

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

Submitted to Synod in May 2013

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REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev. D. Campbell

INTRODUCTION

THIS report follows the pattern of previous years in which details are given of what the Committee has been doing in the past year and then a limited report is offered of areas of significance in the nation. It is never possible to cover all or nearly all of what is important and readers of the report are assumed to be well aware of current events in the Church and State. The report therefore seeks to act as a witness in a world where so many competing voices are heard. We do not expect that this report will make any impression on our godless generation, but if it encourages and informs some of the children of God to prayer for the generation it will have fulfilled a very precious and worthy purpose.

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Catechism of Church Principles

The committee agreed to hand over the work of further editing of the Catechism to a sub-committee and the labour involved in this has been very considerable over the past year. The committee would especially like to thank Rev. Douglas Somerset and Mr. Matthew Vogan for the help they gave as co-opted members on the sub-committee. According to the decision of the Synod the committee has proceeded to implement the necessary editing changes and the Catechism should be available for distribution before the Synod meeting, DV.

Statement of Differences

Due to the considerable time that was required to complete the Catechism, limited progress has been made with the Statement of Differences document. An outline of how this Statement will be constructed has been discussed and some material has been gathered for it, but the Committee regrets that it has not been possible to complete the task for this year's meeting of Synod and hopes to have it ready for next year. We firmly believe that this Statement is both timely and necessary. In an effort to explain to our loyal people the need for our continued witness we hope that the testimony of the Reformed Church in Scotland to the Gospel and to the principles of the truth will be honoured and asserted.

Same-sex Marriage Protest – meeting and media coverage

The second process of consultation on proposals to legislate for so-called "same-sex marriage" in Scotland was launched by the Scottish Government in December 2012. Prior to the consultation being launched, the Convener was

able to arrange through his local MSP, Dr. Alasdair Allan, a meeting with the Minister responsible for the proposed Bill – Mr. Alex Neil, MSP. Accompanied by Mr. Alasdair MacPherson, the Convener met the Minister on 20th December 2012 in the Parliament building in Edinburgh. A detailed paper presenting our objections to the proposals as then known had previously been sent to the Scottish Government and to the press. (This paper is available to any Synod member who wishes to see it.) The meeting, however, was somewhat overtaken by the publication of the consultation in the previous week and with little time to digest its contents, comments and criticisms were also offered to the Minister about it. The Minister was courteous and friendly, but, as was expected, gave no indication that he was likely to re-think the policy. We believe that it was necessary to address the Minister directly and face to face on this most solemn issue and to speak to his conscience in a personal way, which we did. We can only pray that He, in whose hands is the heart of kings, may be pleased even yet to arrest the conscience of this man and of his fellow Ministers. Nothing is too hard for the Lord, who can intervene in ways we cannot now envisage but, as far as man can judge, a very serious change of heart among our rulers seems necessary if a most solemn judgement upon our nation will now be averted.

Following the meeting a television interview was arranged with the BBC. The Gaelic interview with Mr. MacPherson was aired that same evening. An earlier interview clip was broadcast on Scottish Television's *North Tonight* news bulletin. Following the meeting, a controversy arose involving the Free Church in the *Herald* newspaper. This newspaper mis-reported in January that it was the Free Church that had met Alex Neil, MSP, and that they had asked for the re-criminalisation of homosexuality. To this the Free Church reacted with considerable vehemence and denial, considering the allegation a slander. The resulting apology was reported on the Free Church website, identifying the Convener of the committee of our own Church as responsible for the alleged request. As can be seen in our representation to the Minister, no such request was made. In answer to a question, the Convener simply stated that the Church believed that the legal restrictions on homosexual practice should be re-instated and he offered no proposal as to how that should be policed. On return from his deputation visit in New Zealand, the Convener explained the Church's position and the true reason for the meeting in a letter to the press and in a local radio station interview. This dispute also received coverage in the *British Church Newspaper*. We welcome the fact that this supposedly negative publicity was an opportunity to stress again the fact that sodomy is a grievous sin and that its practice should certainly be suppressed by the civil power as contrary to the light of nature.

Preparation of Response to Consultation

While consideration was given to the merit of contributing to the second consultation process, the Committee agreed that a response to the questions dealing with the redefinition of marriage and the proposals to change the law

to provide for same-sex marriage was expedient. It was also agreed that these answers be given under protest against the consultation itself and the process being followed to implement the legislation. The protest and the answers were sent to the Scottish Government and will be made publicly available. All the Committee's representations to the Scottish Government are included as appendices to the Committee's Overture seeking further senior legal opinion concerning a Judicial Review of the legislation.

Letters

Rather than write further letters in opposition to the legislation before the UK and Scottish Parliaments on same-sex marriage, the Convener wrote to some leading politicians who had expressed their own opposition. These letters were by way of support and prayerful encouragement and directed them to the Word of God as the only safe guide in this matter. In connection with proposals in the Scottish Parliament, the Convener wrote to the legal team of the Minister responsible asking for further clarification on the intended changes to the marriage schedule under the new legislation. At the time of writing, no response has been received but the Synod will be informed of this crucial issue as it may materially affect the freedom of ministers to perform marriages for the State with a clear conscience. The Convener of the Committee has also been working on an investigation into the possibility of seeking Judicial Review of any future legislation in this area and has consulted the Church legal advisor on this matter. Options open to the Synod in this regard will be raised in an Overture from the Committee.

Work in progress

The Committee's work on the subject of divorce and remarriage is on-going with nothing new to report to the Synod on this occasion. The Committee believe that it would prove very beneficial if the Training of the Ministry Committee included several papers on the subject of marriage and divorce at future Theological Conferences. The duty of the Church to uphold its own Confession in this area is plain and it is becoming apparent that few, if any, other Churches are willing to take a firm and biblical line on this highly important and increasingly difficult subject.

REPORT ON RELIGION

This part of the report addresses a few of the very many pressing and serious concerns on religious subjects facing our poor nation. As the Word of God identifies Popery as the great spiritual enemy to the Church of Christ, this report continues to testify to the biblical depiction of that evil system. Notice is also taken of the significant events in the Romish hierarchy and also of changes in the Church of England and proposals for alterations in the constitution which will affect religion. Notice is taken of some trends detected in the Free Church of Scotland and an exposure of the growing menace of

Charismatic teaching is presented. Various members of the Committee contributed to this section of the report and their work is appreciated as a reflection of what ought to be a burden to the people of God today.

Popery in Britain

Popery is exposed in Holy Scripture (to discerning men anointed with the divine eye salve), as “. . . the mystery of iniquity . . .” (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and its head, the Pope of Rome as “. . . that Wicked . . .” (2 Thessalonians 2:8), and “. . . that man of sin . . . the son of perdition . . .” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). It is a mystery, that is, a thing concealed and secret, making a fair pretence of love to Christ, truth and piety, when in reality, despising Christ, and engaged in heresy and wickedness. Romanism condemns sodomy, yet is a breeding ground for such filthiness; contends against sodomite-marriage yet forbids its priests to marry, permits divorce on unscriptural grounds, and is cruel to the innocent divorced; rejects abortion under any circumstances, even when the mother’s life is in imminent danger, yet murders the souls of those that it bewitches under another gospel. It also asserts that there is no salvation outside of itself, yet smothers the way of salvation, and erroneously teaches justification by works and regeneration by baptism, and transubstantiation. Within its rotten heart it is intent upon the destruction of true religion or genuine Protestantism, and the truly godly. Popery has been rightly described as Satan’s masterpiece, and an anti-Christian abomination. Its wicked and often subtle activity is a substantial cause of the Lord’s wrath against Scotland.

The false religion of Romanism (once rightly outlawed and suppressed during the First Reformation in Scotland) and reduced to a very few adherents, now claims 184,000 followers in Scotland. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Popery has greatly increased in size and influence (largely due to Irish immigration in central Scotland during the nineteenth century), and true religion has alarmingly decreased. Papists now appear as a “roaring lion”, monopolising the media, and are widely regarded as the voice of the Christian church in Scotland. Its opinions regarding the current religious and moral issues are readily sought after, and are given prominence by the media. By contrast, we as a Church, together with other Protestant Churches in Scotland, have noticeably declined in recent years, numerically and influentially. We have been marginalised to the extent that our prayerful and diligent endeavours to scripturally uncover and condemn Popish heresy, and advance the true Reformed, Protestant religion, the salvation of sinners and holiness, has been considerably curtailed by our many adversaries.

The resignation of the Pope/Cardinal O’Brien

The resignation of both the Pope and the Scottish Cardinal within the space of a few weeks received considerable coverage in the media in early 2013. These events demonstrate the weak foundations of this system and how quickly and easily those who lift themselves up can be cast down. The very serious allegations against numerous Romish priests, which possibly triggered both

resignations, reveal widespread perversion within the whole body. Truly Romanism is “a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Revelation 18:2). That the former Cardinal O’Brien spoke so loudly against homosexuality and was given a platform by professed Protestants in doing so, demonstrates the danger of any parley with Rome. The manifest hypocrisy of the Cardinal is even acknowledged by a reluctant BBC. At the time of writing it is being asserted that Cardinal O’Brien has not been accused of any criminal actions. However, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that his acknowledged offences were, to some extent, an abuse of power, which in many other contexts would require, at least, a police investigation. The absence of this strongly suggests that our nation has within it those in high office belonging to other sovereign states (such as the Vatican is) who can live above and outside the law. It is high time that the diplomatic ties with and formal recognition of the Roman Catholic Church as a political power be reversed by the Government of the United Kingdom.

The UK and Scottish Parliaments and the Union

In November 2012 the British Prime Minister signed an agreement with the Scottish Government which provides for a referendum in 2014 on the future of the United Kingdom. The Treaty of Union is of greater force and of higher obligation than the noisy clamour of politicians or the pretended voice of democracy in the present day. The oaths of the monarch and the obligations of the whole of the State to preserve the true Protestant religion are now under threat with this dangerous political adventurism. Our nation comes under very weighty responsibilities in connection with the Union and to think that a referendum result which produced perhaps a very slim majority in favour of secession would undo the whole constitutional arrangements protecting the Church of Christ in both lands should be a grave concern. It does not give any comfort to think that the referendum will only include those living in Scotland, excluding the many Scots loyal to the union who live in the rest of the UK and abroad. Without asserting it as a duty with respect to voting in this referendum, we cannot see how a faithful Protestant could view the prospect of Scottish Independence with anything less than anxiety and concern. We will unhesitatingly resist the dismantling of the protections secured to the Scottish Church by the Acts of Security, which we have a justifiable claim to as the true heir of the Reformed Church in Scotland and prayerfully seek the preservation of the Treaty of Union of 1707 as a worthy if imperfect arrangement until better days dawn.

The long-term aspirations of the Roman hierarchy to break down the strong bulwarks of the British constitution took a further step forward in the past year with the now open resolve of the UK Government to repeal the ancient hereditary restriction on the monarch preventing him or her from marrying a Roman Catholic. The government of all the Commonwealth countries were polled on their opinion of this measure and, according to our Prime Minister and his government, all agreed to it, along with the abolition of the right of

male primogeniture. The change, it is stated, is a removal of an archaic and intolerant rule from a past age which it is thought should have no place in our more equal and tolerant society. The further equality of allowing a Romanist to be the monarch is not yet sought for openly, but the present change could effect that by default within a generation. The claims that Rome makes on every child born to a Roman Catholic parent secures for that religion a central place within the Royal Family in the future if and when they secure a marriage to an heir to the throne.

The European Union and Britain's membership

Also in 2012 the Prime Minister promised a referendum on the UK membership of the EU before the end of 2017 if his party wins the next election. Many view this pledge as unreliable and as itself highlighting a broken promise to hold a referendum on the recently signed Lisbon Treaty which further bound our nation to the EU. Without offering any comment on the many political, economic and social implications of EU membership, the Church of Christ in Scotland ought to have serious concerns at the tendencies by which our laws and our heritage are being systematically subjected to the dictates of Romanist and secular politicians and legal establishments in Europe. The break-up of the United Kingdom seems to be a political goal of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland and we have reason to fear that the spiritual bondage of pre-Reformation times would be one sad consequence of closer federal and legal union with the nations of Europe. The very serious moral and social liberalism of the political institutions of Europe also undermine the laws of nations which are founded on a truly Christian basis. It cannot be denied that the pro-sodomite equalities legislation emanating from Europe has done untold damage to the statute books of member states, including the UK. Looking at the affairs of nations it is easy to be overwhelmed with discouragement, but we must ever remember that whatever the princes of the earth may think, the government is on the shoulders of “another king, one Jesus” and that He has all power in heaven and in earth. The joyful prospect of the nations of Europe being united under the banner of the Gospel should stir up the prayerful desire that His Kingdom would soon come in Gospel power.

The Church of England – resignation of Archbishop

The Episcopal system of Church Government which is found in the Anglican Communion is unscriptural. The office of Archbishop is nowhere found in the Word of God and is an affront to Christ, the only Head of the Church, and to any true ministers of Christ over whom he might assert lordly dominion. The Church of England was once blessed with many godly men and while its unscriptural Church government was always a solemn error and hindrance to usefulness, its formal witness to the Reformed faith is not altogether extinguished even yet. The resignation of Archbishop Rowan Williams is seen by many as the removal of a weak and vacillating liberal from a position of

influence in the nation. This can only be a good thing. The new Archbishop does not, however, seem to offer any more conservative credentials in the eyes of observers. The office of archbishop requires to be utterly abolished, together with all lordly bishops and prelates in the Church of England and those foreign Churches in communion with it.

Theological liberalism has long ago destroyed the credibility of the Church of England and while the media seem to take delight in discussing and highlighting its many backslidings as though they were advances and improvements, we long for a better day to dawn when the Church of Christ in England and Ireland will recognise afresh their solemn obligations to Scripture truth and avowed Reformation principles. The obligations to pray for the honouring of the Solemn League and Covenant, which was designed with the other Westminster standards to bind this Church to further Reformation, remains a blessed duty upon Protestants in Scotland. It must therefore be our present endeavour, as God may provide the opportunity, “to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory of worship and catechising, that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and that the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us” (Solemn League and Covenant, Section 1).

Ambiguous stance of the Free Church on the Establishment Principle

That the Disruption Free Church was both anti-erastian and also firmly opposed to the principles of voluntaryism ought to be recognised by anyone with a small acquaintance with that period of Scottish Church history. The vigorous opposition to voluntary principles articulated by Dr. James Begg during the nineteenth century Free Church Union controversy, remind us that there were once faithful and godly defenders of the Establishment Principle in the Free Church. It is the claim of the present Free Church that she too is founded on that principle, and her legal right to the large properties and funds in 1905 was in part based on her assertion of it as a fundamental principle. It was in part on account of the recognition of voluntary principles that the Deed of Separation was signed in 1893 by the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and our firm adherence to the principle that nations and their rulers are obliged to recognise and support the true religion and the Church of Christ is enshrined in our constitution.

In the light of its profession and constitutional obligations it might seem strange that the present-day Free Church would therefore express itself as opposed to the view that the civil power has a duty to suppress the evil practices of sodomy, as was done in January 2013 in response to media reports. Comments by the present Moderator of the Free Church General Assembly, which display a distinctly pro-Scottish Independence slant and at best an unhealthy ambivalence over the terms of the Treaty of Union, also raise questions over the commitment of the Free Church to her founding principles.

In a more recent news item on the Free Church website (accessed 4th March 2013) Rev. Gordon Matheson attacked the *Secular Society* for its “allegation” that Christianity “enjoys an exclusive place in religious education in schools in Scotland’s ‘Christian’ areas”. Far from expressing the desire that this was actually true and in line with the legal commitment which the State entered into when Free Church Schools were brought under its jurisdiction, Mr. Matheson seems to oppose any exclusive place to Christianity in religious education.

The website affirms that “The Sleat and Strath Free Church minister pointed to a total lack of evidence in Secular Scotland’s outburst”, adding that the completely unsubstantiated remarks would mean hundreds of primary and secondary school teachers were failing pupils in their care. Mr. Matheson said if Secular Scotland’s claims were true, then education departments across the country “would be turning more than a blind eye” and this would justifiably lead to “a barrage of complaints, investigations and eventually sackings”. Mr. Matheson went on to assert that “when you put general religious education solely in the hands of religious bodies, you get sectarianism, not respect. Never has there been a more important time for partnership between the state and Christianity. Religious education in Schools promotes respect and tolerance, especially when it’s done well, like in the religious areas of Scotland.”

Exactly what kind of “partnership between the state and Christianity” Mr. Matheson seeks is open to question, but it seems not to be one in which Christianity would or should have an exclusive place in religious education. The role of the old Free Church in giving religious education in schools and of many Presbyterian ministers fulfilling the same worthy role well into the twentieth century is thus roundly denounced as sectarianism. These remarks being broadcast on the Free Church website suggests that this is an official position. The question that arises from these events is, When will the Free Church move yet further from her moorings by making alterations to her Confession itself? For some time now the Free Church standard of subscription to the Confession in several of its statements is ambiguous, with many of her office-bearers holding it by a very tenuous grasp.

The Charismatic movement

The greatest danger in the Visible Church over many generations has been laxity in doctrine. For well over a century there has been a willingness to embrace every opinion and wind of doctrine that emanates from the kingdom of darkness and appeals to the corruption and pride of the heart of fallen, worldly man. From this laxity all the prevailing worldliness, ungodliness and lack of biblical discipline we see around us in the Church has emerged.

One of the most blatant manifestations of this has been the “Charismatic movement”, which has brought the teachings of Pentecostalism into the wider Church. The modern Pentecostal movement began in the USA in 1905 but has roots that may be traced to Scotland in the early nineteenth century. There are estimated to be just fewer than 1 million Pentecostals in the UK today. The

leading feature of this delusion is the emphasis on the so-called spiritual gifts or *charismata* allegedly bestowed subsequent to conversion by the Holy Spirit. But we firmly believe the idea that the so-called “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” refers to the charismatic gifts of the Apostolic Church is an erroneous, dangerous and divisive doctrine. These gifts were for a certain time in order to establish and confirm the Apostles’ teachings in the earliest stages of the Church’s development. There is no evidence that they were intended to continue and, of course, it is a historical fact that they *did actually die out* in the Apostolic Church as soon as the Canon of Scripture was completed and a permanent Gospel ministry was established. This happened because God *intended* these gifts to die out. If He had willed them to survive in the Church then they would have survived down through Church history. Paul told the Corinthians that “tongues will cease” (1 Corinthians 13:8). If the “Charismatic” view is correct then the Holy Spirit has left His Church without His “baptism” for around 1,900 years until it reappeared in the nineteenth century. That is a ludicrous notion and stands in complete contradiction of Christ’s promise regarding the Comforter “that He may abide with you for ever” (John 14:16).

Not only does this false doctrine foster a spirit of looking down on those who do not possess these so-called gifts as second-class, unspiritual Christians, but it greatly derogates from the greatest miracle of all which can happen to a ruined sinner – the real baptism of the Holy Spirit: “the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost”. It leaves men dissatisfied with what they imagine to be regeneration and faith in Christ and makes them want these “marvellous” and “miraculous” experiences purportedly associated with the charismatic gifts. This is to dishonour both Christ and His Spirit. The Spirit always points to Christ – He doesn’t draw attention to His own work since His true work is to show Christ to the soul through the Word (John 16:13-15). If someone is dissatisfied with their Christian experience they need more of Christ revealed through His Word and Spirit in their hearts rather than the ability to work “miracles”. We fear the absence of the Spirit of Holiness from the worship of Charismatics is the chief reason that their “worship” services are largely an extravaganza of puerility and irreverent worldliness. If they would be brought to return to the solid preaching and teaching of the Word of God their misguided notions of the work of the Holy Spirit would evaporate very rapidly. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:6-7).

REPORT ON MORALS

This part of the report was written by several members of the Committee and also from other sources, all of whom we thank for their valuable contributions. The subject of homosexual marriage has taken up considerable attention and the comments here are reiterating what can be found in various places by way

of criticism and concern. The section dealing with education and matters relating to mothers and family life is an attempt to respond to the concern expressed at the Synod that this issue be given coverage in the report. The oft-forgotten subject of capital punishment is again addressed in light of the Word of God. The biblical injunction “thou shalt not kill” is also of central relevance to the final issue considered – euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Legislation in favour of homosexual “marriage”

In spite of it not appearing in their election manifestos, both the Scottish Executive and the Westminster Government, at the time of writing (January 2013), are continuing to force through their plans to redefine marriage. It is a grief to Christians, and to others of traditional values, to see the sin of sodomy becoming more and more acceptable in our society. Not many years ago homosexual activity was illegal. Now civil partnerships are legislated for on our statute books. Not content with that, our legislators want to bow to a minority and are intent on making same sex “marriage” legal.

However, making it legal will certainly not make it right. The definition of marriage was set in Scripture before the Fall of man. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24): a definition which can be seen in practice across all kinds of human culture, throughout human history. Nature itself teaches us that only men and women have the complementary characteristics, both biologically and emotionally, to constitute a real marriage. If the law is changed it cannot change reality. As one contributor on a recent BBC *Question Time* programme said, it is “an ontological impossibility”. Same sex “marriage” ultimately cannot exist.

Our Governments have tried to reassure churches, who would not conduct same sex “marriages” on conscientious grounds, that safeguards will be put in place to protect their position. The Church of England and the Church in Wales will be forbidden to conduct them while other churches have been assured they would not be compelled to do so. However, a homosexual activist, declared “This faith based discrimination could be open to legal challenges. The Government is treating two churches differently from all other religions. Discrimination between faith groups is probably illegal under the Human Rights Act and the European Convention of Human Rights.” The argument will almost inevitably follow that any church refusing to conduct these ceremonies will be accused of discrimination. They will be forced to conform or face the consequences. Already, according to a BBC website report in December, two men in a civil partnership from Essex are considering mounting a legal challenge over the right to have a same sex “marriage” in the Church of England; the ban, they say, would “legally discriminate” against them.

Andrea Williams, of Christian Concern, warns “The Government has been told repeatedly that redefining marriage will have unforeseen consequences. It has been warned that legal challenges will be made against churches if this

legislation passes. . . . (It) will not only create legal difficulties, it threatens to alienate a huge section of the public who believe that marriage is between, and can only ever be between, one man and one woman.”

A leading human rights lawyer, Aidan O’Neill, QC, asserted that, in his opinion, this legislation would have far-reaching legal consequences for many sectors of society. For example, a teacher could be dismissed if he/she refused to teach that same sex “marriage” had the same validity as heterosexual marriage; a parent may lose all rights to ask for their child to be withdrawn from lessons which presented homosexual “marriage” as an equal alternative to heterosexual marriage, and foster parents who showed opposition to same-sex “marriage” may no longer be allowed to care for children in their homes.

There is some encouragement, however, when we see mounting pressure from a significant number of MPs. Fifty-eight cross-party members have signed an open letter opposing the Government’s plans and some more are very disturbed by them. We are in a time when increasingly those who cannot conscientiously agree or comply with the liberal agenda are being labelled as “intolerant”, “bigots” and “homophobic”. Worse, we fear they will be persecuted and hounded for their beliefs and new laws will be passed to legitimise this treatment. Peter Hitchens, the writer and journalist, notes, “Liberal bigotry is the worst of all because it thinks it is so enlightened”. How we need to pray for the true enlightenment of the Holy Spirit for ourselves and for our nation. “Mine eyes enlighten, lest the sleep of death me overtake” (Psalm 13:3, metrical version).

