any of the elect bewitched by its soul-destroying heresies be drawn out of it by God. The Lord's wrath is against Scotland, and the rest of the United Kingdom, because almost universally the people of the land are slighting and despising Jesus Christ, freely offered in the gospel to all sorts of sinners, guilty of all manner of sin. The gross atheism, assailing of the Bible, horrible uncleanness and open contempt for true religion and the truly godly, is also greatly provoking to the Lord.

O that the Lord Christ would strengthen His own dear groaning people to wrestle with Him at the throne of grace, agonisingly and unceasingly, as to obtain from Him the promised dawning of the glorious militant, millennial Church. Perhaps that day may not be far off. While we may not know the exact time, we are encouraged in the Word of God to seek to understand the book of prophecy which promises it and to discern our own times to know what "Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). When that time comes the Church will be revived and flourish in Scotland, the rest of the United Kingdom and throughout the whole world by means of the Spirit-owned and increasing proclamation of the gospel (a good report of Christ). Then the Jews will be converted, the fullness of the Gentiles affected, Popery (that anti-Christian abomination, dominated by that Wicked, the Pope of Rome) will be destroyed, together with all other false religion, including Islam, that Christ-persecuting, man-made institution. We believe the better days are near, when ". . . the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9b). "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every

man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34).

The European Union and the debt crisis

This part of the report was prepared by Dr. Alex Ross and explains the much publicised crisis in Europe already alluded to. The rapidly changing nature of events in Europe may bring up unexpected results, but it is important to look at these things in the light of biblical principles.

In recent years debt has become a worrying problem, not only in regard to individuals, but also to businesses and governments. For individuals, in most situations it is prudent to avoid debt altogether. However, there comes a time for many people where they need to get into debt, such as to buy a house. Some students indeed are constrained to take on debt to advance their education. The idea being that when they are working, they will be able to repay. Such an arrangement is still prudent because there is a well-expected opportunity for repayment. Where debt is taken on, where there is no obvious means of repayment, it effectively becomes akin to gambling in its imprudence. The present worldwide debt crisis is due, at least in measure, to taking on imprudent debt; e.g. mortgages that were of greater value than the property, the excessive leveraging of financial products, etc.

Such imprudence is also in evidence concerning the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, where governments have borrowed to fund their present policies in order to meet costs in excess of income. Their hope has been that their national economies would expand to allow the debt to be repaid at some time in future. The present market judgement, in regard to the default risk of that debt, indicates that much of it was indeed imprudent. Four of those countries most affected by the debt crisis – Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Spain – are reported to be in the top ten of those nations with the highest gambling addiction, as evidenced by per capita gambling losses in 2010 (*The Economist*, “The biggest losers”, 16th May 2011). Lack of prudence amongst the citizens, therefore, seems to have gone hand in hand with the imprudence of the governments, and is evidence of deeper societal ills.

These southern European nations have also very long ago cast off the true gospel in favour of the traditions of men. Therefore we might expect to see the fruit of prudence more diminished there, than in those European nations where there was a greater influence of the Reformation. The degree of worldwide angst about the European debt crisis calls to mind that prophecy concerning the fall of Babylon, “And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more” (Revelation 18:11). We are not in a position to judge the application of that prophecy to the present crisis, but ought to be mindful that both the evil fruits of Babylon and her judgement are likely to be conjoined.

The lack of acceptance of responsibility amongst both government and citizens in Greece regarding their unsustainable debt, presents a dishonourable

character. The failure to honour debts, which ought to be a matter of shame and humiliation, and have a humbling and repenting effect, is instead accompanied by violent demonstration amongst the populace in response to politicians who are not prepared to accept the blame for their actions. The present debt crisis is fluid. It has the potential to become much worse if the lawless behaviour seen in Greece deteriorates further and spreads to the Latin nations.

Whilst the debt crisis has arisen through imprudence, it appears to be exacerbated by the structural economic imbalances between Eurozone countries caused by its one-size-fits-all economic policy, which severely limits sovereign action at the national level. The imprudence of successive UK governments in regard to our own mounting debt burden is not much less than that of the nations of southern Europe. That we are not so deeply embroiled in the present crisis is due to the providential circumstances of not having joined the Eurozone; and we ought to be rendering thanks to the Most High for that blessing. We ought also to pray that the crisis would yet be made instrumental in leading those affected to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:71).

Science

A major source of trouble to the Church of Christ has arisen in recent times from an aggressively secular movement which claims to have scientific authority for its opposition to the Bible and to religious teaching. Prominent scientists have identified themselves with this movement and are increasingly seeking to influence the education system. This part of the report, prepared by Dr. Alex Ross, addresses aspects of this important subject.

The "oppositions of science falsely so called", which Paul warned Timothy to avoid, have for many years proven to be a fierce enemy of true religion. Great damage has been done to the church from the influential teachings of academics, supposedly reputable scientists that teach atheistic and evolutionary doctrines under the guise of science. The theories of Charles Darwin and, more recently, Professor Stephen Hawking, are often appealed to by promoters of atheism and evolution in the media. In reality there are, and have been, very many who have been actively engaged in developing theories which are at variance with Scripture truth concerning creation and natural history. In their own minds, the repudiation of a creator that would interfere with their speculations is a necessary condition. Hawking's mathematical modelling of how the universe was formed, is a vehicle used to "push-back" by their billions of years, that time when they inevitably must confront the reality of their impotence to explain the beginning of the universe, in whatever form their latest theory has coaxed the universe to assume.

The futility of such an exercise must be apparent to all who perceive what true science is – the development of a body of verifiable knowledge pertaining to the material world. Not a single moment or aspect of the history of the universe is verifiable without a reliable witness to the events that actually happened. Through Scripture we are privileged to have such witness. Those

who deny the truth of the Bible have no such reliable witness, and are therefore confined to the unending shifting sands of unverifiable speculations. “The testimony of the rocks”, as the geologist Hugh Miller so unadvisedly put it in the title of his last book, is falsehood and a betrayal of the Creator. Neither the rocks, nor the stars, nor living things, nor any part of creation, speak concerning their history, other than that which the vain speculations of unbelieving writers impose upon them. There are, no doubt, uncommon abilities and gifts manifest amongst those who develop such speculations, which are consumed and believed by multitudes to their ruin. They may be very clever and sophisticated speculations, with much detail that is appealing to the natural man, with much seeming self-consistency; but that cannot make up for lack of verification. The palpable frustration of the atheist at this final and immovable impotency, leads them to attempt to change the meaning of words such as “science” and “fact”, as for example in the recent utterly erroneous statement of the prominent atheist Richard Dawkins: “We need to stop calling evolution a theory. In the ordinary language sense of the word it is a fact. It is as solidly demonstrated as any fact in science” (*Daily Telegraph*, 19th September 2011).

The speculations of the theorists have been promoted by incessant propaganda from both the broadcast and print media, and by the indoctrination of the young in schools and universities. The charismatic broadcaster David Attenborough recently joined prominent atheists in calling for a ban on the teaching of creation in schools as part of science education. Such teaching does not presently occur in state schools, but the enemies of truth are clearly fearful of the consequences of what will happen if it is allowed to expose the weakness of their speculations. It is now very difficult indeed for children to go through their education without being tainted with falsehood concerning creation and natural history. Where there is a godly counteracting of this falsehood by teaching within the home and church, there is hope for a child that it will not cause them to cut adrift from the church but, alas, there is a grave danger that such teaching is weak or absent, and there follows a disengagement from the ordinances of the gospel.

A widespread delusion exists amongst the general public that “evolutionary science” is the building of a pyramid of knowledge which will ultimately lead to a complete knowledge of the history of the universe, physical and biological. The reality is very different – it is an ever expanding collection of loosely-tied speculative and unprovable theories, of which there are potentially a vast number of competing alternative theories that have not yet been considered; and those that have been are continually being reformulated in the light of new observations. These are often falsely reported in the media as if they were scientific facts. The absence of opportunity for verifiability regarding evolutionary theory has encouraged an appeal to its popularity – “the vast majority of scientists believe it, therefore it must be true”. By which method they hope to humiliate and silence its detractors. The recent promotion of anthropogenic global warming theory has proceeded along similar lines in an

attempt to eradicate scientific and political opposition. It seems that, for many, science is no longer about what is right, but rather about what is most popular.

In practice, the chief motivation of the evolutionist has proven to be to move further away from the truth of the Bible. Any explanation is tolerated for serious consideration, in the light of a new observation which contradicts an existing speculation, so long as it is not contrary to that chief motivation. Thus, whatever may be the stated beliefs of the evolutionists, and those allied to them such as Roman Catholic and liberal theologians, their practice is undeniably atheistic, by denying God His rightful place as the Creator of the universe and everything in it, according to His own Word. May the Lord hasten that day when the veil of ignorance that is upon the face of all nations, concerning the truth of creation, is removed.

REPORT ON MORALS

Divorce

In the aftermath of the consultation process regarding same-sex marriage the impression may be left that the Churches in Scotland are united in their approach to marriage as a divine ordinance and in their determination to defend it as it is regulated by the Word of God. Sadly this is not the case and the attitudes to divorce and re-marriage evidence a very serious departure from Scripture, even in Churches claiming to stand on the scriptural ground of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The Church of Scotland has long ago shifted its position from the restrictions defined in the Confession. The Committee gave consideration to a document produced by the Free Church of Scotland which significantly changes the stance of this Church on the subject of divorce. A panel was set up by the General Assembly to prepare a study paper “in light of recent Biblical research”, and its report has been circulated to Presbyteries of the Free Church seeking their responses to a proposed new position on divorce. The Study Panel will submit its final report to the 2012 General Assembly.

The new position is that the true scriptural position allows for divorce, not only on the grounds of desertion and adultery, but also on the grounds of emotional and physical neglect and abuse. It is argued that such behaviour in a marriage is “an abandonment of the promises involved in a marriage, a rejection of the other”. This, it is argued, is “in essence desertion”. Conveniently “this could fit within the terms of the Confession”. This position may appear plausible and it is offered on the basis of arguments purporting to have Scripture foundations. It is true that desertion needs to be defined, but the proposed definition is excessively wide. A whole range of things could come under the category of “neglect” and of “abandonment of promises involved in a marriage”. The arguments in favour of the new position are spurious and depend on extra-biblical propositions relating to Jewish customs.

However inadvertently, the whole endeavour looks remarkably similar to the very thing our Westminster divines warned against. The Confession states:

“Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to *study arguments*, unduly to put asunder those whom God has joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case” (Chapter 24, VI) The new definition seems to better fit the civil grounds of “irretrievable breakdown” which was demonstrated by a multitude of faults other than adultery or desertion. This position, which was the basis of legislation (first introduced in 1937 and added to in 1967) has been largely discredited. The reason for this is due to the increased acrimony in divorce cases and the implications for courts that resulted from it. Present legislation favours the equally unscriptural no-fault divorce. We must maintain the Reformed position on this subject.

The Scottish Parliament

That our rulers are obliged to keep the law of God as rulers and in their offices of state is clearly taught in Scripture and reason itself demands it also. Righteousness exalts a nation and sin is a reproach to any people. The moves in our Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh suggest strongly that the causes of irreligion and immorality have considerable influence on our policy-makers and that in time ungodly legislation will be further embedded into our statute books. Two areas of concern in relation to the morals of the nation are highlighted in this part of the report which was prepared by Mr. Alasdair MacPherson.

End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

On 1st December 2010 the Scottish Parliament rejected the End of Life Assistance (Scot) Bill discussed by Margo MacDonald by 85 votes to 16 with 2 abstentions. It was a matter for thankfulness that it was rejected. The Sixth Commandment forbids “all taking away the life of ourselves or of others, except in the case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life” (*Larger Catechism*, Answer 136).

At the start of 2012 the Commission on Assisted Dying – a year-long Commission chaired by Lord Falconer, the former Lord Chancellor – has published its findings. If implemented, the proposals would give adults, who are likely to have less than a year to live, the ability to ask their doctor for a dose of medication which would end their lives. Scottish right-to-die campaigners have welcomed these moves at Westminster. Margo MacDonald (Independent MSP) is preparing to re-launch her own bill in the Scottish Parliament this month. She said she was “120%” behind the work of the Commission. It is widely understood that the Commission consisted of members hand-picked for their known bias in favour of euthanasia and its credibility is thus to be seriously questioned.

The Scottish Government has said there are no plans to change the law here on deliberately taking a life while BMA Scotland said it was “firmly opposed” to legalisation of assisted dying. When a terminal cancer patient, Geraldine McClelland, London, finally decided to take her own life in a Swiss suicide clinic, she asked the UK pro euthanasia organisation, Dignity in Dying, to publicise her decision. She stated that she was angry because of the cowardice of our politicians in not legalising assisted suicide, thus preventing her from taking her own life in her own country and with her family around her.

Another Press article says that “Parliament has stood up bravely to fierce lobbying from activists intent on introducing euthanasia to our legislature. It has been debated four times in recent years and on the two occasions it has come to a vote it has been defeated. That’s not cowardice. It’s democracy.” Sadly and alarmingly, if our rulers place their confidence in mere democracy rather than the law of God, immoral and irreligious laws will eventually be accepted.

What need for prayer without ceasing that these forces, which promote evil, might be suppressed and our rulers brought in repentance to the law of God as their only safe guide in such matters!

Same-sex “marriage” consultation

In the wider sphere of UK politics, the Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron, is personally pushing the issue forward. In his speech to the Conservative Party Conference he expressed his support for the institution of marriage, but then stated his strong support for same sex marriage. To equate same sex marriage vows with traditional marriage vows is nothing less than perverse. The Scottish Conservative Party also elected an openly lesbian leader in 2011, thus identifying itself with this sin. That Christians could now vote with a clear conscience for any of the main political parties in Westminster or Holyrood elections is to be seriously questioned. How much we need that the Lord would raise up those who fear His name to lead us in our Parliaments!

The Scottish Parliament launched a public consultation on whether to redefine marriage in order that people of the same sex may marry. This was to run to 9th December 2011. That such a consultation is being held at all would have astonished people 20 years ago. Marriage is defined by the Bible: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). This cannot be brushed aside as “Old Testament” because it is cited by Christ in connection with marriage and divorce (Matthew 19:5). The relevant point here being, “He which made them at the beginning made them male and female”, in order that there might be such a thing as marriage. Two men or two women cannot marry in biblical terms, precisely because they are the same sex.

The Religion and Morals Committee responded to the Consultation paper in the strongest of terms, a sample quoted as follows:

We reject utterly the legal right of any government to redefine marriage as it pleases, or even as it may please the democratic majority of the people. In principle we will oppose and condemn any such move as an iniquity and public shame. No law or public opprobrium will prevent our ministers from publicly preaching against the sins of sodomy and unnatural union which this consultation process seeks to promote.

We therefore herewith warn and solemnly protest to the Scottish Government that they desist forthwith from what would, if enacted, tend to erode the institution of marriage. We exhort all concerned in this process to beware of inviting the deserved judgement of God on our nation by such actions and decisions as would pretend to validate what God has condemned as abomination and wickedness.

As can be seen in the references above, the danger of euthanasia becoming legalised in some form is very real. Consequently the Committee feels that this matter must be kept before our minds continually in this report. The following section of the report was prepared by Mr. Hector Munro, who has detailed the problem in greater depth.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a term which was virtually unheard of not so many years ago. Today, however, we find it regularly referred to in the media, but what exactly does this word mean? Well the word itself means “to die well” or “good dying”. Now, if that was all it meant, the Christian would have no quarrel with the definition. We should all pray earnestly to die well; indeed this should be our chief occupation in life. We need to be prepared for death which is appointed for us all. The Word of God tells us, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13). We should cry to the Saviour, who overcame sin and death, and who graciously gives this preparation to all who will diligently seek it from Him.

Looking a little more closely, though, we see sinister connotations attached to this word. The Oxford dictionary states, “Euthanasia is the *killing* of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease”. Yes, the *killing*. This changes the meaning radically. It is now a patient, which means an ill person, indeed a terminally ill person . . . a vulnerable, sick person, who should be receiving as much care, love, kindness and treatment as it is possible to give from our medical profession, yet they are to be *killed* if we legalise euthanasia, as a significant and vociferous section of society are bent on doing.

Euthanasia can be further divided into categories. (1) *Active euthanasia*, where the medical professional deliberately does something to cause the patient to die, i.e. knowingly giving a dose of medicine which will certainly cause death. (2) *Passive euthanasia*, where the patient is deprived of treatment necessary to life, i.e. withholding certain drugs from him/her or being taken off a life support machine. (3) *Voluntary euthanasia* is where the patient refuses

treatment to save their lives and they want to die. It is effectively suicide. (4) *Non voluntary euthanasia* is where the patient cannot make a decision about life or death due to, say, being in a coma or having brain damage. Someone else makes the decision for him or her. (5) *Involuntary euthanasia* is where the patient clearly states that he/she wants to live but is killed anyway. This is usually classed as murder.

There have been endless arguments over the relative morality of those various categories, however the Bible rises high above them all with its absolute commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). In a world of secular relativism where man sets himself up as autonomous, claiming a right to die when he chooses, or taking another's life when he considers its quality to be at or near zero, the Bible speaks loudly and authoritatively, when the Psalmist acknowledges, "My times are in thine hand" (Psalm 31:15). How solemn! Man, not considering an afterlife, is ready to usher himself and his fellow sinners into the endless eternity to meet their Maker and Judge.

Currently, in the United Kingdom there is a constant clamour to legalise euthanasia in its more subtle forms. Some other countries have already done this. Here we have the powerful lobby group, "Dignity in Dying" (formerly called the Voluntary Euthanasia Society), wielding arguments, stimulating debate, and attracting patrons from high profile and influential positions to gain their evil ends. One patron, Patricia Hewitt, a well known minister in the last government states: "I have become convinced of the need for a change in the law to protect people with terminal illness who have made the painful decision to seek help in dying . . . all of us have a real choice" (Dying in Dignity website). What a distorted view of protection! Here is plausible but poisonous language which is echoed by other patrons such as Terry Pratchett, the author, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, Lord Joffe, the vigorous euthanasia campaigner, and Simon Weston, the Falklands War veteran.

Another patron of "Dying in Dignity" is Nick Ross, a former prominent BBC *Crimewatch* presenter. He commented on a colleague, Geraldine McClelland, going to die at the notorious Dignitas clinic in Zurich in December 2011. She was suffering from lung and liver cancer. Ross said bitterly, "never let organised religion be a trump card to imprison free spirits like Gerry in its own dogma" (*Daily Mail*, 9th December 2011). In the same newspaper, alongside Nick Ross' emotive language, a more balanced view was expressed by Baroness Finlay, who is Professor of Palliative Medicine at Cardiff University and part of the research body "Living and Dying Well". She said, "there was no reason why this lady could not die at home with her family around her, especially as Britain has internationally renowned palliative care". One would expect her to have more practical knowledge of the course of Geraldine McClelland's disease than Nick Ross would have.

Medicine is continually improving. Cures are found and new techniques are discovered. As Baroness Finlay has said, palliative care is becoming increasingly sophisticated, so that the suffering of terminally ill patients can be alleviated to a great degree. Euthanasia inevitably slows down and thwarts

this medical progress. The life which could have been benefited is ended. Proponents of euthanasia state that what the patient *wants* is the issue and if he or she is rational they should not be denied the right to die. But who is rational when they are in pain and focussing on an uncertain future? Fear, shock and, of course, sin in the heart and the devil's influence, all act as factors in the situation. One is asked to make a decision at the worst possible moment. In any case, most people in such circumstances cannot know for certain how accurate the prognosis is in their own case.

In 1996 Australia legalised euthanasia for a short time. Dr. Philip Nitschke was the first doctor in the world to administer legal voluntary euthanasia. After the law was repealed he and his supporters campaigned for a return to legalised euthanasia. One supporter/patient, June Burns, pleaded for death on national TV in 1999 saying that she would rather kill herself than "die like a dog" from cancer. She went into remission a year later. Would she not be glad that she was not allowed to make that choice? How many more are like her?

The debate is about getting the law changed to give the "right to die" and "letting people die" as if it was a gentle, passive concept, ignoring the fact that this is asking the state to take part in the act of terminating life, i.e. doctors actually *killing* patients. Surely reason tells us that the state's duty, on our behalf, is to protect all of us from danger. Such protection should define a civilised society. That is why we have police, military forces, magistrates, etc. The state may say that there is a right to life but it cannot say that there is a right to death. People must die, yes, but the state should not kill them. If euthanasia were legalised then the state would decide who should live and who should die. The state should never determine that a person's life is not worth living. One House of Lords' pronouncement reinforces this by stating: "The message which society sends to vulnerable and disadvantaged people should not, however obliquely, encourage them to seek death, and instead, should assure them of our care and support in life."

