

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

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REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF SYNOD

REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev. G. G. Hutton

RELIGION

Islamic fundamentalism

Tuesday, 11th September, saw the world's worst terrorist attacks. Four planes were hijacked by Muslim extremists and turned into enormous flying bombs. Two were flown into the World Trade Centre, causing the collapse of the twin towers, a third was crashed into the Pentagon and a fourth came down in a field after a heroic attempt to overcome the hijackers by passengers and crew after the hijackers began knifing the stewardesses. Such fanatical barbarity is utterly repugnant.

A Saudi Muslim extremist, Osama bin Ladin and his al-Qa'eda organisation, were found to be behind the attacks in which thousands died. Earlier in the year, bin Ladin had urged his followers to "penetrate America and Israel and hit them where it hurts most". The same group was responsible for a bomb attack on American military barracks in Saudi Arabia, and the attacks on the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998 when 301 people died and 5,000 were injured. It is also likely that bin Ladin's group was responsible for the attack on the *USS Cole* in Aden in October 2001 which caused the deaths of 17 sailors and the wounding of 39. The Muslim extremists were trained in Afghan camps and sheltered by the Taleban regime in Afghanistan. The 11th September attack was the second attack on the Trade Centre by Muslim terrorists. When false religion poses such a threat to life and property the civil powers must take action in defence of their people.

Atrocities are also being perpetrated against the people and State of Israel. Palestinian suicide bombers are indiscriminately attacking Israeli men, women

and children. A recent report stated that since Yasser Arafat launched the Intifada against Israel less than two years ago, 11,000 acts of terror have been committed against this tiny state. On average, these attacks have been at the rate of 30 a day, most of which have not been reported in the Press. Whatever disagreements any may have with US foreign policy or perceived injustices with respect to Palestinians, such murderous acts of aggression should never be tolerated by any state against its citizens.

These terrorists see their activities in terms of a religious war. The Islamic faith is not, as the politicians and moderate Islamists claim, a “peaceful religion”. Islamic states are brutal and repressive. One writer recently said that the “breeding ground for such killers lies in the Islamic doctrine which divides the world into ‘Dar-al-Islam’ (House of Islam) and the Western Judaeo-Christian ‘Dar-al-Harb’ (House of War). The conflict between the two, according to normal (not extremist) Islamic doctrine, is interrupted only by states of truce, and will never cease until the whole world is brought under the sway of the Dar-al-Islam.” There is an important distinction to be noted with respect to these conflicts. On the Muslim extremist side we see a religious war being conducted by indiscriminate, murderous attacks against civilians. America, Britain and the State of Israel, on the other hand, are not engaged in religious warfare. In this case we see civil powers lawfully seeking to defend their citizens by targeting the terrorists.

It is solemn to think that Sinn Fein/IRA, who pursued their own ends by terrorism, used to meet on the 106th floor of the north tower of the World Trade Centre.

Muslim extremists and British mosques

This worldwide terror campaign is being conducted in the name of “religion” and a significant number of persons deeply involved are British born Muslims or British citizens of the Islamic faith. British mosques have become recruiting fields for Muslim extremists and breeding grounds of religious hatred. Radical Muslim clerics have been freely inciting their followers to commit atrocious crimes whilst receiving the benefits and protection of the British state. It has been left to newspapers to expose Islamic leaders like Sheikh Abdullah el-Faisal who now stands accused of inciting British Muslims to kill “filthy Jews” and “infidels”. Even as we write, reports have appeared that Muslims have been training with AK47 rifles in London’s Finsbury Park mosque.

The UK authorities are more concerned to protect Islamists from a British backlash than to protect British people from Islamic fundamentalism. Thankfully there are now some signs that the authorities are beginning to wake up to reality. When blame was being laid on the failure of US intelligence, one American defence expert pointed out that none of their officers had been permitted to investigate British mosques since the early ’nineties. A *Times*’ editorial (5th February) accuses the Home Office of being “afraid to act against Muslim extremists”. This feeble approach sends out a completely wrong signal when Islamic extremism is being supported by so many young

British Muslims. In October a poll, conducted by an Asian radio station, showed that 98% of Moslems in London under the age of 45 would not fight for Britain whilst 48% said they would take up arms for Osama bin Ladin. A *Times*' poll revealed that 40% of British Muslims believed that Osama bin Ladin was "justified" in mounting a war against America and the same proportion felt that British citizens who joined the Taleban were justified in doing so. The despising and rejection of the Gospel of Christ will have serious consequences for all in time and for eternity.

Multiculturalism

This policy is not only bound up with the protection of other cultures but, more importantly, with the various forms of false religion that accompany them. It gives a false impression of being a just and fair means of promoting peace and harmony among men but it is in truth a divisive and irrational policy concocted by men and women who have abandoned the counsel of God revealed in the Bible. The summary of the divine law is love to God and our neighbour. It therefore follows that if we are to comply with God's will we cannot encourage men to continue in sin. The Christian response to people of other faiths is to seek by kindly Gospel persuasion (not force) to win them to Christ but definitely not to regard their various forms of false religion just as different ways of worshipping the same God.

Multiculturalism has been at the core of Government thinking since the 'sixties and even some Muslim leaders have seen how divisive this policy has been. There is a serious problem within the Muslim community due in part to a policy that has allowed extremism to flourish. Furthermore a Commission for Racial Equality has been set up, whose existence depends on the false idea that Britain is a society awash with racism. The policy makers have become paranoid about human rights and charges of "racism" or so-called "Islamaphobia" and the Government seems afraid or incapable of acting appropriately.

All this is taking place against the background of a sharp decline in Christianity in Britain. At the same time it is a disturbing fact that, according to statistics, the largest absolute increase of all the religions in Britain between 1980 and 1995 was in the Muslim community! A new mosque is opening every week in Britain and there are fifty mosques in the city of Bradford alone. The Imams are accountable to no one, neither is there a proper system of government or discipline in the mosques. Over the last thirty years the Muslim community in Britain has doubled and within it a very extreme element has been permitted to develop. Enclaves of extremism and hatred have been created. Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists are afraid to change their false gods but we, like the Jews of Jeremiah's day, have changed our glory for that which doth not profit (Jeremiah 2:11). The lessons of the Bible have been forgotten.

The Protestant succession

The Roman Catholic party in the country has so far failed in its attempts to overthrow our Protestant constitution. Nevertheless, erosion of the status quo

continues apace. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, has served her people well in many respects over a long period of time. But as each year passes the reality is underlined that our Queen is not embracing biblical Christianity as represented in the constitution of our country but is under the influence of false teachers and blind leaders. Contrary to solemn coronation vows, our Queen has held communion with and demonstrated subservience to the "See of Rome" by her visits in black to the Vatican and the countenance given to the late Cardinal Hume and consequently all that he stood for.

In 1982 two persons, both unlawfully claiming headship of the Church in England, met when the Queen entertained the Pope in Buckingham Palace. (The title Supreme Governor of the Church of England is not in essence different from that of head.) In 1995 the Queen attended a full Roman Catholic service when she attended vespers in Westminster Cathedral. Such breaches of Coronation vows by British Monarchs have been made before. King Edward VII caused protests when he attended a Requiem Mass at St. James's RC Church, Spanish Place, London in 1908, and George V attended a Requiem Mass at the Benedictine Abbey of St. Michael in Farnborough.