The difficult choices in education

The following section of the report has been taken with permission from an article discussing aspects of education which are of concern to many in the Church.

“Few things worry parents so much as how their children are going to turn out. Christian parents worry especially about bringing up their children in a way that is consistent with their Christian profession. This makes Christian parents especially interested in (and vulnerable to pressure from) various theories of how children should be educated.

“Until recently, there were two options for how to educate children – state school or private school. Since private schools are prohibitively expensive for most people, state schools have normally been the obvious and natural place for children to go. Recently though, people have started exploring other options. One is home educating, once the resort of parents who objected to traditional forms of structure and authority, and parents of children who struggled in the conventional classroom (as victims of severe bullying, or with medical conditions, or similar), and the other is Christian schools.

“Parents faced with this array of choices need to be reassured that there is no single right option. None is automatically the right choice for everyone. The decision to select one or another is constrained by circumstances – the personal circumstances of individual families, given their geographical location, their

finances, their academic ability, their context in their community, and their personal tastes, inclinations and temperaments. It's not a question of absolute right and wrong but a question of what's appropriate, wise, and practical in a particular set of local circumstances.

"On the one hand, this means that home-schooling and Christian schools are perfectly legitimate routes for Christian parents to go down. Nobody would or should deny the right of parents to educate their children at home or in Christian schools. It's a question of what's appropriate in their circumstances.

"On the other hand, it also means that it is a perfectly legitimate option for Christian parents to educate their children in state schools. This is a point which needs to be stated explicitly in our current context where Christian parents may find themselves in constant danger of being rebuked, browbeaten, and judged for sending their children to state schools (or for that matter private schools that are not overtly Christian). But for them as for anyone else, it's a question of what's appropriate in their circumstances."

Family life and the role of mothers

That the divine institution of the family is under very severe attack in the present day has often been identified in this report and by many other organisations besides the Christian Church. The laws passed in our Parliaments over the past 60 years since World War II have increasingly eroded family life. Very many children are now reared in homes where marriages have broken down, two or more partners become identified with the family and where increasingly the biblical role of a mother is all but obliterated. The education system and employment changes, together with a revolution in the ethics of matters surrounding fertility and birth-control, have all contributed. A particularly pervasive and successful feminist agenda in the 1970s and 1980s has reaped this fruit in the present generation. Some social commentators are beginning to see signs that this movement is facing something of a reversal in more recent times. It is now more common for young mothers to openly recognise the fallacy of the dogma that a woman is repressed when she acts in the role of a mother and home-maker rather than as a career-driven professional or money-maker. This is certainly a welcome trend if it is finding wider acceptance. It is particularly interesting that this trend is found among highly educated and otherwise employable young women. However, it is clear that much more biblical teaching is needed to break down the decades of destructive legislation and social engineering in our society.

The time and labour invested in the apparently trivial concerns of the home and around infants and young children is indeed a worthy trading with God-given talents and will be sure to find a gracious recompense when performed as unto the Lord. The security and comfort of a home in which the mother is always found and to which she gives all her talents and gifts and time will be a legacy that children will treasure long after their mother is removed from time into eternity. The absence of a mother from that most fulfilling and yet most difficult and taxing of roles will be felt by every child who suffers that

loss. We therefore most earnestly encourage young women to value and cherish these years of motherhood if and when God blesses them with children. It is neither patronising nor repressing to be instructed from divine truth in matters of such high importance for the future of the Church of Christ and of the nation in which we live. Being a mother is not incompatible with a good and complete university education. The prayerful care of a mother cannot be replaced with any other benefit in the lives of children and if the time to give it passes, it will not be reclaimed later. Mothers are therefore to pay no heed whatever to the clamouring calls of a godless age to throw off what it calls repression and bondage but what the Word of God describes in the most honourable of terms.

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates” (Proverbs 31:10-31).

The Death Penalty

The scriptural warrant for capital punishment is plain: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:6). The duty for the just operation of the penalty for murder is laid upon the civil magistrate who is that “minister of God” appointed to execute justice, to bear the sword against the evildoer (Romans 13:3-4). In practice the scriptural position largely prevailed in most countries up until the first half of the twentieth century. The early movement for abolition came mainly from northern Europe, and has progressed worldwide since. The European Community (EC) and its predecessor organisations have been a major force in

its abolition. During 1969, the United Kingdom abolished the death penalty for murder in readiness for entering the EEC. Like all other member states, the UK is now bound by the Treaty of Lisbon which prohibits the use of the death penalty for all offences. But notably there is a provision made for reintroducing it quickly, should it be needed, in times of war or serious civil unrest. The EU very actively campaigns for worldwide abolition. It funds anti-death penalty lobby groups in various countries which have retained the death penalty. A total of 16 million euros was “allocated to support the fight against death penalty worldwide” between 2007 and 2013. During 2009 alone, various lobby groups in the USA were given grants totalling \$3.6m – further evidence, if it were needed, of the deeply iniquitous and troubling practises of the EU.

The abolition of the death penalty has proceeded and been retained, despite public opinion consistently favouring capital punishment, particularly for the murder of children and police. In regard to much of the wicked legislation that has been introduced in recent years, it is sadly true that our leaders have the support of public opinion. However, in regard to the abolition of the death penalty, they have defied; and in refusing to countenance its reinstatement, continue to defy, public opinion. Recent polls in the UK have shown a desire for the death penalty to be reinstated: for “standard murder” 51% in favour and 37% against (YouGov, 2010); for “child murder” 62% in favour and for “murder in some circumstances” 70% in favour (Mori 2009). Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (18th September 2012), the ex-minister of the Conservative government, Norman Tebbit, called for the re-instatement of the death penalty to be examined. He noted, according to his records, that about 150 people have been murdered since abolition by those who had a prior conviction for murder. Surely our lawmakers must share in the guilt of those entirely unnecessary murders, at least those of them who are not actively seeking the re-instatement of the death penalty. That is but part of the guilt: above all they have sought to break the Lord’s bands asunder in defying His express command and, in some cases, have engaged to persuade other nations to do likewise.

Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) and Euthanasia

Definitions

Euthanasia: “The intentional killing by act or omission of a person whose life is felt not to be worth living.”

Suicide: “The action or act of intentionally killing one’s self.”

Physician-Assisted Suicide: “The doctor prescribes a lethal medication but the person administers the dose himself or herself.”

Physician Assisted Suicide

In the last year moves by the group “Health Care Professionals for Assisted Dying” in the British Medical Association to accept PAS were defeated. Lord Falconer’s Commission on Assisted Dying was rejected in both Houses of Parliament; however, his new bill is to be debated shortly in the Lords. A new

bill by Margo Macdonald will also be debated in the spring. A poll taken in September showed that seven out of ten MPs were against PAS.

The question of suicide deals with moral accountability. Usually we are morally responsible for those actions which we freely perform and come to freely. But what if we are influenced by an argument when in a weakened frame of mind or by the medication we are taking? Does the moral responsibility move elsewhere? At what stage is a person coerced into committing suicide and the coercer share or take responsibility for the action? This question must be asked, as it is believed:

Firstly, that a growing number of people are opting for PAS through the coercion of others rather than coming to that position with open eyes and a clear head. A person comes to a situation when they “feel” that they can no longer face the future due to some traumatic event such as the onset and progression of a terminal illness. They are advised that assisted suicide is an alternative to a long and lingering onset of death. A physician offering such advice would be in breach of the Hippocratic Oath (c. 400 BC), “I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel”, and the International Code of Medical Ethics (1949), “a doctor must always bear in mind the importance of preserving human life from the time of conception until death”. The autonomy of the doctor is impinged upon and ultimately the trust of all patients in their doctors to “do no harm” is undermined.

Secondly, an increasing number of medications have been developed for the treatment of terminal illnesses as well as other conditions such as heart disease and depression that can cause the user to feel suicidal. There have been numerous cases reported in the Media of families claiming that their loved ones have taken their own lives under the “influence” of such medications.

Thirdly, increasingly the elderly and terminally ill when physically and mentally weak are being made to feel that there is not only no quality or value to their life but that they are really a burden to their loved ones and therefore ought to end their lives. Experienced hospice doctors advise that this sense of being a burden is a symptom of underlying depression and once the depression is treated the suicidal thoughts end. This position is clearly opposed to the basic Christian teaching of the New Testament in which suffering by one member is to be shared by all (2 Corinthians 1:4-5).

Euthanasia

The first European Symposium on the prevention of euthanasia in Europe was held in Edinburgh in September with delegates from 12 countries. This comes as figures showed that euthanasia deaths in Holland rose by 18% in 2011 and now account for 2.8% of all deaths in the country. It was encouraging that the challenges by two men with “locked in syndrome” were rejected by the High Court.

As far as the law is concerned, euthanasia for the moment remains illegal and yet there is a growing concern that euthanasia is being actively practiced by many health-care physicians. Families of loved ones with a terminal illness,

or those ones whose loved ones have suffered a stroke, speak of attempts by medical staff to end their lives. However, due to the nature of this, there is little documented evidence.

Yet we believe, it true to say, that relatives find themselves under increasing pressure to withdraw life-sustaining fluids from the ill in order to end their suffering and because there is no hope of recovery. Some relatives have refused to yield to this pressure and their loved ones have made at least a partial recovery.

There is also rising concern that medications such as morphine-based substances, used to make the terminally ill more comfortable, are actually ending their lives earlier than otherwise might be the case. It is essential that patients and family understand that this is a side effect of such medications and that there is a difference between taking the drug to end a life and to make the end of life more comfortable through palliative care.

The biblical argument against Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia

The sovereignty of God

The account of Creation as described in Genesis chapters one and two tells us that life is the gift of God. God is “the fountain of life” (Psalm 36:9). Man is, therefore, not the creator or author of life, he did not create life and it is not his to take life away. The moral law of God states plainly, “Thou shalt not kill”. Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia are, therefore, sins against God.

Caution

The motives and causes which would make a person consider Physician Assisted Suicide or Euthanasia are complex. Therefore, we must be very careful not to pre-judge difficult cases, nor to neglect the simple Gospel teaching that we are to show compassionate love towards the sinner. No matter what our own views are, the final judgement of all men lies with God who alone sees into the heart. “I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works” (Revelation 2:23). However, this does not mean that we compromise the clear biblical precept summed up for us in the answer to question 68 of the Shorter Catechism, “The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others”.

CONCLUSION

This report does not make pleasant reading. It has been the sad duty of the Church in its 120-year history to testify to a nation that has had many favours, that its works are evil. This evil came in like a flood with doctrinal error and unfaithfulness in the Church in the nineteenth century and has now spread into nearly every area of society. It has now reached the height of the most glaring wickedness whereby our rulers seek to destroy the very foundations of human society. The sins of our land cry to God for vengeance, yet we are encouraged

in the Bible to pray with Habakkuk, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2). The Committee’s report will achieve one of its aims if that is the fervent cry of its readers.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

WHEN the Synod established the Sabbath Observance Committee to deal with “questions of general interest relating to Sabbath Observance”, one aspect of the Committee’s work was to “recommend to the various Presbyteries of the Church the line of action to be taken in any particular case”. The input and activity of Presbyteries remains vital to the work of the Sabbath Observance Committee. The Committee would, therefore, respectively ask Presbyteries to encourage their various congregations to keep the Committee informed about local events held in their area on the Sabbath.

The Committee continue to work on several new tracts which it hopes will be available in the near future.

- *The Duty of Parents Regarding the Sabbath*
- *The Sabbath and You*
- *The State Must Promote and Uphold the Sabbath*
- *Works of Necessity and Mercy*
- *The Duty of Employees*

The following letters were sent out during the course of last year:

Sport

Marathon

- Mrs. A. Williams, of Christian Concern, ran the New York Marathon on the Lord’s Day.

Christian Concern responded as follows: “Andrea’s marathon run was completed in order to raise money for the ministry of Christian Concern, which is a ministry that seeks to put Jesus Christ back at the heart of public life in a nation that had turned its back on Him. In this sense, it is a mercy ministry and Andrea’s run raised money to support this ministry. Her participation was therefore in good conscience and in accordance with biblical teaching on the Lord’s Day.”

(This response portrays a clear misunderstanding, intentional or otherwise, of the biblical teaching on works of mercy and necessity. Fisher defines works of necessity as “such as could not be forseen, nor provided against the day before, nor delayed till the day after the

Sabbath”; and works of mercy as “the moderate refreshment of our bodies . . . visiting the sick, preparing and administering remedies to them . . . feeding our cattle . . . and preserving their lives, if in danger . . . and making collections for the poor”.)

Tennis

- The International Tennis Federation
No response.

Cycling

- British Cycling
No response.

Fishing

- Fish-O-Mania
No response.

Squash

- England Squash & Racketball
“We will, respectively, continue to stage events on Sundays where it is appropriate for us to do so.”
(This response fails to acknowledge the sovereignty God has over His own day.)
- World Squash
No response.

Basketball

- The Basketball League Ltd.
“ . . . your attempt to equate the Christian Sunday with the Jewish Sabbath is misconceived. The fourth commandment, which you quote *in extensor*, applies to the latter and not to the former. To apply that teaching, literally and out of context, to the Christian Sunday results in the sort of legalism that led the Scribes and Pharisees into conflict with our Lord.
(This response fails to accept the keeping of the Sabbath as a Moral rather than Ceremonial command and Christ’s own teaching on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8).)

Ice Skating

- National Ice Skating Association Ltd.
No response.

Hockey

- Hockey in England
No response.

Boxing

- Matchroom Sport Ltd.
No response.

NOTE: The majority of Sport shown live on British television or radio takes place abroad, making it impossible for the Committee to respond.

Transport

Ferry

- In the summer of 2012 Caledonian MacBrayne began running a ferry between Uig, Skye and Tarbert, Isle of Harris on the Lord's Day.
- Caledonian MacBrayne
No direct response.
- Angus B. MacNeil, MP
Non-committed response with letter being passed on to Caledonian MacBrayne.
- Alasdair Allan, MSP (SNP)
Non-committed response with letter being passed on to Caledonian MacBrayne.
- Catherine Macdonald (Independent Councillor)
Miss MacDonald passed concerns onto Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive of the Council, who responded favourably.
- Donald John MacRae (Labour Councillor)
No response.
- Philip Maclean (SNP Councillor)
No response,

Politics

Sabbath voting

- The Committee wrote seeking clarification as to the possibility of an election or counting of votes taking place on the Sabbath.
- Alasdair Allan, MSP (SNP)
“I know of no current active proposals that would lead to this situation in Scotland and think it extremely unlikely that electoral voting would take place on a Sunday.”
- Political Debate held on a Sabbath to discuss Nuclear Weapons.
- Dave Thompson, MSP (SNP), Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch.
“Without getting into a theological debate, I feel that the Lord would not disapprove of my participation in a debate about one of the most immoral matters facing us today, that of nuclear weapons.”
(Clearly such a debate cannot in any sense be considered a work of necessity or mercy.)

Festivals

- Fort William Mountain Film Festival
No response.
- Glasgow Film Festival
No response.
- Aye Write! (Glasgow's Book Festival)
No response.
- Glasgow International Comedy Festival
No response.
- Ceilidh Culture
No response.
- RSPB Scotland
No response.
- Islay Festival of Music and Malt
"Observance and abstinence on the Sabbath is a matter for individuals."
(Again this response fails to recognise God's sovereignty over the Sabbath Day.)
- Traquair House Charitable Trust
No response.
- Newton Stewart Walking Festival
No response.
- Perth Festival of the Arts
No response.
- Festival of Museums
No response.
- Imagine Festival
No response.
- Inside Out – St. Andrews Street Theatre
No response.
- Southern Fried (Music) Festival
No response.
- Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival
No response.
- Pittenweem Arts Festival
No response.
- Royal Tattoo
(The Tattoo is advertised as taking place over several Sabbaths)
"You may rest assured that the Tattoo does not take place on the Sabbath which is considered a day of rest for both participants and staff."

- Aberdeen International Youth Festival
No response.
- The Bruce Festival
No response.
- Dundee Flower and Food Festival
No response.
- Autumn Speyside Whisky Festival
No response.
- Callander Jazz and Blues Festival
No response.
- Cowalfest Walking and Arts Festival
No response.
- St. Andrews Voice
No response.
- The House Folk Music Festival
(This festival was advertised as taking place on the Sabbath. This was later found to be incorrect and an apology was sent.)
- St. Andrews Festival
No response.

The Committee craves the prayers of the people of the Church for an outpouring of God's Spirit, and a return to national Sabbath keeping.

JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod

MR. RODERICK A. CAMPBELL and the writer visited Zimbabwe towards the end of 2012 and a full report of that visit is to be found among the Synod papers. Our mission work in Kenya has come to an end and our work among the Jews is greatly reduced and now almost entirely attended to from this country as base. For these reasons, this Report will be brief and avoid duplication of what is already covered by the deputies' report and other reports submitted by members of mission staff. Once again we have to acknowledge the increasing and generous support of the Mbumba Zending. And it is not only financial support that we receive from that land for we believe that there are many God-fearing people throughout Holland who constantly remember our mission work at the throne of grace. We are grateful for that.

Zimbabwe

The work in Zimbabwe continues as in years past and if success were to be measured merely in numbers attending the public means of grace, then, we

might well feel encouraged and the more so when we consider how prevalent non-attendance is becoming in other parts of our church. But however good it is to see so many assembling together, what remains desirable above all (as among us at home), is that the Spirit of God would come so that after all the planting and the watering would come the increase. Rev. A. B. MacLean, Rev. S. Khumalo and Rev. M. Mloyi have many duties laid upon them with much travelling from one place of worship to another and we are thankful that they have hitherto been sustained in health. New churches have been built at Maware, Zishavane and Insiza, with the people themselves providing a significant input in terms of labour and material. The foundations of another new church have been laid at Mahatshula and, again, with help from the people, it is hoped that it will soon be completed.

At *Ingwenya*, the renamed "John Tallach High School" is now teaching pupils up to university entrance level. At present science subjects have priority and a very attractive "fit-for-purpose" laboratory has been provided for the use of these pupils who have gained a place in the Sixth and Upper Sixth Forms. They have also been provided with comfortable new dormitories. The school's reputation for achieving results is such that it is placed among the foremost schools in Zimbabwe and this is largely to be attributed to the skill and dedication of Mr. Bonakele Ncube, the Headmaster, and Miss Norma MacLean, his deputy. We think that there cannot be any other school in Zimbabwe where pupils are exposed to sound Gospel preaching, where the Scriptures and Catechisms are taught, to the extent that that is the case at Ingwenya. We hope and pray that the seed sown may take root and bear fruit.

At *Bulawayo*, at the Head Office, the Administrator, Mr. Melusi Mpfu, continues efficiently to handle all the day-to-day matters and problems that arise at our mission stations. The Mission Co-ordinator, Mr. Hugh MacKenzie, keeps an over-all eye on expenditure and is largely responsible for the preparation of the annual budget which is submitted to Mbumba Zending. In this connection we have also to acknowledge the contribution made by Mr. William Campbell while he was General Treasurer.

At *Thembeiso*, the children are very well cared for by the Superintendent, Mr. Busiso Maphala, and his staff. We are grateful to Miss Margaret MacAskill for her visits there for staff-training purposes.

At *Zishavane* the loss sustained through the death of Rev. Zorarai Mazvabo is still felt. Messrs. Siziba and Mahashavure, Catechists appointed by the Presbytery, as well as other office-bearers, continue to take services. Mr. Tricot Mwedzi uses a room in the manse as an office and it is there that he continues to work on the revision of the Shona Bible. The post of Translation Manager is still to be filled.

At *Zenka*, the Rev. M. Mloyi has not only to care for his own flock, but has to attend to duties at Mbumba, Nkai and numerous outstations as well. The school there seems to be flourishing.

At *Mbuma*, where the late Rev. Petros Mzamo laboured for so many years, the services are, for the most part, conducted by office-bearers and catechists. There are also around fifteen outstations where services are held.

The hospital is a hive of activity as anyone approaching it may observe. The medical and nursing care provided has come to be so highly valued in the surrounding area that patients are arriving in such numbers that the hard-pressed staff experience difficulty in coping with the situation. An appraisal has been carried out and, as a result, it is hoped that an arrangement will be set in place which will result in a reduction of their work load. Meantime, Dr. Snoek and the Nursing Sisters – W. Geurtsen and G. Wyngaarden – continue self-denyingly to work long hours, at times far beyond the call of duty.

Sad to say, Mr. Nathaniel Mpofo, who so acceptably performed his duties as one of the Catechists, has passed away.

Kenya

As mentioned above, all missionary activities have now come to an end. The legal aspects of the situation are still being attended to.

Israel

The revision of the Delitzsch Hebrew Gospel of John has now been completed and will soon be published under the auspices of the Trinitarian Bible Society and friends from Finland. The translation of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* has also now been completed and the proof texts have been added. It is hoped that it will be published in the not too distant future. The Church's input towards the fruition to these projects continues to be provided by the Rev. J. L. Goldby.

Conclusion

Over 108 years ago the Rev. John B. Radasi pitched his tent at Ingwenya and it is a matter of great thankfulness to the Most High that what was established there still continues and flourishes. We urge the praying people of the Church and all who care for the cause of Christ to pray earnestly that the predicted stretching forth of Ethiopian hands unto God would soon come to pass. Also for the ingathering of the Jews and the coming of the Saviour's Name to be great among the Gentiles. "The whole earth let His glory fill. Amen, so let it be."

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

THE year that is now past but under review in this report had two major events.

The Form 6 complex of John Tallach High School was completed. A formal opening ceremony took place. Many persons were present from different

walks of life in Zimbabwe. In addition, Rev. John MacLeod, London, the Convener of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, and Mr. R. A. Campbell, a member of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, were both present from the U.K. and contributed to the formal opening of Form 6. It was thought to be a happy occasion and thoroughly enjoyed by all. All pupils of John Tallach would normally leave at the end of Form 4 but some are now able to stay to the end of Form 6. A valuable exercise of the Lord's people would be to pray for ministers of the Gospel, who fear not the face of man, to be raised up from amongst some of the boys in the school. All who continue to Form 6 will remain under the Gospel for two further years and the prayer should be that this additional time would be blessed to their souls.

The other major event was the launching of the new Ndebele Bible. A formal launch took place in Thembeiso Children's Home at which the Rev. John MacLeod addressed those gathered from the Word of God. Mr. Paul Rowland, General Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, was also present and addressed the gathering on the background of the work. Rev. De Jong, Holland, a member of the Mbema Zending Board, was also present on this occasion. Distribution of the Bible has since commenced amongst Free Presbyterian congregations and many outwith the church. The Bibles have been distributed free of charge. It is a rare thing to see many gathering for a Bible and finding out that they belong to the strangest religious organisations imaginable. The Bible has enjoyed a very wide circulation and the Lord's Word will not return unto Him void.

The distribution of the Bible highlighted how many new churches abound here. They are mainly of the Pentecostal and Charismatic type. Their number, even in the local area, indicates that Zimbabwe is becoming very like Kenya, where every village has numerous churches. It would also seem that their numbers are growing at the expense of the mainstream churches.