The stated aim of medicine is to preserve life, not end it; the principle of medicine is to heal, not destroy. The Hippocratic Oath requires doctors to pledge, "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone even if asked, or suggest any such course". This underpins our understanding of medicine. The relationship between a doctor and a patient is based on trust. If euthanasia were legalised, the patient could justly say, "I fear going to my doctor; he may prescribe death". Of course, in practice palliative care, itself, may shorten the patient's life. However, this is not the *intention* . . . that is the crucial difference. The *intention* is to control the pain; the hastening of death, then, is an unwanted side effect.

If a "euthanasia environment" is created, families may urge doctors to "let their loved ones go" or patients themselves may feel obliged to request death, as they may be made to feel guilty for the care they have every right to receive. Others may gain, materially, from their deaths or have the "burden" of caring for them taken away. The temptation to collude with doctors or even bribe them is greater. At present, technically at least, the law gives protection to patients

and their interests are fundamental, not the wishes of relatives or others. Suicide itself used to be illegal and though now not a punishable offence, there is certainly no legal right to take one's life. Of course, assisted suicide is still illegal and punishable on the statute book by up to 14 years' imprisonment.

In addition to the pressure put on society to formally legalise euthanasia, there is a very real fear that in certain places it is already taking place by stealth. Law courts in the UK have authorised the withdrawal of tube feeding from some patients who are in a so-called "Persistent Vegetative State". This amounts to euthanasia if the intention is to bring about death. The term "vegetative" itself is misleading, as it implies the person is no longer human. Assisted suicide is another area where stealth is becoming apparent.

Keir Starmer, Britain's Director of Public Prosecutions, has published guidelines on assisted suicide in response to an instruction by Law Lords who ruled in the case of Debbie Purdy. She is an MS sufferer who wanted legal guidance on how her husband would be treated if he helped her to die (assisted suicide). The DPP ruled that any relative or friend who helps a suicide out of compassion and not for personal gain is less likely to be prosecuted. Those guidelines have really muddied the waters. None of the 44 people suspected of helping friends or relatives to die over the 18 months to September 2011 has yet been prosecuted. Starmer himself has the role of judging all assisted suicide cases personally, so he interprets his own ruling. Medical professionals would normally not be protected under the guidelines, yet we find a doctor, Michael Irwin, not facing trial for helping a cancer victim to kill himself, despite, apparently, there being enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. The Christian Institute has said that Dr. Irwin wrote to Mr. Starmer admitting helping a terminally ill patient, Raymond Cutkelvin, to commit suicide at the Dignitas facility in Switzerland in 2007.

Dr. Peter Saunders, of the campaign group Care not Killing, warned (in the *Daily Mail*, 6th September 2011), "There is a very real danger here of legalisation by stealth which runs contrary to the will of Parliament. This could place vulnerable sick, disabled and elderly people at much greater risk. The law is clear and has not been changed . . . it acts as a powerful disincentive to exploitation and abuse. The DPP has a duty to uphold the will of Parliament . . . he appears to be interpreting his own guidance very liberally."

It is solemn indeed when we cannot trust those in places of high authority to deal faithfully with the vital issues of life and death.

Of course, the unspeakably awful fact is that one form of euthanasia has been legalised and has been carried out routinely since 1967. The killing of some of the most fragile and vulnerable members of our society in Britain is commonplace. The baby in the womb is denied the right to live if the mother so chooses. As John Calvin said so long ago, ". . . the *foetus*, though enclosed in the womb of its mother is already a human being (*homo*). . . . If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious

to destroy a *foetus* in the womb before it has come to light” (Commentary on Exodus 21:22).

The following sections of the report, which detail the statistics on the subjects of alcohol, drugs and crime, were prepared by Rev. Bruce Jardine. The details illustrate the terrible blight which sin has brought on our nation and how ineffectual the response of our rulers has been while they continue to reject the Word of God as their guide. These statistics are provided to encourage prayerful and practical concern for those whose lives are destroyed by sin in its more overt forms. If the facts detailed place a burden of prayer on the Lord’s people, this report will have served a useful purpose.

Alcohol

We read in the Word of God of the entrance and prevalence of sin in the world. There is no clearer place to see this than in the abuse that is made of alcohol and drugs in our day and the crime which so often follows from it. The information contained in this section is taken from that published by the charities, Alcohol Focus Scotland and Drink Aware UK. These charities not only publish information on Alcohol abuse but provide guidance for those with alcohol problems. Alcohol is not just an ordinary commodity but can also be a hazardous substance. Scotland has the highest level of alcohol consumption and harm in the United Kingdom. Over the past year almost 51 million litres of pure alcohol has been drunk by Scots – this is equivalent to every person over the age of 16 drinking 119 bottles of wine.

Over the last 30 years there has been a 450% increase in deaths caused by liver cirrhosis. Alcohol Focus Scotland has published the following facts:

- 25 people die in Scotland every week as a direct result of their drinking.
- Accident and emergency units treat an average of 4 alcohol-related cases every hour.
- Alcohol misuse in Scotland costs £3.5 billion every year, that is equivalent to £900 for every taxpayer.
- 77% of young offenders were drunk at the time of their offence.
- During 2009, Scottish hospitals dealt with 39,278 alcohol-related discharges. Of these, 36,121 were emergency admissions.

General Health

Over 60 diseases or types of trauma have been linked with alcohol use. Average alcohol consumption is causally related to the following major diseases: Tuberculosis, Mouth cancer, Oesophageal cancer, Colon and rectum cancer, Liver cancer, Diabetes mellitus, Depressive disorders, Epilepsy, Heart disease, Stroke, Lower respiratory infections (pneumonia), Cirrhosis of the liver, and Pre-term birth complications and foetal alcohol syndrome. Each year in Scotland up to 500 new cases of breast cancer could be linked to alcohol

consumption. The world's largest study of women's drinking behaviour showed that the risk of breast cancer increases by 10% for every extra alcoholic drink you drink every day over the recommended daily amount.

Alcohol and stress

Stress occurs when the pressure and challenges of life exceed our ability to cope. Though stress isn't a physical problem it makes us prone to physical and mental illness. Many people use alcohol to relax and to combat the effects of stress. However, using alcohol for this purpose leads to the following problems:

- The more a person drinks the more drink he needs to feel "relaxed" – this more often than not leads to alcohol dependency.
- Hangovers make concentration harder and even simple tasks more difficult, adding to stress level.
- Alcohol disrupts sleep, leaving the drinker tired and irritable.
- Drinking can also result in stressful financial difficulties.

Clearly drinking to try and cope with stress will only make the situation worse.

Drink driving

Drink-drivers are responsible for one in six deaths on British roads. In 2009 there were seven drink-drive deaths and 28 serious injuries every week. A further estimated 80 road deaths per year are caused by drivers who are under the drink-drive limit, but who have alcohol in their blood. Drunken car passengers can be as dangerous as drivers who drink. Research suggests that 100,000 accidents a year are caused by inebriated passengers who can cause drivers to lose control of their vehicle, swerve or crash by grappling with the steering wheel, or fiddling with the handbrake. Alcohol is recognised as a contributory factor in a wide range of other social evils, including anti-social behaviour, crime, violence, domestic violence, strained relationships, family breakdown, child abuse and child neglect. The following gives an indication of this:

- Alcohol played a major role in 14 out of 18 murders in Strathclyde in 2010.
- Half the prisoners in Scotland's jails were drunk at the time of the offence.
- 70% of assaults presenting at A&E were alcohol-related.

Alcohol and the young

It is estimated that at least 65,000 children in Scotland are negatively affected by a parent having a drink problem. Children have to cope with their parent's unpredictable behaviour, rows, neglect, domestic violence, and can often feel

ashamed as well as under-achieving at school. It is not easy being a young person in today's society. Young people are under pressure to start drinking at a young age. Without the restraints of grace and of true religion in the home, peer pressure, a lack of better alternatives and influences from film, television and social media, make it almost impossible for young people to abstain from the sinful habits of drunkenness. However, more than 10,000 children end up in hospital every year due to drinking alcohol. Research tells us that 15 per cent of young people think it is normal to get drunk at least once a week. By this they are putting themselves at risk of harm, including liver disease, depression, and brain damage. They are also grievously imperilling their immortal souls. As a young person's body is developing the most during their teenage years, the negative effects of drinking alcohol in their youth can result in lifelong illnesses and problems. Briefly:

- Alcohol makes children more vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime.
- Young people's bodies are more vulnerable than adults' to the effects of alcohol.
- Drinking can lead to and be a symptom of poor mental health.
- The earlier a child starts drinking, the higher their chances of alcohol-related problems as adults.

Drugs

This section of the report deals with the abuse of controlled substances. The information contained in this section was published by the Scottish Drugs Forum and Scottish Government. Controlled substances or illegal drugs come in a variety of forms:

- Amphetamines/Amphetamine stimulate the central nervous system and give the user increased energy, reduced appetite and an overall feeling of wellbeing.
- Barbiturates/Barbiturate which are prescription sedatives.
- Benzodiazepine/Benzodiazepines are widely prescribed for depression and sleeping disorders.
- Buprenorphine (Subutex, Buprenex, Temgesic and Suboxone), which is often used in the treatment of opioid addiction.
- Cannabis/Marijuana. Cannabis is the most commonly abused illegal drug.
- Cocaine is a potent stimulant and one of the most powerfully addictive drugs.
- Heroin is an addictive narcotic drug derived from the opium poppy.
- Inhalants or solvents are ordinary household or industrial products that are inhaled or sniffed by solvent abusers to achieve intoxication.

- Ketamine hydrochloride is a depressant of the central nervous system and a fast-acting general anaesthetic with sedative-hypnotic, analgesic, and hallucinogenic properties.
- LSD is the most common hallucinogen and is one of the most potent mood-changing chemicals available.
- Magic Mushrooms are certain types of naturally occurring mushrooms which contain hallucinogenic chemicals that can be released when eaten.
- MDMA, or Ecstasy, is a synthetic drug with amphetamine-like and hallucinogenic properties.
- Methadone is prescribed to people who take heroin (or other opiates) to help reduce the risks of their illicit drug use.
- Phencyclidine or PCP.

The prevalence of illicit drug use in Scotland

The following figures are based on a survey carried out by the Scottish Government:

- One in four (25.2%) adults have taken one or more illicit drugs at some point in their lives.
- 7.2% of adults have used one or more illicit drugs in the last year.
- 4.2% have used one or more illicit drug in the last month.

Cannabis is by far the most commonly used illegal drug. 22.9% of adults have taken cannabis at some point in their lives, around 6.1% of adults reported using cannabis in the last year, and around 3.6% reported using cannabis in the last month. The next most common drugs were amphetamines (7.6%), ecstasy (7.4%), and cocaine (6.7%).

Men have higher levels of illicit drug use than women:

- Around 31.4% of men reported taking an illicit drug at some point in their lives compared with 19.5% of women.
- 10.1% of men reported having used one or more illicit drugs in the last year which was twice as high as the 4.5% percentage of women.
- 6.0% of men compared with 2.6% of women reported having used one or more illicit drug in the last month.

38.2% of 16-24-year-olds and 41.9% of 25-44-year-olds reported having used illicit drugs at some point in their lives. Reported drug use was lower among 45-59-year-olds and decreased further among those aged 60 or over.

Tobacco/nicotine

There is another drug which, though not illegal or as controlled as the above, is just as harmful. According to the American Council for Drug Education, tobacco use has been implicated in:

- Cancers of the lungs, mouth, throat, larynx, oesophagus, stomach, pancreas, uterus, cervix, kidney, bladder, and some forms of leukaemia.
- Cardiovascular disease, heart attack, fatal heart failure, and stroke.
- Pulmonary diseases, such as sinusitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, emphysema, and inflammation of the trachea.
- Reproductive complications, such as miscarriage, premature birth, birth defects, and, especially, low-birth weight babies and babies with developmental problems. Nicotine depresses the appetite at a time when a woman should be gaining weight, and smoking reduces the ability of the lungs to absorb oxygen. Deprived of nourishment and oxygen, a child in the womb may not grow as fast and as much as it should.

This reminds us of the responsibility we are under to take every lawful endeavour to preserve our own life and the life of others (*Shorter Catechism* Q.68).

According to the Government, smoking-related conditions cost the NHS over £5bn a year.

Crime

The following information is taken from the *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) 2010-11* as published by the Scottish Government. The figures given are, in part, estimates originating from a sample survey and are, therefore, subject to uncertainty.

Some of the most significant findings of the report claimed that:

- The risk of being a victim of crime is falling. The risk of crime was 17.8% in 2010-11 compared with 19.3% in 2009-10 and 20.4% in 2008-09.
- The number of crimes has fallen by 16% or 171,000 in the two years between 2008-09 and 2010-11, from 1,045,000 crimes in 2008-09 to 874,000 crimes in 2010-11.

The extent of crime in Scotland

An estimate of the extent of crime among the adult population living in private households in Scotland can be given. There were 874,000 crimes, including:

- Approximately 654,000 property crimes (75% of crime) involved theft or damage to personal or household property (including vehicles).
- Around 32% of crimes were incidents of vandalism – 17% was vandalism to vehicles and 15% was vandalism to property.
- 7% related to motor vehicle theft and actual thefts of and from a motor vehicle.

- 3% of crime was housebreaking and 19% was other household theft (including bicycle theft).
- 14% of crime was personal theft (excluding robbery).
- Approximately 220,000 violent crimes of assault or robbery (25% of crime).
- Assault accounted for 24% of crime (2% was serious assault and 22% was minor assault).
- 1% of the crime was robbery.

The number of crimes has fallen by 16% in the two years between 2008/09 and 2010/11, from 1,045,000 crimes in 2008/09 to 874,000 crimes in 2010/11.

Violent crime

The following are the main claims according to the report:

- The risk of being a victim of violent crime is falling, 3.0% in 2010-11 compared with 3.6% in 2009-10. The estimated number of violent crimes was 220,000 in 2010-11 compared with 266,000 in 2009-10.
- The offender was under the influence of alcohol in 63% of cases of violent crime in 2010-11 compared with 62% in 2009-10.
- 22% of violent crime happened in or around a pub, bar or club and 46% of violent crime occurred at the weekend between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- The victim reported that the offender had a knife in 11% of violent crime in 2010-11 compared with 12% in 2009-10.

A weapon was used in 24% of violent crime in 2010/11 compared with 30% in 2009/10. Where victims reported that the offender had a weapon a knife was the most common weapon. It was used in 11% of violent crime in 2010/11 compared with 12% in 2009/10. Victims perceived the offender to have been under the influence of alcohol in 63% of violent crime and to have taken drugs in 34% of violent crime.

The risk of being a victim

The survey estimates that around 17.8% of adults aged 16 or over were the victims of at least one crime:

- 15.9% of adults were estimated to have been a victim of property crime.
- 3% of adults had been a victim of violent crime.

The risk of being a victim of a crime has fallen from 19.3% in 2009/10 to 17.8% in 2010/11. The risk to the individual:

- Males and females had an equal risk of being a victim of property crime (16%); males had a higher risk of being a victim of violent crime compared with females (4% and 2% respectively).

- 26% of males aged 16-24 were at risk of being a victim of crime. The risk of being a victim for females of the same age was 25%.
- 11% of 16-24-year-old males had the highest risk of being a victim of violent crime compared with all other combined age/gender groups.

The risk of being a victim of crime decreases with age. 26% of those aged 16-24 had been a victim of crime in the last year, compared with 9% of those aged 60+. Males had a higher risk of being a victim of violent crime compared with females. 4% of adult males had been a victim of violent crime in the last year compared with 2% of females.

The risk of repeated victimisation:

- 5% of adults or 35% of victims of property crime were repeat victims of property crime.
- 1% of adults or 35% of victims of violent crime were repeat victims of violent crime.

Where and when crime happened

Nearly 63% of all property crimes took place immediately outside the home. In contrast, violent crime happened in a number of locations:

- 22% of violent crime happened in or around a pub, bar or club.
- 19% happened in or near the respondent's place of work.
- 12% of violent crimes took place inside the victims' home and 11% took place immediately outside the home.
- 6% of violent crimes happened in or around a shop, supermarket, shopping centre or precinct.

Almost 48% of all crime took place on a weekday and a little less, 41%, took place at the weekend. 51% of all property crime took place on a weekday and 36%, took place at the weekend. In contrast, 57% of violent crime took place at the weekend and 46% of all violent crime took place at the weekend between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Some characteristics of offenders

- Males were more likely than females to be offenders. In 74% of crime, where the victim was able to say something about the offender, the offender was male compared with 12% of crimes where the offender was female and 13% where there was a group of both male and female offenders. Males were more likely to be the offender in both property and violent crime.
- Offenders were most likely to be aged 16-24. In 41% of crime, where the victim was able to say something about the offender, the offender was described as being aged 16-24.

- In 34% of property crime, where the victim was able to provide details, the offender was of school age, compared with 15% of violent crime. Property vandalism was the crime most likely to have been committed by school age children.
- In 19% of crime, where the victim knew the offender well, the offender was a friend or acquaintance; in 16% a neighbour and in 9% the current partner of the victim.
- 26% of property crime, where the victim knew the offender well, was committed by a friend or acquaintance and 16% committed by a neighbour.
- 16% of violent crime, where the victim knew the offender well, was committed by a neighbour, 15% by a friend or acquaintance, 13% by the victim's current partner and 13% by client or member of the public contacted through work.

It is clear from the above that sin is as rampant today as it has ever been and that it is then just as necessary for us to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit.

Conclusion

What need there is for another Reformation. The dreadful apostasy from the truth is going on apace and, while the Lord is able in a short time to turn the tide of iniquity, we greatly fear that our nation must yet be brought exceedingly low for its sins. For ourselves we must consider solemnly the question, "are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" (2 Chronicles 28:10). It has often been said that repentance begins in the Church of God and how fervently we should seek that the spirit of grace and of supplication would again be poured out on Scotland to effect that great and necessary change. May the Lord hasten it in His time.

APPENDIX 1

RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN THE WORSHIP OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

(a) Constitutional changes in the Free Church

- (1) The Act of the Plenary Assembly of November 2010 introduced a new constitutional arrangement to the Free Church of Scotland. By this Act it was legislated for the first time that the Free Church can change its form of worship which previously had been protected by its written constitution. By this Act, there is a new Free Church of Scotland.
- (2) The Act of the Plenary Assembly of November 2010 being treated as a Class 1 Act and assuming powers only granted under the Barrier Act to pass legislation into standing law, has circumvented

the provision of the Barrier Act and the Assembly has rejected the provision of the Barrier Act for this piece of legislation, making it constitutionally illegal.

- (3) The Act of the Plenary Assembly of November 2010 has repealed all previous Acts of Assembly since 1846 relating to Hymns and Instrumental Music in Public Worship. This would have had the effect of restoring the Free Church to the constitutional position in 1846 but the Act goes on to enact fresh legislation sanctioning the use of Hymns and Instrumental Music as a Class 1 Act.
- (4) The terms upon which the Act of the Plenary Assembly of November 2010 which has sanctioned the use of Hymns leaves the worship of God and the material used in it open to the subjective and changing interpretation of office-bearers who have disavowed the constitutional purity of worship in the Free Church.
- (5) As in 1892 when the constitution of the Free Church had changed in relation to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the Plenary Assembly Act on worship has changed the constitution of the Free Church in relation to the worship of God and so there is now a new Church calling herself the Free Church of Scotland.
- (6) The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has always claimed to be the Free Church of 1843 and claims to be the true heir of the Disruption Church of Scotland. This claim is further substantiated and would have every reason to succeed in law were the matter ever put to trial as in 1900 in relation to property.
- (7) The competing claims of the Free Church (Continuing) as the true heirs of the Free Church constitution are to be dismissed on account of their being a new denomination and being established on unfounded and new principles relating to an alleged continued right of protest.

(b) A new Free Church Declaratory Act

The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in May 2011 passed a further Act on the subject of the worship of that denomination in an attempt to put a line under the disputes of the past 10 years. The form of the Act in several particulars resembles in form the infamous Free Church Declaratory Act of 1892. In what is all but an admission of a very significant change in the Questions and Formula put to Free Church office-bearers, the new Act of 2011 recognises that the decision of the Plenary Assembly of November 2010 “may have created difficulties of conscience for some office-bearers and some who may be elected to office”. It then enacts that, “in order to address such difficulties”, all candidates for office at the time of licensing, ordination or induction “may intimate to the relevant Church Court their own personal conviction with regard to sung praise and instrumental music in public worship”.