A Roman Catholic army chaplain, the late Monsignor Kevin Vasey, was appointed a Queen's Honorary Chaplain in 1999. This was the first time that a Roman Catholic priest had been made a Queen's Honorary Chaplain. A further retrograde step was taken when Hume's successor, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, the leader of Roman Catholics in England and Wales, was invited to preach in the Sandringham church on 13th January, at the Queen's personal invitation. It was reported that a spokesman for the Cardinal said: "The Cardinal is deeply honoured by the Queen's invitation. It is a clear sign of the Queen's willingness to promote ecumenism." A Buckingham Palace official said that the invitation was "in the spirit of co-operation, unity and friendship, that Her Majesty has always practised". We wonder whether Her Majesty is aware that the chief and only bond of ecclesiastical unity in Rome's view is "to adhere to the Roman See, and continue in subjection to it". As far as we know, the only Cardinal to preach to Her Majesty before this was Basil Hume, who preached at the opening of the new ecumenical church in Milton Keynes in 1992.

Giving place to the priests of Rome is dishonouring to our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. The priestly office came to an end among men with the coming of Christ. Christ is the anti-type of the Aaronic priesthood. It is blasphemous for the Pope and his fellow priests to assume the office of Christ and claim to be "continuing the priesthood of Christ". All this gives rise to grave concern for the succession and for Her Majesty's spiritual state in view of eternity. May the Lord open the eyes of our beloved Queen.

The Queen's sister, Princess Margaret, passed away in February and her remains were disposed of, not by Christian burial, but by the unscriptural practice of cremation. This is the first time that the remains of a member of the Royal family have been treated in this way. Furthermore, it seems that the Princess had a strong leaning to the Roman Catholic Church. In a recent

biography of Princess Margaret it is alleged that the only reason that she did not become a convert to Roman Catholicism was out of loyalty to her sister as Supreme Governor of the Church of England (*Times*, 25th February).

It is quite clear from the events of recent years that the Gospel of Christ, to which the British constitution bears witness, is not valued or prized but rather despised and rejected by the powers that be and many of our people.

The Pope and the Jews

Whatever cruelty and fury may in the future emanate from the Papacy it is evident that the reign of the Papal Antichrist will yet come to an end. In order that this may take place the real nature of the Papacy must be revealed and made known to the world at large. This is an age of unprecedented deception and the Papal propaganda machine is busy papering over the truth in order to justify the continued existence of this corrupt antichristian institution. Whatever we may say of Islam, the famous 18th century Scottish economist, Adam Smith, was clear that Rome stood at the head of the hierarchy of evil when he wrote in his *Wealth of Nations* that: "The constitution of the Church of Rome may be considered the most formidable combination that was ever formed against the authority and security of civil government as well as against the liberty, reason, and happiness of mankind." Such statements are not made without reason.

The wickedness of the Papacy has been well documented since the Reformation of the 16th century but in recent times, in the context of vastly increased dissemination of information to the general public, some notable facts have been revealed.

The wider public is still to a large extent unaware of what kind of institution the Papacy really is or that the wartime Pope Pius XII was accused of complicity in the crimes of the Nazi regime against the Jews. One of the ways the Vatican sought to answer these charges was by claiming that the Papacy was neutral. It was on this ground that "for much of the war, Pius maintained a public front of indifference and remained silent while German atrocities were committed. He refused help on the ground of neutrality."

In 1962 the truth concerning the wartime activities of Pius XII was drawn to popular notice by a play called *The Deputy*, by Rolf Hochuth. This play "triggered Roman Catholic outrage worldwide". The Vatican issued large numbers of documents in its defence and this has generated an extensive historical debate on the role of Pius. In the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* of October 2001 an article appeared entitled "The Vatican Archives". This article draws attention to the findings of historians that confirm the accusations against Pius XII (*Hitler's Pope*, by John Cornwell) despite the fact that the historians were only allowed to see some archive material. Since then other studies have been made public. *Unholy War*, by David Kertzer, is a shocking account of the Vatican's role in the rise of modern anti-Semitism.

In 1987 the Pope asked his "Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews" to "determine what responsibility, if any, the Church bore for the slaughter of millions of European Jews during World War II?". The

Commission's answer (*We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*), said Kertzer, was a resounding "no". Kertzer knew that the history presented by the Vatican was terribly wrong. It was not what actually happened. It was a cover up. Historians point out that any support that the Pope did give to the Jews came after 1942, once US officials had told the Pope that the allies wanted total victory, and it became likely that they would get it (see article by Shira Schoenberg, "Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust").

Roman Catholic Saints

The controversy over Pius is being kept on the agenda, at least in part, by the present Pope's insistence that Pius XII should be canonised. Another candidate for this unscriptural practice is Josemaria Escriva de Balague, a Spanish cleric and founder of the sinister Opus Dei society. This Roman Catholic cult, answerable only to the Pope, played a significant role in "bailing the Vatican out of the Ambrosiano Bank scandal" (*The Pope's Armada*, by G. Urquhart). A third choice for canonisation is Padre Pio, a supposedly miracle-working friar and mystic from southern Italy.

The present round of canonisations will bring the total number of saints created by the Pope since his election in 1978 to 470. He has also beatified 1,300 people. This is the first step to canonisation. Two miracles must be performed by the candidate in order to qualify for canonisation. Miracles performed by the bodily remains of the candidate are a special proof of his or her merits. The remains are then preserved as holy relics and the saint may be worshipped. It has been reported in the *Times* that an illiterate woman from West Bengal, called Monika Besra, was said to be suffering from stomach cancer. She apparently prayed to Mother Teresa's picture beside her bed. In September 1998, on the first anniversary of Mother Teresa's death, two nuns took a silver medallion which had been placed on Mother Teresa's body after her death and tied it to the sick woman's stomach. She fell asleep while the nuns prayed and on awaking she found that the tumour had gone! This event will no doubt be of real assistance to the Vatican "theologians" in helping them to decide on whether or not Mother Teresa should be added to the roll of saints.

Praying to dead saints was first authorised by Pope Gregory at the close of the 6th century but like all of Rome's false teachings the practice has no biblical warrant.

Roman Catholics in high places

All true Christians desire that poor people would be saved out of that system of superstition and error that is the Roman Catholic Church and that the true Gospel might be preserved from compromise. This will not happen unless a clear distinction is maintained between the teachings of Rome and the Gospel of Christ. This is one reason why it so important for Protestants to keep fast hold on the Bible and to resist the resurgence of Romanism.

The Monarch is forbidden to marry a Roman Catholic and before the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, Roman Catholics were not allowed to sit

in Parliament. Now things are changing. It is reported that Tony Blair usually worships in a Roman Catholic Church. Mrs. Blair is a Roman Catholic and a republican. Iain Duncan Smith, Charles Kennedy, Michael Ancram, Bill Cash, General Sir Charles Guthrie, Chris Patten, Anne Widdecombe, the present Northern Ireland secretary, and a large percentage of the Scottish Parliament are Roman Catholics. Mr. Michael Martin is the first Roman Catholic Speaker of the Commons to be elected for 442 years.

Roman Catholics find our Protestant Constitution offensive and discriminatory but it is not individuals who are being rejected by the Constitution but the doctrines, claims and superstitions of Rome. One would expect persons of intelligence and ability who occupy public positions to make informed and rational choices in life and distance themselves from Romish error. They should be men and women of principle and integrity. Who can have confidence in leaders who cannot or will not see through the falsehood of Roman Catholicism, who are supporters of the Papacy, who pray to the dead, who believe in relics, who worship images, and who defend a system that is not willing to administer appropriate discipline to its clergy for serious immorality?