Regular supply was kept up at all of the stations that make up the Ingwenya congregation. I am indebted to the elders for all their assistance. Four communions were held during the year. One communion is held at Inyathi in November and one is held at Cameron in July. Two communions were held at Ingwenya. Rev. Khumalo assisted at the March communion and Rev. Mloyi assisted at the September communion. My thanks are due to them both. Rev. John MacLeod assisted for part of the Inyathi communion, which was a great help.

During the year, both Rev. P. Mzamo and Rev. Z. Mzwabo passed away to their eternal rest. They were faithful ministers of the Gospel and much attached to the old paths.

“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:44).

JOHN TALLACH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

WE are thankful to report that the introduction of the Sixth Form Science curriculum in 2012 was very successful in terms of the school administration and teacher, pupil and parent satisfaction. The second stage of this programme is now underway with the enrolment of 20 pupils to Form 5: 19 of whom were enrolled from our 2012 Form 4 class and one girl enrolled from a local boarding school. The eight pupils who were enrolled last year are now in the final year of the course and are expected to sit the A level examinations, both ZIMSEC and Cambridge, at the end of this year, DV.

The official opening of the Sixth Form development took place in November at the time of the annual Prizegiving. It was a very impressive and happy occasion and staff, parents and Ministry of Education representatives were delighted that Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee representatives were present: Rev. J. MacLeod, the Convener, was the guest of honour at the function, accompanied by Mr. R. Campbell and Mr. H. MacKenzie. There was a huge turnout with the main courtyard full to capacity.

The Bible instruction has continued as in the past: the demands on the few staff who can be called on to run this programme are heavy, especially in Sabbath School with only 4 staff available to take the classes. The John Tallach Sabbath School meets every Sabbath morning at 9 a.m. for one hour. The 150 Form 1s are taken by Mr. O. Moyo, from the Bulawayo congregation. Most of the Form 1s are from non-Reformed backgrounds so our principles and practices are new to them. Mr. Moyo concentrates on introducing his pupils to the basics of these principles and practices. The Form 1s are generally lively and very open in the discussions; e.g., on why we have exclusive Psalmody, why we do not have dancing in church services, why we do not believe in speaking in tongues, why the Sabbath is a day for worship not for recreation or unnecessary work, etc. These are all completely new principles to the majority of our Form 1 pupils and they are clearly bemused during church services: most of them are shocked to be confronted in sermons with the fact that they are sinners in need of salvation. The Shorter Catechism is studied with Form 1s required to learn numbers 1 to 31 by the end of the year and also a selection of the Metrical Psalms. The children seem to enjoy this memory work and learn it all very easily.

The Form 2 group, also approximately 150 pupils, are taken by Mr. B. Chokuda, who is from the Munaka congregation. This group continues to learn a selection of the Metrical Psalms and Catechisms 32 to 57: lessons are based on a study of the teaching in the catechism for each week. Mr. Chokuda has a high degree of personal authority so the children learn well and also enjoy the discussions.

The Form 3 group, approximately 140 pupils, is taken by Miss MacLean and it is this group which provides the biggest challenge as far as the memory work is concerned. Ennui appears to have set in and many of the children have

decided that these issues are just not important for them. As well as Metrical Psalms, Catechism 58 to 81 are studied, after which there is an intensive revision programme of all the Catechisms from nos. 1 to 81. There being many children from Seventh Day Adventist backgrounds, the liveliest discussion is invariably on catechism 59, "Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?" Many of the SDA children are so indoctrinated in their own beliefs that they are not open to logical argument and scriptural evidence.

Mr. Ncube, the Headmaster, takes the Form 4 group now combined with the Form 5s and 6s. It is not an ideal arrangement but no other option is possible without a fifth teacher to take the Form 5s and 6s separately. The Form 4s learn catechisms 82 to 107 and also Metrical Psalms: the ennui which overcomes them in Form 3 seems to dissipate in Form 4. This is perhaps partly due to Mr. Ncube's personal authority, but by Form 4 many of the children have also become more attentive during church services and develop an interest in theological arguments. On completion of the catechism, Mr. Ncube then concentrates on a critical study of the various churches which the children attend. This is a very important exercise as most of these children leave for other schools/colleges at the end of Form 4 and Form 6 and most will no longer be exposed to Reformed teaching.

Only very few of the former pupils continue attending Free Presbyterian services after leaving John Tallach School but we are thankful that there are at least a few. The great need of all the pupils and staff is to realise that Christ is speaking to them in the Gospel, whether in church, Sabbath school, Bible Knowledge classes or daily worship and that He is saying: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life . . ." and that they, by the Holy Spirit, would come to say, "we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God".

Staffing

Sadly we have to record the death of one of our teachers during Term 1 this year: Mr. B. Mthethwa was the Head of Science and was a very competent teacher who had a caring and gentle manner with the pupils. He was only a young man in his 30s so he is a loss to his family and to our staff. Mr. Mthethwa had been in poor health for a number of years.

Mr. Nyoni, one of the History teachers, and Miss P. Ndlovu, an Ndebele teacher, married which means that we now have three married couples on the staff. Mr. and Mrs. Nyathi, who married in January last year, are now the parents of a baby daughter. Mrs. Nyathi has been on maternity leave since December last year but will be returning to work for Term 2 in May and Miss Bhebhe, who recently married, will be leaving us in Term 2 to join her husband in South Africa, DV.

Our staffing complement is stable, as it has been for the last 4 years, so there is much to be thankful for. The parents' committee is still enhancing the salaries of all the teachers to a level more suitable for the high performing professionals that they are.

There was one change to the ancillary staff, who are all paid from parents' funds, with the addition of a Science Laboratory Technician. This post became necessary for the Form 6 Science classes and is being paid for from parents' funds. Another ancillary post, which is clearly necessary, is that of a Bursar to do the school accounts. These accounts have traditionally been done by the Mission staff at the school but with decreasing numbers of Mission staff in the last few years this cannot continue indefinitely as it is a full time job to keep the records of and be accountable for an annual budget of around \$700,000. The parents have sufficient funds to pay for this extra post but accommodation would be necessary as no one trained and experienced is available locally.

The school benefited again from the assistance of overseas voluntary workers. Mr. and Mrs. James Campbell were here for 2 months en route from Scotland to Australia. Mr. Campbell, a qualified electrician, did a tremendous amount of work while he was here: he refitted almost all of the buildings with energy saving lighting, dealing with many suspect situations he discovered as he went along. The electricity in the dining hall was not stable, with constant tripping of pots, bandsaw and cold rooms: so Mr. Campbell spent some time there unravelling the problems. He replaced a rotten external electricity pole and fitted a booster pump to the base of the main water tank. All of these would have been very expensive repairs had electricians been employed from Bulawayo. In some cases, electricians had been employed from Bulawayo but the issues had not been resolved so Mr. Campbell's work was much appreciated. Mrs. Campbell of course was not new to the school and she fitted in easily, taking classes as before. Their presence on the Mission in August was a wonderful Providence when Rev. MacLean and Miss MacLean had to return suddenly to UK for a family bereavement. This was during the school holiday period when no one else is normally resident on the Mission: Mr. and Mrs. Campbell cancelled a personal holiday to remain on the Mission in charge of all the keys. Dr. M. J. MacLeod was also at the school for 2 months: she gave valuable assistance to the overworked Bible Knowledge teachers, taking the Form 6 Scripture and Confession of Faith classes and also Form 6 Mathematics classes. Miss A. Fidler, from Holland, came for the third time and gave her usual expert assistance in the school office, accompanied this time by Miss M. van Harbenden.

Pupils

With the enrolment of Form 5, the school roll is now approximately 600. Another small increase is anticipated next year when the current small Form 6 group (of 8 pupils) is replaced with a full Form 5 group of at least 20 pupils.

Enrolment is stable, with few pupils transferring during the year, although there are always a few for either medical, financial or family reasons.

O Level Results

ZIMSEC (Zimbabwe Examinations Council)

The pass rate remained very high again in 2012 at 93.9%. This is the third year running with a pass rate of over 90% which is an astonishing record and is a

testament to the professionalism and dedication of our teachers and the hard work of our pupils. It means that the school was again number 1 in the Matabeleland O Level league table, with the gap between John Tallach and the number 2 school increasing. When pass rates remain very high, there may be a concern that the standard of the examinations is falling. That, however, is not the case when the pass rate of the previously high performing number 2 school begins to drop.

Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	100.0%	History	93.9%
Agriculture	62.5%	Integrated Science	89.4%
Bible Knowledge	86.3%	Literature in English.....	100.0%
Biology.....	100.0%	Mathematics.....	74.4%
English Language	98.4%	Ndebele.....	98.4%
Fashion & Fabrics.....	81.8%	Physical Science	100.0%
Geography.....	99.0%	Woodwork	76.9%

Four pupils scored 10 As, eight had 9 As and 2 had 8 As. A total of 49 pupils had 5 or more A passes which was 37% of the number of candidates registered.

CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)

The high cost of the Cambridge Examinations, at \$80 per subject, is a deterrent to enrolment: if a pupil is to sit 5 subjects, the total cost of \$400 is more than the cost of one term's fees. However, 17 pupils were registered in 2012. Pass rates were as follows:

Accounts	100.0%	Geography	93.7%
Bible Knowledge	100.0%	Mathematics.....	88.2%
English	100.0%	Science.....	100.0%

Across the group there were 13 A*, 26 As, 29 Bs.

Finance

There was no increase to school fees in 2013, although there was an increase in the price of foodstuffs. Due to budgeting in other departments, it was possible to absorb these increases. The parents' Finance Committee continued to meet monthly to supervise the expenditure of the school: this is a very easy committee to work with as the members (all elected by parents at their AGM) are very professional and constructive in their approach. The parents' annual budget is around \$700,000 US which is entirely raised from school fees. From this they pay for all direct school expenditure: tuition and boarding expenses, examination expenses, sports expenses, vehicle expenses, all ancillary staff, enhancement of teachers' pay, all repairs and maintenance to school buildings and teachers' cottages. In addition, the school pays a monthly contribution to the Mission for use of the Mission security staff, for the use of the driver on a daily basis and for the use of the generator.

The parents' Finance Committee also has a budget for small scale development projects.

Developments

The main Mission-sponsored development in 2012 continued to be the Form 6 complex.

The fixtures and fittings in the Form 6 laboratory complex were eventually completed but later than anticipated due to problems with the suppliers failing to deliver as per agreed specifications and quality. The Science Department staff are to be commended for their tenacity and firmness in dealing with the suppliers.

The laboratories, of course, then had to be supplied with equipment and chemicals, many of which had to be imported. This was a major expense which had been under-costed in the original quotations so we were very thankful that the JFMC agreed to finance the acquisition of these items. Replacement and running costs from now on will be paid for from the school fees' budget.

The final building project to complete the Form 6 complex was the construction of two dormitory blocks: one for boys and one for girls. It was decided this time to employ a local Project officer to oversee the running of the project. Mr. Bope, Head of the Geography Department, was appointed to the post. His appointment proved to be an excellent decision: the simultaneous construction of two such large buildings definitely required a Project officer on site and Mr. Bope proved himself to be an excellent manager and organiser. The dormitories are beautiful, with pupils sharing 2 per bedroom rather than the 12 per room in the lower school. The shower and toilet areas are beautifully laid out and fully tiled and there is a large common room area in each block. The Ministry of Education officials are so impressed with the final product that they have been sending representatives from other educational institutions to see the standard required. Some small scale external work is still underway and landscaping is to be done but the dormitories are fully operational and have been completed within budget.

There were three main parent-sponsored developments in 2012: the final refit of a second 76-seater bus, the installation of solar water heaters to all of the dormitories and the digging and fitting of a new borehole.

The refit of the second 76-seater bus had been ongoing for about 2 years as funds and materials were available. This bus was ready for use during 2012 and has been a valuable addition to the school's vehicle fleet, especially for the termly opening and closing days. It is a matter of concern to transport nearly 600 pupils to and from school when dependent on transport companies which may not have properly serviced and roadworthy vehicles or careful, sober drivers. It was because of parents' concern over the safety of their children that this second bus was acquired so that the children can be transported more safely and more efficiently.

After the completion of the bus, the parents' committee decided to fund the installation of solar water heaters to all of the dormitories so that the children have hot water for bathing. Previously hot water was only provided during the winter term by means of bush boilers but the children were responsible for managing the fires. Given the unreliability of children, this was a haphazard and at times dangerous arrangement so this new development is very welcome. The whole project is expected to be completed by the end of May this year in time for the winter weeks.

Ingwenya is often short of water so the school Finance Committee offered to raise a special fund from parents for the sinking of a new borehole which will tap a new source of water, the total cost being estimated at around \$10,000. Most parents have paid this special levy of \$20 per child so this project can now begin.

Conclusion

As always the report concludes with sincere thanks to all the donors who continue, in spite of the financial constraints imposed by the international economic situation, to support the work so generously, especially the Church in Scotland and Mbuma Zending.

Above all we wish to record our thanks to the Most High for His care and keeping throughout another year and we again ask all friends and donors to remember the work at the Throne of Grace so that the souls of children, teachers and workers are made "wise unto salvation".

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

"THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Psalm 19:1-2). This shows how years quickly pass by, all governed by the mighty God in His wise providence. As each day and year passes by, eternity draws near and some are found by death unaware and some on the path of true worship, seeking their salvation diligently.

All preaching stations were kept open for worship throughout the year, on weekday prayer meetings and Lord's Days. Elders and deacons helped in my absence as the field is wide and the labourers are few. Our prayer and desire is that our people would be taught the truth of the Word of God and that there be a blessing upon that Word. We desire that our people would have a saving knowledge and grow in grace.

The sacrament of Baptism was dispensed in this congregation to an old man and woman. It was encouraging to see these old people come forward. Many people these days are taken up by false teaching and have no truth taught to

them by the different sects that surround the Mission. The Lord's Supper was dispensed twice as usual.

There were many deaths around the Mission, some of our people, adherents and locals. We have lost also our head man, Harry Mpande. Most were through natural death, old age and few now die from the AIDS-related diseases. Health Education has taken wide strides to bring awareness to HIV and AIDS.

Countrywide peace is prevailing and there is free movement between preaching stations, even travelling without fears from Zenka to Zvishavane or Binga. We do thank the Lord in His sovereign governing of all things over the political situation.

The planting season of 2012-13 has not been good. Rains were late. Our sins as a nation draw down the displeasure of God upon us, then judgements come and we begin to mourn, as we see during the times of Israel (Amos 4:7). There will be little harvest.

There was great joy in the church when there was a launch of the Ndebele Bible as it was distributed. Each home desired to have one. This was distributed to our people with the metrical Psalms, to local churches and sects and even council schools. We trust the Word would be blessed to many who shall read it and attend diligently upon the means of grace. We have done what we can, though still some come seeking for the Bibles. Our sincere thanks go to the almighty God who upheld the translation team to the end, although it was very sad that Nathaniel Mpofu passed away before a large consignment was distributed, only seeing the launch at Thembiso Children's Home on 17th November 2012.

Our prayer is that the Lord would raise up men to lift up the banner of truth and we pray also for the downpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our land.

The two church buildings are making progress at Mabayi and Fudu. We presently face the task of transportation of river sand and gravel. The guest house is progressing well and we hope these structures will be finished by the end of 2013, God willing.

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah" (Psalm 84:4).

BINGA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

BINGA was visited three times during the course of the year. There is now a low turnout at the two stations of Samende and Nsenka. At Samende there is hope for the true witness, though it is not a high expectation; Nsenka is not hopeful. The last time we visited the place very few people attended and the shed used for worship had collapsed. The service was held in a classroom but we couldn't bear the noise made by different sects in other classrooms beating drums and singing very noisily.

The road leading to Nsenka is no longer accessible by a normal vehicle as the surface is so bad. Because of this, our last visit to Binga ended at Samende. We still desire to continue our services to the Tonga people, who need our constant care from the light of the Word and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. “Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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 26:17-18). Only in the strength of the Lord shall we still continue to visit this place and sow the seed of the Kingdom.

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

THE LORD is gracious in His dealing with us. We do not deserve His mercy and love because of our sins. The Psalmist has to say in Psalm 103:13: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” We have been led by the wonderful mighty hand of God to see yet another year of His mercy and have reason to be so thankful, when others have been hastened to eternity.

The year has been solemn to our church at large as two prominent ministers passed away and other communicants. In the Mathetshaneni congregation of Nkayi we lost a member in December. Thus the voice of death is sounding in power to awake our consciences, young and old, to seek refuge for our souls in time. Precious is the death of the saints in the sight of God, but woe is to the unconverted who die without hope and outside Christ.

Though there is faithful preaching of the Word in our stations, you find others who are being deceived by false prophets who are not preaching the seed of the great kingdom of God, enticing people with vain worship and without any concept of their spiritual need. The devil is at work, blinding many, especially amongst the young generation. The testimony of John was, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Our prayer and desire is that our people would be saved and see a better light that will shine perfectly on their way of faith.

The doors have been kept open at all preaching stations, both at the weekday prayer meeting and worship on the Lord’s Day. In the strength of the Lord, during the course of the year, I visited all stations, though there are constraints on fuel. The sacrament of Baptism was administered to two girls and the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was dispensed twice at Nkayi congregation and once at the Donsa Dam church as usual.

Two men were ordained as deacons – Benjamin Tshabalala of the Nkayi congregation and Miroso Ncube, of the Nkuba congregation. At the time of

writing this report, Miros Ncube, of Nkuba, is unwell. We pray that the Lord would send more labourers into His vineyard as the work is plenteous but the labourers are few. Nkuba congregation has its own place of worship, independent of the school classroom.

ZISHAVANE MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

It is almost a year since Rev. Z. Mazvabo was called to eternity by his Master, whom he served so faithfully. He laboured with all his heart, mind and strength.

The Zimbabwe Presbytery appointed me to be interim moderator since then. There are 9 preaching stations which I am now looking after. These are: New Canaan, Chiedza, Makovere, Akori, Munaka, Ingezi, Chiwara, Maware and Zvishavane. In Zvishavane, a new church has been built and services are held there now. Communion is held at Chiedza in May and November, New Canaan in January and August, and Maware in April, and at Munaka in September. In all these stations, services are held every Sabbath, with the help of elders and deacons, who help keep the door to the places of worship open. There are 5 elders and 7 deacons. Among the five elders, Mr. N. Siziba and Mr. J. Mashavakure are home missionaries and have motorbikes, which makes travelling easy for them to supply distant congregations. The problem is the rough terrain and rain during the rainy season, which makes travelling difficult for them.

Above all we are thankful to the Mission for providing these motorbikes as a means of transport for the elders.

The congregations by their own effort collected money to buy a truck. They then asked for assistance from the Mission. The truck was then bought and is helping them for transport to different communion places and also to transport communion tables to different stations.

It is pleasing and encouraging to see that the congregations are still holding on to the truth of the Word of God as they were instructed by their late minister. We pray that the Lord by His grace will enable them to hold fast to what they have received until the end.

The past year and this year had very little rains. There was no harvest last season and there is nothing to harvest this season also. This has affected many people's livelihoods, as many people depend on farming for their sustenance. It, therefore, becomes very difficult for some of the people in the congregations to feed themselves and their families as they are poor.

Despite all these difficulties we might face, this is our prayer: "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2).

In conclusion I would like to thank the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, the Mbuma Zending and all friends for their support to the cause of Christ in Zimbabwe. May the Lord of all grace enrich you with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

“The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37).

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

MAN is such a frail creature. He always needs the support of God. In times of distress and pain he has a desire to worship God and performs duties assigned to him but infirmities of the body fail him. There is consolation for the men of God in their failing strength who burn with a desire to be ambassadors of Christ. “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Without Him we can do nothing – this is true.

It is our earnest prayer that the Lord of the Vineyard would in due time settle a shepherd at this charge to guide the flock. There are many feeble sheep who need a constant visit to hear a word of consolation to their souls but time cuts me short and there are some unable even to crawl to the house of worship now. They have this privilege only when, at communion times, my car is available to transport them to and fro.

As it is our earnest desire that the seed of the Kingdom of God is to be sown abroad, the church has spread out its wings and now sends men to preach fortnightly at the hospital. We would be very glad if motorbikes could be used for this purpose; the deacons’ court would maintain these, providing fuel and carrying out minor repairs.

Spiritual education is carried on in outstations and outreach clinics – an exercise placed on the shoulders of the elders and catechists here. We were downhearted at the loss of Mr. N. Mpofu, one of our faithful catechists, and it is our desire to have another to fill his place.

Doors were kept open throughout the year at all preaching stations, at weekday prayer meetings and on the Sabbath day. The sacrament of Baptism was administered to a woman in August at Somankantana and the Lord’s Supper dispensed twice at Mbuma as usual in April and October and once at Somakantana in August.

Mbuma church building needs major repair as there are serious cracks caused by the shifting ground. The Somankantana church roof also needs immediate attention as it has been destroyed by termites.

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

FIFTY years ago Mbuma Mission Hospital was erected. Rev. James Fraser and his helpers started medical work, besides all the other work, in Mbuma, from January 1954 on. Yet the first wing of the current hospital was built in 1962 under the supervision of Mr. Jan van Woerden.

When looking back on these 50 years, how much should we glorify the Name of the Lord. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." He, who blessed his Word, despite all our doings; He, who bound the devil and extended His kingdom; He, who enabled different people in their diverse capacities to care for the body and soul of the sick and suffering around Mbuma. During hardships and during prosperous times. With few and with many.

Rev. P. Mzamo was one of His servants. From June 1957 till December 2006 he faithfully laboured in Mbuma and the many outstations. Great was the dismay in the Mbuma community when he passed away on the 7th of July.

Another unexpected blow came on the 29th of December when Mr. N. Mpofu passed away. During the 2 years in Mbuma as a Catechist, he was enabled to sow the Word of God tirelessly and in very applicable ways. His work was mainly within the hospital, where he conducted worships in the morning and evening, led the daily Bible classes with various groups and held person-to-person discussions with patients and relatives on matters relating to the Word of the Lord. Moreover he helped Mr. Nkiwane at certain Community Meetings where it was observed that villagers were rather hostile when certain cultural beliefs and practices were biblically challenged. His departure to the eternal regions left an empty space in and outside the hospital.

During the past 50 years Mbuma Mission Hospital has developed into a hospital which is delivering a broad range of services and catering for approximately 20,000 persons. Where it started with 1 or 2 staff members, nowadays over 90 people are employed. Thanks to major contributions from overseas, the expansion of medical resources was at times concomitant with the increased needs.

The increase of human resources, however, remained always behind the expansion of the work and this discrepancy was even worsened by the AIDS pandemic. Like other parts of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe has been seriously affected by the so-called "brain-drain". And within countries, rural areas like Mbuma have always been more affected than urban areas.

This continuing work-staff discrepancy was one of the main reasons for the management of Mbuma Mission Hospital to request the JFMC for the development of a long-term strategy. The JFMC then appointed a team of three to conduct an Options Appraisal, namely Mr. H. Mackenzie, Mr. G. Nieuwenhuis and Mr. L. Boon.

The terms of reference directed the team to: "Carry out an appraisal of the situation at Mbuma Mission Hospital with a view to making the unit

sustainable in terms of needs versus resources and the Hospital's place as a hand-maid to the Gospel in the area."