In substance and in form this is a new Declaratory Act and is, like the Declaratory Act of 1892, a relieving Act. Yet, unlike the carefully crafted production of Robert Rainy, it clearly identifies what the 1892 Declaratory Act in fact constituted – a change in the relation of the Free Church to her constitution. While the 2011 Act is constructed to relieve the consciences of office-bearers, it would appear that the consciences intended in the Declaratory Act of 2011 are those of the Free Church office-bearers who wish to *preserve* rather than those who wish to *change* the constitution. Such is the new understanding of liberty of conscience that office-bearers who have *not* changed their avowed position on purity of worship are now required to make known their “personal conviction” and “it shall be the duty of the Clerk of Presbytery or Kirk Session in all cases to record any such intimation”. Those who *have* changed their position relative to the vows they have taken are not required to make any such statement as the Plenary Assembly has granted them the licence to change their avowed convictions with impunity.

It remains to be seen how many existing office-bearers in the Free Church will make use of the liberty and advice of the new Act which ordains that “existing office-bearers may intimate to the relevant Church Court at any suitable opportunity their own personal conviction with regard to sung praise and instrumental music in public worship”. This provision of the Act seems so wide open to misuse and misconstruction that it would hardly seem credible that a Presbyterian Church could long endure the ambiguity it has potential to create. If, for example, a candidate for office in the Free Church of Scotland were to declare his personal conviction to be in favour of some particular body of uninspired hymns presently disallowed by the Free Church understanding of her “purity” of worship, would an argument not immediately ensue as to whether this or that particular hymn was according to the doctrine of the Scriptures and the Confession? Similarly, if an office-bearer who previously swore to “assert, maintain and defend” the purity of worship as authorised and practised when he was ordained, intimated that he would do all in his power as an office-bearer to overturn the Plenary Assembly decision, could the Church Court to which he is accountable legitimately accept and approve of this intimation? Anarchy would ensue in either hypothetical case.

It is very possible that what lies behind the new Declaratory Act is a hope that such anarchy is only hypothetical and not likely to prove a reality in the present-day Free Church. Doubtless Robert Rainy thought similarly in 1892 before he encountered the support given to the consistent witness of the Free Presbyterian Church, which saw the reality of the situation clearly. Similar zeal for the old purity of worship is sadly little in evidence. Separation or re-constitution are ultimately very unlikely. The nearly universal cry for “unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace” is likely to create such a din in the ears of would-be protesters that they would shrink from asserting themselves any further. Flight to other denominations would now be the preferred option for those unwilling to accept the changes. Thus, once again, the Free Church of Scotland, by declining from her testimony and constitutional obligations, has

been the agent of schism and in the name of unity has again rent a division, however small in numbers, in the Church of Christ.

APPENDIX 2

ADDITIONAL COMMENT ON THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In the Committee's report to the May 2011 Synod a review of the Scottish Churches was presented to the Synod which included, together with our own Church, reference to four other bodies claiming to represent the Reformed Church in Scotland. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the Reformed Presbyterian Church was not included in this brief survey. The fact that this denomination had all but disappeared from the ecclesiastical scene at the time may account for this omission, but this situation has changed in the past year. Mainly due to the decisions on worship in the Free Church of Scotland, this denomination has increased in size and has changed its constitution in the past year. The following survey is intended to update the Synod on the position of this Church and, as in last year's survey, to offer some reflections on the general subject of schism and Church unity in view of the forth-coming revision of the Statement of Differences.

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland

There have been no formal relations between this Church and the Synod at any time. The Reformed Presbyterian Church (established in 1743) does not share or claim the historic Disruption heritage of other Scottish Presbyterian Churches, but it is recognised as claiming a heritage and constitutional continuity with the Reformation Church of Scotland. The Free Presbyterian Church Statement of Differences in 1962 highlighted several points in the constitution of this Church with which we could not entirely agree. These were: (1) the complete rejection of the Revolution Settlement, (2) the signing of the Covenants being made a term of communion, (3) the belief that the Civil Magistrate must have respect to the Word of God and the interest of the Church before he can be recognised as having a valid standing, and (4) the rejection of political involvement by Christians either in taking any office of State requiring an oath of allegiance or in voting for members of Parliament.

On the other hand the Synod affirmation of the Second Reformation attainments in its statement of 1910 clearly expressed sympathy with and a measure of harmony between the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the outlook of the Reformed Presbyterians on the inadequacies of the Revolution Settlement. This statement clearly identifies the main complaints about the Revolution Settlement which we share with the Reformed Presbyterian Church and others. It contends, however, that these are not sufficient to reject the Settlement altogether but rather that it should still be

recognised as a work of God. It also showed that this was the position held by the Disruption fathers as expressed in their 1851 Declaration which, among other things, expressly called for the repeal of the Act Recissory which stigmatised the Second Reformation as treasonable and rebellious.

The separate position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church was therefore to be viewed as invalid for these constitutional reasons. It is to be further noted that a majority in the Reformed Presbyterian Church saw the stand for truth in 1843 as fulfilling the terms of their testimony sufficiently to effect a union with the Free Church of Scotland in 1876. That this was the correct conclusion on a constitutional level is evident and therefore leaves the remaining Reformed Presbyterian body open to the charge of schismatic division.

The constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland has, however, been considerably altered in the past year and has been all but stripped of its previously distinctive elements. This action seems, in part, to have been carried out for pragmatic reasons rather than from conviction or deeply held principle. As such it is also open to the charge of promoting and maintaining schism. The separate jurisdiction claimed and practised by the Reformed Presbyterian body seems no longer to be justified even to themselves.

The new constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church states that the putting in abeyance of its distinctive testimony and the adding of new statements is intended to produce “a standard around which all who agree may gather”. The clear duty of a body of Christians finding themselves in such a position must be to come under the jurisdiction of that body which reflects the biblical and constitutional identity to which they have deliberately aligned themselves. To demand that others suddenly abandon their principled stand and testimony to the same truths and heritage in order to be united to a body which has only really come into its present separate existence a little more than a year ago seems a most extravagant suggestion. While recognising the testimony of Churches which hold to the Disruption heritage as doing “good work”, the position adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church implies that the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church is not one around which they and others ought to gather. That the alteration in the constitution was in part at least for pragmatic reasons tends to undermine confidence in the commitment of such parties to constitutions which have the honourable distinction of many generations of allegiance. This justified doubt requires to be satisfactorily dispelled.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has openly declared its position on Church unity and its willingness to consider the matter of union a duty if certain important conditions were met. It considers that adherence to the whole doctrine of the *Confession of Faith* must be in practice as well as in profession and views the matter of discipline founded upon Scripture as of fundamental importance to the credibility of any profession made in constitutional documents or ordination vows. The Synod has several times declared its reasons for maintaining a separate position and does so firmly on the ground

of strict adherence to the First and Second Reformation and Disruption attainments. Its constitutional claim to be the true Free Church of Scotland as settled in 1843 has never been refuted.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland maintains that its separate existence is justified because it is necessary. The necessity of its testimony against the serious doctrinal errors as identified in the doctrines of the Declaratory Act of 1892 and other serious defections of the Churches in Scotland since that time, is as great in 2012 as at any time in its near 120-year history. It welcomes those who wish to adhere to its testimony and has received many such from other denominations over the years. It is willing to assert, maintain and defend its position from Scripture and the *Westminster Confession* to which it adheres. It does so in the prayerful hope that the Lord will again restore and revive His cause in Scotland by Reformation and repentance so that the attainments of previous Reformation work will be returned to and valued by the Church and people of God.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

OVER the last twelve months the Committee has endeavoured to maintain the historic witness of the Free Presbyterian Church in regard to the Sabbath Day.

As well as the correspondence listed below the Committee has continued work on various new tracts and has drawn up a report on the use of the Internet on the Sabbath.

Correspondence

The following gives an idea of the range of the Committee's correspondence. Unless otherwise stated, no response was received.

Sport

Football

- Masters Football

Golf

- Stornoway Golf Club

The Club noted the Committee's letter.

A letter was also sent to the Rev. Ivor Martin of the Free Church in Stornoway after he had publically expressed the view that there was nothing wrong with playing golf on the Sabbath. No response was received by the committee.

- The Royal and Ancient, St Andrews

The R & A states that, "I am afraid that staging sports events on

Sundays is becoming something of the norm and I see no prospect of this changing”.

- PGA European Tour

Motor Sports

- MSVR
- Eurosport Events Ltd.

Running

- Fyvie School Parent Forum – Acknowledgement
- Tom Scott Memorial Road Race
- Petrofac Athletics League (North) Race
- Invershin Fun Run
- Highland Athletics Open with Hippo I – Acknowledgement
- Bupa Great Run

Cricket

- The England and Wales Cricket Board
The Board stated that it could not provide “an assurance that many individuals will not choose to pursue cricket on Saturdays and Sundays”.

Darts

- British Darts Organisation
- Professional Darts Corporation Ltd.

Show Jumping

- The British Show Jumping Association

Tennis

- Lawn Tennis Association

Badminton

- Badminton England

Cycling

- Scottish Cycling

Angling

- The Angling Trust

Agricultural / Flower Shows

- Royal Horticultural Society
The Society responded that it was “unlikely we would reconsider Sunday shows”.
- The Royal Highland Association

Concerts

- T in the Park

Festivals

- Wigtown Festival Company Ltd.
The Festival Company states that “the Book Festival is intended for everyone to enjoy, whatever their faith or religion, and the Sabbath is not the same day for everyone”.
- Autumn Speyside Whisky Festival
- Crieff & Strathearn Drover’s Tryst
- Lennoxlove Book Festival
- Shetland Food Festival
- Scottish International Storytelling Festival
- Royal Deeside Venison Festival 2011
- Dundee Science Festival
- Perthshire Amber Festival

One difficulty now facing the Committee is that a growing number of organisers of events held on the Sabbath cannot be contacted. Many now use a temporary email address which is removed after the event and it is often impossible to find out who the organisers behind an event actually are. A great deal of time is often spent trying to track down an organiser but without success.

Sabbath ferries

At the end of 2011 Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd. intimated that, after a consultation with the local community, it would be introducing a passenger service in and out of Tarbert, Harris, on the Sabbath Day. The Committee responded to this by writing to the following:

Local Councillors

- Cllr. Morag Munro
As has always been the case, Cllr. Munro gave her full support to upholding the Sabbath.
- Cllr. Catherine Macdonald
Cllr. Macdonald gave her full support.
- Cllr. Philip Maclean

MSPs

- Mr Alasdair Allan, MSP
Mr Allan passed on the Committee’s concerns to Caledonian MacBrayne.
- Rt. Hon. Alex Salmond, MSP – Acknowledgement
- Mr Keith Brown, MSP, Minister for Housing and Transport
The Scottish Government responded that Calmac through their consultation process had found that “the majority of Harris residents were not opposed to the proposed Sunday sailings”.

After the commencement of the new service, concern was raised by Cllr. Munro in the local press that the consultation process had been severely flawed, with a good number of objections being overlooked.

MPs

- Mr Angus MacNeil, MP
Mr MacNeil passed on the Committee's concerns to Caledonian MacBrayne and in his reply recognised the continued integrity of our position regarding the Sabbath.

Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd.

- Mr Peter Timms CBE, Chairman
An acknowledgment was made on behalf of all Executive and Non-Executive Directors.
- Mr David Taylor, Managing Director
- Finlay Macrae, Pier Master

Calmac Ferries Ltd.

- George Taylor, Group Technical Director
- Gordon Mackenzie, Company Secretary
- Philip Preston, Managing Director
- Robert Sinclair, Non-Executive Director

David MacBrayne

- Primrose Stark, Non-Executive Director
- Norman Quirk, Non-Executive Director
- Lorne MacLeod, Non-Executive Director
- Alex Lynch, MBE, Group Finance Director
- Ian Gillies, Non-Executive Director
- David McGibbon, Deputy Chairman
- Archie Robertson, OBE, Chief Executive

The historic position of the Free Presbyterian Church

In *One Hundred Years of Witness* (pages 85-87) we read that "the subject of the sanctity of the Sabbath was always dear to the Free Presbyterian Church" and that "may the day never dawn in the Free Presbyterian Church when silence on this important subject becomes accepted". It is, therefore, our duty to renew our own efforts to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath. We can do this by seeking to keep the Sabbath holy to God.

We keep the Sabbath holy to God, through holy resting and the performance of holy exercises. Fisher in his Catechism defines holy resting as "not only an abstaining from our own work, or labour, but an entering by faith (in the use of the appointed means), into the presence and enjoyment of God in Christ, as the only rest of our souls, Hebrews 4:3; that having no work of our own to mind or do, we may be wholly taken up with the works of God" (Q.60, Sect. 19); and holy exercises as: "hearing the word preached, Romans 10:17; joining in public prayers and praises, Luke 24:53; and partaking of the sacraments, Acts 20:7" (Q.60, Sect. 22); as well as family and secret duties.

The general rule is for us to endeavour to attain and maintain a holy frame of spirit in all that we do. We as a Church have abstained from using the Radio or Television on the Lord's Day. The supreme purpose of the Sabbath is the pursuit of holiness and whatever tends to interfere with that end is unholy.

JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod

General

THIS Report attempts to provide the Synod with a broad summary of our Church's mission work in Zimbabwe, Kenya and at a much reduced level in Israel. In African congregations, as throughout our congregations at large at home or abroad, there is little evidence of the Spirit of God moving sinners to flee from the wrath to come. As a result labourers may well be inclined to join the prophet in exclaiming, "Who hath believed our report?". Were it not that we find the same prophet shortly afterwards moved to affirm that He whose Word was preached had promised that it would not return to Him void, they might well be disposed to think that their labours were entirely in vain. But, it is not so. We are told that such "work and labour of love" is not forgotten by Him whose kingdom it is that we seek to extend and has assured us that "Ethiopia", shall, in due time, "stretch forth her hands unto God".

Zimbabwe

It is encouraging that the revision of the Ndebele Bible is now completed and is now in print and ready for distribution. In this connection much is owed to the members of the team in Zimbabwe whose expertise and dedication to the work has been mentioned and commended in previous reports. At this particular juncture, the debt owed to the Trinitarian Bible Society in ensuring that the translation was as accurate as humanly possible and in exercising oversight at all stages leading to its production, is very great indeed. For this work alone, not to mention other activities, the Society is deserving of our support.

The cost of maintaining our missionary work in Zimbabwe at its present level is a matter of grave concern to the Committee. The Zimbabwean "powers that be" now require us to pay our workers wages set at a level which we cannot sustain. Accordingly, the Committee is conducting an "options appraisal" of all our handmaid activities with a view to finding ways of reducing expenditure to a sustainable level. Our friends in Holland have also expressed concern. Were it not for their support over the years much of our mission work in Zimbabwe would have by now been very much reduced. The expenditure incurred in maintaining our Kenyan mission work is totally met

by them. We are glad that four representatives from the Mbumba Zending Board will attend our Synod meeting and that this will give us the opportunity of expressing to them personally our deep sense of gratitude.

Pastoral work

We are thankful that the ministers [the Rev. Z. Mazwabo at Zvishavani, the Rev. S. Khumalo in Bulawayo, the Rev. A. B. MacLean at Ingwenya, and the Rev. M. Mloyi at Zenka] have been able to attend to their duties over the year in review. We are sorry that Mr. Mazwabo was indisposed for some time, but relieved that he is now restored. We are glad that the Rev. P. Mzamo is still able to preach occasionally and also attend Presbytery meetings where the experience gained over the years of his ministry will doubtless be of great value.

Administration

Mr. M. Mpfu continues competently to handle the administrative work at the office in Bulawayo while Mr. H. MacKenzie continues to co-ordinate the multifarious on-going mission projects according to plan.

The John Tallach High School

Under the continued capable, dedicated Headmastership of Mr. B. Ncube and his Deputy, Miss N. B. MacLean, the school is flourishing and its excellence as a centre of learning is now well known throughout the whole country. It now, for the first time in its history, teaches pupils up to Fifth Form level and expects to progress to Sixth Form this year. The new and necessary additional prefabricated building was built in record time under the supervision of Mr. Maarten Vroengindewej, a structural engineer from Holland. We are grateful to him for the work done at Ingwenya and also at Mbumba. Reports submitted by Miss MacLean and others will provide further information so that it is unnecessary for this report to go into details.

Mbumba Mission Hospital

Dr. A. Snoek and her staff provide medical and nursing help at such a level that the number of patients continue to increase. This brings staffing problems and means that the Doctor and her nursing staff have to work hours beyond the call of duty. The appointment of a Hospital Administrator is dependent upon a work permit being obtained and it is now almost certain that Mr. Leendert Boon, who had been accepted by the Committee, will not be able to fill the post. As the Zimbabwean authorities would not extend her work permit, Miss Celia Renes has returned to Holland. We are most grateful to her for the many years of dedicated service she has given, both in Kenya and Zimbabwe, and we wish her the Lord's blessing on her retirement. Miss Erica van Breda has also returned to Holland and to her also we express our gratitude for her faithful service and wish her every blessing for the future.

Thembeiso Home

The Home is now functioning as separate “family” units, five in number; Mr. B. Maphala has been appointed to the post of Superintendent. Mr. S. B. Mpfu served the Home faithfully as Superintendent for many years and we express our gratitude to him and wish him much of the Lord’s blessing on his retirement. We are grateful to Miss Margaret MacAskill for the work she has done in connection with tutoring members of staff and guiding them in order to ensure that the new system will run smoothly. We are also grateful to Miss P. Beukers for all the work that she has done and wish her well as she returns back home to Holland.

The Translation Team and Bible Revision Team

The Ndebele Bible being now in print, the work of translating the Shona Bible is now in progress.

Kenya

The Rev. K. Watkins’s own report will cover all aspects of the work being done in Kenya. We are thankful that he and his wife continue to be sustained in good health. It is certain that it is not for lack of faithful preaching and teaching over the years that so little fruit has become apparent. Adults and children attend the means of grace in substantial numbers and are prepared to attend Catechism classes. We believe that their knowledge of that incomparable “compendium of theology” would put many in our own midst to shame. We can only hope and pray that after so many years of diligent planting and watering, God will, in due time give the increase. The help given at various times by two young people from the London congregation – Miss Elizabeth Munns and Mr. Justin van Kralingen – is much appreciated.

Israel

In April 2011 Rev. J. Goldby returned to the UK after almost seven years’ service in Israel and is now settled in Northern Ireland over the Larne congregation. Following his return, the Committee encouraged him to continue his contacts and work among the Jews as enabled. The revision of the Hebrew New Testament is being continued by the team in Israel, sometimes by Skype, under the auspices of the Trinitarian Bible Society. This project is expected to continue for a number of years, funded by the TBS and friends from Finland. Mr. Goldby recently accompanied Mr. Rowland and Mr. Hopkins of the TBS on a short visit to Israel in order to meet with the revision team and to arrange for the printing and distribution of the revised Hebrew Gospel of John. A meeting was held with David Zadok, the manager of HaGefen, who is assisting us with publishing the Hebrew *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The Scripture proofs are being added at present and an estimate of the full type-setting cost is expected soon.

Conclusion

At a time when there appears to be a universal movement to denigrate Christianity and its moral code, we should be thankful that we still have the unhindered opportunity of spreading abroad the renowned fame of Christ as a Saviour in Africa and elsewhere under heaven where our testimony is maintained. The god of this world and the numerous enemies of the Gospel, patently motivated by him, are acting as if their victory was in sight, but greater is He that is for us than all our enemies and we must endeavour to encourage ourselves in Him. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

IN the year that is now past there was an attempt to continue the propagation of the gospel by the appointed means. Preaching is the appointed means, Mark 16:15. Preaching includes teaching, Matthew 28:19. The means must be persevered in as the appointed means. The Divine Redeemer has given His seal of authority to it and the history of the church shows that it is blessed in His season, Matthew 28:18 and 1 Corinthians 1:21.

The normal supply schedule was more or less held to. Two communions were held at Ingwenya; one at Cameron and one at Nyati. Two new communicants were received during the year. A middle-aged man was received at Cameron and a middle-aged woman was received at Nyati. May the Lord bless them both.

The year 2011 saw the completion of a major part of the construction work of the Form 6 extension to the John Tallach Secondary School. Whilst excellence in education is a benefit to a person, it is not the function of the church to provide it. The purpose is to bring children to hear the Word of God. With the extension of the school from Form 4 to Form 6 some children will be under the gospel for longer.

The Insiza Church roof was put on this year after the receipt of a donation from the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee. The Deacon's Court recorded their appreciation of this donation in the minutes and we are very happy to acknowledge our thanks in this report.

During the year Rev. J. R. Tallach visited and assisted with supply. My thanks are to him and also for the elders who assisted throughout the year. Mr. Mhandla Mhlanga, one of the main interpreters in the congregation, was tragically killed in an accident. He was trying to prevent a child crossing a road and was hit by an oncoming car. He died soon after at Nyati hospital. He was a very able interpreter and most useful to the congregation and myself in many ways. His death is a great loss but for him we hope that it was great gain.