Cardinal Murphy O'Connor sent a priest, who was a convicted paedophile, back to work, as a priest, at an airport chapel. In the past five years a significant number of priests in England and Wales have been convicted of sex offences against children. The incidence of paedophile crimes among priests has been far higher among Roman Catholic priests than in the population at large. As in other parts of the Roman system there is a culture of secrecy, a covering of sin, an unwillingness to face the truth, a blind belief in a church that will never ever reform.

The former Bishop of Aberdeen, Archbishop Mario Conti, succeeded Cardinal Thomas Winning and became the new leader of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow in February. As might be expected, Conti is a bitter enemy of Protestantism. The Church of Rome in Scotland includes 8 Dioceses with 51 parishes and an assortment of religious orders of Benedictines, Carmelites, Cistercians, Jesuits, Marists, Passionists, etc. Roman Catholic writers think they have got a scent of victory now that they see formerly Protestant Churches moving towards the Roman camp. An article in the *Times* of last December was entitled "The Quiet Rebirth of Catholic England". The writer quoted Cardinal John Henry Newman when he said that, "Protestantism is the intellectual and moral language of the body politic". The writer notes the changed situation in our day with the ascendancy of Roman Catholics into the most exalted positions and expresses astonishment that no one notices and no one cares. She finished her article with a thinly veiled call to rally round the Roman standard. Another writer thinks that, "we are indifferent mourners to the strange death of Protestant England". Nevertheless, despite the fact that in our day truth is fallen in the street, better days are on the wing when Rome shall fall and the true Gospel witness shall be revived and prevail (Revelation 11:11, 20:2).

British Churches

Figures show that 52% of British people now have no religious affiliation at all. The Church of England continues to depart from its biblical foundations, as we see from daily press reports. Over the last 45 years, numbers attending the Church of England have fallen by half. The choice of a new Archbishop of Canterbury is on the agenda this year and the contest once again draws attention to the errors of Erastianism and Episcopalianism that prevail in the Church of England.

The three candidates in the field are the Most Reverend Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Wales, who is a liberal, the Right Reverend Michael Nazir-Ali, who is said to be an evangelical, and the Right Reverend Richard Chartres, who is described as a conservative. If Nazir-Ali is an evangelical after the fashion of George Carey, as is likely, then that will not augur well for the Church of England. Truly evangelical prelates of the Church of England like Bishop Ryle, who adhered to the doctrine of the Reformers, appear to have become entirely extinct.

The biblical system of Church government has been rejected by the Church of England and as a consequence that Church has little say in the appointment of its chief officer. The Crown Appointments Commission have the responsibility of drawing up a shortlist but Mr. Blair, the Prime Minister, has the real say and even the General Synod has no veto over Mr. Blair's choice. One writer has said that the Archbishop of Canterbury "will owe his position entirely to Tony Blair". The Queen gives final approval but will not overrule Mr. Blair. One friend of the family has described Mr. Blair as half a Roman Catholic! Others have described him as an "an active evangelical Anglican" but he himself is reported as saying that he would not convert to Rome as long as he remains Prime Minister, which suggests that he is a Roman Catholic in all but name. Such "Canterbury Tales" have provoked some to renew calls for the disestablishment of the Church of England. Roman Catholics do not want disestablishment because their ambition is to swallow up the Church of England and take its place. May the Lord forbid this. These "theatricals", however, need to be abandoned and our National Churches should return to the biblical system set forth so clearly and logically in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Presbyterian Form of Church Government.

The Church of Scotland continues to move further away from the scriptural position taken up at the Reformation. Last year the Panel on Doctrine continued the presentation of their findings on the ministry. The Working Party on Ordination co-operated with representatives from the United Free Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The ecumenical trend at the expense of truth is accelerating the decline. The Church of Scotland is undermining and changing the peculiar and distinct position of the ministry and is moving away from the biblical position.

The Free Church continues to drift from the position of the 1843 Free Church in the general direction of the Church of Scotland. The Free Church Continuing and the Free Church are going to court over the property issue. The

constitutional position of each body will no doubt be examined in great detail, whatever the outcome may be. The Associated Presbyterian Church is gradually disappearing as the people are absorbed into other churches. The difference between the APC and the Free Presbyterian Church of 1893 becomes ever more apparent. We wonder whether the rank and file of the APC know that their claim to be the true Free Presbyterian Church is the basis of their claim to our property? Any person should be able to see that there are no grounds upon which the APC can justifiably sustain such a claim.

Overseas

It is sad to read of the President of the United States of America, George W. Bush, lauding the Man of Sin last year at the dedication of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Centre. "I'm grateful," said Mr. Bush, "that Pope John Paul II chose Washington as the site of this centre. It brings honour and it fills a need. We are thankful for the message. We are also thankful for the messenger, for his personal warmth and prophetic strength; for his good humour and his bracing honesty; for his spiritual and intellectual gifts; for his moral courage, tested against tyranny and against our own complacency. Always, the Pope points us to the things that last and the love that saves. We thank God for this rare man, a servant of God and a hero of history." Does Mr. Bush really believe that the Pope of Rome points us to the things that last and the love that saves?

In February, reports appeared in the press of the rape and torture of Christians in China. Death sentences have been passed on several leading Christians in recent months. The brave Chinese official who risked his life in leaking documentation of the barbaric treatment of Christians in China is to be commended. The brutal sectarian conflict in Gurjarat, Northern India, between Hindu and Muslim mobs, where hundreds of people have been killed, some by being burnt alive, stemmed from a conflict over so-called holy sites. This shows the danger of false teachings that make buildings and sites, holy places of worship.

Although darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people we have no reason to be discouraged. Jacob is small but the word of promise is: "Fear not little flock; for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). While the Free Presbyterian Church endeavours to maintain a faithful Gospel witness in various parts of the world, we and all who love the Truth long for the full answer to the prayer, "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen" (Psalm 72:19).

MORALS

The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is reported to have said recently, "Whatever our faults, Britain is a very moral nation with a strong sense of right and wrong, and that moral fibre will defeat the fanaticism of terrorists and their supporters". It is our conviction that this statement ignores Britain's desperate

weakness, and so fails to identify the solution. There is one word that characterises the state of our nation morally – confusion. There is a hue and cry against people hunting foxes with hounds and horses, and the Scottish Executive supports their cause with legislation. But those who lift up their voice to protect living but unborn human beings, full of wondrous potential, meet outraged and irrational opposition. Again, sexually transmitted diseases are bringing what seems to be continents of people to their graves, but the UK’s laws encourage further promiscuity. There is a will in the corridors of power to shield children within their families, but the same body of power exposes children to sexually explicit material in schools. Lawful marriage, and the rearing of children within the framework of a stable relationship, with their fathers and mothers around them, is spoken of as the bedrock of society, but teachers may yet be disciplined if they do not teach children that a homosexual relationship is as normal as marriage between one man and one woman.

We believe that a sovereign God rules over all the earth and that finally the nations of the world will willingly bow to Him. However, we also believe that the apostle Paul identifies the opposition with which a witnessing Christian Church has to engage in this world, until these days come. He says: “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Sodomy

In the 1950s the UK Department of Health recorded 100,000 cases affected by sexually transmitted diseases. In the 1990s the figure (from the same source) was over 800,000 (*Britain in Sin*: Christian Voice).

“By 2003 it is feared that there will be 29,000 people in the country with HIV, compared with 20,800 at the beginning of this year. In Scotland, more than 3,000 people have been infected with HIV, of whom 1,150 have died, says the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health. It was estimated that throughout the world about three million people died from Aids in 2000. . . . The rapid and relentless spread of this fearful disease is a compelling witness to the dreadful consequences of the sin which is its main cause. There are other causes which do not involve any sin, but transgression of the Seventh Commandment continues to be the principal cause. The witness of Scripture is loud and clear: ‘Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap’ (Galatians 6:7)” (*Free Presbyterian Magazine*, January 2001).