During 2012 a series of meetings and interviews with various professional and church bodies and several stakeholders in the Mbumba catchment area were held, conclusions drawn and presented to the JFMC.

Concise analysis of the investigation process revealed a situation which cannot be indefinitely sustained. An added burden was the escalating running costs, mainly due to annual pay rises fixed by the Government which cannot be negotiated.

From the findings the following way forward to a more sustainable situation was approved by the JFMC:

- Devolve all primary and preventive care services to strategically located Rural Health Centres staffed and paid by the Government under the supervision of Mbumba Mission Hospital.
- Reduce the dependency on donor contribution by downsizing of services and/or increasing other sources of income; e.g., increase fees, transfer of mission posts to government payroll, etc.
- Give responsibility for the Catechists and the Outreach Programme to the Mbumba Kirk Session.¹

It is expected that an implementation plan will be drawn up in the course of 2013.

Administration and finance

Remarkably another development took place in Nkayi District during 2012, which turned out to support the above-mentioned ideas of devolving primary and preventive care and increasing other sources of income. Nkayi District, namely, was one of the districts which had been chosen for the introduction of the so-called "Result Based Financing (RBF)". Instead of receiving grants according to the size of a health institution, RBF rewards according to health results, which are measured by certain indicators. The system is a tool which is said to increase the quantity and quality of health services. It combines the use of incentives for health-related behaviours with a strong focus on results, and it supports efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.² Part of the RBF implementation process was the erection of Ward Health Teams and a Health Centre Committee (HCC), which consists of representatives of different population groups. Mr. M. Mpofu, Mission Administrator, was chosen as chairman of the HCC. His guidance has been of great help throughout the year.

After some months the effect of the new system was visible already by the increased activities in other clinics (which resulted in less deliveries in our hospital), besides the improved involvement of the community in hospital affairs.

At the moment the World Bank is the donor of this project, but the Zimbabwean Government is expected to take over after 5 years.

We were able to save 19% of the Revenue costs due to less maintenance expenditure and the RBF development.

Capital projects

Few capital projects were realised in 2012 in Mbuma. On the one hand this was caused by the fact that the post of Administration and Technical manager was physically vacant during some months of the year; on the other hand because the money of some projects (Staff accommodation, Counter and sluice building wards, Upgrading hospital, Waste management) was transferred to the new X-ray unit. As mentioned in previous reports, our old X-ray machine needed urgent replacement. After thorough investigations it was decided to replace the old machine with a new digital unit. However, the procurement costs for this type of machine were far higher, although in the long run the digital unit would be cheaper, since it does not need consumables. The decision for the digital X-ray was made after the budget for 2012 was already set, wherefore some intended projects were postponed and the money of these projects used for the new X-ray unit.

A substantial amount of money was saved on the installation and training by the fact that Mr. Johan Verhaar was found willing to undergo a few days' training at the factory in Belgium, whereafter he installed the entire machine in Mbuma and trained the users. For this major achievement we are most grateful.

The official commencement of the X-ray machine was done on the 8th of November by Rev. J. Macleod in the presence of Chief Sikhobokhobo and several other community representatives. So far the unit has proven to be of excellent quality and high comfort for staff and patients.

A container full of medical equipment was received in the course of the year, which had been purchased in the previous year. Besides large items such as an Ultrasound scan machine and Incubators, many smaller items such as automatic Blood Pressure machines, instruments and hospital attire, were received. Especially the new BP machines proved to be of great assistance in the daily work in the hospital.

The condition of the electric water pumps was reasonable. The borehole with the mechanical pump, however, collapsed and this has not been fixed yet.

The situation concerning our generators was poor. One big generator blew up and 2 small generators broke down, after which we were left with one back-up generator. So far the small ones are not yet repaired. Another important development, however, was the decision not to replace the big generator: after several years of promises the first poles for connection to the mains electricity were erected in Mbuma. It is expected that all Staff houses, School, Church and Hospital will be connected to ZESA in the course of 2013. A back-up generator than will remain for the hospital.

The general condition of our vehicle fleet (lorry, three cars and tractor) has been good throughout the year, except for the motorbikes, which still needed regular repairs. The Toyota Twincab was involved in a unilateral accident, but was repaired.

A grass mower was bought to assist in the maintenance of the Mission compound, but has not yet been used.

A trailer was purchased and upgraded for use by the Outreach team and this has proven to be of great assistance.

Staffing

As mentioned in the 2011 report there was need for a 3rd Catechist. The extra post was thankfully filled by Mr. S. Ncube in May 2012. He first joined Mr. G. Nkiwane at the points outside the hospital and after that remained at the hospital to learn from and assist the late Mr. N. Mpofu. The death of Mr. Mpofu leaves us again with a great need for sowers of the Word of God.

In the 2011 report it had been mentioned also that Mr. M. Ncube would fill the post of Administrative and Technical Manager. He started his work in April 2012, when he took over from Mr. L. Boon, who visited Zimbabwe for one month. Regrettably in November 2012 Mr. M. Ncube fell ill and was not able to resume his full duty until the end of the year. Throughout the year Mr. L. Boon continued to give support for the administration of the finances from Holland, which has been of great help.

After lobbying for a long time we were happy to receive an Environmental Health Technician, deployed from Nkayi District Hospital.

In the course of the year Mr. E. Ndlovu and Mrs. A. Mpofu retired. Both had been working with the mission as General Hands for (over) 25 years. We are grateful for the work which they have been doing during all these years.

Dr. A. Snoek came back from furlough in February, Sr. W. Geurtsen and Sr. G. van Wijngaarden went on furlough in March and August respectively.

At the end of the year the total number of Government paid staff members was 54 (59%) compared with 38 (41%) Mission paid staff members.

The overview of staff at the end of 2012 was as follows:

	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
Catechist	–	–	2	2
GMO	1	–	–	1
RGN/SCN	1	1	2	4
Locum RGN	–	–	1	1
EHT	–	1	–	1
PCN	7	12	–	19
Locum PCN	–	–	3	3
Counsellor	–	–	1	1
Microscopist	2	–	–	2

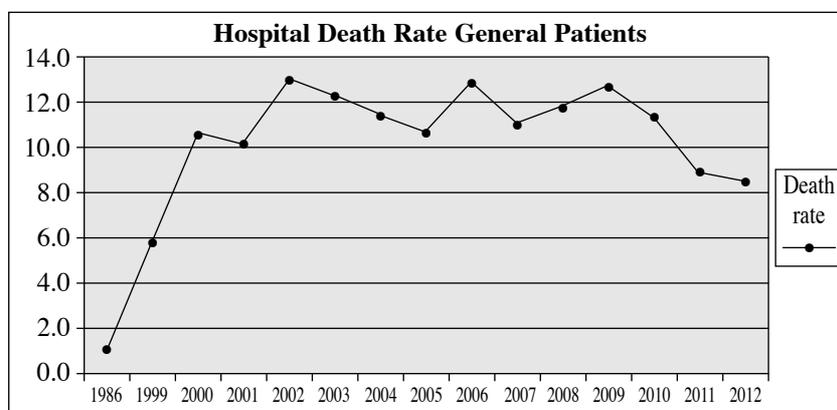
Clerk	–	–	3	3
Nurse Aide	16	–	8	24
Foreman	1	–	–	1
Storekeeper	1	–	–	1
Driver	–	–	2	2
Gateman	3	–	3	6
General Hand	8	–	13	21
Total	40	14	38	92

In-house refresher courses were given on TB, Obstetrics and Non-communicable diseases, besides the weekly Case-presentations. 2 Nurse Aides enrolled in the Training for Counsellor and 1 Nurse Aide continued with the Human Resources Training.

Six PCNs enrolled and finished the additional 6 months Training for Midwifery.

Hospital services

Thankfully we are able to report a decrease in the death rate of the admitted patients again. Due to the fact that over 75% of the eligible patients in our catchment area are on ART³ now, the number of patients who present at the hospital seriously ill has gone down.



Besides a drop in mortality, the morbidity also is going down, resulting in a decrease of 14% of the number of admissions.

	2011	2012
Admissions	2,725	2,348
General	1,143	987
Paediatrics	540	436
Maternity	996	861
Neonatal	46	64

Bed occupancy rate		
General	66.5%	61.7%
Paediatrics	76.1%	80.6%
Maternity	80.5%	64.0%

Deaths	158	131
General	107	96
Paediatrics	43	24
Early/Late Neonatal	8	11
Maternity	1	0

The number of hospital deliveries decreased by 21%, mainly due to the fact that the surrounding clinics (re-)started performing deliveries in view of the Results Based Financing.

Despite improved effort in health education, the number of home deliveries increased to 14% of the institutional deliveries, compared with 10% in 2011. Related to this is the very sad fact that 2 Maternal Deaths occurred in the community in 2012. In both cases a delay in recognising the severity of the condition, besides a delay in reaching the health facility, contributed to the death.

Births	2010	2011
Live births	959	762
Still births	11	7

2012	Hospital deliveries			Home deliveries			Total in catchment area
	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	TBA ⁴	Other	Total	
	58	704	762	27	98	125	887

2012	Still births			Early Neonatal deaths			Maternal deaths		
	Fresh	Macerated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
	1	6	7	5	4	9	0	2	2

Stillbirth rate and Neonatal mortality rate thankfully remained low, even 50% or more below the country rate. 56% of the Early Neonatal deaths in 2012 were due to prematurity.⁵

Infant mortality rate⁶ is often used as an indicator of the level of health in a country. For example: the infant mortality rate in the UK in 1960 was 23, while in 2012 it was 4.6. For Mbumba the rate is 60% lower than the country rate. However, our infant mortality rate might be higher in reality since community deaths are not always reported to the hospital.

At least 19% of our infants deaths in 2012 were related to smoke injuries, a traditional “treatment” of some diseases, whereby the baby is exposed to the smoke of a fire to chase away the “evil spirits”.

Indicator	Mbumba		
	Zimbabwe	2011	2012
Maternity mortality rate (per 100,000)	790	188	225
Still birth rate (per 1,000)	16	10.2	8.0
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000)	31	7.4	10.1
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000)	59	22.0	23.6

The Caesarean Section rate for 2012 was 4%. When Vacuum Extractions and Symphysiotomies are added, the figure of assisted deliveries reaches 7.6%, which is within the 5-15% range which applies to a Rural Hospital.

Theatre/OPD	2011	2012
Caesarean section	48	31
Major cases	114	97
Minor cases	796	735

Although the new X-ray machine was installed in November only, the overall number of films used increased by 18%.

The percentage of HIV tests out of the total number of laboratory tests is still going down, showing less demand for HIV tests. However, the percentage of the population which has been tested is 42% only, wherefore we have increased our efforts of reaching the healthy part of the community. This because prevention and early detection is of paramount importance in the fight against AIDS.

Radiology services	2011	2012
Number of films	1,071	1,267
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	4,616	5,282
Number of HIV tests	3,241	1,697

As mentioned above, HIV related morbidity is going down due to the fact that a substantial proportion of our HIV positive patients are on ART. The number of patients with TB, the major opportunistic infection, decreased in 2012 by 30%. That it is having a positive effect on patients without HIV as well, is shown by the fact that the number of HIV negative TB patients decreased from 18% to 9%.

To reduce the malaria burden, yearly Indoor Residual Spraying is performed in Nkayi District. Although it would be more effective if larviciding⁷ would be applied also, the spraying has been proven successful over the past years. We only had 7 cases with confirmed malaria in 2012. Sadly enough one of them, an HIV-positive boy, passed away.

The WASH (Water and Sanitation Hygiene) programme was extended to Mphoko village. 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.

In 2012 32 Blair-ventilated improved pit latrines were completed. 7 are still under construction. 2 Community Health Clubs were established and 20 PHHE⁸ sessions were conducted.

Besides household inspections, also premises inspection was restarted. 25 trading premises and 2 non trading premises were checked.

The findings were that most of the trading premises were below standards. Only 7 premises out of the inspected number were found to be meeting minimum health requirements. Some shops had no license and shop attendants were not medically examined. Shop owners were advised to comply with the provisions of the Public Health Act to safeguard Public Health.

Environmental Health department	2011	2012
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	485	341
Number of sputum +ve	39	32
Number of sputum -ve	332	226
Number of sputum not done	2	2
Extra pulmonary TB	52	34
Relapse	10	4
Re-treatment	50	41
Number of TB patients HIV positive	82%	91%
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	10	7
Water and sanitation hygiene programme – Number of toilets built	37	39

The number of women and children which were seen in the Mother and Child Health Department and Outreach clinics decreased on average by 14%.

most likely due to the increased service delivery in neighbouring clinics in view of the Results Based Financing.

	2011	2012
ANC (Antenatal Clinic) attendances	4,751	4,108
CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances	7,933	6,679

From January to December 2012, 639 patients were assessed for ART eligibility by CD4 count. Out of those assessed, 326 patients were eligible for ART, which is 51% of the screened patients. In 2011 still 70.3% of the screened patients were eligible. This shows that in general the community has greatly improved on being tested before becoming ill, which results in being assessed in time and started on ART as soon as needed. Early presentation gives opportunities for early behaviour change and results in reduced transmission of the HIV virus.

The number of OIC visits reduced because all patients are decentralised to the Outreach clinics now from the 3rd month on instead of the 6th month. When they are decentralised they are seen 2 monthly instead of monthly.

The number of patients who were initiated on ART till date is 1,959.

220 patients on ART died from 2006 till 2012, which gives a survival rate of 88%. At one of our outreach points the number of patients on ART became very high due to the fact that the neighbouring clinic did not offer ART services. After discussion with Nkayi District Hospital, the staff of the clinic was trained by us, and 110 patients were transferred to them, explaining our high transfer out rate.

In total 63 patients (3.2%) have been lost to follow up.

The total number of patients continuing on ART in Mbuma is 1,651 at the end of 2012, of which 21 patients are on a second line regimen.

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2011	2012
Number of OIC visits	13,031	11,705
Number of patients started on ARTs till date	1,633	1,959
Number of patients who died while on ARTs till date	166	220
Number of patients transferred out	130	244
Number of patients continuing on treatment till date	1,305	1,651

The number of OPD visits for 2012 was 8,404.

Due to changes in lifestyle even in Africa gradually the percentage of non-communicable diseases like Hypertension and Diabetes is increasing, creating a substantial number of patients with chronic conditions.

	2011	2012
New conditions	57%	51%
Chronic diseases	43%	49%

The top 5 of acute and chronic diseases in 2012 was as follows:

Acute diseases		Chronic diseases
Acute Respiratory infections	1	Hypertension
Injuries	2	Asthma
Diarrhoea	3	Rheumatic heart disease
Skin conditions	4	Mental illness
Eye conditions	5	Diabetes

The Catechists, Home Based Care Department and Orphans Care project staff continued with their extensive work in the community.

As mentioned in previous reports, in 2008 a 5-year HBC plan was started in co-operation with the community to improve the care for people living with HIV and AIDS. At the end of 2013 the plan is expected to be executed. During 2012 it was realised that in the past years, together with 177 volunteers and community leaders, important developments have taken place in the following areas:

- Improved knowledge, attitude and behaviour regarding relationships and HIV/AIDS.
- Improved support to PLWA⁹ and other patients in need of care at home.
- Improved support to orphans and vulnerable children.

However, the area of “creating income generating projects” and “increased accessibility to water” did not receive much attention, due to lack of manpower and knowledge.

World Vision, an active NGO¹⁰ in Nkayi District, therefore has promised to take over these areas during the coming years.

In our aim to increase the responsibility of the community for the HBC programme, a small contribution was asked from every household in our catchment area, which was used to buy groceries for the Community Home Based Care workers as a token of appreciation. Besides this the entire community, after being addressed by Chief Sikhobokhobo, contributed firewood to the hospital.

The hospital library continues to play a central role in the spread of information. Children of staff who are staying on the compound are the most frequent visitors. Further, the nursing staff themselves are coming for medical books and magazines, reading or study books. Quite a number of staff are

trying to upgrade their “O” levels. Other groups of library users are the secondary school students, the students enrolled in the OCP programme and church attendees who visit the library on Thursday morning after the prayer meeting. The latter ones will come for easy English Bible Story books or just a chapter of *Line upon Line* or *Peep of the Day* in Ndebele.

With the help of friends overseas several items again were received: 92 books, 20 leaflets and 4 readers.

The library also accommodates second-hand computers, which are used for staff training during one evening per week.

The Sabbath school teachers, consisting of hospital staff members and a primary school teacher, continued diligently with their important work. On Sabbaths and Saturday afternoons approximately 120 children and teenagers, divided into four groups, are attending the lessons.

The year 2012 will be remembered as the year in which the Lord took home some of His servants, whom we regarded as pillars in the church. A solemn warning to us all.

On the Monday morning of the April Communion in Mbuma, few days after the funeral of the late Rev. Z. Mazwabo, Rev. Khumalo preached from Habakkuk 3:2: “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”

May the entire church be prayerfully exercised about this, for the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.

Notes

- ¹ Summary taken from *MMH Options Appraisal Report December 2012*.
- ² The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest.
- ³ ART = AntiRetroviral Therapy.
- ⁴ TBA = Traditional Birth Attendant.
- ⁵ Gestational age varied between 25 and 31 weeks.
- ⁶ The number of children dying at less than one year of age, divided by the number of live births that year.
- ⁷ Larviciding is an ecologically safe preventive method used to interrupt the development of larvae or pupa into adult mosquitoes.
- ⁸ PHHE = Participatory Health and Hygiene Education.
- ⁹ PLWA = People Living with AIDS and HIV.
- ¹⁰ NGO = Non Governmental Organization.

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

TIME is short sayeth the Holy Scriptures. The year began and came to an end and when we look back, we see that those whom we began the year with have passed on to eternity. This proves that “For here we have no continuing city” (Hebrews 13:14).

Last year was a year with mixed events, as we saw the passing on of Rev. Z. Mazvabo on the 17th of April 2012 and thereafter Rev. P. Mzamo on the 7th of July and Mr. N. Mpofo on 29th December 2012. We would say like the Psalmist, “Thou hast shewed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment” (Psalm 60:3). Above all, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

We are so thankful that we are still kept in the land of the living and more under the Word of God.

On the 17th of November 2012, it was a memorable day when we witnessed the launch of the much-awaited Ndebele Bible. We thank the Most High for this great achievement of producing such a sound and reliable Ndebele version of the Bible. A big crowd gathered for the occasion and we were pleased to have among us visitors from the UK and Holland, who were part of us in this great event. Our heartfelt thanks to our guests from the UK and Holland, Mr. P. Rowland of the Trinitarian Bible Society, the Rev. De Jong, Vice President of Reformed Bible Society – The Netherlands, and Rev. J. MacLeod, Minister of the London congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Convener of the Church’s Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee. Copies of the new Bible were distributed. The bulk shipment of the Bibles arrived in early January 2013 and were distributed to various congregations, other denominations, hospitals, old people’s homes, children’s homes, schools and individuals. The reception for these Bibles was overwhelming and many people have commented on them as clearly understood and one of the best Ndebele Bibles ever produced in recent times. I also discovered during the distribution of the Bibles that some homes never had any Bible and now the Word of God has reached them. What we pray for is the Lord’s blessings upon His Word wherever it has reached. We thank also the translation team: Miss C. M. MacAulay, Mr. B. M. Mziya, Mr. T. Benschop and the late Mr. N. Mpofo for the excellent work in producing this Ndebele Bible.

In Bulawayo the work of the Gospel is still continuing in our places of worship. Lobengula is the main station, where communions are held twice a year in June and December. The other stations are: Nkulumane, Mguza, Mahatshula and Thembiso Children’s Home (only for prayer meetings). The sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism were administered in the congregation. A Bible study class is held every Sabbath after services for young people, whenever I am present. It is pleasing to see young people actively participating in the discussions. We are currently going through the book of Genesis. It is of note that we are seeing some former John Tallach

pupils attending the services. One of the boys was accepted for Baptism in June. We pray that all those who go through our institutions may see the Light. “Yet a little while is the Light with you. Walk while ye have the Light, lest darkness come upon you” (John 12:35).

In conclusion I would like, on behalf of our congregation, to thank the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, Mbumba Zending Committee and all friends for the financial support given for the prosperity of the cause of Christ.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Trinitarian Bible Society for the printing and distributing free of charge the accurate and reliable translation of the Word of God in our language. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7).

ZIMBABWE PRESBYTERY TRANSLATION COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. S. Khumalo

It has been reported in a previous report that the new Ndebele Bible translation had been completed. In 2012 it was printed by the Trinitarian Bible Society. Two formats were printed. One contained the Ndebele Metrical Psalms and the other was without the Psalms. Both formats have the identical text of Scripture. They are well printed and most attractively bound up to the usual excellent standard of the Trinitarian Bible Society. The Bible launch took place on 17th November 2012 in Thembiso Children’s Home Hall. In addition to people from the church many others were invited and also present. This included government representatives and people from other churches. Though we are not in agreement with them yet we did not want the Bible to be viewed as a Free Presbyterian Bible but one for all the peoples of Zimbabwe. Rev. J. MacLeod, London, Convener of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, was present and addressed the gathering from the Word of God. Mr. Paul Rowland, General Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, was also present and addressed those gathered on the work of the Society and the new Ndebele Bible. Rev. De Jong, Holland, was present as a representative of the Dutch Reformed Bible Society. He addressed the people also. The Dutch Bible Society funded part of the cost of printing the Bible. At the end of the meeting the initial consignment of Bibles was given out to the people present from other churches and organisations. The main consignment arrived in 2013 and is now being distributed amongst our congregations and other organisations, churches and individuals. The meeting was thought by all to be a very happy occasion. The prayer is that the Most High would bless His Own Word. The Committee would especially like to thank the JFMC, the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Dutch Reformed Bible Society for their wonderful efforts in

producing this Bible. It is now the standard pulpit and congregation Bible within our own church and we hope that it will be so in other churches also.

During the year under review the new translation of the Shona Bible continued. Good progress has been made so far. A first draft of the New Testament has been produced and is currently being proof-read. It is hoped that in a similar way to the Ndebele Bible project, the Shona New Testament will be printed first then the full Bible printed when it is completed.

THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT

Mr. B. Maphala, Home Superintendent

Introduction

KING SOLOMON had this to say in Ecclesiastes 3:1: "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven." It is this time of the year when I have to share with you what has been happening in this vineyard during the past year.

The Home

The Word of God is the foundation of Thembiso Children's Home. Its principles, values and guidelines are derived from the Word of God. Each day begins with the Word of God and ends with it. Families conduct their morning and evening prayers as a family unit from Monday to Friday. We then meet as a Home on Saturday and Sabbath mornings when the Superintendent conducts the worship. On Sabbath children are divided according to their ages for Sabbath School.

The Superintendent leads the Secondary school pupils, whereas home mothers rotate to take charge of the junior and kindergarten sections respectively. It is our duty to bring these siblings before us into the presence of the Lord as it was done unto Samuel of old. As we read in 1 Samuel 3:1: "And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days. There was no open vision." We leave the rest unto Him; He will make it prosper at His own time.