The rains this year were very poor. Although some areas nearby got sufficient rains for a harvest many did not. This mixed picture can only be seen as a time of suffering hunger for many. It is sad to think of this prospect in the months that are ahead.

“His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed” (Psalm 72:17).

JOHN TALLACH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

THIS is an historic year for John Tallach School when it drops the title *Secondary School* and adopts the title *High School* on account of the first enrolment of Sixth Form pupils. It is an exciting but demanding development and, until almost the last minute, it was not certain that enrolment would be able to take place this year. There were the major challenges of fitting out the laboratory and sourcing appropriately qualified and experienced teaching staff and many other more minor issues also had to be resolved. As the deadline drew nearer, however, the issues were resolved one by one and the challenges were overcome, giving us the opportunity to enrol a small group. We trust that this opening of doors at the critical time was in the Lord's favourable Providence and that this new development will be for the furtherance of His Cause among the young people He brings into our care and under our instruction.

The Bible instruction curriculum had to be expanded to incorporate the Form 6 group: during Term 1 they started a revision of the *Shorter Catechism* and began a study of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. It is intended that a study of Romans will be incorporated from the beginning of Term 2. Our hope would be that the Holy Spirit will lead these young people to a spiritual understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith.

Staffing

No teachers have left the staff in the last 3 years, which is in no small part due to the fact that the parents, in recognition of the excellent results, are continuing to generously supplement the teachers' salaries. The continuity is good for both the ethos and the performance of the school. Mr. Nyathi and Miss Moyo married in January so we now have two married couples on the staff. Mr. N. Khumalo also married during the December school holiday: he started with the school as a Form 1 pupil in 1996 and returned to teach here straight from College in 2005; his wife is also a former pupil so Mr. Khumalo's life is closely entwined with John Tallach School. In January, Mr. O. Moyo from the Lobengula congregation joined the staff as a Bible Knowledge teacher and is proving to be a competent and cheerful

member of that Department. However, another teacher is required for Bible Knowledge so interested applications from Free Presbyterians elsewhere are still welcome.

As mentioned in previous reports, few of our local teachers are Free Presbyterians but, when at school, all of them conform commendably to our practices. All of them are professional in their day-to-day duties and are without exception cheerful and helpful colleagues. They attend the weekly Prayer Meeting on Thursday mornings but, sadly, remain attached to the teachings of their own denominations. It should be a matter of concern that these teachers and all the ancillary staff on the Mission who join with us in worship on Thursday mornings would yet be found worshipping the Lord in spirit and in truth.

Pupils

The school roll increased for the second consecutive year: the total enrolment is now just under 580. The new Form 6 group did not contribute significantly to the increase as only 6 pupils were enrolled: 3 boys and 3 girls. Five of them are from last year’s Form 4 group with only one boy coming in as a new pupil. He has settled in very well, so much so that it is almost as if he has always been with us. It was only possible to enrol a very small Form 6 group because the new dormitories have not yet been constructed so enrolment had to be restricted to the space available in the existing dormitories.

A welcome development this year has been the enrolment into Form 1 of 3 visually impaired boys, Sydney, Gift and Khumbula, so our resource room is again fully operational. Gift is totally blind, the other two have severe visual impairment – all of them have to use braille. They have all settled in well and obviously enjoy being at school but Sydney has serious health issues which meant that he had to return home for some time for medical treatment. Thubelihle, the Form 2 girl in the unit, is doing well and can manage with enlarged print.

O Level results

ZIMSEC (Zimbabwe Examinations Council)

The overall pass rate increased again to 95% which put the school at the top of the Matabeleland O Level league table and 6th in the national league tables. Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	87.5%	History	96.1%
Agriculture	32.0%	Integrated Science	92.3%
Bible Knowledge	92.3%	Literature in English.....	98.1%
Biology.....	100.0%	Mathematics.....	84.8%
English Language	93.2%	Ndebele.....	100.0%
Fashion & Fabrics.....	92.3%	Physical Science	91.6%
Geography.....	100.0%	Woodwork	100.0%

One boy scored 10 As, four pupils had 9 As and two had 8 As. A total of 30 pupils had 5 or more A passes.

CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)

As was mentioned in last year's report, the school was able to offer Cambridge International O Levels in 2011. Only 10 pupils registered but these 10 did extremely well. Pass rates were as follows:

Accounts	100.0%	Geography	90.0%
Bible Knowledge	100.0%	Mathematics.....	90.0%
English	100.0%	Science.....	100.0%

Across the group there were 18 A* (with 2 boys getting 5 A* each), 7 As and 16 Bs.

During the examination period, an inspector from Cambridge came unannounced to inspect the centres throughout the country and he rated John Tallach School in the top 4 in Zimbabwe for security and conduct of the examinations, which was a great encouragement.

Finance

An increase in school fees was necessary for the first time since 2009: \$50 (14%) per child was added to the boarding budget so as to allow the budget to balance. This means that most children are now paying \$390 per term to cover all the costs. The school was again able to pay for all its running costs and maintenance from school funds throughout 2011.

Developments

The main development in 2011 was, of course, the construction of the new Form 6 Science Laboratory block. This was a prefabricated structure imported from South Africa and constructed on site by a specialist team. The construction of the building went very smoothly and kept to the agreed timescale, largely due to the input of Mr. Maarten Vroegindeweyj. Our sincere thanks are due to Mr. Vroegindeweyj for his commitment and tremendous energy throughout this project. The specifications of the foundation and the ground slab were critical to the successful construction of the laboratory. Therefore, without Mr. Vroegindeweyj's engineering skills and on-site supervision, it would not have been possible for the required level of accuracy to be assured. The main construction began in May and was completed successfully before the end of October. Thereafter, some delays were experienced in the final finishing but after these were resolved we were left with a very attractive building. At the time of writing this report the installation of furniture and fittings is being completed. The laboratory is therefore expected to be fully operational in time for Term 2 (May 2012).

The plan to build another teachers' cottage for the extra staff needed to teach Form 6 Science was shelved due to budgetary constraints. Instead one under-

utilized house designated for Mission use was renovated so as to be suitable for school use. This was a very cost effective and successful solution to the accommodation problem.

Two dormitories, one for boys and one for girls, are now needed to complete the provision for Form 6 Science. At the time of writing, two teams of building contractors are on site digging the foundations of these dormitories and it is hoped that construction can be completed by the end of the year.

Bathroom renovations were done in 4 Mission properties. The water at Ingwenya has a very heavy lime content which causes deterioration in the sanitaryware, none of these bathrooms had been renovated in over 20 years so the improvements were badly needed.

The very successful solar water geyser project continued: the last electric geysers were removed and replaced with solar: now only the 3 primary teachers' houses are waiting for the installation of solar water geysers.

Conclusion

As with every report, thanks are due to all of our donors, especially the Church in Scotland and Mbuma Zending. Although the school is able to fund its own running costs and maintenance, capital developments such as the Form 6 Science project would not be possible without external support. We hope that all donors will follow this new development with prayer that it will be for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom and that these children who can now remain with us for an extra 2 years will yet be like Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened to the Gospel.

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

BY the providence of God the Lord has led us to see yet another year on mercy's ground.

The Lord is in control of our lives. God is so gracious and merciful and slow to anger. "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." We have seen the year begun and ended. So hastily many have been hastened to eternity, some with hope and some not. Many laid aside with body infirmities. Thus the loud call of God to sinners, "Repent ye and believe the gospel"; "Israel prepare to meet thy God".

All preaching stations were kept open on weekday prayer meetings and Sabbath. Sinners were warned to flee from the wrath to come and prepare for eternity and the careless also were exhorted to seek the Lord for their salvation. This exhortation was also voiced at a few funerals around the Mission as young and old passed away.

The congregation lost two members during the year – an old lady from Katasa and a deacon from Fudu. Both funerals were attended and we addressed the gatherings.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in this congregation in February and August respectively. Baptism was dispensed at Zenka when a boy of 16 years old was baptized. Sabbath classes continued as usual in both stations. Notably the Katasa congregation has few children. In all preaching stations Bible classes are revived after prayer meetings to extend the scriptural knowledge to both members and adherents.

On Tuesday afternoons at Zenka the teachers gather for the Bible class to sow the good seed of the Word of God. We hope and pray that the Word of God will have an effect in their souls. Most of these teachers have different family backgrounds. We pray that the Lord may bless the Word taught to them as a precious seed.

The Mission Compound is now soon looking forward to being electrified. The electricity lines are now in the Mission. Only tubing needs to be done and the whole compound, after connection, will be effected. We extend our gratitude to the Rural Electrification Agency who have come to our rescue.

Work has also begun to erect church buildings at Mabayi and Fudu. We hope by the end of the year the buildings will be almost be finished, if funds permit. Fudu preaching station is not conducive for meetings during the week but teachers loan us the classroom at their own time for a prayer meeting. Mabayi Head is a warm sympathizer to our cause and in time of worship he offers us a classroom, attending himself with a few school children and a lady teacher. It is all for the glory of God.

We pray for the Spirit of giving to the cause of Christ and that the Lord would move the hearts of many to give as it was in the time of building the Tabernacle. Oh! Lord strengthen us in this work as it was in the days when Nehemiah and Ezra rebuilt the temple.

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

HOW quickly time passes by – another year has begun and it is gone. Surely the Scriptures warn us. “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). We need this wisdom as man's mind is darkened by sin. He knows not of his end. Only to open his eyes in torments and pains of hell like the rich man.

The supply has gone on as usual in all preaching stations. In my absence the elders and deacons have been of great help to keep the doors open, both at weekday prayer meetings and Sabbath.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed twice at Nkayi and once at Donsa Dam church as usual. At Donsa there was a baptism of an old lady.

Sabbath classes are carried on by the elders and deacons in these congregations.

The Nkuba congregation has finished building their own house of worship. They are now working on furniture for the Church and final touches to the plaster and floors.

We are encouraging the Manomano congregation to do the same. We are thankful that one of our elders, Mr. S. B. Mpofu, has a diesel car, so benefiting from the pastoral fuel to help visit Manomano.

It is our earnest desire and prayer that Nkayi church would have its own pastor to shepherd that flock. The harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few. It is a great concern as Nkayi was the first Mission station of our church in the Tshangane Reserve. It has all the potential, like the other stations, to have a resident minister. May the Lord soon provide one for Nkayi.

There was not so much help from the non-governmental organizations this year in terms of food. Many people had a good harvest from the fields, though not all. Those in need of food didn't go far to source it. It was available at the Local Grain Marketing Board and meal-mealie from the stores was in abundance this time.

We pray that rains would continue through this farming season. We pray also for the downpouring of the Holy Spirit on our congregations that many would turn to God and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation.

ZVISHAVANE MISSION REPORT

Rev. Z. Mazwabo

THE year 2011 passed rather quickly and quietly. Time passes very quickly and we are all reminded that our days in this world are few and evil.

The church building at Maware was the talk of the day. The outstanding building was being polished up for the pending communion.

There is nothing wonderful about the Maware Church, but because it is situated in the countryside, it is like an apple tree among the trees of the wood. The congregation of Maware is to be commended for their dedication and hard work. They moulded clay bricks, carried river sand and pit sand. They put up the building themselves. We give thanks to the Mission friends who provided the rest and made it possible for this poor congregation to have a respectable place of worship. It is built on a rock and can be seen from distant places.

Then came the time of the communion. It was very nice. One pleasant thing was that Chief Mazvihwa himself attended most of the services. We pray that the Lord would open his heart. Two different denominations have also built their churches near ours.

We have since held communions at Chiedza and Munaka. In all these places, the net of the gospel is spread and sinners are invited to come to Christ.

But if the question were to be asked, as the disciples were asked, “Children, have ye any meat?”, in our case meaning “have you caught anything”, their answer would be “No”. We pray that the same instruction would be given, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find” (John 21:5-6).

This year the area of New Canaan was visited by witch-doctors. They claimed that people had magic, either of their own or sent to them by the enemy to harm them. All were invited to be cleansed of this magic. The payment was usually a cow or an ox. Many from the churches or from the heathen community were victimized by these unscrupulous children of darkness. Our people were no exception but we are thankful that we came out better than many denominations and not one of our members fell victim but one or two adherents.

The New Canaan communion which comes in January is just gone by. It was very difficult for me this year. I was not well at all. But, thankfully, it was possible to arrange that I would not be preaching. At the end of one of the prayers, trying to sit down, I landed on the floor. I just hoped that very few, if any noticed it at all. It would be very disturbing. I went to hospital after the communion and lay in a hospital ward for over a week. Although the medical people have not yet finished with me, I am thankful that I am much better.

One of my elders did not attend the communion. I contacted him by phone to find out what the problem was. The answer I got was, “I thought you knew, Minister, that at every New Canaan communion, I suffer terrible diarrhoea”. The words sank into me like medicine. It rang a bell. Yes I remembered it, not particularly about the elder, but that it had been reported to me, that at every New Canaan communion people generally suffered from the same complaint. I either did not take it seriously or I ignored it. But it now took hold of me. The truth is that the New Canaan Church is roofed with asbestos. Water is collected from the roof into the tanks for cooking, drinking and washing. It dawned on me and I am convinced that this water is the cause of the diarrhoea. This is a big problem.

The foundation of the new church at Zvishavane, Ebenezer congregation, is now being dug. All around the church building are crowded houses built by Mimoso Platinum Mine for its employees. The thought that occupies my mind is that whenever the preaching of the gospel would start, there would be available a public speaker system for the benefit of the occupants of these houses. I shall not conclude this report without mentioning that the Lord has again visited our iniquities with yet another famine.

“There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psalm 19:3-4).

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

“DELIGHT thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” (Psalm 37:4). This was the desire and prayer of the psalmist and he cast himself upon the Lord. It is also our desire as a Church, if it pleases the Lord in His own time, to provide a shepherd at this station to care for the sheep. He saith in His Word, “For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a Shepherd seeketh out his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day” (Ezekiel 34:11-12).

The year has passed by tremendously quickly and another year has risen in time. The question is, Are we prepared for eternity? We are all to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. What account shall we give regarding our sins and the privilege of the means of grace in our midst? The Lord God has provided all means for our salvation – His Word and the preachers of the gospel labouring tirelessly. The doors have been kept open in all preaching stations. Two places have been newly started at Singeni and Mthoniselwa; both are visited fortnightly. There is a good turnout, on average about twenty grown-ups and some children attend the services.

It is noted with sadness, after a long illness, the passing of Amos Mdlongwa of Lukampa who was helping at this preaching station. We sympathized with the family in the loss of their father.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism were dispensed in this congregation twice, in April and October respectively. An old man was baptized at Mpakama, an infant at Singwangombe, one woman and a boy, and two girls were baptized at Mbuma.

Spiritual teaching is done at Sabbath School and Bible classes are conducted by the Catechist in the hospital. The effort is to be applauded.

The Binga Mission has been visited twice. There is such a loud cry from the Binga people, who desire to learn church practice and doctrine. The three-day stay for our visit per time is not sufficient, however, to teach these friends. They are eager to learn but the time factor handicaps their desire. We also desire to have a missionary to visit them frequently, God willing, and labour in their midst as the apostle Paul laboured amongst the Gentiles, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

Lord willing, Binga will be visited twice or thrice this year too. The Deacon’s Court will try to organize these trips. Those that trust in the Lord shall not be dismayed, as the Psalmist saith, “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God” (Psalm 146:5).

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

ALTHOUGH the first signs were visible last year, it may fill our hearts with joy and thankfulness, that for the first time since the outbreak of the AIDS pandemic, we are seeing a significant decrease in the number of deaths. Although the disease is still present and thousands of people will have to continue on treatment their whole life, it looks like the proportion of newly infected patients is becoming smaller, besides an increased knowledge level in the general community. This makes it more easily manageable by the health institutions and patients are started on treatment more in time. Whereas in the past years we sometimes felt like ploughing on the rocks, it is the Lord's mercy and longsuffering that He gave deliverance and blessed the means which are used for that purpose. How much we have to pray for a spiritual awakening and repentance, lest we have to cry out with Ezra saying, "Should we again break the commandments . . . wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?".

Administration and finance

2011 has been a stable financial year. Most hospital supplies were available in Zimbabwe. We only ordered abroad for quality and cost-saving reasons. Apart from the yearly drugs order at IDA in Holland, we got hospital equipment, computer supplies and new durable ceiling sheets abroad.

The Revenue budget was not entirely used. We were able to save three months' revenue. The main reasons were suspension of some Home-Based Care expenses and efficient drug procurement. A big budget spender was the kitchen. It had a 170% budget overspending because of unexpected price increases of food.

The Capital Projects budget was not entirely used either. Two projects were not executed; the Rehab Unit project was postponed until 2012 and the Office Equipment budget was not necessary because we managed to repair our printer/copier.

Out of the remaining 11 projects which were realized, 4 projects ended the year with a positive balance, due to efficient procurement of the needed materials. Two other projects had a positive balance due to cancellation of part of the projects. The other 5 projects used their entire budget.

Capital projects and maintenance

The upgrading of the hospital by means of capital projects and regular maintenance continued during 2011. The pace of activity, however, reduced compared with the previous year, due to the fact that the post of Administrative and Technical Manager was physically vacant throughout the year, except for part of the months of July and August, when Leendert Boon was present. We managed to execute the necessary projects, thanks to the efforts of other

management members and three volunteers, Mr. Maarten Vroegindeweyj, Mr. Johan Verhaar and Mr. Kees Wemmers. Maarten came several times during his stay in Ingwenya and gave valuable advice on building at the mission. Johan and Kees came in November and supervised the upgrading of the doctors' house and other smaller projects, besides trouble-shooting many water, electric and computer problems.

The upgrading of the Water Management System, which had started in 2010, was continued this year. Our two monopumps were assessed by an engineer and it was advised not to use the bigger one anymore. The engine and the pump were therefore removed and a single-phase electric pump installed in the same borehole. A single-phase electric pump was chosen for ease of change of power supply to solar panels in the future. So at the moment we are having two electric submersible pumps, besides a small monopump, which is used as back-up.

Besides the water pumps themselves, the aging of the entire plumbing system has been a cause of concern for some time already. We therefore asked for an assessment of the system, which was done by Mr. Kees Wemmers, an experienced plumber from Holland. He produced a comprehensive report and advised on upgrading the whole plumbing system to a more sustainable and better maintainable level, which will need to be implemented in the coming years.

In the course of the past years quite an amount of our medical equipment had become damaged or broken down, but was not properly replaced, due to the fact that robust hospital equipment has not been available in Zimbabwe for some time. It was, therefore, decided to bundle it into a capital project. This year much time has been spent searching for good quality hospital equipment suitable for our situation at an affordable price. We got in touch with several manufacturers producing equipment specifically for developing countries and managed to purchase most of the needed materials and now await delivery.

The upgrading of the access road to Main Staff Quarters started in 2010 and was finished this year. All roads to the main staff quarters are paved with gravel now. The maintenance of them will fall under the Revenue budget from now on as these expenses return annually.

Like most of the buildings in Mbuma, the expatriate houses, which are made of bricks, are showing cracks and other signs of wear and tear. Repairs and painting were done where needed. A greater renovation was done for the doctors' house. Special attention was given to the replacement of gutters and a water drainage system, which is thought to play a part in preventing further damage to the building.

Beside the repairs, damaged fly screens were replaced in the expatriate houses and also in part of the hospital.

For many years the EPI¹ department and Ante-Natal Clinic (ANC) did not have an allocated area in the hospital, but were sharing rooms. The increasing number of patients and the higher administrative demands, however, justified

a separate space in the hospital. This was realized by reorganising the Out Patients Department and refurbishing a room according to the needs of the EPI/ANC department.

Although the new building for AIDS and TB services had proved to be a great relief to accommodate the different AIDS related services, there were often not enough seats for everybody. This year, therefore, extra concrete and wooden benches were added to the entire building.

The reagents which are needed for the CD4 machine, which is used for the assessment of the condition of HIV positive patients, were, until this year, purchased using a donation. Next year it will become Revenue since these expenses return annually.

For some years past it was realized that fire-fighting was not the hospital's strongest point. This year several buildings were, therefore, equipped with extra fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were purchased for all sleeping and living rooms.

Since the number of computers in the hospital has increased in the past years, their maintenance has increased as well. Extra protection and spare parts were, therefore, bought and installed this year.

Some years ago a Bicycle Transport Scheme project was started to allow staff to travel daily from their distant homes to the hospital and back. The project has proven its function and this year project money was used to buy new parts for the bikes. As these costs return annually, next year the project will be changed to Revenue expense.

The general condition of our vehicle fleet (lorry, three cars and tractor) has been good this year, except for the motorbikes, which needed regular repairs.