The UK, in 1967, legalised homosexual acts between consenting adults. In 1994 the age of consent was lowered from 21 to 18. Now the Government has lowered the age of consent further from 18 to 16 by passing the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, although the House of Lords rejected the proposal three times.

On the occasion of the last mentioned surrender of moral ground the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* commented: “Despite the fact that the Bill exposes

both boys and girls, at an age at which they are still children in law, to the predatory activities of older men . . . the Government . . . pressed ahead, in the face of the clearest medical and ethical evidence about the dangers of this vile perversion. . . . In its determination to overcome all opposition and suppress further debate, the Government used the Parliament Act (a rarely-used procedure that was originally adopted for major constitutional issues; it has always been reserved for such issues and not used in matters of conscience). . . . Baroness Young, who has led opposition to the Bill for the last two years, accused the Government of behaving in a ‘completely dictatorial manner’ towards Parliament” (Vol. 106 No. 1).

The General Teaching Council for England (GTC), the new regulator for the teaching profession, produced a draft code for teachers in 2001. This code would have required all teachers to fully respect differences of sexual orientation. Though it was intended that the Code would have had legal status and employers taking disciplinary action against teachers would have inevitably used it, it has now been stripped of its formal legal status, and substantial changes for the better have been made to it. We have reason to be thankful that there was sufficient pressure put upon the GTC on this occasion to change their direction, but it is alarming to see the length to which such influential bodies as these are prepared to go in order to normalise homosexual practices.

The *Daily Mail* reported (5th March 2002) that “Homosexual couples and unmarried partners have been granted a raft of new rights in a stealth operation by the Scottish Executive”. The paper says that next of kin status has been given to those who have been living together for six months. “Bills have been quietly amended to ensure that cohabittees and [homosexual] partners are treated in the same way as spouses.” The paper says that the Scottish Executive has “effectively declared war on the one institution it should be shoring up urgently as the best antidote to social disintegration”, and “The Scottish Parliament has a vendetta against marriage: that became obvious during the Section 28 controversy, when it stubbornly resisted public pressure to acknowledge its status, even in the mildest terms. MSPs are recklessly undermining the most effective instrument of social stability.” The Scottish Executive expect to publish plans for changes to Family law in Scotland, the *Mail* says.

In Westminster, MPs are drawing up plans to give homosexuals the same rights as married couples. According to the Christian Institute, these changes involve “what would surely be the most radical change to family law in English legal history”. Homosexual partners make up a small percentage of all households, “Yet under the [proposed] Bill virtually all the legal rights and privileges of married couples are handed to homosexual couples who have lived together for six months and register their partnership”. The Institute says that such a proposal, “completely dismantles the Western legal tradition whereby marriage is accorded special respect and protection. . . . It equates [homosexual] liaisons and temporary relationships with marriage. It gives the legal privileges of married couples to the 50,000 [homosexual] households but

the law continues to withhold them from the 3.4 million people who share a home . . . [for example] two spinsters who lived together for 40 years gain nothing from the Bill unless they pretend to be in a lesbian partnership.”

The Word of God speaks of homosexuality as an evidence of a reprobate mind, the degrading practice of those who have been given over to vile affections, by God. “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. . . . For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Romans 1:24, 26-28). In spite of the clear biblical teaching regarding the sinfulness of homosexual behaviour, and the medical evidence of its dangers, we see Westminster and Holyrood bow to the pressure of those who demand the protection of the law, while they seduce our children, and the rights and privileges of married couples while they undermine marriage. Those who read their Bibles, believing that God speaks there authoritatively, view the strong influence of this reprobate mind in our land with great alarm.

Drug abuse

“Mr. Keith Hellawell, who was formerly in charge of implementing the Government’s policy on drugs, recently stated that all heroin addicts he had met said their substance abuse began with cannabis. . . . The country’s leading drugs expert, Professor John Henry, . . . warned: ‘Scientific studies show overwhelmingly that cannabis use causes physical and mental harm.’ Baroness Susan Greenfield, Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford University, agrees: ‘A fundamental fallacy lies at the heart of the calls to decriminalise cannabis. This is the belief that the drug is essentially harmless. As a neuroscientist, I have been convinced by in-depth research that this is untrue. In fact, there is a wealth of evidence to show that cannabis may be dangerous, causing permanent long-term damage to the brain and undermining the mental health of users’” (*Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 106 No. 12).

Despite the opinion of the experts quoted above, the Home Secretary, Mr. David Blunkett, announced that cannabis is to be reclassified from Class B to Class C; it has been effectively decriminalised, resulting, no doubt in its increased use and a legalised gateway to harder drugs.

Cocaine use has increased fivefold among young people over the past two years.

Yet in drugs education resources, recommended by the Scottish Executive for use by teachers, it is recommended that children are to be told that crack cocaine is not necessarily addictive, and that most drug users come to little harm. One teaching pack says: “Teachers sometimes feel under a lot

of pressure to teach from an anti-drug perspective.” They are advised to “resist this pressure”. This “liberal” approach exacerbates what is already a grave problem.

Sex education in schools

Some of the Scottish Executive’s recommended material for sex education in schools has been described as “the lurid index of a pornographic magazine”. Children from the youngest age would be exposed to vile and degrading suggestions, if some of the recommended material were to be used in schools. And the astonishing fact is, that in some regions it is reported that this degrading material is being used. It is gratifying to know that four councils in Scotland have banned the Executive’s sex education guidelines within their borders.

Closely associated with this topic is the government policy to provide contraception for youngsters to avoid unwanted pregnancies, especially among those who are under 18 years of age. An article in the *Times* (5th March 2002) states that “Access to contraception does not reduce teenage pregnancies according to new research”. The paper goes on to say that there is some evidence that “greater access to family planning services was associated with an increase in under age pregnancy”. Britain has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Europe. The heedless insensibility with which the Government ignores the moral degeneracy of our nation might be gauged by reports in the press of the shocking indecency of our Prime Minister wearing an image of a naked woman on his shirt cuff while representing Great Britain in Australia this Spring.

Discipline in the home

While the Scottish Executive is recommending material that would degrade our children, should teachers expose them to it, they also seek to defend children from violence in the home. They will not, however, simply legislate against cruelty in the home, they also intend to interfere with the parent’s right to exercise loving discipline. The Word of God forbids using violence against our children, but it does not forbid using physical chastisement. “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15). “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Proverbs 13:24). The present state of morals in society is a fruit of our policy regarding the punishment of offenders, whether in schools, in the home or in society at large. How perfectly apt the words of King Solomon: “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15). We believe that our present moral degeneracy is a rod for the back of a foolish nation that has been too wise in its own eyes to show respect to the law of God. Solomon said: “A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool’s back” (Proverbs 26:3).

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

Abortion

Those who pity foxes succeeded in having fox hunting banned in Scotland (though at the time of writing it is understood that there is to be an appeal against the ruling), while on the other hand, those who pity the unborn child cannot get their voice of concern heard.

The Bourne Judgement in 1937 in effect allowed abortion on the grounds of mental health on a girl who had been raped. At that time, the practice of abortion was completely governed by the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861 which allowed a pregnancy to be terminated only to save the life of the mother. “When the judgement was first made nobody dreamed that it would lead ultimately to abortion on demand and it took decades for it to affect the medical profession. By the 1950s, however, if women knew ‘where to go’, had enough money and were prepared to tell a psychiatrist that they would commit suicide unless the pregnancy was ended, it was pretty easy to get an abortion” (*The Right to Life*).