Children

At present we have 41 children, 23 girls and 19 boys. Almost all are attending formal education, except for the smaller ones, Vivian, Jonathan and Nkosiphile. Khulekani Dube has been doing well in a Teacher Training Course. He is now out for teaching practice and has been offered a place in the nearby school at Makhandeni Government Primary School. He will be attached there for 1½ years. We have 3 pupils who will be sitting for "O" level exams this year – Siphon Zama at John Tallach Secondary and Simangaliso Mlangeni and Nozihlobo Bhebhe at Luveve High. We pray that the trio will do well in their exams in November 2013 (DV). Most of our children are

in good health due to the well-balanced diet they receive from the caring House mothers.

Staff

At present we have a staff complement of 23 workers including management. There are 12 mothers (including 2 relievers), who look after the children. Four night guards, a gate man, 2 grounds men, a gardener and 3 office workers, a Superintendent, Administrative officer and a Receptionist.

The entire staff is well disciplined and upholds the values of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland doctrine, which in turn is cascaded down to the children.

Refresher course

Home mothers, their assistants and relievers went through a gruelling two-month-long refresher course from 22nd January to 8th March 2013. It was a great success. The recipients received participation certificates at the end of the course. I take this opportunity to thank the following for a job well done: Dr. A. Snoek, Rev. S. Khumalo and, most of all, Sisters Petra Beukers and Margaret MacAskill for coming down and making it all happen. As Superintendent I co-ordinated events at ground level.

Projects

The carpentry shop is functioning well. Both boys and girls attend carpentry lessons on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons between 2-5 p.m. They are taught by Mr. Enock Zitha, a retired polytechnic carpentry lecturer. Most of them are doing well, notably Natasha and Siphetheni.

The fowl run project has taken off the ground as well. It is doing quite well. We are about to sell the second batch of broilers (289 from the initial 300 chicks). Both mothers and children are taking an active roll in feeding the chicks and cleaning the fowl run. It is a marvel to watch.

Outings

We managed to visit Hillside Dams with all the children, including their mothers. They had breakfast and lunch there. We also took them to Hwange Game Park over a night. They had a nice time there and it proved a really educational trip.

Conclusion

With the help of the Lord, God willing, we anticipate to do more for the children during the course of the year, teaching them how to fear the Lord, as it is written in Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." However, we have to be prudent in our approach, and leave the rest unto the Lord.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. M. A. Mpofu

Introduction

In submitting a brief report for the past year one is conscious of the unfailing kindness of the Lord. Our sins have provoked the Lord Jehovah and, in spite of our unfaithfulness, He remains unchanged. "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6)

Field and Sub-Committees

The two committees held their quarterly and monthly meetings as scheduled. The chairmanship of the Field Committee rotates among the members and the Mission Administrator is the Clerk of the Committee.

The Sub Committee, which deals with operational business of the Mission and reports to the Field Committee, is chaired by the Mission Administrator. Mr. H. Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, joins both Committee meetings through Skype whenever he is in Scotland and has continued to give invaluable advice and ideas on how best the Mission can be run.

The minutes of both Committees are sent to the Clerk of the JFMC once they are adopted and signed.

Staffing

During the year under review the Mission had 105 workers on its payroll:

Head office	10
Lobengula.....	3
Nkulumane	2
Zenka.....	6
Ingwenya	13
Bookroom.....	3
Mbumba.....	37
Thembiso.....	24
Zvishavane.....	7

It has to be noted that the non-graded staff are included in the total figure. The Field Committee deliberately took a position that all graded staff removed from the payroll due to death or retirement should not be replaced. The policy has seen the reduction of employees from 109 in the previous year to the current 105.

The separation of John Tallach High School workers from the Mission payroll has greatly reduced the labour disputes that were being experienced at Ingwenya. The Parents Association is charged by the Ministry of Education to deal with matters that concern the school, consequently all those directly employed by the Mission cannot interfere with Boarding School affairs.

During the course of the past year, Rev. Z. Mazvabo from Zvishavane and Rev. P. Mzamo (retired) passed away in April and July respectively. Mr. N. Mpofu, a catechist at Mbumba Mission, passed away in December. All the men are sadly missed but we sincerely believe they are now in a better place.

Expatriate staff

As reported last year the number of expatriate staff has gone down due to the problems encountered in applying for and renewal of work permits. But we should be thankful, though, that those of our staff on the Mission currently have been given maximum assistance when they go to the immigration Head Office in Harare. During the period under review some of the expatriate staff went on furlough.

On a sad note, Miss N. B. MacLean and Rev. A. B. MacLean had to go to Scotland unexpectedly to attend the funeral of their dear father who had passed away.

Visitors

Rev. J. MacLeod, Convener of the JFMC, and Mr. R. Campbell visited the Mission as Deputies from 31st October to 20th November 2012 in order to attend the official launch of the new Ndebele Bible on 17th November and the commissioning of the “A” Level Department at John Tallach High School.

The Deputies were able to visit and preach at all Mission stations and at other places of worship, including schools that are run by the Church.

Rev. De Jong, Vice President of the Reformed Bible Society in the Netherlands, and Mr. Paul Rowland of the Trinitarian Bible Society, attended the Ndebele Bible launch and later distributed free Bibles to the over 400 people who attended the launch. On this occasion Rev. J. MacLeod led the meeting in thanksgiving to the Almighty God for the Bible and preached a very suitable sermon for the occasion from James 1:25.

To date more than 20,000 copies of the Bible have been distributed.

During the period under review some expatriate staff received and welcomed family members and friends who visited them.

Themviso Children’s Home welcomed Sr. Petra Beukers and Sr. M. MacAskill, who had come to conduct a refresher course for house mothers at the home.

Mr. H. Mackenzie led a delegation that had been tasked by the JFMC to conduct an options appraisal for Mbumba Mission Hospital. The team has since submitted their report to the JFMC, which has given guidelines on the way forward.

Finance and capital projects

In 1967 Mr. Jan van Woerden wrote: “The income and expenditure account is a silent witness of a great work, lovingly done by many people in various parts of the world. . . .”

The Mission continued to receive monthly remittance from the General Treasurer. Most of the capital projects that were being carried out in the year under review were completed. A detailed report on projects will be made by the office of the Transport and Buildings Projects Manager. The remittance has since been pegged at \$100,000.00 per month. One is happy to report that so far the office has been able to operate within this allocation.

The fuel accounting system, that was drawn up by our auditors Ernst & Young, seems to be working very well. In spite of the increase in the cost of fuel we are still able to manage with our allocated budget.

Sustentation Fund

Head Office received the following amounts from Congregations being their contributions to the Sustentation Fund:

Mbuma.....	–
Ingwenya	\$1,671.00
Bulawayo.....	\$1,379.00
Zenka	\$315.00
Nkayi	\$249.00
Zvishavane.....	\$220.00
Total.....	<u>\$3,834.00</u>

Communication systems

All our communication installations and systems worked well and served their purposes effectively but there are Skype network reception challenges at Ingwenya. A mobile phone service provider intends to install a network booster at Mbuma. It is hoped this development will improve the reception in the Mission and surrounding areas. Currently one has to go up the ridge to get a good cell phone reception.

Bookroom

The bookroom continued to operate well and was able to sustain itself in terms of paying rentals and utility bills. Orders for Bibles, religious books and stationery for sale were also purchased using the income generated. The rentals of the premises keep rising and one is worried that if the trend continues we might not be able to sustain these in future.

Primary schools

The Church has five Primary Schools under its supervision. These are operating normally.

The table opposite shows some statistics from the schools.

School	Enrolment	Staffing	Grade 7 Pass Rate	2011
Zenka	837	23	49%	44%
Mbuma	682	18	30%	33%
Ingwenya	280	9	15%	26%
Lutsha	497	15	8%	14%
Thembiso	379	12	49%	68%

A close scrutiny on the pass rates shows a big drop in all the schools. The explanation is that the school system had students who were not properly taught during the period of hyper-inflation from 2006 and these are the students who are now in upper primary where they write the Grade 7 examinations.

In the year under review all the primary schools were allocated \$5,000.00 for the development of their infrastructure.

- (a) Mbuma repaired classrooms.
- (b) Zenka bought school furniture and refurbished offices for the Head and Deputy.
- (c) Lutsha put up a shed which is used for mid week prayer meetings.
- (d) Ingwenya completed the ECD classroom and furnished it.
- (e) Thembiso completed a classroom block and electrified it.

It is worth reporting that all the primary schools with the exception of Ingwenya in Ntabazinduna have very co-operative parent bodies that have taken an active role in the maintenance and improvement of school buildings and furniture.

- (a) Lutsha: A fence has been put up round the school.
- (b) Mbuma: All cottages have been repaired and repainted.
- (c) Zenka: Classrooms have been painted and an Early Childhood play centre set up. Currently the parents are repairing a classroom roof that was blown off in a storm.
- (d) Thembiso: Parents bought a photo copier and a computer. (Mrs. A. Maphala, the wife of the Home Superintendent, is now Head of Thembiso Primary School.)

The Bible Quiz Competition, which is now a permanent feature of our schools' calendar, was held at Thembiso Primary School. This year, Lord willing, the competition will be at Zenka in July. Questions will be set from the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament and St. Mark in the New Testament. Schools will also be expected to learn the shorter catechism questions 11 to 20.

Another interesting feature about this year's quiz is that six schools that do not belong to our church have requested to join the Bible quiz (Simbo, Singwangombe, Mthoniselwa, Mpakama, Magazi and Mabayi). It has been agreed that these schools will first compete among themselves on general Bible questions. The winner will then join the Church schools in the main quiz competition.

Conclusion

In general our office continued to receive and enjoy the support of all the departments of the Mission but, of course, like any social entity we experienced some disappointments and anxious moments. Despite these setbacks Psalm 121:1 gave us comfort: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

TRANSPORT AND BUILDING PROJECTS REPORT

Mr. P. Mzamo

Transport

There have been some changes in our transport operations the past year whereby there has been some introduction of Monthly Vehicle Usage for fuel returns on fuel consumption for all vehicles, electricity generators and water engines throughout all our Mission stations. The total consumption of fuel for all stations for the past year is as follows: Diesel was 39,581 litres, Petrol 7,000 litres, and we have less vehicles and generators using petrol, so most fuel is diesel.

The cost of maintaining our fleet escalated. A few vehicles on top of the list for repairs and services done are the Zenka Mission Minister's Toyota Hilux Pickup at a cost of \$10,626.28, Ingwenya Mission Minister's Nissan Pickup at a cost of \$5,626.00, the Mbuma Mission Hospital staff car Toyota Double Cab at a cost of \$8,497.00, and panel-beating repairs due to an accident and a UD70B big lorry costing \$10,009.00. The Toyota Vigo, relocated from Zvishavane after the passing on of the late Rev. Z. Mazvabo, was also involved in an accident, the repairs of which cost \$5,561.68. Other vehicles had no major repairs done other than the usual servicing.

Head Office

All four vehicles are running well. The Ford Ranger used by the Administrator is still new; the Mazda BT50 used by the Transport and Building Projects Manager, is still in good condition; the Toyota Vigo, which was for Zvishavane and now is at Head office, is in a fair condition; the Mazda B18 has since been relocated to Thembiso Children's Home after the disposal of the Toyota Hiace (Kombi).

Bulawayo/Lobengula congregation

This congregation has a Toyota Hilux Pickup for the minister's use which is ten years old and still in a fair condition compared to the other vehicles of the same year. The Mbema Mission Hospital small lorry, relocated to Lobengula after the Hospital had received the new lorry, was fully handed over to the responsibility of the Lobengula Church Deacons' Court last year.

Thembeiso Children's Home

The Home had four vehicles – a Nissan Double Cab for the Superintendent which was used by the former Resident Nurse and which is still in good condition; a Nissan Civilian 30-Seater Bus, in as new condition and used for transporting children to the means of grace and visiting various places throughout the country; a Toyota Hiace (Kombi), sold at the beginning of the year; and a Toyota Hilux, which was sold to the former Superintendent of the Home (Mr. S. B. Mpofu).

Ingwenya Mission

Ingwenya has three vehicles which belong to the Mission: two Nissan Pickups, one for the Mission staff which is in good condition, the other for the Minister, which has a good engine but has been in and out of the garage for repairs on brakes, callipers, universal joint and diff., and a Leyland Comet Lorry, which had its engine overhauled, panel-beated and sprayed with a new look. The School has its own fleet and is responsible for the maintenance and running of its fleet, which comprises two big Buses, a 25-seater Bus, a UD40 Truck for orders and a Mazda BT50 Double Cab for the use of the Headmaster.

Mbema Mission Hospital

The hospital has the following vehicles: a Toyota Hilux Double Cab; a staff car, which is still in good condition, regardless of the accident in which it was involved; a Toyota Land Cruiser, used as a home-based care vehicle, still in good condition; an Ambulance, a Toyota Land Cruiser, which is still in good condition; a UD70B Nissan Lorry, used for orders for the hospital and still in good condition; and a Massey Ferguson tractor, used for collecting firewood, and which is still in good condition. There are also four motorbikes used by the Catechist and these are always in and out of the garage (hardly a month goes by without a motorbike going in for service).

Zenka Mission

The Toyota Hilux used by the minister is not in good condition and it is always in and out of the garage. It has been on the go for almost ten years on roads which are not good and it is now becoming worse.

Building projects

Most building projects have come to an end in the past year with the exception of one or two which are not totally complete because of other services

needed from service providers. Zvishavane's new church has not been fully completed as we are still waiting for the Electrical Company to come and inspect the electrical fittings, but the Zenka electrification has been completed, inspected and approved, and only awaits the Electrical Authority to come and connect.

KENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. K. M. Watkins

FOLLOWING the decision of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee to close the Kenya Mission after my resignation as superintendent, all efforts were made to secure an orderly closure before leaving Kenya. Professional advice was sought from the mission's accountants and also from lawyers, and consultations were had with the Kenyan government. Security increasingly became an issue and my wife and I left Kenya on 9th October 2012. The Committee reappointed me as superintendent in order to continue the closure of the mission from the UK, which is proving to be a protracted affair.

At the end of October 2012, all the staff were made redundant with full payment of all dues according to Kenyan law, and the Omorembe clinic was closed. Thus mission activities ceased at that time. However, closing the mission as a legal entity and effecting an orderly handover of its assets are complex, and endeavours are still in progress. Legally, no assets or funds can be repatriated to the UK but must remain in Kenya. Security continues to be an issue, and staff for 24-hour guarding the compound and assets, together with one for part-time office duties, are employed on a casual basis. The Kenyan Ministry of Health is operating a basic clinic service, using a single nurse employed by themselves.

The Sengera congregation (together with its three outstations) ceased to be part of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland at the end of October 2012. Nevertheless, at the time of writing Sabbath services are still held according to FPCS principles, with some 100 adults and children (down from 250) in attendance at Sengera. There were no communicant members or office bearers in Kenya, but the hope is that a remnant group will continue faithfully in the ways they have been taught, and legal steps are being made to allocate a portion of the land with a suitable building for this purpose. It is also hoped that a much enlarged book of Ekegusii metrical psalms will be published and sent.

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

FOR us, as it ought to be for the human race, the most important cause in the world is the Kingdom of Christ. For this and other reasons our Church has been presenting annual reports of its work for the information and consideration of the Synod. In our history as a Church we have had sad matters to record and learn from but there have been, and are, encouraging matters for which we are grateful to the Most High.

Our small church, which first began in Scotland in 1893, has for many years had congregations in other parts of the world. At present, it has congregations in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Texas and the Ukraine, which continue to gather around the Word of God. We did what we could to sustain the small congregation in Italy, but certain others tried to break the bond between that group of worshippers and our Church in the UK. We hope that all is not yet lost.

Although our overseas congregations are distant from one another and also from the Church in the UK, we are bound together by our united stand in the Word of God. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Despite occasional problems arising, this Bible-based unity continues and is one reason for times of spiritual blessing and Gospel happiness. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16). We are indebted to the Lord for this.

Written reports to the Synod from Church deputies and overseas ministers continue to be a contributory factor in nurturing a spiritual interest and bond throughout the Church. These reports are again at hand and speak for themselves.

We are glad that the Church was in a position to send deputies overseas, and we are indebted to these ministers who gave of their time and energy for this work. Rev. John Macleod visited Santa Fe, Rev. Neil Ross visited Odessa and Santa Fe and Rev. David Campbell visited New Zealand, Australia and Singapore. Rev. John Goldby is to visit Chesley in April, DV. While the interim moderators of vacant overseas congregations visit the congregations for which they are responsible, both they and the congregations are very appreciative of the added visits of the deputies. We are reminded of what an itinerant missionary in Central Africa in the middle of nineteenth century wrote: "My journey was attended with much blessing. I will quote letters which I received from Basutoland and elsewhere, because they prove that such visits to the scattered missions of the Church of Christ are sources of blessing, and should be made by Christians for the purpose of cheering and refreshing the Lord's faithful servants. . . ." We have reason to believe that visits by

deputies to our congregations abroad prove to be a source of comfort and blessing to the Lord's weary heritage in a world so opposed to the Gospel of God's grace.

It was with regret that we learned of the retirement of Rev. Edward Rayner from his long pastorate of our congregation in Grafton. We wish him the Lord's blessing in his retirement and are thankful that he is able to give pulpit supply extensively in different parts of the Presbytery, being still able to endure the travel involved. His ministry in Grafton has proved to be a blessing to many. In the goodness of the Lord a number of sinners were brought from darkness to light under his preaching and the Lord's people were fed spiritually. It was also with much regret that we heard of the serious illness of Rev. Johannes van Dorp, who is now unable to do the extensive pulpit supply work which he was very much involved in during his retirement. We pray that his life may be prolonged.

While we are very thankful that the Lord of the harvest has given two young ministers to labour in the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery, there is great need that others would be raised up to be fellow labourers with them. The burden of maintaining worship in pastorless congregations falls mainly on the shoulders of the elders – in some congregations more than others, for example Singapore. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labours into His harvest" (Luke 10:2).

AUSTRALIAN AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Rev. G. B. Macdonald

IN Psalm 121 the Psalmist writes, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." It is good to know that wherever we may be upon the face of the earth, the Lord is the help of His people. Australia and Singapore are situated a great distance from the hills that the Psalmist gazed upon, but the God of Israel is near to all who call upon Him in every nation of the globe.

Australia

The Commonwealth of Australia has six states and two major mainland territories, and is one of the largest nations in the world. The country is very diverse in its topography; from vibrant cities, to barren desert, to high quality farmland where beef cattle graze and various fruits and crops can be grown in the pleasant climate. The population of Australia is also becoming increasingly diverse, with a large number of migrants arriving each year. One need only take a trip on a train in Sydney to see the variety of nationalities represented.

The past 50 years have seen great changes in Australia, and sad to say, while the general standard of living has risen dramatically, the standard of morals has declined, in common with other Western nations. One does get the impression though, that there is still a strong conservative element in Australian culture, and this was represented in the defeat of proposals brought before Parliament in favour of changing the marriage laws to permit so-called same-sex marriage. We are grateful that for now, the mood was not for change, as has been the case in some other nations, and may yet be so in Scotland, a land that has known so much Gospel blessing.

The congregation in Riverstone is situated in the western suburbs of Sydney and is located in an area that has a rapidly growing population. During 2012 the attendance on Sabbath was approximately 35-40 souls. Between 15 and 20 usually attend the mid-week prayer meeting. The congregation was heartened when three new members were added to the Communion Roll during 2012 and two infant boys were baptized. There were also some comings and goings with some leaving for work elsewhere, whilst others arrived, including James and Catriona Campbell from Scotland.

The diverse population of Sydney also presents our church with an opportunity to reach out to those who may not have a reformed Gospel witness in their native land. For example, one young man from Russia commenced attendance in Riverstone, having become friendly with a young lady in the congregation. They have since become engaged and hope to make their home in Auckland, New Zealand. We wish them well and pray that the good seed of the Gospel may have a good effect in their hearts and lives.

The other congregation of our church in Australia is located in Grafton. One notable change there was the retirement of Rev. E. A. Rayner following 35 years of faithful service in that congregation. We wish him and his wife God's blessing in his retirement, and trust that, with the Lord's blessing, he will continue to be useful in preaching the Gospel throughout the Presbytery. During 2012 three people were added to the Communion Roll and there were two baptisms. The congregation in Grafton continues to be most viable, with 60-70 people in attendance most Sabbath days.

The reflection of a couple of years leads me to conclude that there is certainly a need for the distinctive reformed witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Australia. The congregational website and occasional personal interaction with other ministers and Christian people in Australia, has afforded an opportunity to make our views known to a wider audience, and we trust that, little by little, we can be useful in Christ's cause in these parts.

Singapore

Mr. Bernard Yong continues to faithfully oversee the congregation in Singapore, as he has done for a number of years. The Presbytery is indebted to him for his diligent service, while continuing to work in a busy role in his

secular employment. The congregation appreciated the welcome ministry of Rev. Rayner at its communion season in December, where one new member, Linus Lau, was added to the Communion Roll. Some 16 souls gather on a regular basis for public worship in this cosmopolitan city.

In a disappointing indication of the presence of sin, even in a highly regulated and relatively crime-free society such as Singapore, I am informed by Mr. Yong that the news in Singapore has reported several cases of scandalous behaviour on the part of some important officials of late; including marital infidelity and the seeking of bribes. While it is sad to be reminded of such corrupt practices, it is good that the authorities take a serious view of such corruption and those caught are prosecuted.

Another matter presently before the courts was a high profile case of alleged fraud involving officials in a large and well-attended church in Singapore. The sums involved amounted to millions of Singapore dollars, which is surely a warning against churches becoming the repositories of vast sums of money, and a reminder of the covetous spirit that is in man.

Singapore is a very pleasant stopover destination for travellers to Australia and New Zealand and the congregation always welcomes those who desire a place of reformed worship during their stay. It is always a pleasure to preach to our friends in Singapore, in this hot and humid city of the Far East, and to sing the Psalms and enjoy the form of worship just as it is in any Free Presbyterian Congregation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both Australia and Singapore need what Scotland needs too, namely, an outpouring of the gracious influence and blessing of the Holy Spirit. He is termed in Scripture, “the Comforter”, and He alone is able to turn sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Therefore our prayer in these parts is with the Psalmist: “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles” (Psalm 43:3).

NEW ZEALAND REPORT

Rev. J. D. Smith

AT the time of the writing of this report, we look forward to Rev. David Campbell’s arrival in New Zealand, DV. As a Deputy appointed by Synod, Mr. Campbell intends to visit the congregations of the Australia-New Zealand Presbytery. It is also hoped that he will officiate at the Auckland communion. The services of the other communion seasons in Gisborne and Wellington have been conducted as usual, and currently the Tauranga communion season is underway. There is much to be thankful for and yet much to pray about and

mourn over in a land where, like many others, there is so little evidence of true heartfelt religion.