Staffing

In the desire to reach more of our patients with the gospel, we were very pleased with the coming of Mr. N. Mpofu in April 2011 as a second Catechist. Together with Mr. G. Nkiwane, they have been diligently looking after the spiritual needs of staff and patients in the hospital, and Mr. Nkiwane even reaches a wider area around the hospital. The need, however, for sound biblical teaching is still far beyond the scope of their capacity. The request for an extra post for Catechist was therefore submitted and granted which, the Lord willing, will be filled in the course of 2012.

After Mr. Johan Verhaar left in 2010, the management of maintenance and projects was temporarily done by Sr. Erica van Breda, while in the meantime the post for Administrative and Technical Manager was advertised. Mr. Leendert Boon and Mr. M. Ncube were found suitable candidates. The plan was that Mr. Boon would take over from Sr. Erica and that in due course he would hand over to Mr. Ncube and give him a sufficient training period.

However, men plan, but the Lord rules. Sr. Erica departed in August, closing a period of 5 years of conscientious work in Mbuma. She left a structured

administration system and a well developed and efficient Home Based Care department, for which we are much grateful. To our great disappointment, however, Mr. Boon and his wife soon had to leave as well, since his application for a work permit was refused. He then continued to work from Holland and managed remarkably well to do the administrative and financial work with the help of Si Ncube, the office clerk. Besides this he finished some of the capital projects, while awaiting the response to his appeal for a work permit.

An even more unexpected blow was the refusal of the extension of Sr. Celia Renes' work permit. She had to leave the country in October. A period of 35 years of missionary work, of which 17 years were for the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and 5 of these 17 years were at Mbumba, came to an end. Her diligent and prayerful work among patients, staff, children and orphans has been of great value to the hospital.

Sr. Willie Geurtsen came back from furlough in January, Sr. Gilia van Wijngaarden and Dr. Anneke Snoek went on furlough in June and December respectively.

In January and February two General Hands were found to have breached the Code of Conduct. One was dismissed, the other one was deployed to Dakamela Hospital. In June one counsellor, who was deployed from Nkayi District hospital, returned to Nkayi.

We were very dismayed when, on 26th December, we lost PCN S. Gumbo after a long period of illness. She started working with us in 2003 as a Nurse Aide and went for the PCN² training in 2006, after which she came back to Mbumba.

In the course of the year four of our PCNs transferred from the payroll of Nkayi District Hospital to the payroll of Mbumba Mission hospital, filling part of the vacant RGN³ posts. Although we continued to lobby for more government paid posts, so far this has not been successful. One Counsellor, one Nurse Aide, three PCNs and one relief gateman were employed to be able to cope with the work, besides the fact that every month of the year at least one locum RGN was present. Because the demands for the services we are expected to deliver continued to increase, the entire nursing staff still had to work hard, but this was done with an admirable team spirit.

The total number of staff at the end of 2011 was as follows:

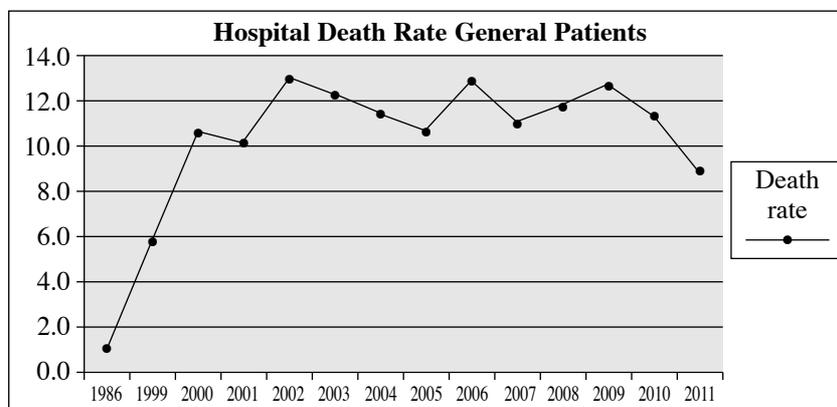
	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
Catechist	–	–	2	2
GMO	1	–	–	1
RGN	1	1	2	4
Locum RGN	–	–	1	1
PCN	7	11	3	21
Counsellor	2	–	1	3
Microscopist	2	–	–	2
Clerk	3	–	3	6
Nurse Aide	12	–	7	19
Foreman	1	–	–	1
Storekeeper	1	–	–	1
Driver	–	–	2	2
Gateman	3	–	4	7
General Hand	8	–	10	18
Total				88

To improve and update the knowledge and skills levels of our staff, the Staff Development Programme was continued. One Nurse Aide started the Human Resources Training, one PCN continued his diploma training in Project Designing, Monitoring and Evaluation and one PCN started the Counsellor training. An in-house OI⁴ Refresher Course was repeated and most of the staff members passed the final test. A TB Refresher Course was given at the end of the year. Computer training was attended by 1 Nurse Aide and 2 PCNs. Mathematics lessons were given to a selected group of nurses by one of the Primary School Teachers.

Besides this, workshops given by the government on Peri-Natal Mortality, Drug Management, ART⁵ Logistics, Integrated Management of Acute Illnesses, Community Management of Acute Malnutrition and Malaria Case management were attended by 23 staff members.

Hospital

As mentioned above, for the first time since the outbreak of the AIDS pandemic, we are able to report a significant decrease in the number of deaths. The death rate for the general wards (including TB) went down from 11.4% in 2010 to 8.9% in 2011.



The total number of admissions is still increasing, mainly because of the rising number of deliveries.

	2010	2011
Admissions	2,524	2,725
General	1,180	1,143
Paediatrics	485	540
Maternity	915	996
Neonatal	–	46

Bed occupancy rate		
General	88.9%	66.5%
Paediatrics	63.0%	76.1%
Maternity	55.4%	80.5%

	2010	2011
Deaths	209	158
General	150	107
Paediatrics	40	43
Early/Late Neonatal	15	8
Maternity	0	1

The number of admissions in Paediatric ward went up, due to a high number of children who presented with severe pneumonias in June and October.

The number of children who were admitted with malnutrition decreased, while the number of adult patients who were enrolled in the programme

increased significantly. Because of missing statistics, no cure rate could be calculated.

Paediatric Ward	2010	2011
Admissions	458	522
Referrals in	27	18
Deaths	40	43

CMAM = Community Management of Acute Malnutrition	2010	2011
Admissions onto programme	4	160
Admissions in ward	64	33
Total admissions	70	193
Number of admissions HIV positive	–	119

The number of hospital deliveries increased by 6%. The number of reported home deliveries has reduced to 10% of the institutional deliveries, which is going in the right direction.

The number of stillbirths and neonatal deaths came down from 1.6% and 1.7% in 2010 to 1.1% and 0.8% in 2011 respectively.

Sadly enough we had 1 Maternal Death in 2011. It was a HIV-positive, pregnant lady who developed a Stevens-Johnson syndrome due to ART.

Births	2010	2011
Live births	901	959
Still births	14	11

2011	Hospital deliveries		Home deliveries			Total in catchment area	
	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	TBA⁶	Other		Total
	78	892	970	29	82	111	1,081

2011	Still births			Neonatal deaths			Maternal deaths		
	Fresh	Macerated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
	3	8	11	7	1	8	1	Unknown	1

The Caesarean Section rate for 2011 was 4.9%, which is still alright since it is below the set maximum of 5% for a rural hospital.

The number of other procedures increased by 50%, which might partly be caused by an improvement in the capturing of data of the minor procedures.

Theatre/OPD	2010	2011
Caesarean section	40	48
Major cases	93	114
Minor cases	515	796

Despite the fact that the old X-ray machine is not functioning well, we continued using it, since it is of great diagnostic value for our setting.

The number of tests done by the laboratory went up, caused by the increasing numbers of TB cases and CD4 tests. The number of HIV tests is going down, showing the fact that a significant proportion of our community is already aware of its HIV status.

Radiology services	2010	2011
Number of films	912	1,071
Pharmacy		
Number of attendances	18,639	20,806
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	4,332	4,616
Number of HIV tests	4,167	3,241
Environmental Health department		
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	477 ⁷	485
Number of sputum +ve	46	39
Number of sputum -ve	342	332
Number of sputum not done	6	2
Extra pulmonary TB	65	52
Relapse	3	10
Re-treatment	15	50
Number of TB patients HIV positive	364 (76%)	398 (82%)
Number of HIV positive TB patients started on ART	239	315
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	14	10
Water and sanitation hygiene programme – Number of Blair toilets built	17	37

TB remains a major contributor to the morbidity of our community. The number of cases in 2011 went up again. However, this is not necessarily a sign of a rising incidence in our area, since a large part of our patients become infected somewhere else and only return to their home area for diagnosis and treatment. In the beginning of this year a new system of daily observed treatment (DOT) was introduced to improve the outcome of the treatment. Since the patients have to take the TB treatment for a period of 6 months, a close follow-up is needed. Where in the past years patients went home with

a 2 weeks' supply, now special trained DOT observers are available in the community, who make sure that the TB patients take the tablets daily. So far we are one of the few hospitals in Zimbabwe which managed to introduce and keep the system, which might be an explanation for our low defaulter rate.

Only 10 patients were diagnosed with malaria in our hospital but, sadly enough, 3 of them died. In all three cases, there was a delay in diagnosis on arrival at the health centre.

The WASH (Water and Sanitation Hygiene) programme was started in Magwayi in 2010. The programme aims to improve the general hygiene in the community in order to prevent diseases. Hand washing facilities, human waste disposal and safe keeping of water and prepared food are promoted. The programme extended in 2011 to another village, Mphoko, and thus far an assessment revealed that there is an improvement in hygiene practices. A total of 37 toilets were built in 2011 by the community with the help of the hospital.

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

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2010	2011
Number of OIC visits	14,229	13,031
Number of patients started on ARVs till date	1,030	1,633
Number of patients who died while on ARVs till date	105	166
Number of patients transferred out till date	66	130
Number of patients continuing on treatment till date	916	1,305

The major objective of 2011 has been the decentralisation of the ART services to the 11 outreach places which were established last year. Out of the 1,305 patients on ART, 855 received their treatment in the outreach clinics at the end of 2011. Together with the decentralisation, an intensive behaviour change programme has been started, which has given many occasions of interesting discussions and opportunities to share biblical values.

The Home Based Care givers continued their industrious work in the community. All the care givers undergo a yearly evaluation by kraalhead, patient and hospital team, to assess their performance. A refresher course was given to 98 care givers in April 2011. To relieve them in the care for their patients, 62 new volunteers were trained in the course of the year, which brings the total of our Home Based Care givers to 160.

Besides the AIDS and HBC services, the other services of ANC and CWC were continued at the outreach points and in the hospital. Especially the CWC attendances increased, showing the importance of hospital services within a walkable distance from home.

	2010	2011
ANC (Antenatal Clinic) attendances	4,135	4,751
CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances	5,440	7,933

Care for orphans was continued, after Sr. Celia left, with the help of Sabbath School teachers from the different FP congregations. The programme still accommodates 80 orphans, who were helped to attend either Primary School, Secondary School, Advanced level or Vocational training.

The Sabbath Schools in Mbumba continued to be held on Saturday afternoon, run by hospital staff members, and on Sabbath in between the services, which is done by Primary School teachers. Over 100 children attended weekly. On Saturday the children are divided into three groups, from grade 0-3, grade 4-7 and secondary school pupils. They dealt with the *Mothers Catechism, The Peep of Day, Shorter Catechism, Line upon Line and Truth of God's Word*. Besides this an increasing number of children started to do the *Young People's Magazine* questions.

The library, which was restarted in 2007, has developed during the past years into a well equipped room with a large variety of spiritual, medical and children's books, besides training and teaching material. Staff members and their children, as well as church members are making use of it. This year 95 books, 2 large stapler machines, 4 readers and 2 research documents were added to the library. Since most of the books are still written in English, a request was handed in to the Publications Committee asking if more books could be translated into Ndebele.

Looking back on 2011 it may fill us with thankfulness that we were enabled in so many different ways to continue sowing the gospel seeds. To the Lord be all the glory. We would like to convey our sincere thanks for all the support we got from the JFMC, Mbumba Zending and others, in whatever form, and we would like to ask that you continue to remember us in prayer.

¹ EPI = Expanded Programme of Immunisation

² PCN = Primary Care Nurse

³ RGN = Registered General Nurse

⁴ OI = Opportunistic Infection

⁵ ART = AntiRetroViral Therapy

⁶ TBA = Traditional Birth Attendant

⁷ In the 2010 report mistakenly the figure of 2008 was mentioned

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

AS the past year came to an end and the new year begun, we need to have grace to understand the spiritual things as did Habakkuk when he prayed thus, "O Lord I have heard thy speech and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy." I hope this is the prayer of the Lord's people all over the world.

As one moves around in Bulawayo and the country at large, one would be convinced that this is a true Christian country, for churches are springing up. There are religious gatherings everywhere, under trees, in open places, at night and during the day. One may ask, What all this is? Certainly the answer will be, We worship God. Surprisingly in other instances the Bible has been abandoned, whilst the Word of God, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him. It is in the Bible that God has revealed the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. How much we need the Spirit of grace to work in us as a people and nations of the world, to come to ourselves and return to God by the way appointed and revealed to sinners.

The past year, like other years, was mixed with encouragement, discouragement and solemn events. This is obvious when one looks at the pews, where people are seated on the Sabbaths and see vacant places, not because they are ill or absent, but because they have been taken away to eternity and will never again sit on these pews. With a loud voice God speaks so clearly and so closely and, then many would not hear, how sad it is.

In June, we were pleased to have Rev. J. R Tallach at our communion and we were thankful that he preached among us and we pray for the blessing of the Word preached. Also in August and in September, we were pleased to have Rev. De Jong and Mrs. De Jong with Mr. and Mrs. Barth from Holland. We were very encouraged by the presence of our visitors from overseas. And more encouraging is that which has made this unity – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In December we almost had an accident. Church ladies were cleaning the church in preparation for the communion when a storm suddenly came, blew part of the tiles off the roof and some heavy asbestos fletcher boards. A fletcher board fell from the top, broke up the asbestos, came through the ceiling, and hit near where the ladies were standing. Providentially, the ladies had just moved inside the church. We were very thankful to the Lord for His protection. No one was injured.

Services still continue as usual in our preaching stations, namely Lobengula, Nkulumane, Mahatshula, Mguza, and prayer meetings in all our stations and Thembiso. Bulawayo is scattered such that it necessitated us to open a place of worship in Mahatshula, which is a new suburb, with more new neighbouring suburbs to be built and some of our members have house stands there which are yet to be developed – some are in the process of developing. With this in

mind for the future of Mahatshula, the Bulawayo congregation decided to apply for a stand, which was granted, and have embarked on developing it. We have moved a step now to the slab level and by the help of the Lord we hope to start the walls.

Our communions are twice in a year, in June and in December. It was encouraging seeing the large attendance, especially in December, when we saw our young people, who are studying or working outside the country, attending together with their families. Also encouraging was to see new members added to the communion roll and the sacrament of baptism administered to adults and children.

The work is great indeed but I thank the elders, who are of great help to me, in supplying whilst I am in other stations or away at communions. I am also thankful to Mr. N. Sibanda, who is a great help in supplying, also the deacons and the congregation for working in unity. The purpose, in all this labour, is to build the walls of Zion and that glory would be unto God.

I also want to thank Rev. P. Mzamo, whose zeal and love for the cause of the gospel is undoubtable. He has continued to attend services on Sabbaths when his health permits, and to advise when necessary.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the church in Scotland and in other parts of the world, the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee, our Dutch friends, Mbumba Zending for their unwavering support to the gospel, and the Mission Field in Zimbabwe, for their help financially and materially.

“God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations” (Psalm 67:1-2).

GWERU MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

IN the past year, problems were encountered in the supply of Gweru because of the introduction of toll gates on roads. The Presbytery decided to avoid paying toll gates on Sabbaths by having those that supply in Gweru go on Saturdays and return on Mondays. I am pleased to say that to date the supply has improved a little. Rev. A. B. Maclean from Ingwenya, Siziba, Zvishavane, and myself, and recently Mr. P. Mzamo from Cameron, also helped the supply.

Services are held at Tinomunga Mashavakure's house and he has been the contact person in Gweru. He also helps to ferry people by his car to where services are held on Sabbaths and also gets help to ferry people back by car, from whosoever will be supplying in Gweru. The attendance is about fifteen and above. There are good prospects to establish a church in Gweru.

Like any other places, Gweru is not short of church buildings but is short of the true doctrine of the Word of God. As a small branch of the visible church, this is what we endeavour to do by the grace of God as Paul, “to open their

eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins” (Acts 26:18).

For this work to prosper, we very much need labourers. Our duty is to plead with the Lord in prayer. “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).

ZIMBABWE PRESBYTERY TRANSLATION COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. S. Khumalo

THE major activities of the committee are the supervision of the Ndebele and Shona Bible Translations projects.

In 2011 the final proofreading of the new Ndebele Bible Translation was completed under the supervision of the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Presbytery Committee. The Trinitarian Bible Society is gratefully thanked for their assistance. Also thanked are the numerous individuals who assisted in the proofreading. Mr. N. Khumalo and Mr. O. Moyo are due special thanks for their large involvement in this work.

The completion of the proofreading means that a whole Bible is now in the hands of the Trinitarian Bible Society ready for printing. It is believed that it will be printed this year and sent out to Zimbabwe in due course. The Bible will also have bound up with it the latest version of the Ndebele Metrical Psalms. May the Lord bless His own Word.

The on-going translation of the Shona Bible continues. Currently the New Testament is being translated. It is hoped that a first draft of the New Testament will be completed late this year or early next year. The translation of the whole Bible is a large work that will take several years.

During 2011 the Zvishavane manse in New Canaan was extended to include premises for the Shona Bible Translation team. Currently, Mr. T. Mwedzi is the only member of the team. It is hoped that another translator to assist Mr. Mwedzi will be employed this year. The members of the Shona Translation Project live a considerable distance from Bulawayo and it is only reasonable that they be able to work there rather than living in rented accommodation in Bulawayo.

Isaiah 55:11: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT

B. Maphala, Home Superintendent

It is prudent to count our blessings whilst we are still spared to see yet another year. Many had high hopes and plans set aside but all that came to nothing. The Almighty has His own ways which are beyond the comprehension of mankind.

Moses had this to say, in Psalm 90:12: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." That is what we pray for, as an institution, home, families, parents, guardians, children and, indeed, as individuals, that we might be enlightened in the ways of God.

Home

Each day begins with the Word of God and ends with it. The conversion from dormitories to family units was a great success. It was officially opened on the 14th June 2011 by the Mayor of the City of Bulawayo, the honourable Thaba Moyo, in the presence of Rev. Dr. James Tallach, the clerk of the JFMC, all stakeholders and expatriates. It was a colourful event. Providentially all the proceedings went well. We thank the Most High for His wondrous doing.

Children

At present we have 44 children under our care; 21 boys and 23 girls. Most of the children are in good health. They are having a balanced diet. The economy has stabilised a little, so most commodities are now available on the shelves in stores at competitive prices.

Formal education

Eight of our senior children are at secondary level. Two boys are at John Tallach Boarding School, namely Siphon Zama in Form 3 and Thandazani Dube in Form 1. Six girls are attending lessons at Luveve High School nearby. Seventeen pupils are attending primary school at Thembiso Primary School and 4 at Grade "O" Level.

School leavers

We have three children who fall into this category, namely Sukoluhle Khumalo, 21, Sithandazile Dube, 22 and Khulekani Dube, 17. Of the three, Sithandazile Dube is now employed at Mbumba Mission Hospital as a Nurse Aid. We are thankful to Mbumba Management for trusting in our young person and allowing her to work in their midst. Providentially, Sithandazile and Khulekani were baptised in the Bulawayo congregation. Khulekani Dube has passed a driver's licence course, that is Class 4. Currently he is enrolled in a College for Development Studies doing a diploma in Environmental Management. The college is footing the bill whilst we chip in on his transport fares. Sukoluhle Khumalo completed a diploma in art. She did extremely well. She has been promised employment in various institutions but the lack of a

birth certificate is a hindrance. We are trying to get one for her. We pray that we may succeed in that endeavour for her good, D.V.

Outings

We managed to visit Victoria Falls, with all children, including their mothers, for 3 days. Sister Petra played a crucial role in that regard, children were able to view the falls, board a cruise ship in the Zambezi River and visit the Falls National Park. We stayed in the Victoria Falls Camp at a subsidised fee. Children had a nice time out there.

Staff

During the course of the year, the long-standing dispute agitated by the retrenchees was finally resolved. Solomon has this to say in Proverbs 10:28: “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.” Providentially their expectations were not granted. We are grateful for that. There is peace and tranquillity amongst the present staff now. As I write this report, mothers and their assistants are receiving refresher lessons from Sisters Petra and Margaret MacAskill. It is going on well. We envisage another of the kind in the near future if funds permit, D.V. – maybe after 12 months and then spread it to 24 months in that order. We hope this will enable mothers to execute their duties with dexterity.