There are about 600 abortions carried out every working day in this country, and the number is increasing every year. As a nation, we have stood by while the most fundamental human obligation to its own offspring has been violated. The light of 6,000,000 potentially useful lives have been put out in the last half of the 20th century. How many men and women of vision might this nation have produced had we not begun and supported this incomprehensible slaughter?

We must not forget that a proportion, however small, of these abortions were carried out to save the mother’s life. With such we feel the deepest sympathy. It is with the reckless and selfish extinguishing of the unborn that right-minded people are appalled.

Euthanasia

Voluntary Euthanasia societies say that we ought to have a choice in the matter of death, whether people die “in a way that reflects their living, perhaps retaining some control over the dying process and maybe the time and circumstances of death and, even if it is never used, holding the key to the door marked ‘Exit’” (Scottish Voluntary Euthanasia Society).

The recent history of the pressure to legalise euthanasia shows who is gaining ground in the argument.

In 1984 the Supreme Court of the Netherlands declared that voluntary euthanasia is acceptable subject to ten clearly defined conditions. Since then, doctors in the Netherlands have been free from fear of prosecution for taking away the life of a patient within the parameters of that law. Each year some 2000 people have their life taken away there. That figure is bound to rise now that the lower house of the Dutch Parliament has made euthanasia legal.

There is a worldwide trend in the same direction as the following information shows.

In 1985 Lord Jenkins presented a Bill to the Lords to repeal a relevant clause of the English Suicide Act, but was defeated. In 1990 Roland Boyes MP presented a Bill to Parliament in favour of euthanasia. He too was defeated. In 1991 the United States Congress passed the “Patient Self-Determination Act”, compelling hospitals to respect Living Wills. The British Medical Association then declared its support for Living Wills.

In 1995 the British Medical Association produced a Code of Practice on Living Wills. In 1996 Northern Territory, Australia, passed the first law in the world to allow active voluntary euthanasia. This allowed doctors to administer a lethal injection. The law was overturned six months later, by the Australian Federal Government. In the same year Paul Brady was admonished and set free by the Scottish Courts for assisting in the suicide of his brother.

Human cloning

The Government is proposing to amend the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 to legalise “therapeutic” cloning. Cloning, whether “therapeutic”, for research purposes, or “reproductive”, involves generating human life. Allowing therapeutic cloning would result in an indefinite number of embryos being cloned and then destroyed in the course of research.

Intolerance of Christian principles

One of the functions of the minister of Christ is to act as a watchman. His duty as such, is to identify and expose the movements of the enemies of Jesus Christ, and of true religion, such as the papal antichrist, and the followers of the false prophet Mohammed.

The period covered by this report saw both the Westminster and the Holyrood Parliaments produce documents for legislation which many believed encroached on the Protestant Church’s liberty to serve her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Legislation was pushed through the House of Commons, ostensibly to counter terrorism but containing far-reaching measures which could criminalise the minister’s duty to be a watchman. In the providence of God, the House of Lords proved to be an effective check, and that freedom of speech, purchased by the blood of our reforming and covenanting forefathers, is with us still.

In Scotland, where there is no upper chamber to check a wilful and reckless Executive, the same fears, concerning the loss of freedom of speech in our pulpits, were raised with regard to Mr. Donald Gorrie’s consultation document, *Protection from Sectarianism and Religious Hatred*.

Mr. Gorrie’s concern it seems was sparked off mainly by sectarian violence at football matches. This problem was effectively addressed in Ulster by the disbanding of those football clubs which fostered sectarianism. The threat of disbanding clubs might be an effective deterrent for football sectarianism in Scotland. But Mr. Gorrie has cast his net further afield.

The proposed Bill's main proposition is that a code of conduct should be drawn up by those organisations deemed to have the potential for sectarian violence, among which are not only football clubs but churches (Mr. Gorrie was anxious to point out that denominational schools would not be affected by his proposals).

It is with justified resentment, that we find sectarian football clubs and the Visible Church banded together as organisations, whose activities are held to be of such a character, as to require the passing of new laws to restrain them. That Mr. Gorrie failed to draw a line between religious hooligans and the historic biblical Christianity which we as a Church seek to uphold is, quite frankly, sinister. We fear that there is such ignorance of true religion in Scotland that strongly held biblical views, and the behaviour of drunkards and others who perpetrate violence in the name of the Christian religion, are viewed as different manifestations of the same principles. No cognisance is taken of the fact that those who have deeply held beliefs, adhering firmly to the biblical principles, regarding Truth and error, as expressed in the Word of God, and summarised in the Westminster Confession of Faith, are among the most law-abiding, friendly and public-spirited people in the nation.

As to a code of conduct required by the State, any person with a knowledge of Scottish Church history knows that the Presbyterian Church is, as a matter of principle, totally opposed to the imposition of a code of conduct upon the Church of Christ by the State.

Over the centuries, the Scottish people have contended for the non-interference of Church and State in one another's province. This has contributed significantly to the freedoms enjoyed by our people. The Church, like any other body, is subject to the censures of the magistrate if guilty of a crime that comes within his province, but to impose a code upon the Church and introduce a mechanism which makes appeal to a body outside of the Church part of the Church's formal procedures is a reversal of the freedoms secured at great cost in the past.

How would the imposition of a code of conduct upon the members of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland change the attitudes of hooligans on the terraces, or drunkards in a public house? That we would be required by law to promise that we do not commit crimes we never intended to commit is objectionable. It is an unwarranted intrusion on the liberty of any legitimate corporation of subjects to require them, in effect, to bind themselves, to take steps to promise not to commit a crime themselves, or, to prevent members of the corporation from committing an act of violence, or other breach of the law, which neither they nor those associated with them, have the least inclination to commit. The law should take to do with those accused of crimes, not to try to get law-abiding citizens to repudiate actions which they have no intention of committing or to repudiate views either which they do not hold, or which they are entitled to hold and to propagate.

Whether this Bill will make it to the statute books is not yet clear, but the wheels of change have been set in motion. Unless the Most High intervene, the

momentum that changed attitudes and laws regarding the sanctity of human life, and the importance of legitimate marriage to society, will bring about the silencing of all who wish to oppose the enemies of Jesus Christ.

The Synod of this Church strongly opposed such a Bill in May last year. They “envisaged legislation of the kind proposed easily becoming a tool for those seeking to suppress legitimate views and criticism and biblical evangelism”.

Pressure to change the Act of Settlement

It was argued by Kevin MacNamara MP in his Private members’ Bill recently supported in the House of Commons, that there is unfairness in the constitution of the throne of Great Britain, which allows the British Monarch to be, or be married to, a person of almost any persuasion whatever, except a Roman Catholic. It is usually the case that Private members’ Bills run out of Parliamentary time and do not become law; we trust that that will be the case in this instance.

However, this is but the latest attempt to charge the Act of Settlement with bias against Roman Catholicism. The fact that a Roman Catholic association with the throne is forbidden was called by one member of the Upper House, Britain’s “murky little secret”.

The reason for this exclusion, let us remind ourselves, is, that, no organisation ever so embittered the British people as the Papacy did. We firmly believe that Romanism poses the same danger to our religious and civil liberties, today, as it did when a chastened British people enshrined, in the Act of Settlement, as a warning, to all future generations, their grievous experience of popery. There they state that “it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Popish Prince, or any king or queen married to a Papist”. The *Times* article, “Paedophile priests to be ‘tried’ without police” (9th January 2002), which speaks of a desire within the papacy to deal with the criminal offences of its priests internally, confirms our fear of popery. Was not a powerful, corrupt and unaccountable papacy, the grief which our forefathers bitterly regretted, and warned succeeding generations against in the Act of Settlement?