The re-election of President Obama in the US was another signal indicating the accelerated moral and spiritual decline in Christendom. Here in New Zealand, Member of Parliament Louisa Wall has acknowledged that her decision to draft the bill to redefine marriage was strongly influenced by the international shift towards “gay marriage”, in particular President Barack Obama’s vote of support. The Amendment Bill which “aims to ensure that all people, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity will have the opportunity to marry if they so choose”, passed its first reading by 80 votes to 40, a sad indication of the majority’s intention. A Select Committee has been appointed to consider the proposed Amendment and to review the input of the public. The Church must witness and stand against any further national departure from God’s law. Both the Auckland and Gisborne Kirk Sessions have made submissions to the Committee to declare the scriptural view of marriage and to persuade our Government to refrain from making the proposed change. In addition, the Presbytery has written individual letters to each of the 121 members of the New Zealand Parliament about this issue. The examples of Scripture demonstrate God’s hatred of the sins involved in relationships contrary to the institution of marriage which, as expressed by the *Westminster Confession of Faith* “is to be between one man and one woman”. Jude 1:7 warns: “Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

Politicians claim that their efforts to change the laws regarding marriage are in order to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. But we must not be deceived by their “good words and fair speeches” (Romans 16:18). They may have the majority of votes, but numbers are no security for them. “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Exodus 23:2). It is a sad state when people led by unscriptural principles are voted into office. Nothing else can be expected but a general relaxation of moral standards. “The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted” (Psalm 12:8).

Yet we must not only mourn over the nation’s moral decline, but also use the means available to us; and while we have made submissions to the Committee in the hope that our voice will be heard by the nation’s leaders, our sure and certain hope must be in the Lord. “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help” (Psalm 146:3). The Lord hears prayer and our undeniable duty is to pray “for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:2-6).

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

ODESSA is the centre from which our mission work in Eastern Europe is being done, and there we have a mission building where public worship is held on Sabbath and week day. A major part of our work continues to be the distribution of Bibles and Reformed literature, and we are very indebted to Mr. Igor Zadoroshney for his diligence and endurance in this vital work. We are deeply conscious that the Bibles and literature cannot profit sinners without the Lord by His Holy Spirit opening the minds and hearts of the recipients. Some of them wish to have the Free Presbyterian Church begin a work in their area but our present situation does not allow this. We will, however, be in a better position to do so should the student, Mr. Dmytro Levytskyy, finish his studies and be licensed to preach the Gospel. However, such extension work needs much time and energy devoted to it and we trust that the Lord, who declares, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5), will favour us with His sufficient grace and strength. Literature is given without payment because many people can ill afford to purchase it, and also the setting up of a sales scheme would involve us in endless problems with tax and other officials. In any case, Mr. Zadoroshney is already fully stretched by his distribution and other mission duties.

The number of packages of Bibles and books posted (most of them weighing 2 kilograms) was 580 – sent to individuals, families, and pastors. Mr. Zadoroshney says: "Missionaries from the Netherlands and the United States who work in Russia ask us to help them with literature. We meet their requests and post literature to them." As far as can be discerned from some of their correspondence there is a genuine interest in Reformed literature, and our hope and prayer is that this will increase. Mr. Zadoroshney reports that our Russian publications are "in great demand", especially Shaw's *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Shorter Catechism* and the *Children's Catechism* (formerly known as the *Mother's Catechism*).

We are also much indebted to the Trinitarian Bible Society for their continuing to send us Bibles, a considerable number given by way of grant, including Kulish Bibles in the Ukrainian language. We thank them also for the usual large grant of *Words of Life* and *Golden Thoughts* calendars in the Russian and Ukraine languages. Mr. Zadoroshney arranged the distribution of 7,436 calendars throughout Odessa and beyond, which in most instances were received with much appreciation.

At one time we regularly travelled by truck to take Bibles and humanitarian aid to Eastern Europe. We had hoped to resume travel by truck but this hope has quite receded. But we remember with great gratitude the valuable support given to us in this transportation work by people in the home church and friends in Holland, such as the Voortman family in Rijssen and the Schaly family in Markelo.

With the ending of this method of transportation we now depend entirely on postal services and carriers to take Bibles into Eastern Europe. A Dutch carrier transported the remainder of our Hungarian Bibles (2,000 plus) into Romania. It would have been relatively easy to send the large amount of Russian Bibles and Gospels of John (stored at Laide) by carrier to the Polish/Ukrainian border, but known customs problems on the Ukrainian side made us decide to post them instead. We heartily thank Donald and Duncan MacAskill for packing them for despatch to the Church Office in Glasgow, from where Norma Morrison kindly posts them over an extended period (as it is cheaper to post them from the Glasgow Office than from Laide). While posting is very costly, it is by far the simplest and least troublesome way of sending them.

Our latest book published in Odessa is the children's title *Line Upon Line*, which has been well received because not only is it attractive but also there is a strong demand for books for children and young people. We hope eventually to produce a book on Christian doctrine, mainly with young people in view, although it will suit all ages. The title, *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald MacDonald, Sheildaig*, is now complete, thanks to the able work of our translator, Mrs. Natasha Hopkins, and our two editors, Mrs. Tanya Ball, who makes suggestions regarding the actual translation, and Mr. Igor Zadoroshney, who refines the style of Russian. They have proved to be a harmonious team of workers, producing a good standard of work for which we are very grateful. The next stage is the more costly one of printing this title, and we trust the Lord will graciously provide the means to that end.

One family, living about 300 miles from Odessa, wrote to Mr. Igor Zadoroshney: "Grace to you and peace! I and my grandmother sincerely thank you for the interesting theological literature you sent me. You do a good work spreading the Word of God. My grandmother loves to read spiritual literature in the evenings. Please send the new collection of sermons, when these come out from the press" – meaning the *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald MacDonald, Sheildaig*, which contains twenty of his sermons. Some who receive literature give donations to cover costs, and last year these amounted to £420.54. These funds were sufficient to pay for postages, stationery, and the rent of the Postal Box.

Of those attending our church services, some are rather spasmodic in appearing. Some of these have come in response to invitation cards distributed in the area (600 were sent out). Mr. Zadoroshney says the vast majority of the people around never attend church and many of those who do so, wish to remain in the liberal churches to which they belong. However, of those who do come, albeit spasmodically, some do show an interest in Reformed teaching and we trust that this will not be just a passing interest. The Church door collections for the year amounted to £786.10; an encouraging increase of £395.30 from the previous year.

Since the last meeting of Synod, Rev. Neil Ross went to Odessa (in June 2012) with the intention of officiating at a communion season in the congregation, but it was not possible to do so because Mr. Edward Ross, who

was to accompany him, became ill prior to travel. However, Rev. Neil Ross had more than enough work to do in conducting services, giving lectures on church principles, and chairing field committee meetings during his fortnight's stay, and the congregation was very happy to receive him and to be under his ministry, albeit for such a short period. The people, however, were very disappointed that they did not have a communion season, but we hope this will be possible this year, God willing.

Other matters could be reported but perhaps sufficient has been written to give to our church people an adequate idea of the Church's mission work in Eastern Europe. It is evident and inevitable that each report has a certain sameness about it, but such is the nature of mission work – and we are thankful that this is the case. The work continues; there has been no disruption of it; the door of the Gospel remains open; and kind friends in the Church and beyond its borders continue to support it by their donations and prayer. For this and many other blessings we are very thankful and express our gratitude, especially to the Most High, the giver of all good. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Rev. D. Campbell

THE Dominions and Overseas Committee have been unable to find a minister in Scotland able to visit this Presbytery as a deputy in nearly five years. I agreed to visit for a period of four weeks. In consultation with the Australia/New Zealand Presbytery, it was agreed that I spend my Sabbaths in the vacant congregations if possible.

Report on my visit

I left Scotland on Thursday 10th January 2013 and flew via Glasgow and London to Singapore. I spent an enjoyable Sabbath with the few friends in this great city state and also was able to arrange to take the weekly prayer meeting on the Monday evening prior to my departure. The attendance at the services ranged from 12 to 18 persons. While the congregation is weaker numerically since I was last in Singapore, those adhering to the Church are resilient and committed as far as we can judge. The faithful diligence and considerable care that the Elder of the congregation takes in all aspects the Church's witness, and of visitors, is well known to those who have been privileged to visit Singapore. For that he is due the thanks of the Church at home.

On Tuesday 15th January I took my flight from Singapore to Sydney. Making my way by train through the huge city of Sydney, I could not but be struck by the greatness of the task given to the Church of Christ to "preach the

gospel to every creature". It was heartening to meet again with Rev. George Macdonald, who labours in the Riverstone congregation, doing the work of an evangelist as he pastors the flock. I spent three days in Sydney and took the weekly prayer meeting. The congregation is largely young and, being of working age, most are employed in different parts of the large city. It was therefore to their credit that they made the effort to be present at the meeting. It is clear that the congregation in Sydney appreciates greatly the provision of a Gospel minister after so many years of faithful and prayerful waiting. Various additions from Scotland and other parts have strengthened the congregation numerically. The attendance at the prayer meeting was around 30 persons, with some being absent due to the holiday period. The temperature in Sydney during my visit was unusually high, reaching a local record of 46 degrees on Friday.

On Friday 18th January I flew from Sydney to Grafton. Rev. Edward Rayner and his wife took care of me for the weekend in their home on the outskirts of the town overlooking the beautiful Clarence River. It was a pleasure to be with them and also to be able to meet Rev. Johannes van Dorp and his wife who now live in the town. Mr. van Dorp has helped in the supply of the vacant pulpit. Both these ministers have served the Church admirably over many lonely years and their retirement from a more active ministry has not left them without labours to perform in the harvest field. There are upward of 60 persons regularly attending the means of grace in Grafton. During my visit Mr. van Dorp required surgery and was given news of a more serious illness.

On Monday 21st January I flew from Grafton to Auckland via the airport in Sydney. I was able to spend two nights with my brother who lives in Auckland before joining Rev. Jett Smith and his family in their home for the Auckland Communion Season. Several visitors gathered for the Communion as did the members of the Presbytery. The Presbytery met on Friday and due to the extent of the business continued its meeting for most of the day. Attendances in the Church over the Communion exceeded 80 persons with the people from Auckland itself numbering in excess of 60 with a considerable number of children and young people. The Congregation has purchased a very comfortable manse in the Tatanini district of the large city of Auckland and the minister and his wife have settled in well after a period of significant disruption and difficulty in moving. The situation in Auckland as in Sydney is most encouraging humanly speaking. The time spent with the two ministers at and after the Communion was most pleasant and, we hope, profitable.

On Wednesday 30th January I flew to Wellington. Attempts to contact various persons in the capital city with connections in Scotland were unsuccessful so I spent the day in the city on the water-front. The beauty of the surrounding scenery and climate clearly illustrates why many are drawn to live there, but sadly few seem to have any concern for eternal things. Watching the multitudes pass by in this busy city gave rise to the question of how many were the offspring of Highland parents and grandparents with a Gospel heritage now neglected. This part of New Zealand, more particularly in the South Island, is

home to many with Scottish Presbyterian roots. I was taken by the local Elder of the congregation to the Church in Tawa where I took the prayer meeting. Two families attended, numbering in total 8 persons including children. The congregation in Wellington is in a very precarious position numerically since the recent departure of the former Elder with his large family. The local Elder, Mr. Optland, travels for over an hour each way from Carterton to conduct services, for which he and his family are to be highly commended.

On Thursday 31st January I flew from Wellington to Tauranga where I was met by Mr. Dick Vermeulen, known to many members of Synod who have visited as deputies. I spent the remainder of the day with Mr. Vermeulen, during which we were able to visit one in the town who has roots in Scotland. The prayer meeting in the evening in the local Girl Guide hall was attended by 15 persons, which constitutes the entire congregation. This congregation is relatively new in the Church and is largely new to the principles and practices which the local Elder has been instructing them in. They are to be encouraged and commended for their faithfulness and we hope that provision might soon be made for a pastor to be set over them, if the Lord would be pleased to send forth more labourers. Tauranga is a large town with many opportunities for furthering the Gospel and the Kingdom of God.

On Friday 1st February I assisted Mr. Vermeulen's brother, Peter Vermeulen, in driving from Tauranga to Gisborne. This new experience of the beauties of the New Zealand countryside was a most pleasant and memorable one. I was to stay in the home of Dr. Geoff Cramp and his family during my stay in Gisborne, which was a most enjoyable end to my deputation visit. The congregation in Gisborne on the Sabbath was around 30 persons with two or three families. While considerably reduced and feeling the loss of their minister who retired recently, the Gisborne congregation holds out much promise also if the Lord were to send forth a labourer into that harvest field. The memory of the fruitful ministry of Rev. William MacLean in this place is still fragrant and ought to be an encouragement to men whom the Lord would constrain to go into that Macedonia to help and encourage the Lord's dear people and to labour to gather in souls to the Kingdom of Christ.

I left Gisborne on Tuesday 5th of February at 9 a.m. in the morning. My flights took me to airports in Auckland, Melbourne, Singapore, London and Glasgow before I arrived 36 hours later in Stornoway to be greeted by my waiting family. It was a great joy and comfort to arrive home safely after such a long journey and absence and I must acknowledge my great sense of thankfulness for the many mercies that were given to me by the Lord during this trip. I would like to express my thanks to all who showed me such great kindness and hospitality in all the homes and congregations I visited and to my Presbytery for leave of absence and those who looked after and supplied my congregation over the period.

**BRIEF NOTES REGARDING THE WORK OF THE
CHURCH IN THIS PRESBYTERY**

Singapore

It should be a priority for the Church in Scotland and in the overseas Presbytery to especially support this young congregation. Singapore is fertile ground for the Reformed faith to be published in the terms held by our Church. However insurmountable the practical difficulties may seem to be, a minister set over the congregation here would be a very great advantage in gathering together some of the scattered children of God who desire and seek to hold to biblical truth. There is reason to hope that Singapore has potential to become a fully operative Presbyterian Church in its own right. The number of Presbyterians who have conservative principles in some areas, but are in need of more teaching and guidance, is significant. With a teaching ministry and Presbyterian structures of their own, this Church might yet flourish in missionary endeavour among the Chinese millions to whom they are so closely tied in culture and racial identity. This should be a determined goal of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in establishing a congregation there. To this end it would prove very useful to have a carefully prepared Statement of Differences between the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the other Presbyterian Churches in Singapore.

Australia

As already indicated, the city of Sydney, like every modern city in the world, is a great mission field. Such a harvest field requires not just one minister but an army of sent labourers and how earnestly we are to pray for that. "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15). To get a true picture of possibilities for the establishment of congregations with a sound constitution in this country it would be highly useful for the Synod to seek from the Presbytery a complete picture of the ecclesiastical scene. Being a commonwealth country under the British crown, Australia is in a closer relationship to the Church in Scotland and to the obligations of the work of Reformation and our constitutional commitments. A full Statement of Differences between the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and all other Presbyterian Churches in Australia would therefore be a welcome guide for future missionary endeavour in this large nation.

The congregation in Grafton has the longest connection with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, having first made contact with our Church in 1901, when Rev. Walter Scott visited the Western Isles, from where many of his congregation had come. Rev. Walter Scott gave an address to Rev. Donald MacFarlane's congregation in Raasay on 18th March 1901 in which he explained the stand his own Church (also called the Free Presbyterian Church) had made in Australia in connection with declension in that country. One interesting feature of this address is the strong position his Church took in

relation to the Solemn League and Covenant. There are certainly strong ties between Scotland and Australia which go back so far in our history. There are lessons to be learnt on how our fathers saw the needs of the cause of Christ in what were then the colonies. That further congregations in New South Wales could be yet established seems possible, given its long association with the Scottish Church.

New Zealand

As with Australia, there is a long history of close relations between the Reformed Church in Scotland and New Zealand. While the Disruption Free Church was more closely associated with the South Island than the more Anglican North Island, the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church extends back far indeed in different regions of New Zealand. This country has four viable congregations and one or two other places where there have been those who associated with the Church. Much reduced from its former more flourishing condition, these congregations need to be encouraged and supported.

Ways in which the training of future ministers to serve in this part of the Church from among the congregations already established should be given consideration, particularly in the light of how difficult it has now become to have foreign students get access to the UK. The considerable difficulties involved in moving, and the inhibiting factors relating to this, need to be taken into view when proposing any scheme whereby future students might be trained. The need that ministers be set over vacant congregations and the advantage of having indigenous ministers from among the people in this country is very great. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his own harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

There are few Churches in New Zealand, if any, which come near to the degree of Reformed orthodoxy which our constitutional commitments and the Word of God require. The need for the continued witness of the Church in New Zealand is very plain. It would be of great use to the Church in considering future extension of the work of the Gospel, according to the terms of the constitution of the Dominions and Overseas Committee, to have from the Presbytery a full Statement of Differences between the Free Presbyterian Church and other Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO TEXAS

Rev. N. M. Ross

IT was my pleasure to be once again with our Santa Fe congregation in Texas, as a deputy sent out by the Dominion and Overseas Committee, for almost a fortnight in December. I found the congregation, despite being pastorless, being sustained and in good heart, and also deeply appreciative of the help being sent to them from the Church in Scotland.

On my first Sabbath there, the sacrament of Baptism was administered in the presence of the 40-plus congregation, when two baby girls were formally received into the visible Church. May those infants and the other children in the congregation be raised up by God to be “a godly seed” (Malachi 2:15) by being born again by His Word and Spirit.

It was heartening to note that since I was last there the congregation has established a Sabbath School and has also succeeded, in the kind providence of the Most High, in clearing the debt it incurred in purchasing its most suitable church building.

The communion season, which began on 13th December, was well attended, despite some having to cope with the responsibilities of work or studies and some with health issues. Regrettably, there were no new communicants on this occasion. It was with pleasure that we welcomed some visitors from our Chesley congregation. On Sabbath, some others were present in the 50-plus congregation who had previously been occasional visitors (one family from Dallas and another from Houston). Also in attendance for the first time was a young man from Galveston.

We believe we experienced a measure of the Lord’s gracious presence as a people as we gathered around the solemn ordinance of the Supper, seeking to contemplate the One of whom Scripture declares, “Jesus in the midst” (John 19:18). It was with regret that we had to bid our friends farewell on Monday evening after the service of thanksgiving.

Prior to my arrival, an election took place for the appointment of two elders in the congregation. The Kirk Session found that the two men voted for (Deacons Mr. Carl Smith and Mr. Jeshurun Hembd) were elected by a substantial majority. The Session unanimously agreed that they were well qualified for office and were pleased to know later that both men believed it their duty to accept office. The ordination has been appointed to take place at a later date.

I thank again the people of the congregation for their warm kindness to us (happily, my wife accompanied me) in setting us up very comfortably in the pleasant manse and supplying our needs. Some of them had us in their homes for meals (indeed, the number of hearty invitations exceeded our ability to accept). They also kindly gave us the use of a car (the manse being on the outskirts of the town). Our thanks also to the men who kindly transported us the considerable distances to and from Houston airport.

I am also indebted to the local elder, Mr. Joseph Smith, the visiting assessor elders, Mr. Alastair MacPherson, Scotland, and Mr. David Kuiper, Chesley, and the local deacons Mr. Carl Smith, Mr. Jeshurun Hembd, and Mr. Mark Smith, for their invaluable assistance. May God, who alone can give the increase, bless all that was done in His Name there, and supply all their needs according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

REPORT OF DEPUTIES TO THE ZIMBABWE MISSION

Rev. J. MacLeod and Mr. R. A. Campbell

AS agreed by the JFMC, Rev. John MacLeod and Mr. Roderick Campbell visited the Zimbabwe Mission, departing from this country on Tuesday 30th October and arriving back on Wednesday 28th November. Mr. Hugh Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, was on the same flight in the outward direction, but, he, having assiduously attended to, and completed his work, returned home after a week or so.

We were warmly welcomed at Bulawayo Airport by Miss Norma MacLean, the Rev. S. Khumalo and Mrs. Khumalo, the Rev. A. B. MacLean and Mr. M. Mpofu, the Mission Administrator, who then drove us to the Head Office where he had already arranged for a welcoming spread to be set on the boardroom table. This was our introduction to Zimbabwean hospitality. Before nightfall, we were at Ingwenya and ensconced in one of the vacant "Syringa" cottages which were originally built to house expatriate staff. That was to be our base over our three-week visit. As we climbed out of the pick-up truck, a loud peel of thunder sounded and the question was being asked eagerly by the local people: Is the rainy season about to begin? This was not to be, however. The cottages have been well repaired and furnished since the time when they had been severely damaged by tree roots, but an eye will need to be kept on the possibility of such damage recurring. That evening, as was frequently to occur over the course of our visit, there was a cut in the electricity supply and it was necessary for the generator to be brought into operation to provide alternative power. Cheering could be heard from the direction of the school when the lights came on. Some of the pupils were studying for examinations the following day!

This report will be compiled using place-names as convenient headings.

Ingwenya

On viewing and traversing the Ingwenya compound in the light of day the number of buildings now contained within it immediately strikes the eye. The recently-extended church is at its very heart with the John Tallach Secondary School and the Ingwenya Primary School roughly on either side. The manse, teachers' houses – left and right – workshops, dining hall and existing dormitories, take up most of the space left with the new laboratory and additional dormitories, constructed to facilitate the teaching of pupils to sixth year level, occupying the area most remote from the main entrance gate. We had opportunities later to inspect both the new facilities and all the Primary School classrooms, including the pre-primary class. The Primary 7 teacher – Mrs. Radasi – is the wife of a grandson of the Rev. John B. Radasi, the first missionary, and is a valued member of the staff.

The Rev. Alasdair B. MacLean has before him here at Ingwenya – when the school is in session – the numerically largest, regular congregation in our church, at home or abroad. During the school session he has up to 600 pupils

in front of him as well as the teachers, mission workers, and worshippers from the surrounding area which belong to his settled congregation. This is truly a great privilege; also a heavy responsibility. He also has a concern to encourage “conservation farming” among the people, to help maximize their crops. We attended the Prayer Meeting on Thursday morning held at 8:00 a.m. by Mr. MacLean. The sermon, from 1 Peter 1:18, was in English and translated into Ndebele by Mr. Onely Moyo, the young Scripture and Internet teacher. The duty of holding the three services on the following Sabbath fell to Mr. MacLeod, who felt that it was with a measure of liberty that he was enabled to do so. The first two services on Sabbath entailed the use of an interpreter, but this posed little difficulty with Bonakele Ncube, the Headmaster (who is also a Deacon in the Bulawayo congregation) effortlessly performing that duty; the evening service was wholly in English. The singing, predominantly that of young voices, was pleasant to listen to – melodious and harmonious. An Ndebele psalm, sung to the tune “Ayrshire” with Mr. N. Khumalo (son of the Rev. S. Khumalo), the Music teacher, leading the praise, was indeed memorable and one longs for the dawn of that day when such singing will be universal, with the singers making melody in their hearts to the Lord. This spectacle of above 800 worshippers assembled to hear the Gospel preached and to engage in the singing of the psalms of David would surely convince any right-minded person viewing and taking part in it that our presence there and all the endeavours made to bring the minds of sinners into contact with the Word of God is surely worthwhile. What is needed at Ingwenya and elsewhere is an outpouring of the Spirit of God.