Projects

Capital projects that were lined up, including the Superintendent’s dwelling house, were completed timeously. The Superintendent is now housed at Thembiso Children’s Home. We take this opportunity to thank all those who funded these projects and made them a success. May the Lord increase their spirit of giving.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

M. A. Mpofo

INVARIABLY as the Synod time draws near, one has to think of the year that is past. When an annual report is called for one, invariably, whether it is pleasant or not, has to consider that there is much that has been left undone. There are things that could not be accomplished even when one tried, but the sadder thing is, that there are things which one could have done, but they were neglected. The prayer is that one may learn from their errors in thought and conduct.

Field and Sub Committees

The two committees held their quarterly and monthly meetings respectively. There were, however, isolated incidents when either committee was called to

meet in order to deal with urgent business that could not wait for a scheduled meeting.

The Field Committee continued to oversee the operations of Mission Institutions and Departments, while the Sub Committee dealt with the executive business and reported to the former.

Staffing

The Mission has 109 workers on its payroll (Head Office 54, Mbumba 30 and Thembiso 25). It should be noted that John Tallach Secondary School pays her own workers directly, although Head Office assists with the calculations. Mbumba Hospital also has other workers who are on government payroll.

Salaries of graded staff are negotiated with the National Employment Council (NEC) while those of the non-graded staff are agreed between the employer and the employees.

One is happy to report that problems of salaries, that have in the past created tension between workers and the administration office, have been overcome. The Mission is now paying the correct wages stipulated by NEC and one hopes the situation will remain the same throughout the year.

The Ministry of Education has directed that parents be involved in the administration of school funds; consequently John Tallach Secondary School employees now approach the Parents' Association whenever they have grievances related to their wages and conditions of service.

Retrenchment at Thembiso Children's Home

The retrenchment at Thembiso, which was mentioned in the last report, has been concluded and the affected employees compensated.

The matter was finalized by the Retrenchment Board, which ruled in our favour, because the Workers' Union was opposed to the retrenchment, although it was clear that the reorganization at the Home had made some posts redundant.

Expatriate staff

The number of expatriate staff has gone down due to problems encountered in applying for and renewal of work permits.

At Mbumba Mission Hospital, Sr. Celia Renes lost her appeal for a permanent residence permit. Immigration regulations stipulate that a person who would have stayed in the country for more than five years applies for a residence permit rather than extend their temporary work permit.

Mr. Leendert Boon's application, and subsequent appeal, was also declined by immigration.

One is happy, though, to report that, despite all these disappointments, Sr. W. Geurtsen was granted permanent residence.

It is worth reporting that one needs to exercise extreme patience when dealing with immigration matters. Sometimes it helps to travel to the Headquarters in Harare where decisions can be made more expeditiously.

Sr. Petra Beckers returned home after her contract terminated in November 2011.

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

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

Visitors

Rev. J. R. Tallach visited the Mission as a Deputy in June 2011 in order to attend the official opening of the houses at Thembiso Children's Home after the successful conversion from the dormitory set up.

Rev. J. R. Tallach had a nasty experience when on his way to Matapa for a prayer meeting: Mandla Mhlanga, who would have acted as his interpreter, was killed by a motor vehicle when he was assisting a niece cross a road.

Rev. J. R. Tallach was able to visit a number of our Mission stations during his tour of duty.

Representatives of the Mbuma Zending Board, Rev. and Mrs. De Jong and Mr. and Mrs. Barth from Holland, also visited the Mission during the course of the year. They were able to visit the Mission stations and view some of the projects that were underway at the various places.

Some of the expatriate staff also received family members and friends who visited them during the year under review.

Finance

The Mission continued to receive the monthly remittance from the General Treasurer.

During the year under review the Mission was able to realize a reduction in the motor vehicle repair and fuel bills when aging vehicles were disposed of. Currently our fleet is made up of fairly new cars.

Our auditors, Ernst & Young, were contracted to draw up a robust fuel accounting system. It is hoped that when this is in full operation, fuel expenditure will be further reduced and accountability enhanced.

Sustentation Fund

Head Office received the following amounts from Congregations, being their contribution to the sustentation fund:

Bulawayo	\$2,086.05
Zenka	\$188.00
Nkayi	\$171.00
Ingwenya	\$358.00
Zvishavane	\$98.00
Total	\$2,901.05

Capital projects

Progress was made on these; of note was the completion of the Superintendent's house at Thembiso Children's Home and Form 6 laboratories at John Tallach Secondary School.

Communication systems

All our communication installations and systems worked well, serving their purposes effectively.

There is need, however, for a cell phone booster at Mbuma. It is hoped that the local leadership in the area will lobby the cell phone service providers to install this. Such a development will help the generality of the staff at Mbuma to be able to communicate with their families in town and in Diaspora.

Bookroom

The Bookroom has continued to sustain itself and operate profitably. The only disturbing point is that the estate agent continually raises the rent for the premises, while failing to refurbish or maintain them well. If we move out, there is no guarantee that we will get anything better and our customers are now used to our current shop.

The rent currently is \$1,000 a month and this is excluding utilities.

Primary schools

The Mission has five Primary Schools under its authority. The table below shows the 2011 Grade 7 pass rate compared to the previous year.

School	Enrolment	Staffing	Grade 7 Pass Rate	(2010)
Zenka	912	23	44%	57%
Mbuma	682	16	33%	11%
Lutsha	570	15	14%	23%
Ingwenya	341	9	26%	45%
Thembiso	441	10	68%	50%

Two classrooms are being built at Thembiso Primary School and at Ingwenya Primary School funds have been made available to put up a double classroom block but with the high cost of building materials only one classroom will be built.

Since the arrival of the new Headmaster (Mr. M. Ndlovu), Mbuma Primary School has seen extensive renovations. Mr. Ndlovu has been able to motivate the parents to take an active interest in the school affairs. Even the Grade 7 results improved in the past year. All credit goes to Mr. Ndlovu, who has an excellent vision and outstanding leadership qualities.

The Bible Quiz Competition is now a permanent feature in our school calendar. In 2011, Mbuma Primary School, who hosted the event, came up top.

Thembeiso Primary School will host the schools later this year. This year's quiz will be based on the Book of Numbers, the Gospel of Matthew and the first ten questions of the Shorter Catechism.

Conclusion

The Mission Head Office continued to receive support from all Heads of Departments and it hoped that we as an office were also able to reciprocate their co-operation and kind gestures.

We are always grateful for the support and professional advice we receive from Mr. H. Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator.

There is no doubt that we experienced some disappointments and anxious moments during the course of the year, but our successes urged us to forge ahead and we took a lot of strength from the Holy Word of God. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you" (Isaiah 35:4).

TRANSPORT AND BUILDING PROJECTS REPORT

P. Mzamo

IT is by God's unspeakable grace that we are kept up to now and this is what every Christian learnt at his/her conversion; as we have gone through the past years it is because of His grace. Paul's letter to the Philippians 2:13-16: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." It really shows that the Lord is working among us as Christians both here and abroad, especially in Scotland and Netherlands, that there be light in dark places and much will be expected from us on the judgment day.

Transport

Most of the old vehicles, which were giving the Mission problems, were disposed of and we are left with the Leyland Comet big lorry at Ingwenya Mission which had a minor overhaul done last year and is now running well – one or two things keep popping up but it is still manageable. The Thembeiso Children's Home small bus is giving the home/mission problems as it needs parts now and then. The other fleet had no major repairs and this has made some savings to the Vehicle Maintenance bill.

Building projects

In general all projects were done, some finished properly and some not finished properly. Those that were not finished properly were the Manse extension in Zvishavane, Superintendent's house, Thembiso Children's home, but they have since been rectified. The other projects were carried over to this year and some are under budget. The Thembiso Primary Classroom block has not been finished, leaving painting of doors and only one block constructed, the other part being left at slab level. The new church in Zvishavane has had materials already procured and has now started, but we do not know whether we can go through with it. The Ingwenya Primary classroom is also under construction.

KENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. K. M. Watkins

THE mobile phone rang. It awoke us both. It was 1.20 a.m. The caller was from within Kenya, but I did not recognise the number. "Open this door, or I will shoot you," the male voice said. It went on: "Why are you forcing me to kill you? Open the door now." Of course, I did not open the door. That was the last thing I wanted to do. However, there was no one at the door. Although sinister, it was merely an attempt to scare. It made me think of the work here in Kenya. For many years, this mission has been saying to the people, "Open the door! Open the door of your heart to Christ." The Lord Himself says to wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked sinners: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). But sinners are neither willing nor able to open their hearts to Christ. Very few have done so here. Even when threatened with death – and with everlasting torment in hell's burning fiery furnace which is far worse than death – sinners still hold out against the Saviour. They refuse to open to Him. It is the last thing they want to do. They would rather keep their sins than forsake them. Christ could well use again His complaint against the Jews: "Ye will not [that is, ye are not willing] to come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). All over the world, sinners love death! Yet the Lord opened Lydia's heart, and He is able to open hearts here also. So we continue, sowing the seed of the gospel, looking for the power of the Holy Spirit to accompany the Word.

Work with the young has been encouraging. Conferences were held in August and December. With the younger classes the subject on both occasions was Israel's journey through the wilderness, taken as a picture of the sinner's journey from the estate of sin, through the estate of grace, to the estate of glory. With the oldest class, where some 30 to 40 youths aged from 16 to early twenties reside on the mission for three nights, the subject was the Protestant Reformation. In Kenya we face a woeful ignorance of church history, which

contributes to the thriving of false religion and the widespread failure to understand Popery as the Antichrist. We looked at the corruptions of Rome, as constituting the need for Reformation. We looked at the forerunners: Waldo, Wycliffe and Huss. Then we came to the Reformation proper, in Germany with Luther, in Switzerland with Zwingli, in Geneva with Calvin, in France with the Huguenots, in England and then finally in Scotland with Knox. The overall message of “salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone” was pressed upon our young friends. In particular, the tragic story of godly Lady Jane Grey, someone their own age who was ready to die for her beliefs, seemed to draw out their hearts. The total contrast between her and the travesty that is called a Christian in Kenya was not lost on them. Booklets on various Reformation characters were printed and distributed.

The Reformation theme has continued in the oldest Sabbath School class, where we have been studying Daniel and his friends, and how they made a stand for truth in their own circumstances, whatever the cost. One area in which our young people are called upon to make a sometimes costly stand is in the matter of girls’ hair. Almost all schools make shaving of girls’ hair compulsory. This must be done regularly, as growth is vigorous. Non-compliance is punished severely, including caning and even exclusion. We were therefore very pleased to reach an agreement with a local secondary school for our girls to keep their hair long, provided it is tidy.

Sadly, the local community goes from bad to worse. Sengera was in the national news when security forces had to be deployed to control violent crowds thronging the gates of the local Roman Catholic mission, accusing the principal of the girls’ secondary school of misappropriating funds. The sodomites from North America, who were here for three months last year, have just returned to their “church”, to a rapturous welcome from the poor blinded people, who will sell their souls for any money they can get. In January there was a spate of arson attacks within a mile of the mission. The people, being unable to explain how the fires were starting, attributed it to demons. The Roman Catholics were called to exorcise the spirits, but the fires continued. Next the Seventh Day Adventists tried, but also failed. Then the people turned to the local government authorities – asking them to bring in a traditional sorcerer to get rid of the demons!

I suppose that it is a positive development to report that the lines are being drawn up with increasing clarity, between our thoroughly Biblical witness on the side of Reformed doctrine, worship and practice, in contrast to the abominations that pass for Christianity in this part of the world. When all the local “pastors” joined together with the sodomite church last year to declare that they were “all one in Christ”, it was our church that was not there. Encouragingly, we were not even invited to the meeting. Our message, though hated, is getting through.

After years of witnessing against the improprieties and worse that invariably take place at funerals, we have had to withdraw from all involvement, even with the burials of our own people, for they are not able to prevent their

extended families and the wider community imposing their will on the proceedings. A funeral here begins on the day before the burial. Late in the afternoon, the body is brought back from the mortuary. It is accompanied by a noisy procession of vehicles and motorbikes blowing their horns, packed with people yelping loudly like hyenas. Truly, the paganism of it all has to be seen and heard to be believed. This is just the beginning of the “celebration”. The body must then “sleep” in its home for the night. On the morning of the burial, which takes place within the compound of the deceased, the formal programme begins. The loudspeaker is turned on, and tapes of so-called gospel music, along with multiple speeches, blare out across the whole district for hours on end. Hundreds of people come. The corpse in its coffin is placed at the entrance to the compound, with the head visible. On arrival, many stop at the coffin and audibly pray for the dead. The music tapes are bright and cheerful. Often choirs and soloists entertain the people. Hardly a speech goes by without the speaker assuring the family that God loves them and cares for them, and that their deceased relative was a good person. Many a speaker leads the people in “prayer”. Again prayers are made for the dead. All are welcome, so there are women leading in prayer, false pastors spreading poisonous doctrine, worldly and wicked people proclaiming the things of God “in the name of Jesus”, and politicians drumming up support, frequently in a humorous way. Nothing is off limits. And then comes the burial itself. It is clear that a biblical ministry cannot join itself with these abominations. God-honouring worship cannot be conducted as part of a programme like this, and thus we are excluded. At the request of some of our people, we are looking at legal options to prevent these things taking place at their funerals.

The regular preaching and teaching of the Word of God has continued as in previous years, both at Sengera and at the three outstations. Translation work is ongoing, in particular on the metrical psalms. Having completed the overview of the books of the Bible, we have begun memorising Scripture texts in the Catechism class.

The work at the clinic has continued for another year. Costs in Kenya have escalated, but our prices have been kept as low as possible. Nevertheless, many would rather use government facilities and local “quacks” rather than our professional services. When government nurses went on strike, bringing local hospitals to a standstill, we saw an increase in patient numbers. Sadly, we still do not see patients who have been helped by the clinic attending the church for the healing of their spiritual diseases.

As sponsor of the local primary school, the mission has continued to help, paying for extra teachers to make up for the government shortfall, adapting the school hall with an extension for nursery teaching, and generally supporting the educational efforts. In the national primary examinations taken by Standard 8 pupils at the end of the year, the school obtained the best results in the area for a government school. However, our own church children, whether attending our sponsored school or other schools, did very poorly. Nationally 48% of children passed, but only 1 out of 14 of our own children managed to

do so. The hope is that these youngsters will be the adults of our church in the decades to come. More is needed, of course, but poor educational achievement is not going to help the church in the future. Therefore from the beginning of 2012 a homework class (for secondary students and the older primary pupils) was begun at the mission, offering a place and materials to study, along with extra tuition, on weekday evenings and Saturdays. Some thirty children have been availing themselves of the opportunity.

Mission infrastructure has been maintained in good order. The perimeter wall around the new land is almost complete. The introduction of plastic water tanks, to replace the broken concrete ones, is ongoing. An extra building has been constructed specifically for meetings of the translation team. One of the vehicles, the pick-up, was involved in an accident and has been off the road for several months, but after extensive negotiations with the insurance company who considered it a write-off, it is now almost fully repaired. It turned over three times in the accident, but thankfully the three members of mission staff within escaped with cuts and bruises. There have been no security breaches.

The Poor Fund has continued its work of assisting the more needy among the people, in the areas of food, medical, housing and education. When funds were running very low, a group from Holland offered substantial donations, which have meant that the help could continue. A shift is being attempted, where possible, away from food handouts towards assisting people to grow food for themselves.

We are thankful to all those who help the mission in so many ways. Justin Van Kralingen and Elizabeth Munns from the London congregation, came and gave months of labour. Others from Inverness and London made much-appreciated and much-valued visits. Other friends contribute materially, and we acknowledge the ongoing support of Mbumba Zending in Holland and also of the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Roundwood Trust in England, as well as various individuals. Especially we need and value the prayers of God's people, that the Lord would send His blessing upon the work.

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

THE Committee's reports to the Synod tend to be repetitive; nevertheless, giving one annually is the method required by the Synod for keeping the Church informed of the ongoing work of the gospel in our overseas congregations, hence we submit a report once again.

It is cause for gratitude to the Most High that our Church has congregations in a number of countries and that they all have the Regulative Principle at heart as they continue proclaiming the gospel where they are. No doubt they sometimes feel isolated when they do not meet with many who are sympathetic to

the biblical teachings so excellently summarised in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, yet it is encouraging to the home church to know that we do have overseas congregations upholding these glorious doctrines.

Since our last report there has been the retiral of Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp from the pastorate of Gisborne Congregation in New Zealand. The congregation was begun by immigrants from Scotland and has had another minister besides Mr. van Dorp, namely, the late Rev. W. MacLean. During its pastorless periods the services were conducted by the elders who mostly read sermons. When the congregation is now without a pastor once again, we trust that in the kindness of the Most High it will not be long before another minister will be set over them.

During Mr. van Dorp's ministry another congregation was established in the town of Tauranga, which lies north of Gisborne and continues to this present time, the services being conducted by the resident elder, Mr. Dick Vermeulen (who is remembered on our African missions for the good work he did in erecting mission buildings). Mr. van Dorp, who is much missed by the congregation and the Presbytery, and his wife, have gone to live in Grafton where one of his sons resides. We wish him a pleasant retirement and continued usefulness in the cause of Christ.

Happily, another minister, the Rev. J. D. Smith, is now well settled over our congregation in Auckland, which was pastorless since the death of their minister, Rev. Donald M. MacLeod, in 1978. Over the long period of 33 years the congregation has been wonderfully preserved by the divine Head of the church, all the services having been conducted by the elders and, from time to time, by the then interim moderator, Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp, and also by visiting deputies occasionally. It was the fear of many in the Auckland congregation that they would never have a pastor. However, the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, and in His own perfect time He has provided a pastor for it.

The Lord provided likewise for our Sydney Congregation in Australia. Rev. G. B. MacDonald, who has been well settled there for two years, reports a degree of success in the work of the gospel. There have been a number of young people added to the congregation and at the last communion one person was admitted to the Lord's Supper. There is also outreach work done through the congregation's website.

Rev. Edward Rayner, the minister of our congregation in Grafton, Australia, reports that during the year there was one new male communicant, and that the congregation has been able to fulfil its commitments to the Sustentation Fund of the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery. Our places of worship vary in size, from numbers in the region of fifty down to half a dozen or so in Wellington, and one family in Napier. Sadly, the reports of the three ministers in the Presbytery tell of the increase of ungodliness in both countries.

In Singapore, the main burden of maintaining public worship continues to fall on the shoulders of Mr. B. Yong. We feel for these elders who, as well as having their daily work to attend to, have the added commitment of conducting church

services. Moderators and Interim Moderators of Kirk Sessions have to remind themselves from time to time of what our *Manual of Practice* says about the church work of elders: “that the burden of the duties laid upon them should not be oppressive, or interfere with those of their ordinary callings”. Much need we have that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more labourers.

We are indebted to the Interim Moderators who continue to look after our congregations in North America, namely Rev. J. MacLeod, London, Interim Moderator of the Kirk Session of Santa Fe congregation in Texas, and Rev. R. Macleod, Glasgow, Interim Moderator of the Kirk Session of Chesley congregation in Ontario. Rev. J. Macleod preached at the communions in both Santa Fe and Chesley last year, and Rev. Donald MacDonald, North Uist, is to visit Chesley for two or three weeks in April, God willing, when a Communion season will once again be observed. The Santa Fe congregation has had grievous problems and is pastorless again, but we trust that these difficult times will not have had too much of a detrimental effect upon it.

Our congregations in North America are well attended, and it is cause for much gratitude to God that they continue to be supportive of the church principles which are dear to us as a denomination. It is our prayer that they will continue this stand and that the Lord will provide pastors for them as He has graciously done for other of our overseas congregations.

We are thankful to the Most High that the fund established with the money realised from the sale of the Vancouver Church some years ago has continued to grow and that the trustees of the fund are therefore able to give much needed assistance with the payment of the fares for visiting ministers and elders to and from our congregations in North America. Because charity legislation in Canada requires that the monies of the fund be fully disbursed for the purposes stipulated in the Trust Deed, it may be necessary for the Synod to broaden the uses of the fund. While it grieves us that church properties have to be sold because congregations break up, we are glad, nevertheless, when the funds can be put to other uses for furthering the work of the gospel there. We still have a few church members in Vancouver but, of course, there have been no services there for some years.

We continue to have contacts with congregations in the Philippines, a few of which claim to be reformed. From time to time we supply them with Christian literature, which is paid for by the Outreach Fund. Our contact with the house church group in Holland could not be sustained but we trust that Mr. Backhurst has settled down in the place of worship he has found.