CONCLUSION

We have scratched the surface of Britain’s moral degeneracy.

The two great spheres of our national life, the Church and the State, flounder, bow and submit to the clamorous voice of immorality. Is Mr. Blair’s Britain “a very moral nation with a strong sense of right and wrong”? We fear that, having abandoned the Word of God, there is strong evidence that we have little idea of what morality is. While we wish to respect the office of our Prime Minister, we profoundly regret his immoral example and double standards: speaking on one occasion of being the leader of a nation of moral strength, and on another embellishes the cuff of his shirt with the image of a naked woman.

To a degenerate Israel God spoke by his prophet: “I will go [and] return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early” (Hosea 5:15). This nation must repent of its sins. As it is prophetically said of Israel may it soon be true of Britain: “A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping [and] supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, [and] they have forgotten the Lord their God” (Jeremiah 3:21).

To those who love the peace and prosperity of our land we commend the Word of God as our infallible guide in all matters, the throne of grace as the place to seek mercy with weeping unto the Lord for our sins as a nation, so that we and our children might enjoy the promise made to Israel of old: “And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying” (Isaiah 65:19).

When we return wholeheartedly to the faith of the Word of God then we will have the moral fibre, the strength of character and that quietness of conscience that will make our nation great again.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. J. MacDonald

FOR as long as most of us can remember this Committee’s reports to the Synod tell of increasing Sabbath desecration year by year. This year has been no exception. Whatever sphere of society we consider at either local or national level, the profanation of the Lord’s Day is the rule rather than the exception. We cannot say this in a detached way, for it is our nation that is sinning so. Sabbath breaking is a sin against God and, in common with all breaches of God’s Law, will bring God’s judgement if there is no repentance. We are in danger of taking our standards from society rather than the Word of God and every person within our bounds as a Church needs to beware of such an attitude. It is a solemn matter to trifle with God’s Law and it would be hard to maintain that our Sabbath keeping is on the same level as that of the previous generation; for example, by our unguarded conversation. It is against this sad background that the Committee sought to carry out its task of maintaining a scriptural witness on behalf of the Sabbath.

As we reported in previous years, sport has been one of the leading causes of Sabbath breaking. With this in mind the Committee wrote a brief letter as follows:

Restoring the Moral Fabric of Our Nation by Restoring the Sabbath Day

The obligation to obey the Fourth Commandment which regulates the Christian Sabbath is being more and more erased from the life of our constituted Christian nation.

It cannot be denied that the neglect of the day set apart by Christ and His apostles is due, in a considerable measure, to organised sporting events, and other activities, on the Lord's Day. Though some of these events may be lawfully arranged for other days of the week, arranging them on the day which God has set apart in its entirety for public and private worship constitutes a flagrant disregard of God's authority.

When the day appointed for our instruction in righteousness is dedicated to other pursuits the beneficial effects of that instruction may well be lost, and the moral fabric of our nation will continue to disintegrate. In the light of these things we appeal to you not to organise sporting events on the Lord's Day, but to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy".

Copies of this letter were sent to the Headquarters of SAF, SFA, SRU and SGU.

The Committee approved a letter to be sent to football clubs on our learning of their playing, or preparing to play, football matches on the Sabbath. This letter was in the following terms:

I write on behalf of the Committee to protest against your team playing a football match on Lord's Day, 17th February. We would respectfully point out to you that the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, is the Christian Sabbath and is bound by all the strictures of the Fourth Commandment which forbids all work on that day except works of "necessity and mercy". Playing football matches cannot possibly come within that category.

To use any part of the Sabbath Day for our own pleasure or profit is to rob God of His Day. It is to openly defy His express Commandment. It is no defence that many others are engaged in similar actions and the Word of God leaves us in no doubt that He will deal with Sabbath breakers.

You have sinned yourselves and brought sin on your players and staff, as well as on all who were enticed to watch the game. No doubt your motive was material gain but such material gain cannot but have the curse of God on it and will not profit in the day when "everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God".

We would urge you not to take part in such matches in the future.

As a general rule when sporting organisations do respond to letters of protest it is a mere acknowledgement of our letters. One Football Club sought to justify themselves by saying: "Our experiences of matches on Sunday are that they tend to be more relaxed occasions where it is more likely that families will attend the fixtures together." Such replies cause us to wonder if we are

making ourselves understood in our protests. Some fifty letters were written to Football Clubs.

The Committee continue to feel concern at the Royal Family and the Government in their habitual profanation of the Lord's Day. A letter was written to Prince William protesting at his travelling to St. Andrews on the Sabbath to begin his studies there. We regard this as a shameful example to set before the student population of our nation who are only too ready to take up the lead given by those they regard as "role models" when they say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:3). This protest was not acknowledged.

The Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable Tony Blair, has been much to the fore in Sabbath breaking. The Committee protested to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the opening of the Labour Party Conference, saying:

We as a Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, wish to assure you that, in these times of great wickedness, our prayer to God for you and your Cabinet is that your safety will be preserved. We also pray that the Lord would give you wisdom to know how to effectively address the great evil, not only of international, but also of national, religious terrorism.

As a Committee of our Church whose purpose is to seek to restore the observation of the Christian Sabbath, we acknowledge that, in the time of war, many works of necessity and mercy have to be done on the Lord's Day, but we do regret that the 2001 Labour Conference met on the Christian Sabbath. We respectfully remind you of the encouragement to honour God's Law and God's Day from the living oracles of the Word of God. "For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:3).

This letter was curtly acknowledged.

Later, the Committee protested again to the Prime Minister for addressing a Conference organised by the TUC on the Lord's Day. The following extracts are quoted from this letter:

I have been instructed to write to you on behalf of our Committee to express the dismay felt by many, at your flagrant breach of the Fourth Commandment. We refer to such events as a recent Trade Union Conference, held on the Lord's Day, at which you spoke. We can hardly do a greater dishonour, to Him who has set apart one day of the week for His worship, than to steal it from Him, and use it for our own employment.

While we pray for your safety and prosperity, as head of our Parliament, and the peace and prosperity of the United Kingdom, under your leadership, we fear that your continued disregard of the authority of the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ (who is also

called the King of kings), in respect to the sanctity of the Sabbath, will bring the nation to ruin.

The Law governing the Christian Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it"), is in our day despised; but when did the scorn of lawbreakers ever diminish the authority of the law to bind the conscience, or the judge to condemn?

If the giving of the Moral Law, as we have it, in the Bible, supposes a Lawgiver, to whom we are accountable, as we firmly believe this to be the case, then our wisdom is to honour Him, and not to despise Him.

We account the issue we have raised to be of the utmost importance to the wellbeing of our nation, if not its very existence. Sabbath desecration must be viewed as the bane of a nation's prosperity. While we feel the greatest respect to your high and illustrious office, yet, in the prosecution of our most solemn responsibilities of our own office, we remonstrate with you, with the same argument as Nehemiah used when he contended with the Sabbath breakers of his day: "Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this nation upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath" (Nehemiah 13:17,18).

The Committee have also had to protest to local government for a variety of Sabbath profanation. A letter written to the Chairman of the Education Committee of the Highland Region Council may suffice as an example to illustrate this aspect of the Committee's work:

I write to protest in the strongest terms at your Committee's decision to begin working at the new Ardnamurchan High School at Strontian. This is a policy that is alien to the cultural ethos of the West Highlands. However, we base our objections on the Law of God which states quite clearly, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy . . ." (Exodus 20:8).