In addition, Mr. MacLean has five outstations where he regularly, in turn, keeps services. In order to do so, he has to travel long distances (to Insiza, for example, 60 miles) over rough roads – indescribably rough in places – journeys which test the endurance of vehicle and driver almost to the limit. At Insiza, the handsome new church, the foundation and walls of which were built by the people themselves, is now nearing completion. The older churches – at Cameron (about 20 attended the Prayer Meeting), Gadade (about a dozen, mainly from one extended family) and Inyati – reveal evidence of neglect as far as maintenance is concerned. But those concerned can hardly be blamed for, as soon as windows are replaced, they are just destroyed again by vandals. At the fifth location, Matapa, a small group meets at the kraal of Mr. Joseph Magunya, the only male member there. The deputies, however, were not able to visit this place. The Inyati communion was held on Sabbath, 11th November, and Mr. MacLeod took the services there on the Thursday and Friday before departing on Saturday with Mr. Melusi Mpofu for Zvishavane. As Mr. MacLean was also to be away attending the Inyati communion, Mr. Campbell remained at home to take the first two services at Ingwenya. Mr. MacLean was able to return in time to take the evening English service, which would be the last for some of the Form 4 pupils leaving the school at the end of the week. He spoke from Acts 16:14. It is most engaging to be in a congregation of several hundred teenagers. May they hear that their souls may live!

The previous Saturday – 3rd November – was a noteworthy day in the John Tallach School calendar and it was a great honour and pleasure for Mr. MacLeod, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Mackenzie to be present. The school quadrangle area had been very skilfully covered over by a marquee which exactly fitted the space and underneath its roof, by the time the ceremony began, there were gathered about one thousand souls. The teachers and other visiting dignitaries wore their gowns, university sashes and mortar boards, all which gave a sense of dignity to the occasion and rightly so. Among the guests there was present a former pupil and teacher, who is now a Professor at the prestigious National University of Science and Technology, and also Mr. Jackson Ndlovu, who is the Director of the “Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library” in Gwanda and chairman of the Friends of Ingwenya Mission Parents’ Support Group, who spoke very feelingly of his time at Ingwenya and his continuing attachment to the school. Mr. M. Selome, one of the teachers, who had been project manager for the new Form 6 buildings, acted as Director of Ceremonies, while Mr. Bonakele Ncube, the Headmaster, and Mr. Melusi Mpofu, the Mission Administrator, presided in their usual competent manner and Mrs. Mnguni, the Provincial Education Officer, was there to deliver a speech and to present the prizes. For the first time, prizes were given to Lower Sixth pupils and by next year, all being well, Upper Sixth pupils will no doubt be lining up for their rewards. The John Tallach High School, as it is now to be known, has not achieved its reputation for excellence without effort and dedicated teaching on the part of the staff and especially the leadership and example set by the Headmaster, and his deputy, Miss Norma MacLean, both of whom, with some other teachers, were given presents to mark service of at least 15 years at the school. The founding and background history of the school was not forgotten on this occasion and it was felt that a Christian ethos prevailed throughout. The singing of a metrical psalm in which so many – young and old – joined was memorable, as was a speech by the head boy, Francois Moyo, who emphasized to all that they should put Christ first in everything they did. That such a ceremony was so well organized in every detail and against the background of power cuts and other difficulties bears testimony to the expertise and tireless devotion to duty of those already named.

The prize-giving over, there followed a procession to the site of the new laboratory which was then officially opened, the honour of cutting the ribbon and unveiling a commemorative plaque being assigned to Mr. MacLeod, being Convener of the Foreign Missions Committee. Externally and internally it is a state-of-the-art building, with all the requisite equipment and facilities in place to enable pupils to study science subjects up to university-entrance level. The Church and Mission are deeply indebted to the Mbumba Zending and others who made it all possible. The adjacent but separate dormitories built for the fifth and sixth year pupils who will be using the laboratory are also state-of-the-art and we only wish that all the dormitories within the compound were brought up to the same standard. This event took place almost exactly 88 years to the day on which our first Missionary at Ingwenya, Rev. J. B.

Radasi, was so sadly killed while going to meet Rev. John Tallach on his first arrival.

What makes the John Tallach High School unique and, we believe, sets it apart from all other Zimbabwean schools, is the religious education and instruction provided at Ingwenya. Apart from attending all the church services on Sabbath and weekday, together with the morning and evening “family” worships, many pupils gladly, of their accord, attend “Young Timothy” meetings on certain afternoons and over which Mr. MacLeod presided on two occasions as also did Mr. Campbell. This provides the opportunity of giving such pupils as may be of non-Christian backgrounds sound biblical instruction. Heretical views may be examined in the light of the Word of God and hopefully any present holding them will be enlightened and corrected. These occasions were felt to be profitable to both of us in taking the meetings and hopefully to the young people who listened and conducted themselves in so respectful a manner. Some of the teachers, also, were keen to engage in discussions about Bible teachings. All the former pupils of the John Tallach School whom we met in Zimbabwe said, when asked, that they looked back nostalgically upon the years spent there. They did not regard the discipline and the restrictions which were necessarily placed upon them as burdensome at all. Those of them whom Mr. MacLeod met in Mr. Khumalo’s manse after the Sabbath evening service, when supplying in Bulawayo, showed a great interest in Bible study and it would be hard to find anywhere a more pleasant and interesting group of young men and women. We hope they and many other ex-pupils will appear on the right hand of the Judge at last and will everlastingly offer praise to Him who brought them there by way of our Ingwenya Mission.

Immediately after the prize-giving and official opening of the laboratory, Mr. R. Campbell and Mr. H. Mackenzie set off for Mbumba, while Mr. MacLeod remained in Ingwenya.

Thembiso

On Tuesday, 6th November, leaving Ingwenya early, with Mr. Bobe, one of the teachers at the wheel, Mr. MacLeod made his way, by highways and dusty byways, to Luvuvu on the outskirts of Bulawayo some 30 miles away. There, at Thembiso, Mr. MacLeod was to take the prayer meeting at 9 a.m. Already assembled, he found present all the school pupils, together with teachers, house-mothers, workers, who had temporarily downed tools, and other adults as well.

After the meeting was over, he was given a guided tour of the Thembiso Primary School by the Headmistress, Mrs. Q. Moyo, visiting each classroom to meet teacher and pupils in turn (noting the paucity of all these teaching helps so readily available to teachers in the affluent western world) and of the Thembiso Children’s Home by Mr. Busiso Maphala, the Superintendent, and Mr. Clifford Moyo, the Administrator. The provision here is most impressive. The six units were visited in turn and in each one he was introduced to each of

the “mothers”. It would appear that these children are in safe hands and that the division into separate “families” is working well and has to a large extent removed the feeling that one was entering an institution, something which one could scarcely avoid having on visiting the Home when it was under the old regime. It was good to see in the compound a newly set up workshop where the older children may now receive some vocational training. This could well benefit a number of them when that crucial time arrives and they have of necessity to leave the Home and make their own way in the wide world outside. Our prayer is that when this happens they shall have learned the lesson that if they “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”, then all other needful things shall be added unto them. Regrettably, Mr. Campbell did not have an opportunity to visit Thembiso, apart from attending the ceremony there to launch the new Ndebele Bible.

Zvishavane

The following Saturday, Mr. MacLeod was safely driven from Ingwenya to Zvishavane by Melusi Mpofu. Immediately on arrival, he conducted a prayer meeting in the little hall within the manse compound. It would have been strange for him not to have been conscious of the removal from this earthly scene of the Rev. Zororai Mazvabo, who had been so vibrant and active on his last visit, and who had faithfully pastored this congregation over so many years. The loss sustained is immeasurable. From the manse location they proceeded to the site of the new Zvishavane church which is now not too far from being completed. It is very strategically placed with housing on every side and, as far as could be seen, there is no other church building in the vicinity. If the Spirit of God was to move poor perishing sinners to become seekers of salvation, then, we believe, this building would soon be filled with worshippers from all around. We believe that that day will yet come. After visiting the church, they were kindly entertained by Mrs. Mazvabo in her new home which is but a short distance away.

On the Sabbath, Rev. J. MacLeod took the first service at Chiedza, which is 56 miles away from Zvishavane. On the way, a lift was given to a woman (at c. 8.30 a.m.) who was (as Melusi correctly surmised) on her way to the service. Her home was over ten miles from the place of worship and she had started to walk at 5 a.m. Later it was discovered that her brother-in-law and his daughter had walked all the way to Chiedsa. The three of them – their homes being in between Chiedsa and Maware – were given a lift back after the service. We believe that this is but one example of how the Gospel and our services are appreciated in Mashonaland and surely puts to shame people in our own land who find much less distances from the place of worship so great a hindrance to their attendance. Our hope and prayer is that such as are prepared to make this effort to be where two or three are gathered in His Name will come to know that their presence there is not without the knowledge of Him who has said: “Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.”

From Chiedsa they came to Maware for the next service and as they approached there came into view the attractively-painted, newly-constructed church which is literally built on a rock outcrop. There, awaiting them was a good-sized congregation, including the men who had been foremost in getting this place of worship completed. With little help from any other source, this handsome building is where the worship of God is conducted on Sabbath and weekday in accordance with the pattern established in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. We hope that it will long continue so and that a heaven-sent pastor will soon be set over them. After the service, attended by the local Headman, a meal was provided in the vestry of the church and we are grateful to the ladies who were instrumental in doing so.

On Monday morning, before departing for Ingwenya, Mr. MacLeod and Mr. Mpofu visited the room in the Zvishavane manse where the much-needed translation/revision of the Shona Bible is in progress. At present Tricot Mwedzi is working there on his own, but with the voluntary and freely-given help of Teus Benschop in Holland. It is largely due to Tricot's industry that the first draft of the revised New Testament has been completed. It has yet to pass under the scrutiny of Shona language experts. We were impressed by the dedication and ability of this young man and we hope that help in completing the project will be forthcoming.

Subsequently, on Wednesday, 14th November, Mr. Campbell made the almost 3-hour journey with Mr. Philani Mzamo, Building and Transport Manager, on his weekly visit to supervise the new church being built at Zvishavane, bringing with him both a small load of plumbing fittings and some new batteries for the catechists' motorbikes. Before leaving Robertson Street, Mr. Mzamo had telephoned the district building inspector to confirm that he expected to be in that town the next day and arranged that the inspector would visit the site at 10.30 a.m. to approve the drainage, explaining that he could not be present at that time himself because of attending a church meeting. They went to inspect the building on their arrival and met Mr. Naison Siziba, catechist, who had called to collect the new batteries. While the Building Manager discussed matters with the contractors, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Siziba observed a man working very hard – and evidently very successfully – in his garden across the road and they took the opportunity to go and commend him for his diligence. He said he was employed at the platinum mine. Mr. Siziba mentioned that the church should soon be opened and told him it would be good if he were to be equally diligent in the Lord's service. He spoke in Shona.

Mr. Campbell was then taken by Mr. Mzamo to meet Tricot Mwedzi at his translation office in the manse and the three later shared an evening meal. After a comfortable night's stay at the new Hill Lodge, Mr. Mzamo again phoned the inspector at 9 a.m., as he had requested, to remind him of the appointment. He and Mr. Campbell then set off to hold the 10 a.m. prayer meeting in New Canaan, where about 20 people gathered, some from a distance. Mr. Siziba interpreted. On returning to Zvishavane they discovered that the inspector had

not turned up and, on been telephoned, said he did not have transport to take him there. Mr. Mzamo, Mr. Campbell and the plumber drove round to the Council Office and Mr. Campbell waited by their truck while his two colleagues went to the office to collect the inspector. It took more than an hour for the man to emerge, since he kept attending to other people as they came to the office. He would have been aware that the Church did not give “back-handers” and, thus, this was low in his priorities. When he eventually emerged – and drove himself to the site in a Council van which was in the yard – he saw Mr. Campbell and, taking Mr. Mzamo aside, chided him for not saying he had a visitor with him who was likely to go away with a bad impression of his department! By about 4 p.m. he had approved the work and Mr. Mzamo hoped that the project might now be completed by the end of the following week. Such are the frustrations met by the Building Manager in his work. Having had nothing to eat since breakfast, they returned to the Lodge and spent a second night there. In the morning they collected the plumber and took him to purchase one or two fittings for the church before returning to Ingwenya via the Bulawayo office the following evening.

Mbuma

After spending the night at our base in Ingwenya and leaving Mr. Campbell behind, as he had already visited Mbuma and was now to accompany Rev. A. B. Maclean to Insiza, Mr. MacLeod departed the following morning (Tuesday, 13th November) for the Bulawayo office where, as arranged, he met up with one of the Mbuma Hospital nursing sisters, Willie Geurtsen, who was due to return to Mbuma in the afternoon after dropping Johan Verhaar off at the Airport. Johan was returning home to Holland after having voluntarily spent three weeks at the hospital repairing and servicing computer equipment, but he was there particularly in order to install the new X-ray unit, something that could be accomplished only by someone possessing his specialist expertise. A great debt of gratitude is owed to him. The 120-mile journey to Mbuma, by way of Nkayi, was covered non-stop in about two and three quarter hours. The part of the road that has a central car-wide strip of tarmac has greatly deteriorated in many areas and the gravel road from Nkayi to Mbuma is mostly rough and corrugated, taking its own toll on vehicles in terms of wear and tear. Since the trees were as yet more or less leafless, it was possible on the descent from the main road to see most of the mission buildings while yet some distance away. This time one could see and appreciate just how low-lying the compound site is, on a valley floor, this becoming more apparent as the rising ground beyond was clearly visible. Dr. Anneke Snoek and the nursing sisters – Willie Geurtsen and Gilia Wijngaarden – had prepared the guest house for Mr. MacLeod’s arrival and they kindly entertained him over the period of his stay.

When Messrs. Campbell and Mackenzie had visited Mbuma the previous week-end, as mentioned above, the guest house was occupied by Mr. Johan Verhaar and so they stayed in the old doctor’s house, now in process of being

done up as a replacement for the damaged manse. On the way they had the company as far as Zenka of two elderly men, one being Mr. Solomon Ncube (father of the Headmaster) who had come down to Ingwenya for the official opening of the new John Tallach High School. At Mbuma they enjoyed the same kind care and fellowship from the staff, which Mr. MacLeod experienced. Mr. Campbell held two services on the Sabbath (4th November) at which the catechist, Mr. Nathaniel Mpofu, a former teacher, who had been on the Bible Translation Team for ten years, interpreted and Mr. M. Dube, Elder, led the praise and he and Mr. Mackenzie prayed. Congregations of about 60 or 70 adults and children gathered. Immediately following the afternoon service, they attended a staff Bible study in the Book of Ruth at the hospital. This was conducted by Nathaniel Mpofu, Catechist, and was attended by eleven persons, including Mr. Gloat Nkiwane, also a Catechist, who seemed to have a wide knowledge of the Bible. Despite the small number, a lively discussion took place. Mr. Campbell had found the pulpit floor at the church in a precarious state but, having drawn attention to that, it seems to have been secured before Mr. MacLeod arrived. The church, generally, looked a bit neglected, as did the area around the old manse. The compound, otherwise, was very tidy both at the hospital and the primary school and the new crescents of 36 small brick-built thatched huts, named New Makhaya (New Home), for hospital staff, looked very neat at the back of the compound. After attending meetings at the hospital on Monday in connection with the Options Appraisal Review, Mr. Mackenzie drove Mr. Campbell back to Bulawayo on Tuesday, where they stayed at the Townsend Road house until the following day in order to attend a Field Committee Meeting at Robertson Street office on Wednesday, 7th November. Electricity power cuts were affecting Bulawayo, as was a mains water turn-off during these days. The electricity power cuts are quite random and can be for a longer or shorter period of hours or even one or two days, but the city's water turn-offs are more serious, lasting for up to five days at a time.

The following day (Wednesday, 14th November), after his arrival at Mbuma, Mr. MacLeod was early on his way to Lutsha, an outstation 12 miles to the south of Mbuma. Mr. M. Dube, retired Headmaster of the Mbuma Primary School, was driver and interpreter, and in both duties he excelled. The schoolchildren were all assembled in the open, sitting in precise rows with their teachers spaced out on the periphery keeping a watchful eye upon them. There was not much need, for the children behaved impeccably and, as far as one could judge, listened to what was read from the Bible, took part in the praise, and attended to what was said by the preacher. Without reflecting in any way on the competence of the interpreter, the preacher fervently wished that he had the ability to speak their language and get even closer to them. The adults from the Lutsha congregation were, of course, also present. Among them were the congregational office-bearers, including the ex-headmaster, Levi Ndlovu, who has attended at least one Synod meeting and is now largely responsible for keeping the services at this outstation.

It was then back to Mbuma for a short while until the dutiful Mr. Dube again collected Mr. MacLeod in the early afternoon; this time the destination was Gampagalala, about the same distance away as Lutsha, but to the north, in the opposite direction. The congregation, predominantly of adults, numbering around forty to fifty, was already assembled. Two men had cycled all the way from Somakantana to attend the service, the bed of the Shangani River at this time of year being dry enough to allow them to cross safely. There are around 15 such out-stations attached to Mbuma where services are regularly held and the diligence of the men who attend to these duties is to be commended.

The next morning at 8 a.m. Mr. MacLeod presided and spoke at the Mbuma prayer meeting. The church was crammed full. Over 600 pupils were present as well as members and adherents of the congregation. Patients from the hospital, fit and well enough to walk, were there, and also the doctor and members of staff, conspicuous in their white uniforms. Young and old seemed to listen attentively and we shall only hereafter know who they were that believed the things which were spoken and who believed not. Mr. Solomon Ncube, the father of the John Tallach School Headmaster and an Elder at Mpakama, was among the patients. Happily he was by then well on the way to recovery. His other son, Mthokozisi, who is the Hospital Administrator, happened to be on sick leave at the time of our visit.

This duty concluded, the next consisted of attending a ceremony at the hospital to mark the official opening of the new state-of-the-art X-ray unit. Mr. Melusi Mpofo saw to it that everything was done in proper order; Mr. Nathaniel Mpofo, Catechist, conducted the worship, and Dr. Snoek spoke a few words appropriate to the occasion. If perchance the anonymous person, whose sizeable donation helped to make this provision available, reads this, we would like that person to know that this token of Christian generosity is one the staff much appreciates and that he or she will undoubtedly have been instrumental in saving or prolonging lives. The duty of cutting the ribbon at the entrance fell to Mr. MacLeod and he regarded that as a great honour. Local dignitaries were invited to be present, including the Chief, but, alas, by the time he arrived the opening had already taken place. The Mbuma Hospital is well served by the three Catechists who regularly conduct worship, morning and evening and also go further afield. Mr. MacLeod was sorry that he was not able to spend time with them, to appreciate the important work which they are engaged in. Setting life and death before sinners is never anything else but important and particularly within this environment.

Within an hour or so afterwards Mr. Dube and Mr. MacLeod were on their way to Nkayi, 50 miles away. There, at 2 p.m., they found the congregation assembled, including the four Mpofo brothers – James, Charles, Stanford and Benjamin – and their families. They are now third generation Free Presbyterians and their attachment to the church remains as strong as was their fathers'. Readers of the recent and most interesting book *Mfundisi Tallach*, written by the subject's daughter, Catherine, will know how important this outstation was in days gone by. There were others whose faces were familiar,

but remembering their names was quite beyond the deputy. Leaving Nkayi, they returned to Mboma. Mr. MacLeod is very grateful to Mr. M Dube for taking him safely from place to place and also for acting as his interpreter. He also expresses his gratitude to the doctor and nursing sisters for their hospitality. Readers of this report are urged to remember them at the throne of grace. Only such as have visited Mboma really know how isolated they are and, although they will not think it so, their self-denial and devotion to duty is admirable. "God is not unrighteous to forget such work and labour of love."

Duties at Mboma being fulfilled, on the morning of 16th November Mr. MacLeod departed from Mboma for Bulawayo.

Zenka

On the way he stopped at Zenka, where Rev. Manford Mloyi is minister and there, at 9 a.m., found himself facing over 1,000 schoolchildren and a very significant number of adults. The Church and vestry were filled to the utmost capacity. There, to this vast number of souls, he spoke of the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price, endeavouring to impress upon the minds of young and old the necessity of finding and seeking precious Christ while the opportunity of doing so is there. After the service he was hospitably entertained in the manse and thereafter, with Melusi Mpofu at the wheel, they set off for Bulawayo. On arrival there they met Mr. D. P. Rowland, Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and Ds. Tj. de Jong, Vice-Chairman of the Dutch Bible Society, but better known to us as the Chairman of Mboma Zending. They had arrived for the official launching of the revised Ndebele Bible (this being a joint publication) which had been scheduled to take place on 17th November. Both were manse guests of the Rev. A. B. MacLean. Later that evening we all (Ds. de Jong, Mr. D. P. Rowland, Rev. J. Macleod, Mr. R. A. Campbell, Mr. Andrew MacLean, Mrs. Mary MacLean, and Miss Norma MacLean) met in Miss Norma MacLean's house where she and her mother had prepared a sumptuous dinner for us. This was repeated the following evening.

Launching of the Ndebele Bible

This event, as planned months beforehand, was held in the Assembly Hall at Thembiso. There were about 300 present, the vast majority having come from our own church congregations in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Although invited, no representatives from the Mayor's office or other local dignitaries turned up; not even the Press. But this in no way affected the momentous importance of the occasion; a sound and faithful translation of the Scriptures was being made available in the Ndebele language which, we fervently believe, will be valued by multitudes in generations to come. This provision is of the Lord's goodness and to Him supremely be the glory and the praise. A few passers-by, learning that a new Ndebele Bible translation was being launched in the hall, came in and requested a copy for themselves. The loving labours of the team responsible for its translation and revision (Mr. Nathaniel Mpofu, Mr. Buthi Mziya, Mr. Teus Benschop and Miss K. M. MacAulay) will

remain on record and, if not appreciated at present by the vast majority of Ndebele speakers, God, who is not unrighteous will not forget such work and labour of love. The duty of conducting the opening worship was assigned to Mr. MacLeod who endeavoured to speak on the words, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed". With Mr. Melusi Mpfu in charge of proceedings, the Rev. S. Khumalo, Ds. Tj de Jong and Mr. D. P. Rowland all spoke in turn. Tribute was deservedly paid to those in Zimbabwe who had initiated the work twelve years ago, but especially to the members of the team who had been together for around ten years. Without the help and expertise of the Trinitarian Bible Society, allied with the Dutch Bible Society, this launch would not have been achieved and the major part that they played was and is acknowledged. It was pleasing to note that some of the former John Tallach pupils, who had just left school the previous day, made an effort to attend the occasion. Travelling back to Ingwenya afterwards, Rev. A. B. Maclean met a man who had not attended the launch but evidenced much interest in the event and was very happy to be given a Bible. Mr. Teus Benschop also stopped to give a lift to the former driver of the late Rev. Aaron Ndebele, and he, too, gladly received a Bible. He does not attend our services but is favourably disposed to Ingwenya. It was a happy occurrence that Mr. Paul Rowland, the very next day, had the opportunity to conduct a service at Gadade, at which Mr. Sauli Ncube, the interpreter, was able to read the chapter from the new translation Bible, when he and Mr. Campbell shared the two services there. All those asked, who had an opportunity to read or hear the new translation, confirmed that it made the Scriptures much clearer to understand.