Our Eastern Europe Mission in Odessa, Ukraine, continues to function steadily, and although the people of our small congregation there have much lower earning power compared to wage earners in our other overseas congregations, they made a contribution of £300.00 to the College and Library Fund of the Church. This is a small amount in comparison to the total contributions of other overseas congregations. Nevertheless it would be good if these other congregations would contribute even more to the College and Library Fund, not only because the fund has a debit balance of £65,452 but

also because two of the men being trained for the ministry are from overseas and are supported by this fund, and also another two who recently passed through the divinity course are now settled in Australia and New Zealand.

More details about the work of the gospel in all these congregations will be found in the separate reports submitted to Synod by their Moderators or Interim Moderators. May they and the people to whom they minister be knowing that their labour is not in vain in the Lord. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 43:10).

AUSTRALIAN AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Revs. G. B. Macdonald and E. A. Rayner

Overview

THE year 2011 in Australia began with extensive flooding in some parts of the country, notably in the states of Queensland, Victoria, and northern New South Wales. Many properties in Central and suburban Brisbane were inundated when the Brisbane River burst its banks. This was followed on Thursday, 5th February, by Tropical Cyclone *Yasi*, which made landfall in Northern Queensland, causing widespread damage and wiping out a large portion of the banana crop. Thus the nation was reminded of how swiftly adversity can come.

Sad to say, such loud voices seemed to go unheeded as the nation continued to rebel against the Law of God, and a large proportion of the population to neglect the public means of grace. A fearful apathy with regard to eternal realities seems to prevail, and the Bible is a much-neglected book.

The present Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, has set a bad example, being openly atheist, and continuing to live with her "partner", Tim Mathieson, in an unmarried state. As with many "Western Nations", divorce is high, abortion rife, and the sin of Sodom, not only tolerated, but promoted in some quarters. Doubtless, there remains in Australia a remnant according to the election of grace, those who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. The sentiments of such would be with those of Moses, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee" (Numbers 10:35).

The work of the gospel has continued in Singapore, where the witness on the side of the Saviour has been maintained in the goodness of God. Singapore remains a prosperous city-state, though the opening of a huge casino is a significant and public declension. Sad to say, gambling is a much-loved sin, both in Australia and now, it is to be feared, in Singapore.

Sydney congregation

In the past year the preaching of the gospel has continued in the Sydney congregation. The congregation was encouraged when one person met with

the Kirk Session at the March Communion Season, and was admitted to the privilege of sitting at the Lord's Table for the first time. Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp assisted at the March Communion and Rev. E. A. Rayner in September. In July Mr. Rayner baptized my own son, Ethan, and once again, the congregation was reminded by him of the blessing of this Sacrament of the Church of Christ. He has baptized many of those in the congregation, who have now grown up to have families of their own.

Several young people were added to the congregation over the course of 2011, coming for work and study. There were occasional visitors from the local community, but these tended to be one-off visits. The regular Sabbath attendance is approximately 35 on Sabbath morning and 34 in the evening, with around 20 regularly attending the prayer meeting.

The Sydney congregational website continued to provide a useful means of outreach, and has not only been accessed by people in Australia, but around the world. Thus, by harnessing modern technology the gospel message is spread far and wide, in the hope that the Lord will bless His Word here and there. We look up in hope and expectation for the Lord of the harvest to do wonderful things.

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

Grafton congregation

There are various measures that indicate how our congregations are coping. One that may be mentioned is size. The Sabbath attendances are usually around 40 on Sabbath morning and a few less in the evening, when some older folk living some distance away do not manage to come. Although numbers have declined over the past year, the financial situation remains healthy. Thankfully all aspects of our needs have been adequately met as in the past. The congregation continued to meet 100% of the Sustentation Fund to maintain salary commitments. This is a matter of encouragement, especially in times of economic downturn throughout the world. We acknowledge that it is the Lord who opens the heart and the purse. There was the encouragement of the addition of one new male communicant member during the year. The great need is that the gospel would be blessed and that there would be the increase numerically and spiritually so that a standard would be raised up when iniquity has come in like a flood.

The moral situation in Australia continues to rapidly deteriorate with the governing Labor Party conference giving its support for homosexual marriages, which means its election pledge to maintain the Marriage Act has been overturned. The issue is expected to come before parliament next year. What a need there is that the Lord would in wrath remember mercy and hear the cries of His people, "Turn us again, Lord God of hosts, and upon us vouchsafe, to make thy countenance to shine, and so we shall be safe".

It is a matter of encouragement that the Presbytery has been strengthened with the induction of the minister in Auckland. We are reminded that God has

promised His Word will not return to Him void and we must seek to plead the fulfillment of this blessing in our congregations for the advancement of His cause and the coming of His kingdom.

Singapore congregation

The services in our Singapore congregation continue to be faithfully taken by the elder Mr. Bernard Yong. Given his heavy workload and travel commitments, the Presbytery is indebted to him for his willing and cheerful discharge of his duties. Twenty-five to thirty people attend at the Sabbath services on a regular basis, and this includes several young people and children.

The congregation was encouraged by the ministry of Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp at the December Communion Season. After several years of much-appreciated service, Mr. van Dorp resigned as Interim Moderator, when he relinquished his Presbytery duties as part of his retirement. It is to be hoped that he will continue to preach and minister, as and when opportunity permits, in the providence of God.

Singapore is an excellent stop-over destination between Australia/New Zealand and the United Kingdom; therefore it is possible for our ministers and elders from the Presbytery to support Mr. Yong when travelling to and from Synod. It is cause for thankfulness to the Most High that our Reformed witness has been maintained for another year in this bustling cosmopolitan city.

Conclusion

Our prayer as congregations of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Australia and Singapore is that of the Psalmist in Psalm 74:22 (metrical):

“Do Thou, O God, arise and plead
The cause that is Thine own . . .”

NEW ZEALAND REPORT

Rev. J. D. Smith

THOUGH its land area covers roughly as much as the United Kingdom, New Zealand has only just over 4 million people. But while it is numerically small and geographically isolated from the rest of the world, it is not excluded from the gospel call: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

Four congregations uphold the Free Presbyterian witness in this land, and maintain the distinct sound of God’s Word: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

Auckland is the largest city in New Zealand, with a population of about 1.4 million. In a diverse ethnic climate, it has the largest population of Polynesians

of any city in the world. The Auckland congregation had been without a minister for over thirty years until the settlement of a Pastor on 23rd September 2011. Until then the elders had faithfully continued holding the services, with occasional visits by deputies from the home church. About 45 people now attend the services regularly; there are several young people and children, younger and older families, and elderly as well. In a large city such as Auckland, in a socially diverse setting, there is ample opportunity for sowing the good seed of the kingdom, and much need for prayer to the Lord of the harvest.

Gisborne Region has a population of more than 44,000. The Gisborne congregation was established in the 1950s, where the ministry of Rev. William MacLean is still fondly etched in the minds of many, there and elsewhere. The second minister in the congregation, Rev. J. van Dorp, after serving in the ministry there for more than thirty years, tendered his resignation from the pastoral charge of the congregation, which the Presbytery accepted with sincere regret, yet grateful for his services. Currently around 25 people regularly attend, including children and young people, and the Sabbath school is regularly conducted. Though regrettably the congregation has seen the departure of several families and individuals in the last year for varying reasons, yet the four elders continue to maintain the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, holding services regularly, and are united with the rest of the communicant members and adherents in their earnest prayers for a pastor after God's own heart.

Tauranga has a population of over 103,000. A smaller congregation, there are 12 who regularly meet on Sabbaths and Thursdays. The annual communion season is every third Sabbath of December. Rev. van Dorp conducted the communion services last year and, after officiating in Singapore this year, he is expected to conduct the services again at the Tauranga Communion, where the people are very grateful for his labours among them.

The nation's capital, Wellington, has a population of about 380,000. There is a regular attendance in the congregation of six people, including three individuals who attend Wellington's well known university, Victoria University. In November 2011, Rev. George MacDonald conducted the communion services. In a large and dominating city such as Wellington, it is our hope and prayer that the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will continue to be maintained, and that by the blessing of the Most High "a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time" (Isaiah 60:22).

Though small in population, New Zealand is not small in sharing the same social and moral evils that prevail among other nations of the world. The need for gospel labourers is great. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). May the Holy Spirit accompany all our labours, and in our humble endeavours to be faithful in the cause of Christ, and may the Head of the Church have the pre-eminence in all things (Colossians 1:18).

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

IN the September issue of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* there was a report of our visit to Odessa in June 2011, when a communion season was held. There were no new members but more people gathered than at the previous communion. We had the usual communion services, apart from having one instead of two on Thursday and Friday. We have not had a fellowship meeting yet but we hope to have one in due course as we believe it would be beneficial.

Rev. Neil Ross and Mr. Edward Ross, who is an assessor elder for Odessa congregation, will be there for the communion next June, God willing. Regrettably, Mr. Kenneth Macleod, Ullapool, the other assessor elder, has not been able to visit Odessa for some time because of indifferent health. However, his continuing advice and support are much appreciated.

As for other work on the mission, there is ongoing maintenance of the property, which is another drain on funds, but the more important work is that of printing suitable literature for the spread of the gospel. Happily, our latest book, a translation of the children's book, *Line Upon Line*, by Mrs. Mortimer, is now in the hands of an Odessa printing company which quoted for printing 2,000 copies, the cost being very reasonable in comparison to UK costs.

We are indebted to Mrs. Natasha Hopkins for translating the book and to Mrs. Tanya Ball for editing it. These ladies are both Ukrainians and have an excellent grasp of Russian and English. Mr. Igor Zadoroshney also did an edit of the book but is limited in what he can do, since he does not understand English. However, with his journalistic abilities and experience in the Russian language he contributed to improving the style. Mr. Dmytro Levytsky had to cease such editing work because of his studies.

We miss Mr. Levytsky very much from the mission centre, not least because there was mission business which only he could do, but we have managed to work round these difficulties. He has spent most of his first study year with the Theological Tutor, Rev. R. MacLeod, Glasgow, and is now engaged in distance studies under Mr. MacLeod – the reason being that foreign students are not allowed to stay in the UK for more than six months, whereas the theological course lasts for nine months. Mr. Levytsky has been successful in his first year Presbytery examinations.

The distribution of reformed literature and Bibles in the Ukraine and other former Soviet Union countries continues to be done by Mr. Igor Zadoroshney. The following is an abbreviation of his report.

“Literature posted to Ukrainian and Russian people: *Table Bible* in Ukrainian, 65 copies; *Bible* in Russian, 13 copies; *Sermons*, by D. Macfarlane, 76 copies; *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Russian, 600 copies; *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Ukrainian, 40 copies; *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, by Robert Shaw, 115 copies, *Gospel Calendars* in Russian and Ukrainian, 3,300 copies; *Golden Thoughts Calendars*, 476 copies; The total number of parcels posted with Christian

literature was 625 (up to 2kg), and 7 of up to 10kg. Total number of letters sent: 416.

“Some of the addressees, after receiving a Bible as a gift in their native tongue and Reformed theological literature, sent donations, amounting to £411.89, which was sufficient to cover postage and packing. Church Door Collections for the year amounted to £390.80.

“In 2011 we edited the Russian translation of the children’s book, *Line upon Line*. We are now editing the Russian translation of *Sermons*, by Rev. D. Macdonald, and up to the middle of March have completed six chapters.

“After registration of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ukraine with the Department of Nationalities and Religions is complete and we receive official status, we can engage in missionary activities locally without meeting with difficulties from the authorities. In 2011, the Department of Religious Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine issued the seventh volume of the book, *Religious Minorities in Ukraine* (600 pages). It contains an article entitled, ‘Presbyterian Churches, By an elder of Odessa Congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland’, in which the Presbyterian form of church government, worship and practice are described. At the end of the article is given a list of our literature, together with postal address, phone number and e-mail address.

“In November, Igor Zadorozhnyi was invited by Dutch reformed missionaries to be present at a conference which was held in Kiev, the capital city of the Ukraine. While we do not agree with the Dutch missionaries using instrumental music in worship, or calling on women to pray during the service, we used this opportunity to familiarize Ukrainian ministers with the literature which the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland distributes in Ukraine.

“Arminians are against the publishing of reformed doctrines in the Ukraine. In the past Baptist ministers opposed Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals but now they have switched to criticising Calvinism. For this purpose, Arminians held a conference in the Baptist Seminary in Odessa, the theme being ‘The Foundation, History and Present State of Arminian Theology’, and their aim was to discredit Reformed theology. One speaker was telling the audience that in Calvinism, Christians are permitted to sin because they were ‘chosen’ to salvation and will ‘never lose it’. But in spite of strong opposition to Calvinism, many Christians, being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, are leaving Baptist/Arminian congregations. We receive many letters from Ukrainian Christians who came out from Baptist churches and are searching for Presbyterian churches. We keep in touch with them, sending them theological literature and communicating with them by surface mail, phone and e-mail.

“The following is part of a letter which we received from Russia:

Shalom!

I am hastening to inform you that with a great feeling of thankfulness I received the *Westminster Confession of Faith, Exposition of WCF*, by

Robert Shaw, *Children's Catechism [Mother's Catechism]*, and the booklet *The Apostolic Church: Which is it?* They arrived safely in Kyrov on 25th February 2012. I read the *Confession of Faith* with awe and a booklet about the form of Church government. I liked very much your article, "Dangerous manoeuvres of the Baptist Titanic" about non-evangelical methods of attracting people into the modern Baptist churches!

I agree with all doctrines of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. However, alas, in our city there are no Protestant Churches which would adhere to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The doctrine of predestination is counted a heresy. We do not have any church which would confess the doctrine of predestination, no, not one.

Once again, thank you for the literature, because it is a breath of fresh air for me! . . . If I visit Odessa, I will certainly visit you. . . .

"In Ukraine, the *Children's Catechism (Mother's Catechism)* is in great demand. The Mission station in Odessa is frequently visited by presbyters of Baptist congregations and by Sabbath school-teachers, who ask for as many as 100-200 copies of the *Children's Catechism (Mother's Catechism)* for the children in the schools. For the last 13 years in Ukraine, we have distributed about 30,000 copies of the *Children's Catechism (Mother's Catechism)*. Many of the Christians who were gifted calendars for 2012 expressed their sincere thankfulness to the Church and its Mission and also to the Trinitarian Bible Society in London. We hope that this work, by the blessing of the Lord, will bring good fruit to His glory."

The number of requests for Bibles and literature coming to Scotland from Eastern Europe is less than it used to be, partly, we suppose, because the interest in the new-found liberty of being able to obtain Christian literature has subsided, and partly because a number of those anxious for sound literature can obtain it from our mission in Odessa. Also, there is extensive missionary endeavour by other churches in the Ukraine and elsewhere, which attracts many people anxious to get Christian literature. However, we still do a little postal work from the Glasgow Office and we are indebted to the Office Secretary, Miss Norma Morrison, for attending to it.

We are also deeply indebted to all those who continue to support the Eastern Europe Mission financially. Without that valued support, we would have no mission there. The Trinitarian Bible Society is thanked also because, although having their own financial difficulties, they have liberally provided their popular calendars.

May our Church's comparatively small endeavour in Eastern Europe redound to the glory of the Lord and contribute to the arrival of that day when the whole earth shall be filled with gospel glory – "and let the whole earth be filled with His glory" (Psalm 72:19).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO NORTH AMERICA

Rev. J. MacLeod

IN fulfilling the duties laid upon me as interim Moderator of the Kirk Session of Texas congregation, I visited North America on two occasions towards the end of last year. On both occasions Mr. Alasdair M. MacPherson, who has been an assessor elder on the Session there since the formation of the congregation, was also present to make up the necessary quorum. His help was very much appreciated. On our first visit in November, the Santa Fe charge was declared vacant and certain steps were taken towards adding two more elders to the Session. The marriage of David Kuiper from Chesley and Sarah Smith from Santa Fe was solemnised. It was necessary to go out the following month to dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and this was duly accomplished with the services being well-attended. It was also expected that the ordination of those elected to the eldership would be carried out, but, in the event, this did not take place. On this occasion also an adult woman who had been attending the services for some time was baptised.

Since I was to be on the far side of the Atlantic around the time of the Chesley communion season, I was asked to assist there. Accordingly, I arrived in Toronto Airport on 15th November, where I was met by Mr. Rick Bouman. He took me to his own home on the outskirts of Chesley (where he owns a farm) and it was under his roof that I was to stay over the period of my sojourning. Thankfully, there was only a slight fall of snow and, as it did not last long, all the services were held from the Thursday to the Monday without let or hindrance. I felt somewhat indisposed over some of the days on account of having picked up, on my travels, an infection of some kind, but I was able to attend to my duties and the sacrament was duly dispensed. The services were, on the whole, well attended.

It gave me much pleasure to be back among faithful friends at Chesley. The elders – Mr. David Kuiper and Mr. Gilbert Zekveld – are to be commended for the diligence with which they carry out congregational duties, all the more numerous and onerous in the absence of a settled minister. We hope and pray that the great Head of the Church will soon provide them with a pastor, one after His own heart and who will feed them with knowledge and understanding.

As on previous occasions when I have reported on a visit to Chesley, I have to thank the families there for their kindness. As mentioned already, it was in Mr. and Mrs. Rick Bouman's house that I stayed and their kindness and hospitality will always linger in the memory. Mrs. Kuiper (David's mother) gave me the use of her car. That was a very helpful provision and I desire to thank her for it. On 23rd November Gilbert Zekveld took the day off work and very kindly drove me to the Toronto Airport. The following morning, in the Lord's kind providence, I was back in London.

In North America – as everywhere else – the crying need is for an outpouring of the Spirit of God.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE MISSION

Rev. J. R. Tallach

ON 10th June 2011 I travelled to our Zimbabwe Mission for three weekends, returning on 29th June. With Rev. A. MacLean away at Nkayi Communion, during my first weekend I supplied Ingwenya and saw the foundation being laid for the science labs under the direction of Maarten Vroegindeweij, the Dutch engineer. On Tuesday there was a Presbytery meeting and on Wednesday I set out at 8.00 a.m. with Mandla Mhlanga, a member of the Ingwenya Mission congregation, to take a prayer meeting at Matapa. We stopped on the way to allow a relative of Mandla's to disembark. Sadly Mandla was knocked down by another vehicle and taken to Nyati Hospital, where he died an hour later.

On Thursday a Field Committee meeting was held at Robertson Street. Mr. M. Mpfu was appointed to check the text of the Ndebele Bible as laid out by Mr. T. Benschop. Mr. Mpfu has an honours degree in Ndebele and commented that preparation for a 2nd edition of the Bible would require a separate translation committee as the original committee would tend not to see their own mistakes.

On Friday the opening of the reconstructed Thembiso Children's Home took place. The guest of honour was to have been the Mayor of Bulawayo but his place was taken at short notice by the local councillor Mr. Mabalega. Mr. Cowell, Head of Social services also spoke. Some 40 guests, as well as the workers at Thembiso and the children, were also present. We were given a conducted tour of two of the houses, which were light and cheerful and very well equipped. After the opening I travelled to Mbuma and took the services there for the weekend. My duties included attendance at two Bible studies, one at 8.15 a.m. on Saturday and the other at 3.30 p.m. on Sabbath. On Monday I travelled to Zenka for a prayer meeting at 9.00 a.m. and then back down to Ingwenya. I had the Thursday morning prayer meeting at Ingwenya and afterwards travelled into Bulawayo to the first service of the communion there, staying in the Rev. S. Khumalo's hospitable manse over the weekend. On Monday I began my journey home again and arrived safely in the kind Providence of the Lord.

The services were well attended and the people welcoming. Above all, I am grateful for the Lord's care over those weeks in Africa.

**TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY
COMMITTEE'S REPORT
Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach**

THE Committee notes with sadness the passing of Rev. H. M. Cartwright in September 2011. Rev. Cartwright was appointed tutor in Greek and New Testament in 2000. The Committee gained much from his work as tutor and his counsel on the Committee over these years.

Three divinity students, Messrs. C. Hembd, D. Levytsky and I. MacDonald, began their studies with Theology under Rev. R. MacLeod, Glasgow, in September.

The Committee decided not to pursue sponsorship status for the College from the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) because the final step would have involved considerable expense (around £20,000 in the first year), and entailed a marked increase in the paperwork arising from the requirements of the external supervising educational body, which in Scotland is the Quality Assurance Agency. It seemed an unjustifiable expenditure of money and effort, and it would affect only students coming from outwith the European Union. Furthermore the door is already open to the College to bring such students to Scotland for six months without the College being required to have sponsorship status. This six month visa is not entirely satisfactory, as it means that the student has to return home and complete the full thirty week session by distance learning. It also means that contact with the home church for those students who belong to isolated and distant congregations is very much reduced. Both Mr. Levytsky and Mr. Hembd are in Scotland on six-month visas. The Committee will keep the situation under review, bearing in mind that the possibility of renewing our application for sponsorship status is still open to the Church.