The Fourth Commandment is an integral part of the Moral Law and is as binding as any of God's commandments and, although there are no civil sanctions against Sabbath breakers, they are provoking God by blatant disregard of His Law. You are reported in the newspapers as being "very unhappy about Sunday working"; we urge you that your

Committee reconsiders its decision and seek other ways of finishing this work without desecrating the Lord's Day.

It would be better, if needs must, that the school be late in opening than that God's displeasure should rest on the Committee and its employees as a result of defying God's Law.

We would respectfully ask you to give serious consideration to the objections we have raised in the letter.

A letter was written to the Manager of Scot Rail protesting against the introduction of an all-year Sabbath rail service between Wick and Inverness and between Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh. We cannot but note that within a few weeks of opening of this service the Kyle to Inverness line was closed by a land slippage. In the reply received, this further Sabbath breaking was justified on grounds of public demand. The fact that the Stornoway Fisherman's Co-operative has voted to remove a ban on its members from fishing on the Lord's Day indicates how widespread Sabbath profanation is.

Some of the replies received by the Committee indicate the public pressure there is for Sabbath trading all year. The extracts given are from a national chain store:

As a national business we ourselves campaigned against Sunday trading and we were very much in agreement with the "Keep Sunday Special" campaign. However, as I am sure you will be only too aware, Parliament decided otherwise and agreed that with certain restrictions Sunday could be treated as a normal trading day by business. That decision resulted in a number of retailers starting to trade on Sundays and gradually Sunday has grown for many to be a very important trading day.

I fully understand the sentiments that you express in your letter, but I am sure that you will also appreciate that as a business we found ourselves in the position whereby we were losing quite considerable levels of business to those other retailers that were opening on Sundays. We were thus losing trade and more importantly there has, as a result of the situation I have described, come an ever-increasing demand from our customers to open our doors on Sunday all year round.

With regards to your point about our staff, it is worth highlighting the fact that we give every member of our staff the right to opt-in to work Sundays or the right to opt-out and that is completely their decision; a number have decided to opt-out and that is perfectly acceptable and proper. As such, both our customers and staff have the choice as to whether or not they wish to either shop or work on a Sunday.

While business cannot shift this responsibility to the Government it is clear that many feel themselves forced to trade on Sabbath. Our report does not make for cheerful reading but will leave sad and heavy the hearts of the Lord's people who love the Lord's Day. We recall the words of a worthy late minister of the Church who said: "I am afraid we will not see a return to scriptural Sabbath observance till the Spirit of the Sabbath is again poured out." It is that outpouring of the Holy Spirit that is greatly needed in our day.

Still in our day we must do our duty in witnessing for the truth and testifying against the sin of Sabbath breaking. We commend the work and witness of the Committee to the people of the Church and would ask the praying people amongst us to pray for the Lord's blessing on our feeble efforts to uphold the sanctity of His Day.

JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev J. MacLeod

General

Over the course of another year, the Committee has endeavoured to attend to the duties laid upon it by the Synod. As usual, most of the business transacted has been mostly of a routine nature and, apart from some difficulties arising from the volatility of the political situation in Zimbabwe such as the fluctuation of currency exchange rates and the difficulty of obtaining basic commodities, all has gone well. With the Presidential election now over, it is hoped that stability will now return and that our Mission work, which has as its principal aim the salvation of never-dying souls, will be allowed to continue unimpeded. At the time of writing, the problems resulting from the prolonged drought and the economic state of the country are assuming serious proportions. In November, Miss Sheila MacLeod, C.A., visited Bulawayo and carried out a review of our office and accounting procedures there. In Kenya the political situation appears to be more stable and the administration of the Mission has not been affected and for that we are very thankful. In Zimbabwe, the Oikonomos Foundation representative has been very active in promoting the projects for which this Dutch "Christian institution for the public good" has provided the funds. We are grateful for their help. But were it not for the sustained and ever-increasing financial help provided by our long-term friends – the Mbumba Zending – our work in spreading the Gospel in Africa would have to be severely curtailed. We are much indebted to them and most grateful.

In February, the Committee decided to review its work with regard to the Jews and the Rev. J. R. Goldby was asked to look into the matter.

Zimbabwe

Our staff, both expatriate and indigenous, continue to serve the Church and Mission in a most devoted and exemplary manner. They have done so over the course of another year in the face of problems and difficulties incidental to missionary work and which have to be met and resolved. Individual reports will, no doubt, draw attention to some of these matters. The Rev. P. Mzamo continues to labour on at Mbumba and in all the other congregations over which he exercises pastoral oversight. We are, we trust, grateful to the Most High for prolonging his usefulness and in continuing to uphold him in his duties at what is now an advanced age. We are likewise grateful that the Rev. Z. Mazwabo, notwithstanding the physical disability of blindness, continues to labour on in Mashonaland, and at the same time look after the Bulawayo and Ingwenya congregations with all outstations. The Committee has done their utmost to provide whatever equipment is available to help people suffering from his disability and which will serve to assist in lightening his burden and especially in preparing for the pulpit. At Ingwenya, the presence of the Rev. A. Ndebele continues to be much missed. He is now domiciled in Bulawayo.

The Primary School and the John Tallach Secondary School continue to provide education of high quality and the results speak for themselves. Mr. Bonakele Ncube and Miss Norma MacLean have, in their respective spheres, been responsible for the smooth running of the Boarding School. Such is its reputation that many parents seek places there for their children and the extent of the catchment area indicates how well-known the John Tallach Secondary School is. Miss MacLean was on furlough from April until September. During Miss MacLean's absence, Miss K. M. MacAulay took on many other duties in addition to those to which she was already shouldering including and not least, Ndebele Bible revision. We are grateful to her for that. She arrived home in November for a well-earned furlough and is due to return at the beginning of April. Mr. Jake van Praag returned home to Australia at the end of September after serving the Mission well for two years. We are grateful not only to him but also to his wife for all the work which they did throughout that period. Miss Rhoda MacKay was a welcome addition to the school staff when she arrived at Ingwenya in January.

The Committee appreciated the services rendered to the Mission by the Rev. K. D. MacLeod when he resided at Ingwenya for a period of two months – October-December 2001 – tutoring our African students.

At Mbumba, the hospital continues to provide much-needed medical facilities and we are thankful that Dr. Benschop has been enabled, over yet another year, to supervise the work there. Miss Margaret MacAskill returned home in August and, as reported in last year's Report, is not able to return at the end of her furlough. The Committee is grateful to Miss MacAskill for all her work. We are also most grateful to Miss Jessie Coote for answering the call for help and she, ever willing, has been labouring at Mbumba since August. Miss Louise Leiper also returned to Mbumba in August and has continued to perform her duties in her usual exemplary manner. We are sorry that she has

decided to resign from her post and we take this opportunity of expressing the Committee's gratitude to her for all the service faithfully rendered over the years. We wish her well.

Mr. Teus Benschop has continued with the work of revising the Ndebele Bible and has made excellent progress. This work is being done under the supervision of the Trinitarian Bible Society and its interest and help are much appreciated. Mr. Nathaniel Mpofo has been recruited to help in this work with the expenses involved being met by a Dutch group.

Kenya

The induction of the Rev. Keith M. Watkins took place at a meeting of the Zimbabwe Presbytery held at Sengera on 25th July 2001. In accordance with the arrangement approved by the Synod, the Rev. N. M. Ross and the Rev. J. R. Tallach were present, together with Mr. E. Zikhali, the Presbytery Assistant Clerk. The Mission Administrator, Mr. Hugh MacKenzie and his wife, had prepared the way for this event; one which attracted much interest in the community. Since then the numbers attending have continued to increase. Recently nearly 400 were present on an ordinary Sabbath, many of them having, through lack of seating and space inside, to squat on the outside veranda listening through the open windows.