Bulawayo

The Sabbath following the launch of the Bible, Mr. MacLeod conducted the services in Bulawayo – Lobengula in the morning and Nkulamane in the afternoon. Mr. Khumalo, who has a lot of work on his hands, was also preaching twice that day. In addition to his own congregation he has also the oversight of Zvishavane and the other stations in Mashonaland. Mr. MacLeod was very kindly looked after by Mr. and Mrs. Khumalo in the manse. On Saturday evening he called on the late Rev. P. Mzamo's widow at her home not too far from the manse. His departure has also left a blank that will not be easy to fill. Before returning to Ingwenya on Monday morning, Mr. Khumalo showed us round the site of the proposed Mahatshula church. Mr. MacLeod, Ds. de Jong, Mr. R. Campbell and Mr. D. P. Rowland were present and saw the firm foundation that has been laid in readiness for the erection of the superstructure. Like the church at Zvishavane, this building will eventually be in the middle of a residential area and the feeling we all had was that this was indeed a worthwhile project. One feels that there are many doors that are opening to us in Zimbabwe and the crying need is for faithful heaven-sent ministers, shepherds to tend newly-formed flocks. Bulawayo is the only city in the world where our denomination has more than one congregation.

Insiza

Having a desire to see the new church at Insiza, Mr. MacLean took both Mr. MacLeod and Ds. de Jong to the site 60 miles away. The road there is very rough in places, but the place itself is very open and scenic. The exterior work of the new building was almost complete, the foundation and walls having been constructed by the congregation, only the provision of pulpit and pews remain to be added to make it a handsome place of worship. Two toilets have also to be completed, however, before permission will be granted for its use and progress on these has proved to be slow. The people here are to be commended for their zeal and we hope that in years ahead it may prove to be a birthplace of many souls.

Head Office

The Head Office in Bulawayo was visited on many occasions. On 2nd November Mr. MacLean drove us there, after we attended the forenoon Prayer Meeting at Gadadi, to meet with Rev. S. Khumalo and Mr. Hugh Mackenzie to draw up a job description for the post of Translation Manager. On 7th November we attended the meeting of the Field Committee held in what is called the “boardroom”. This room is ideal as a venue for such meetings. It is furnished with a suitably large table around which members may be seated to discuss the many and varied matters which arise in the day-to-day management of the Mission.

The office itself seems to be very well organised, each head of department having their own separate rooms and other members of staff, attending to their respective duties, in suitable working environments. The Administrator, Melusi Mpofo, in our view, performs his onerous duties in an exemplary manner. At any given time, he appears to have full knowledge and grasp of what is happening in every area. When problems arise, as they do, and often unexpectedly, his ability to handle them is, in our view, admirable. One of his other strengths is his ability to handle matters relating to the Mission’s obligation to operate within the law of Zimbabwe and to deal, when necessary, with outside bodies and local Government representatives.

Malawi

It did not prove possible to meet with Mr. Nedson Banda of Malawi on this occasion, as intended, due both to the very limited flights now operating between Malawi and Zimbabwe and to Mr. Banda not having a current passport, which might have allowed him to come to Zimbabwe or South Africa, to see us. The deputies twice contacted him by telephone in an unsuccessful endeavour to arrange a meeting.

Conclusion

Having visited every main area of our Zimbabwean mission field, the abiding impression is that all is in order in those parts for which the Committee has responsibility. Perhaps, more regular arrangements for taking door collections

could be established in almost all the congregations, with more prominent collection plates on pedestals being provided and put out at each door at every service. On the evening of 20th November, the evening before our departure for home, we gathered together in Norma's house to be again entertained in the same manner. We owe much to her for providing our evening meals and for stocking up the larder of the house we shared. To the Rev. A. B. MacLean also, to Occa who acted as housekeeper during our stay, and all others – too numerous to mention by name – who helped to make our visit so pleasant and memorable, we would express our heartfelt gratitude. For journeying mercies and safe keeping during our visit, and for the privilege of witnessing and participating in the work being done in the Name of Christ through our Zimbabwe Mission, we humbly acknowledge the goodness of God toward us.

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

DESPITE difficulties and anxieties on the way over the past year we have to report that, in a kind Providence, the training of candidates for the ministry of the Word continues.

The three students completed their year of Hebrew and Cognate studies under Rev. Dr. D. W. B. Somerset in Aberdeen and Rev. Somerset's first report as a church tutor is before the Synod. We are indebted to him for his work over the year and trust it will be the first of many.

As reported last year, the Committee decided not to apply for Higher Trusted Status (HTS) to the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA). Failure to apply timeously for HTS results in loss of sponsorship status and this loss was duly sustained by the College. However, we have been assured by UKBA that, if we maintain our accreditation with the British Accreditation Council (BAC) and decided in the future to apply for HTS status, this option would be open to the College. UKBA also gave an assurance that Mr. Levytsky and Mr. Hembd, as non-EU immigrants, would be able to continue to use the 6-month visa path to their studies here.

Accreditation of the College with the BAC has to be renewed by further full inspection every four years and an inspector from BAC was duly sent to Aberdeen in February this year. We are glad to report that the inspector was satisfied with what he found both in the class room and in the documentation provided by the College.

The Theology Conference in October 2012 has already been reported on in the Magazine and we look forward to this year's Conference in November, DV. The speakers and papers planned are as followed:

Rev. D. Campbell	The Intercession of Christ
Rev. R. MacLeod.....	The Covenant of Grace
TBA	Theological writings of Hugh Martin
Dr. A. Ross.....	Responses of churches to Evolution
Dr. R. Dickie.....	Martin Luther

“Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following” (Psalm 49:13).

THEOLOGICAL TUTOR’S REPORT

Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

THE divinity classes began on 5th September 2012 and will continue (DV) until the final exam on 26th April 2013. The students attending the classes are Mr. Caleb Hembd, Mr. Dmytro Levytsky, and Mr. Iain MacDonald. All three are in the second year of their theological studies. Because of the current immigration difficulties, Mr. Hembd and Mr. Levytsky were able to obtain only six-month visas, and they therefore returned to their respective homes at the end of February. Since then the classes have met by Skype, an arrangement which is working satisfactorily. We meet at lunchtime in the UK, which is mid-afternoon in the Ukraine and early-morning in Texas. The course has followed the pattern of previous years, the five parts of it being as follows.

1. Scripture

The portion of Scripture prescribed is Genesis to Esther. The students are studying this independently using Nicholls’ *Help to Reading the Bible*.

2. Hebrew

The main work for the Hebrew is the translation and exegesis of select passages from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and Zechariah. The students’ knowledge of Hebrew grammar has been consolidated and extended using Martin’s edition of *Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar* and the Kautzsch-Cowley edition of *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*. The Masoretic Hebrew accents (prose and poetic) have been introduced, but we have been somewhat hampered in this by the prohibitive expense of the most accessible book (James Price’s *Syntax of the Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible*). The students have also read more than half of Girdlestone’s *Hebrew Synonyms*, generally an excellent book.

3. Old Testament Introduction and Hermeneutics

The main book studied for Old Testament Introduction and Background has been Walter Kaiser on the *Old Testament Documents*. It has to be said that this book was less satisfactory than hoped, and we would not consider using it in

the future. As a remedial supplement to Kaiser, Peter Masters' short book on the *Heritage of Evidence in the British Museum* was introduced, and this has proved an unexpected success. The tutor's notes on the Septuagint and on the Hebrew text were also circulated.

The books studied for Hermeneutics have been Berkhof on *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, Vos on *Biblical Theology*, Fairbairn on *Typology*, and Fairbairn on *Prophecy*. These are difficult books to digest but the students have grappled well with them.

4. Homiletics and Pastoral Theology

The books studied have been Shedd on *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*; Fairbairn on *Pastoral Theology*; Samuel Miller on *Public Prayer*; and the *Directory of Public Worship*. In addition, the students have had a weekly exercise of preparing sermon outlines on selected texts and subjects (e.g. a sermon for the Saturday of a communion season, a sermon for a baptism, etc.).

5. Church History

The books studied for this part of the course have been Owen Chadwick on the *Reformation*, Thomas M'Crie's *Story of the Scottish Church*, and the *History of the Free Presbyterian Church, 1893-1970*. Chadwick's book is not entirely satisfactory but it is difficult to find anything better at present. The students have written essays on the subjects "Compare and contrast Luther and Calvin" and "Was the Secession of 1733/1739 justified?", and historical tours of Aberdeen and of St. Andrews were also arranged.

The students have worked hard and their health, and that of the tutor, has largely been maintained, for which we should all be deeply thankful. There is not much leeway in the course, and any student falling behind finds it difficult to catch up. The students have supplied mainly in Edinburgh, Perth, Daviot, Dornoch and Bonar Bridge, but also in places as far removed as Halkirk, London, and Portree, and now in Odessa and Santa Fe. They also took a number of prayer meetings in Aberdeen to enable the tutor to comment on their conducting of services. We believe that their efforts in expounding the Word of God have been appreciated in the Church. It has been a privilege to supervise their studies, and we trust that they have profited from the course as much as the tutor feels that he has. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). We are thankful that the Lord is continuing to raise up men for the work of the ministry, but the need for more students and more ministers remains very great.

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

AS I have written in last year's report, a Church committee such as the Welfare of Youth should be deeply interested in our young people, particularly in their spiritual wellbeing.

It is most pleasant to meet with our young people from time to time, at communions and at our Youth conferences. It is our desire and prayer for them that they would seek the Lord in their young years. In our liberal society, Christian Foundations are constantly under attack and are being eroded. If, according to Government intentions to redefine marriage in law is permitted, this will have devastating consequences for Society. Apart from the huge moral question involved, which is the main issue, there will also be potentially an erosion of our Civil Liberties. This will affect schools, hospitals, the work place, and other institutions. Our young will potentially be exposed to trial and maybe hardships. We hope and pray that the Lord will prevent this in mercy; however, the Most High may permit it in judgement.

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 Youth Conference was held at Gartmore House, Gartmore, Stirlingshire. The conference fees were 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. Following Christ in a Secular Society**
Rev. K. D. Macleod
- 2. Samuel Rutherford**
The Life of Prayer
Mr. Matthew Vogan
- 3. The Pilgrim's Progress**
The Doctrine of Salvation Illustrated
Rev. R. MacLeod
- 4. Historical Tour Around Stirling**
Rev. R. MacLeod
- 5. The Biblical View of Creation**
A Sure Guide
Dr. Alex Ross
- 6. Bible Character**
The Apostle Peter
Rev. J. R. Tallach

The Committee would thank those who gave papers, and the House Mothers for all their help and hard work. We thank Gartmore 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 and Catechism Exercises for the *Young Peoples' Magazine*, both at home and overseas – this they do willingly – and also for their prayerful interest in our young people. The Committee is indebted to Mrs. Mary Schouten for setting and correcting the upper primary exercises, and Miss Shona Gillies, now doing the senior section in place of Miss Catherine MacQueen, who retired from the work last year. We wish them all the Lord's blessing and help in this work.

BALLIFEARY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

WE are indebted to the Lord for His kindness and forbearance with us over the past year at Ballifeary Care Home.

We record the following deaths of residents who passed away over the year, with regret and sympathy to grieving relatives: Mrs. Katie Ann MacCuish on the 8th of February, Mrs. Mary MacRae on 5th of May, Mr. Charles MacKinnon on 27th June, and Mrs. Jean MacSwan on 1st October.

The following were admitted during the year: Miss Rhoda MacKay on 2nd January, Mrs. Alexina Morrison on 14th March, Mrs. Margaret Wilson on 20th March, Mrs. Annie Gillies on 28th March, Mrs. Dolina Coghill on 8th June, Mr. Charles MacKinnon on 11th June, Mrs. Helen MacInnes on 19th July, Mr. Iain Campbell and Mrs. Rene Campbell on 23rd October.

Respite care was also provided for 3 residents during the year.

A full complement of staff was maintained during the year and Matron attended an 8-week training programme on Person Centred Care. The Deputy Matron completed a Leadership and Management qualification, while others completed training courses on Medication, Dementia Awareness, Diabetes Awareness, Palliative Care, Equality and Diversity and Healthy Eating through James Watt College by Distance Learning. These courses were free of charge to the Home. A monthly training programme is in place and mandatory training is on-going.

Refurbishment work was carried out with the upgrading of 5 en-suite bedrooms. The formation of a new patio area was completed in August 2012. The patio gives a very attractive view over the River Ness and the residents are very pleased. An open afternoon was held when these improvements had been finished and we were glad to see several of those who had had a hand in the work of the Home in the past on that occasion.

The Home had one Care Inspectorate inspection in September and received the following grades: Care and Support Statement – 1 Excellent, Statement 3

– Very Good. Environment – Excellent. Staffing – Very Good. Management and Leadership – Excellent. While noting that standards of care in residential homes have in several instances around the country fallen far below acceptable standards, we are glad to report the kindness and consideration which characterises the work of the staff in the Home and the work of the volunteers who give of their time and talents in various ways.

“Our sure and all sufficient help is in Jehovah’s name; His name who did the heaven’s create, and who the earth did frame” (Psalm 124:8, metrical version).

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

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

Once again the Home has been provided for, although with the global recession and financial down-turn there is an uncertain future, with Local authorities facing financial difficulties. This year they have taken the route of the National Care Home Contract for negotiating fees for a three-year period by way of a tendering process. This involved lengthy meetings and consultations with various bodies, before submitting our offer. Their initial response was scarcely even a token gesture; after further negotiations we are thankful that a three-year rolling increase was accepted. We are grateful to the Manager and her Administrator for their hard work in negotiating with the Local Authority, through a three-year tendering process. This process will be gone through again for 2016.

This year was the 25th anniversary of the Home opening. The Home was opened on the 12th of February 1988 by the late Rev. Donald MacLean, then Minister of Glasgow. The Committee marked the occasion with an open day; attended by representatives from other Care Homes in the Islands and representation from Social Work. In attendance were the past matrons and their assistants, along with the present matron and all her staff. Also in attendance were a good number from the local Community. The special guest for the occasion was the Rev. John Macleod, London, the first Convener of the Committee when he was minister in Stornoway. He was actively involved in getting the Leverburgh Home project up and running. The Committee was pleased that he was able to come, and thank him for all the work he did over the years. There were presentations to two staff members who had been working in the Home from the beginning. A Bible was presented to Mr. Kenneth Campbell, Elder, Leverburgh, who came to the Home consistently

and conducted family worship with the residents over the 25 years. The occasion was opened by the committee with family worship, along with residents and staff and attendants of the local community. There was also a photo-gallery for people to view the Home, as it was being built, along with staff and residents past and present.

Over the past year there have been a number of deaths in the Home: Mr. Donald John Macleod, Flodabay, Mrs. Margaret Macdonald, Lingerbay, Mrs. Mary Ann Mackay, from Inverness (although originally from Leverburgh), Mrs. Mary MacCuish, Horgabost, Mrs. Sarah Macleod, Scalpay, Mrs. Mary Ann Morrison, Sandwick, Stornoway, Mr. Donald Mackenzie, Elder, Leverburgh, and Mr. Finlay Mackenzie, Strond. The Committee sends their sincere sympathies to all the families in their loss. We note particularly, Mr. Donald Mackenzie's passing and are indebted to him as he served on the Committee from the beginning, until shortly before his illness and death.

The inspection reports by the Care Inspectorate continue to be very good, with all four categories being looked at and receiving Grades 5 and 6 with an overall mark of 5.

The Committee again commends the good work of the manager and her staff; we hope they all will have the Lord's blessing for time and eternity. Although the Home status is Residential, we have to report that the nursing care is as great as ever, which places a heavy burden upon the current staff. The committee would again thank the local services for their continuing support of the Home, along with the local community, who continuously support the Home in a variety of ways.

Again we would acknowledge the Lord's goodness and kindness over another year.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

WE are already making arrangements for operating our Christian literature bookstall once again at various agricultural shows in the summer, God willing. It is encouraging that we are made welcome by the organisers of these events and are given ready assistance when needed. In the early days of the work, the organisers appeared to be somewhat reticent to have us on site but not so now. For this we are thankful to the Most High who holds the hearts of all men in His hand.

However, we find that the reluctance of the world to receive the doctrines of the Word of God continues to be a sad reality, and there are many occasions when this is very obvious. Nevertheless, we are thankful to be even tolerated in our efforts, and it is an encouragement to be occasionally welcomed by those who truly appreciate our outreach work. The Apostle, on his weary journey to Rome as a prisoner, was met at Appii Forum and The Three Taverns

by some brother believers, “whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage” (Acts 28:15).

The Committee continues the work appointed by the Synod, although by no means able to engage in all the activities helpfully suggested by various parties. Our work consists on the whole in publishing and distributing Gospel tracts, managing Christian bookstalls at agricultural shows, and carrying out colporteur work in villages and country districts. The Church website also comes under our remit and we are grateful for the large input of material put on it from the Church magazines with their various contributors.

Besides producing tracts, we are in the process of printing leaflets on a variety of religious subjects which we hope will make a useful addition to our resources for outreach work. We are also producing a leaflet giving information about our congregations and the places and times of worship. We have not distributed many foreign language tracts but there is a constant outflow of English tracts which are used by some of our own people and many others outwith our Church.

About 12,400 Gospel tracts were distributed from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, Glasgow. We are indebted to the Bookroom Manager, Mr. Norman Fraser, for his assistance and also for his arranging the supply of books to our book-van. Since our tracts have been advertised in the *Evangelical Times* and the *British Church Newspaper* we have sent out more than usual and therefore had to reprint seven titles at the end of last year. May the Lord bless the reading of these tracts so that some people will think of the eternal world in an appropriate manner and come to a saving interest in Christ Jesus, as has been the case often in the history of Gospel tract distribution.

The Church website has been used by a number of people to contact us; some wanting us to work with their denomination, others wishing donations for their evangelising work, and yet others wanting to assist us in our outreach work. Although we could not possibly accede to some of these requests, we were able to supply literature to those wishing it.

The website is a marvellous tool for advertising the distinctive principles of our Church and consequently a number of people have expressed their appreciation of our reformed position and for the content of the website. The website is being redesigned with the aim of making it even more attractive and user friendly. We are indebted to Mr. James Macleod for all the work he does to maintain the site and we also appreciate having another helper in this work.

Last year we were able to attend an additional agricultural show, this time in the Dornoch area. It proved to be worthwhile since we had a good number of visitors, some purchasing books, others expressing an interest in our work, and others simply browsing, but not going away without being offered some suitable literature, which in most cases was well received. We had hoped to attend the Daviot agricultural show last year for the first time but inclement weather caused the show to be cancelled. Hopefully, we will be able to attend this year.

The Synod realises, of course, that in this spiritually dark age the Committee's selling of literature brings no financial profit. Secular business aims for monetary gain but the business of spreading the Word has the aim of the spiritual profit of those who receive the Word, that the Word may be mixed with faith in them. At the same time we cannot forget that while we are entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit for such spiritual profit, we are also dependent on the financial contributions of our people for the continuance of the work.

We are much indebted to our colporteur, Mr. Alan Boyd, for the work he does. Like other outreach helpers, he does so voluntarily. Going from door to door with the book-van is more difficult in some areas than others. He reports: "The NW Sutherland villages of Durness and Scourie were particularly disappointing, with no sales whatsoever being made, despite every door in these communities being presented with a tract." However, he also records of other areas, for example, Kinlochbervie and Ullapool, "The only sales made were to Free Presbyterian households . . . with particular interest being shown in the recent publication, *Mfundisi Tallach*." So there are some encouragements in the way and we acknowledge with gratitude that "hitherto hath the Lord helped".

Finally, we also record our thanks to those who continue to contribute towards our outreach work. We would venture to say that while the spiritual darkness of our day moves some to continue giving financially, it should stir up others who are hesitant to support this necessary work to give what they can for it, and perhaps even to volunteer to help with some tasks. At one point we offered our book-van to our congregations to use for door-to-door work in their areas but no one seemed to be in a position to take up the offer, which is a great pity in the face of such prevailing spiritual dearth. "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause" (Psalm 74:22).

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

Magazines

OVER the past year, both the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine* have continued to be issued monthly. As in previous years, an effort is made to give a mix of articles in each issue, from sermons to comment on contemporary affairs. The *Gaelic Supplement* continues to come out every three months, under the editorship of Rev. A. W. MacColl.

The further increase in the cover price of the Magazines for 2012 resulted in an increase in income of approximately 10%. The cost of printing remained substantially the same, but the increase in postage costs more than outweighed the increase in income. Royal Mail particularly applied this increase to

overseas postage, but the impact of the increase on UK postage was mitigated, at least in the short term, by buying two years' worth of basic-rate stamps in advance. However, in the light of a continuing deficit in the Magazines Fund, the Committee decided that a further price increase was necessary and again raised the price of both Magazines for 2013.

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, old and new, of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

Publications

During 2012, for various reasons, no further books were published. However, there was a modest increase in the value of Free Presbyterian Publications books sold in the year. Further work has been done on the translation from Gaelic of the *Sermons* of Archibald Cook and it is hoped that it will soon be ready for the printers. It is expected that small quantities of Volumes 12 and 13 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* will be published shortly. It has also been decided to publish three booklets for young people: *The Role of Women in Society*, by Rev. N M Ross, *How Did It All Begin?*, by Mrs. S. M. Campbell, and *Ann Judson*, by Rev. K. D. Macleod.

Bookroom

The Bookroom continues its work of sending out Bibles and other Christian literature to all parts of the world. Disappointingly, sales were again lower as compared with the previous year. It is clear that, in the deteriorating spiritual condition around us, demand for sound religious literature has dropped and Christian bookshops across the country are closing; this reflects the situation in secular outlets – all of which are facing competition from companies, such as Amazon, selling over the internet at low prices. The Committee has considered the performance of the Bookroom at length at recent meetings, and the Convener and Clerk are involved in discussions with a group of men who have experience in retail and IT with a view to making changes which, God willing, will improve the effectiveness of the Bookroom.

We would express our gratitude to all who have helped 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 every part of the Committee's work. We would wish that increasing numbers of the publications we produce and distribute would find their way into readers' hands across the world, but more especially that it would please the Most High to bless them to the readers' spiritual good.

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 continued the work of compiling an inventory of the archives presently in the possession of the Church, including Synod, Presbytery, Kirk Session, Deacons' Court, and Committee records. It is hoped in the forthcoming year to extend this inventory to cover the records of overseas Church courts (DV).

The main work in the past year has been the photocopying and scanning of records. Following the decision of last year's Synod, a start has been made on the Synod minutes. There are eight completed volumes of Synod minutes covering the period 1896-2008 and so far five of these have been scanned (Volume 1 covering 1896-1904 and Volumes 5-8 covering 1947-2008). It is hoped to scan the remaining volumes in the forthcoming year. It would also be desirable to scan the Synod documents for each year because the minutes generally assume a knowledge of the documents and are therefore hard to understand without the documents. The Synod archives do not include a full run of Synod documents and help is needed in trying to assemble some of the earlier ones. It would also be desirable to compile an index of the various matters that have come before the Synod down through the years.

Other records that have been scanned include the Northern Presbytery minutes for 1896-1902 (before the division into the Northern and Western Presbyteries). The four subsequent volumes of Northern Presbytery minutes covering 1902-1976, referred to in last year's report, are now stored in the APC Inverness archive and permission has been obtained for the photocopying of these. The pre-1989 Aberdeen Kirk Session and Deacons' Court are stored in the same place, and photocopies and scans of these have already been obtained.

One concern of the Committee relates to the records of defunct congregations and it is suggested that the Synod should require that these be stored centrally to further their preservation.