The Theology Conference was held in Glasgow in November and a report has already appeared in the Church Magazine. This year's Conference is due to be held in Inverness, again in the last Tuesday of October, the Lord willing, with the following speakers and subjects.

Rev. J. B. Jardine.....	A Bible Character
Rev. K. D. MacLeod	1662
Mr. R. Middleton.....	L. Berkhof
Rev. J. R. Tallach	Antinomianism
Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald.....	The Fall

We look forward to a good attendance and lively discussion.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

THEOLOGICAL TUTOR'S REPORT

Rev. R. MacLeod

THE Bible is the voice of the Bridegroom. The orthodox Creeds and Confessions, together with the body of written and preached materials which constitute their true theological offspring, are the voice of His Bride searching the great deep, expounding the meaning, defending the Truth and extolling the wonders of the Word of God. The Free Presbyterian Church came into existence to preserve a witness to the Truth in Scotland. The reason for our separate existence as a Church is largely theological. Every Free Presbyterian minister must be a theologian. Teaching the great things of God is his calling and this course is designed to lay a foundation for that life work. Therefore, the students are required to construct a body of key theological concepts which will be a foundation for their future studies (D.V.).

The three parts of the Course are –

1. Scripture

The students are studying: (a) The scope of the Books from Job to Malachi. For each Book they were asked (i) to produce an outline of the contents; (ii) to identify a sentence or sentences from each Book, which sums up the mind of the Spirit in the Book as a whole, as they understood it; (iii) in the form of a sermon outline, to give an analysis of the chosen sentence(s). (b) They were asked to write an account of several of the characters whose history is described from the books studied. (c) For each of the theological topics dealt with in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the students were asked to identify texts (from Job to Malachi) which they believe speak most clearly in respect of these topics and in each case give reasons for their choice. (d) They were asked to write articles on the Penitential Psalms and the Messianic Psalms in preparation for an essay entitled *The Book of Psalms: An epitome of the Bible for the purposes of divine praise*.

2. Systematic Theology

The main texts used in the Systematics class were A. A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology*, and L. Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*. Considerable parts of Witsius' theological works were also studied. Turretin's *Elenctic Theology* and John Brown of Haddington's *Compendious View* have featured more this year than before. The students expressed great appreciation of the spirituality of both Witsius' and John Brown's theology. We read parts of James Bannerman's *The Church of Christ*. Rev. John Macleod's articles on the Establishment Principle; Rev. K. Watkins' papers on the mode and subjects of baptism, and Rev. D. Campbell's paper on Robert Bruce's classic treatment of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper were included in the reading material. By the end of the Systematics course we will have studied the departments of Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology (D.V.).

3. Apologetics

The Apologetics course is based on the following questions.

1. Is Apologetics a legitimate theological discipline? This touches on the controversy between the classical and the fideistic approaches to Apologetics. The authors used were: B. B. Warfield, N. Geisler and R. C. Sproul.

2. Can we show that it is unreasonable to deny that there is one living and true God? This deals with the rational evidences for the existence of God. Authors: Rev. D. Maclean and R. C. Sproul. C. S. Evans was referred to.

3. Is it unreasonable to deny that the Holy Scripture is a divine revelation to man? Here we considered the internal and external evidences for the divine origin of the Bible. Authors: Rev. D. Maclean and L. Gaussen.

4. Can we show that none but the Christian Scriptures have the logical consistency that commands the assent of rational men? In connection with this we studied the teachings of Islam. Authors : L. Gaussen and R. C. Sproul.

5. Can we show that the Reformed Protestant interpretation of the Scriptures alone has the logical consistency to command the assent of rational men? The teaching of Romanism was studied and compared with Protestant and Reformed teaching. Author: L. Boettner. The teaching of the Russellite and the Mormon sects are yet to be considered. It might be observed that what began as Apologetics gradually transformed into Polemics.

Each day the class begins with prayer at 9.30 a.m. A portion of the Greek New Testament is then read by each student. There follows a discussion of the “required reading” in Apologetics. The discussion is based on the students’ answer to questions on the text. The students have taken turns to lead the discussion of these questions. Then the required reading in Apologetics for that day is handed out and any anticipated difficulties are discussed. Some time is then usually available to study the Apologetics reading material or prepare for the next class. At 11.30 a.m. the required reading in Systematic Theology is discussed, then the new reading assignments with questions in Theology are given out. At 1.50 p.m. we have repeated from heart, proof texts from the *Shorter Catechism*, the most accurate body of divinity there is. The classes close with prayer at 2 p.m.

The Theological Course this year has had its ups and downs. We have witnessed the most heartening endeavour on the part of the three divinity students and we have witnessed the debilitating effects of winter illnesses. The level of their commitment was apparent from the start. Soon after the course commenced the students began to hold a daily prayer meeting before the classes began. Their commitment could also be gauged by the hours they spent in the library after the classes finished each day. Despite being very ill for several weeks, Mr. Hembd has kept up with the work. Though he had to return home early through his illness, he has kept up by email. Though Mr. Levytsky was off classes for a week with flu, he too has managed to keep up with the work. Mr. Levytsky has kept up with the English speaking students, though he thinks in another language. Considering that our

theological vocabulary is hard enough for English speaking students to master, this is a notable achievement. Mr. Macdonald's health has not interfered with his class work and his constant and unremitting diligence has produced excellent work.

Mr. Hembd and Mr. Levytsky have both returned to their homes and they are pursuing their studies by email. So far the emails have been arriving with well digested comments on the required reading. Though there is but one student left in the country, the classes continue in the library as before. Because of the time lost through illness, the exit examinations will be later than we anticipated. They are scheduled for the first week in May (D.V.).

I would like to thank the students for their help taking services. May the Lord of the harvest make them "living epistles known and read of all men" as far as they are Christian men in the world and may He make them "able ministers of the New Testament", "burning and shining lights" as far as the work to which they profess to be called is concerned. We in the name of God the Lord do wish them to be blessed.

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

A CHURCH committee such as the Welfare of Youth should be deeply interested in the young people, particularly in their spiritual wellbeing.

It is most pleasant to meet with our young people from time to time, at communions or our Youth conference. It is our desire and prayer for them that they would seek the Lord in their young 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 papers.

This year the Conference is to be held at Carronvale House, Larbert, East Stirlingshire. 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. The Book of Providence

How we Should Read It

Rev. Wilfred Weale

2. Education in Contemporary Society

Does Biblical Christianity Exist in Our Schools?

Mrs. Morag Munro

3. The Apostle John

His Life and Ministry

Rev. George Hutton

4. Historical Tour Around Larbert

Mr. David Norris

5. Conversion

Turning to God, What Is It?

Rev. John Goldby

6. Robert Bruce

Preacher to the Conscience

Rev. David Campbell

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 discussions will be blessed to our young people.

The Committee would thank those who gave papers, and the House Mothers for all their help and hard work. Shona Gillies replaced Norma Macleod for this year. We thank Carronvale House and their staff 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 for the *Young People's Magazine*, both at Home and Overseas, which they do willingly. Miss Catherine MacQueen from Portree has resigned from setting and correcting the Scripture and Catechism Exercises for the senior section. The Committee would thank her for her work and input to the Scripture and Catechism Exercises, and for her prayerful interest in our young people.

The Committee tends to hold the conference in and around the central belt because most of our young people are from our southern congregations and overseas. We are conscious of how few young people are now in our Highland congregations; it has to be said that there is a general decline everywhere. Many young people have abandoned the Church and the Gospel. This poses a challenge to the Church and the Committee.

I would wish to thank the Committee for their help and support. 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 another year of hard work and the Lord's care at Ballifeary.

Sadly we have to report the passing away of Mrs. Janet MacFarlane on 22nd August, Mrs. Mary MacKenzie on 26th October, Rev. Donald MacFarlane on 30th October, Mrs. Anne MacFarlane on 4th November, Mrs. Janet MacPherson on 7th December and Mrs. Jessie MacKenzie on 28th December. Mrs. Katie Ann MacCuish was admitted on 10th October and Mr. Ronald MacDonald on 30th December.

Respite was provided on three occasions during the year.

The Home had a full complement of staff during the year and four Care Assistants gained their SVQ2 in Social Care and two gained their SVQ3 in Social Care. Training was given in a variety of areas, such as palliative care and infection control. The Deputy Matron is in the process of studying for a management qualification.

The Home had two Care Commission inspections during the year, in January and December, and received the following grades: Recruitment, Care and Support – both Excellent; Participation, Nutrition and Wellbeing – both Very Good. Environment and Management and Leadership were not assessed.

Under repairs and maintenance the roof was replaced on the single storey extension, trees in the grounds were cut down and some interior decorating done. The garage block has been converted into three resident's rooms and the administration block is in process of being altered to form two resident's rooms.

Thanks are expressed to the management and staff of the Home for their continued care and dedication in looking after the residents. Relatives of residents have expressed their appreciation of how well the home is run and the purpose for having such a home. As has been the case since its inception, worship was kept morning and evening in the Home and the church services relayed. The Committee is constantly aware of its remit to maintain the atmosphere of the Church within all aspects of the work of the Home and seeks, under God, to faithfully discharge this duty.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

IN presenting another report on behalf of the Committee, we once again acknowledge that the Home has continued to function successfully over another year and has been provided for.

The financial downturn continues with an uncertain future and Local Authorities are still facing financial difficulties. For the last two years the fees were held at £510. As I write this report the fees for 2012-13 have not yet been fixed. What assisted the Home in the past year was the provision of a legacy; otherwise there would have been a deficit. It is reported that the Local Authority are going to adopt the National Care Contract.

The Home requires now to have the fees raised to £550 per resident to cover costs; while it is unlikely that we will achieve that, the Committee are hoping for some increase. Over the past year all beds in the Home have been occupied, and we continue to have a waiting list. This greatly assists the finances of the Home.

The Committee are looking at the possibility of building a small extension to the back of the Home to create extra space for storage, which is currently a problem. This will include another room for respite care. We are hoping to obtain grant assistance from the Local Authority for this project.

The past year have seen staff changes in the Home; Mrs. Morag Mackenzie, Strond, and Mrs. Chrissie Macleod, Northton, retired after 23 and 19 years' service respectively – the committee are grateful for their dedicated service to the Home over these years. We wish them good health and every blessing in their retirement.

New staff are now employed with us; we hope that they will be happy working in the environment of the Home and we wish them well.

There have been five deaths in the past year: Miss Dolina Macdonald, Northton, Miss Flora Paterson, Strond, Mrs. Annie Pomfret, Mr. Philip Martin, Leverburgh, and Mrs. Margaret Macdonald, Lingerbay. We extend our sympathies to all their families.

We thank the local medical services for their continued help to the Home, and their care of the elderly.

The recent Care Commission inspections continue to be very good.

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 in the care of the elderly and in the administration of the Home. The Committee thank Mrs. Morag Munro for her appraisal of the Matron's performance, and her report presented to the Committee.

Next Year, February 2013 will mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Home. The Committee are hoping to mark the occasion, D.V.

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

As a Committee appointed by the Synod for the spread of the gospel in this country, we are deeply conscious of the great need for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As we distribute the Word of God and Christian literature, and make contact with many people, there may have been some who have benefited spiritually (since the Lord has promised that His Word will not return to Him void), but we cannot claim to know of anyone yet that we were instrumental in awakening to the realities of the eternal world and their need of the Saviour. There is great urgency, therefore, to pray more earnestly for the awakening work of the Spirit of God as we continue to go out with the Word of God.

We completed yet another mission endeavour at the Black Isle Agricultural Show at Muir of Ord, where we had a stand displaying Bibles, books, booklets, tracts, and sermon CDs. On this occasion we used a new tent, mainly because it was more versatile and saved us at least two hours in erecting and dismantling the stand. However, it did not prove as weatherproof as the previous tent and a few books were slightly damaged (but these have been bought by the Eastern Europe Mission for distribution). Despite the torrential rain there was a considerable number of visitors in the tent and the sales were much better than we had anticipated. Of course, this mission work is not one of financial profit – indeed far from it, as the showground fee and other expenses keep rising – but it is of vital importance to continue it on the Black Isle and elsewhere.

On this occasion we were not the only people distributing sound gospel literature at the show (the Free Church Continuing had a stand manned by Mr. D. J. Morrison, evangelist) and much need there is of more such distribution. Mr. Morrison kindly loaned us AV Bible text boards which, being four times larger than our boards, were much more readily noticed.

A number of people who visited our tent expressed heartfelt gratitude for the witness of the gospel in the midst of the hustle and bustle of a lost world. We were greatly encouraged by receiving a donation of £100.00 for the work while we were there, and by the fact that there are yet people who are concerned for the continuation of this work. We hope and pray that we will yet hear of the work being blessed to some poor sinners in bringing them to see their need of the Saviour and to close in with Him.

We also visited the Agricultural Show in Portree. The response was encouraging, in so far that quite a number of people spent time browsing in our bookstall, and some of them purchased books. Free literature was well

received by some of the people passing by. We are deeply indebted to Mr. Edward Ross, who gave much assistance at both Muir of Ord and Portree, to Mr. Chris Lamont, who helped at Portree, and to several other friends who gave free and cheerful support.

Mr. Alan Boyd was unable on this occasion to attend the agricultural shows but once again has been busy over the summer period in the rather difficult work of going from house to house with the book van. In certain areas the sales were fairly good, showing that there is yet a desire, particularly in some parts of the West Coast and Islands, to purchase good books. Sadly, people in the east coast regions appear to be much less interested in these all-important matters, which is all the more reason to persist in the work. Although Christian books are readily obtained on the Internet, not every person has access to it. For this and other reasons some people appreciate a visit from our colporteur. The total money received from all sales at agricultural shows and door-to-door work was £637.76.

In any case, whether people wish the colporteur on their doorstep or not, we always give gospel tracts to the homes visited. Although we meet with occasional refusals or harsh words, the tracts are generally received gratefully. While we thus work with a view to the awakening of sinners, we see that those who fear the Lord obtain good also, even if only to be encouraged by seeing such outreach work being done. We are thankful that we are in a position to continue, and that it is of the Lord's mercy that such work continues unhindered in our country. When religious liberties are being eroded, and some street preachers have been hauled before criminal courts, we should make it a matter of serious prayer that our remaining Christian liberties would not be diminished further by new legislation.

The gospel tracts, including some in languages other than English, which were sent out from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom in Glasgow amounted to 17,480 and were distributed over a wide area. We hope that in the Lord's goodness and mercy they will be used for the good of those into whose hands they have come. The Committee intends to print a series of booklets on various religious topics.

The Committee has again produced an invitation leaflet for use by congregations. It is somewhat larger than the previous invitation leaflet and includes a couple of other leaflets and a map of the places of worship. We hope congregations will take the opportunity to make use of them.

As last year was the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version of the Bible, your committee entered into a contract with the Trinitarian Bible Society to supply a large number of Bibles (the Windsor issue) for our congregations at a very reasonable cost, for which we are grateful to the Society. Some congregations distributed these Bibles free in their area, and one congregation, which distributed very many Bibles over a wide area in its outreach endeavour, received assistance in the form of a grant of £500.00.

The above is but a brief account of the work of your committee during the past year. We are glad that we can report that we continue to be active, but due

to many other commitments we have not been as active as we would wish. We are greatly indebted to our colporteur, Mr. Alan Boyd, for giving his services freely. We would be delighted to hear from any other volunteers for this or other work we are engaged in, even if they could help only for a few months or weeks. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

THIS is the first report from what is, in effect, a new committee, the Magazines Committee and the Publications and Bookroom Committee having been united by last year's Synod. This report devotes a section to each of the Committee's main responsibilities.

Magazines

Both the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine* have continued to be issued monthly, and the *Gaelic Supplement* every three months, now under the editorship of Rev. A. W. MacColl. The Committee wish to acknowledge the long years of service which Rev. John MacLeod gave to this magazine, specifically intended for Gaelic readers. His work is sincerely appreciated.

The increase in the cover price of the Magazines for 2011 is reflected in the better financial outcome for that year. However, the Committee was conscious that a further increase was necessary and again raised the price of both Magazines.

Sincere thanks are due to all who have given help in various ways over the past year. They include those who have sent in articles and, in particular, the members of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. It is right to pay tribute, in particular, to the quality of Rev. H. M. Cartwright's contributions ever since the Editorial Board was set up. His removal is a sad loss to the Church.

Publications

During 2011 two further hardbacks were produced, both of them in small quantities. One was Volume 11 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the other *Ministers and Men of the Free Presbyterian Church*. It had been hoped that the translation from Gaelic of the *Sermons of Archibald Cook* would have been available by now. However, some further work was necessary and that is in progress.

Disappointingly, sales of books brought out by Free Presbyterian Publications decreased further in 2011.

Bookroom

The Bookroom continues its work of sending out Bibles and other Christian literature to all parts of the world. Sales were again lower as compared with the previous year, but much of the decrease is accounted for by the lower figure for Free Presbyterian Publications.

Some customers have indicated that they have found the books they have purchased to be helpful. 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.

The Committee would call for prayer to the Lord for His blessing on each of the aspects of the Committee's work – in particular that it would contribute to the advancement of Christ's kingdom in a generation when the devil has been permitted to have great power.

CHURCH ARCHIVES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

THE remit of the Committee is to consider the preservation of Church archives. In the past year the Committee has been engaged in the first step which is to draw up an inventory of the archives presently in the possession of the Church, including Synod, Presbytery, Kirk Session, Deacons' Court, and Committee records. The Committee can confirm that the Synod and home Presbytery records are complete, except that four volumes of the Northern Presbytery records are currently in the possession of Rev. Alexander Murray, Lairg. Full information has not yet been obtained regarding Kirk Sessions and Deacons' Courts, and the Committee has not yet attempted an inventory of overseas records.

The next step is to consider how these records may best be preserved. The Committee would most strongly urge all Church Courts to photocopy their records and to store the photocopy in a separate place from the originals. The Church is alarmingly vulnerable to the loss of its records; in particular a single serious fire could destroy almost all the Synod records, most of the Southern Presbytery records, and numerous other irreplaceable documents. Even fireproof safes give only limited protection: the longest guarantee that we have seen for a fireproof safe is for three hours, and most are guaranteed for much less than this.

The Committee would recommend that Church Courts also consider digitizing their records. This is most easily done from a photocopy and can be done in a matter of minutes on appropriate equipment. The advantage is that the digital copy can then be permanently and securely stored in a central location on the Internet and the subsequent retirement, decease, or even defection of Clerks of Courts does not entail the potential loss of records.

Many organizations now store their confidential records on the Internet and the Committee is consulting one office-bearer in the Church who has an expert knowledge in this field. The Committee suggests that the digitizing of all Church Court records up to 1914 might be a reasonable target for this year (D.V.), though it recognizes that the consent of the individual Church Court is required in each instance.

The Committee has discussed the subject of confidentiality of Church records, without coming to any definite conclusion. It was observed that that in one Highland congregation almost everyone mentioned in the Kirk Session records has relatives still living in the area (though possibly no longer connected with the Church), but this situation is probably unusual. On the other hand, it was noted that Deacons' Court records seldom contain anything sensitive and can be of considerable interest to local people and local historians. Eventually all Church records lose their sensitivity but the date by which this happens is difficult to determine.

As far as Synod records are concerned, the Committee considers that it would be useful if every member of Synod had access to all the Synod minutes from the beginning. One way of arranging for this would be to digitize all the records, to place them on a protected website which could be accessed only by authorized users, and to allow users to view the records and to print paper copies for their own use but not to copy them electronically. This is an arrangement commonly adopted by academic journals. After each Synod, the minutes of the previous Synod, now approved, could be added to the electronic archive. In the same way, it would be a good idea if all Church Courts and Committees could preserve electronic copies of their minutes from now on.

The Church archives form part of the record of that "little stone cut out without hands" which is to become "a great mountain and to fill the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34-35). They record the working of the Holy Spirit through the Courts of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are marred by many imperfections but nevertheless they are a means of counsel and encouragement to future generations. The records of the Reformation, for instance, have been of great use to the Christian Church, and Satan would very much desire that they could be forgotten and destroyed. One of the things that the Communists in China did to subjugate the people was to destroy all the records.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland possesses the records of the ecclesiastical struggle of 1893 and of the sacrifice made by many at that time out of loyalty to the Word of God. We are under a duty to preserve these records. Similarly, the records of the present day show our attempts to be faithful (we trust) in the midst of the greatest defection since the Reformation. These too may be useful in the future. "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries" (1 Chronicles 29:29-30).