Mr. Watkins and wife are making good progress in their endeavour to become fluent in the Ekegusii language and the Committee is giving them as much help and encouragement as possible.

The Mission, we are glad to report, continues to be administered in a most efficient manner. For this we are grateful to Mr. Hugh MacKenzie and to all who help him, whatever sphere of labour they occupy. A year ago, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh MacKenzie, self-denyingly, and at very short notice, returned to Sengera. At the beginning of April they arrived home on well-earned furlough and Mr. Watkins, who is also the Mission Superintendent, will, with the help of his wife, Mr. Mishael Gwaro and other members of staff, take on the Administrator's work over the period of Mr. MacKenzie's absence. Dr. Jella Camenga, a Dutch linguist with some knowledge of the Ekegusii language, was recruited to help with translation work and spent July and August at Sengera. It was decided to retain Dr. Camenga in a consultative capacity, as required, but working from Holland.

The Omorembe Clinic continues to function under the supervision of Miss Peta van de Ridder, ably assisted by Miss Truus Ringleberg and Miss Celia Renes. In addition, an African nurse was recently employed and she has proved to be very reliable.

Conclusion

We are looking for the coming of His kingdom and, accordingly, we long to see "the stretching forth of Ethiopia's hands unto God". It is in the hope that we shall as a Church and by Divine grace contribute to the dawning of that day that we continue to labour in Africa. It is to the Lord of the harvest that we

are to look for labourers and we are encouraged by the presence of three African students studying in Scotland this year. We pray that more would follow. We commend the work being done in Africa to the prayers of the Lord's people among us.

ZVISHAVANE MISSION REPORT

Rev. Z. Mazvabo

SEPTEMBER 2001 was an important landmark in our history. It marks the twentieth year of the witness of the F.P. Church of Scotland in this part of the world. One looks back with mixed feelings of shame and joy; shame because so little has been done in so long a time, and joy because at least that little has been done. An impression has been made upon individual souls which will remain forever, either to their condemnation or to their salvation and upon the whole area in general. So that there are many who will be silent on that great day when the question is asked, "Friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?". Happy are those who have received the good tidings of the blessed Gospel. However, it is a disturbing thought to notice that so many have gone ahead to receive the things done in their bodies, according to that which they have done, whether it be good or bad.

There are many needy old women at New Canaan, more noticeable in a year such as this one when the supply of bread is cut. We should really be cooking sadza, the staple food, in the morning, and giving it to those who are in need as they arrive, to enable them to sit and listen to the preaching of the Gospel, otherwise they sleep or faint during the service. We now realise that we were better off when we had no fuel than we are now without food to eat.

The congregation of Zvishavane is still small but stable. Mr. Sithole is a deacon who looks after the congregation when the minister is away. In the present arrangement, with the shortage of labourers, the minister follows a timetable, which can keep him away from a congregation for more than a month. For example, the first two months of this year we were occupied thus: 6th January – Inkayi Communion; 13th January – New Canaan and Maware; 20th January – Inyathi and Ingwenya; 27th January – New Canaan Communion; 3rd February – Chiedza and Chiwara; 10th February – Bulawayo and Ingwenya; 17th February – Chiedza and Akori; 24th February – Zenka Communion. We have to keep a timetable just as teachers do in school and sometimes we may be forced to deviate from our timetable but happily in this period we were able to follow it. One can see how many congregations were left out in these two months, except that some congregations were visited during weekday prayer meetings.

The Zvishavane congregation, which we call Ebenezer, needs a proper place of worship. When we started building places of worship in the Zvishavane and Mberengwa districts we only paid \$2 lease for them, then they were raised to \$32. Last year, however, this was raised to over \$1,000 per every place of worship. We leave it to the different congregations to see to the payment of their lease.

Famine is not the only scourge among the people but there is the AIDS pandemic to add to the problem. Although people point to this and to that as a cause of famine, the fact is that we have sinned against the Lord as a nation and as individuals and these problems are as a result of the rod of the Lord upon our backs. Even as it is written, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it can not save; neither his ear heavy, that it can not hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God".

I am thankful that I am still able to see a bit of the beauty of creation, as I travel from Zvishavane to Chiedza. When we have a generous supply of rain, the countryside looks beautiful; the mountains are covered with leaves of assorted colours resembling a beautiful Persian carpet spread over them. The rain makes things beautiful. But when it is dry, and the trees have dropped their leaves in instinctive self defence, all is very ugly. The different structures of rocks, old logs and streamlets look like the uncovered ribs of an undernourished child. I suppose that, nowhere in the whole world is it so vividly illustrated that the beauty of the countryside depends on rain, than in these unpredictable climates. So it is in the Gospel, is it not that without the Holy Spirit everything is dry unfruitful, unprofitable and, in fact, in every way ugly? Even as it is written: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." But when the Holy Spirit is present, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose". These are good lessons for us to learn that we might pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Situated near and around Chiedza are the congregations of Chiwara, Akori, Ingezi and Mnaka. Mnaka is about 50km away from Chiedza across the River Runde and behind the mountain Mnaka in the district of Chibi. The rest are about 20km away from Chiedza. One has to cross the River Ngezi to come to Ingezi congregation, which is in Zvishavane district. Two communions are kept at Chiedza – one on the last Sabbath of May and one on the last Sabbath of November. We had to change the communion at Mnaka to the second week of September because it is difficult to cross the River Runde in April. Two communions are kept at New Canaan – one on the last Sabbath of January and the other on the second Sabbath of August. It is a pity that we are not able to visit these congregations as often as we would and perhaps as often as it is necessary to, because of the lack of labourers. Mashonaland is a vast area and as much in need of the Gospel as it is vast. We hope that one day the Lord will put the call in our heart, and be pleased to answer it – "Come over to Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9).

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. Z. Mazvabo

INGWENYA is made up of five congregations as follows: Ingwenya itself, which is the oldest and the main congregation; Cameron, which is situated along the main railway line near the railway station where Mr. John Radasi was killed by a train; Kadade is also situated along the railway line between Bulawayo and Mbembesi; then Insiza and then Inyathi. Ingwenya is very suitably situated standing aloof from the lines and aloft yet surrounded by them and in full view of the most of them so that they can hear the regular church bells heartily inviting them to the services of the everlasting Gospel. They can never say they did not hear them. Many of the people in the lines have been to school at Ingwenya and some of them still have either children or grandchildren going to school at Ingwenya. I cannot imagine, when I pass through those crowded homes, that there is any single kraal, which does not have a witness of one or more that have passed through the school. Ingwenya is truly a house built upon a hill and a light set upon a bushel and the witness that they have given both from the pulpit and the school has gone far and wide. Many a water-pot has been filled with the water of the Gospel and it is our duty and I remind you all who read this report of our solemn duty to pray that the water be turned into wine. This witness still continues and must continue, hence the need for more missionary teachers to keep the light burning. In the lines itself, many small denominations have a number – I do not know if I can say most of them but I can truly say some of them – led by men who have been both to school and to church at Ingwenya who have now gone away from us. Just one more word before I leave the school. There is nowhere one can travel in the whole of Zimbabwe but one will meet with somebody who has been to school at Ingwenya and, humanly speaking, it was partly through the services of the school that the Mashonaland Mission was started. Mr. Ndebele, who is now laid aside with illness, successfully laboured in this congregation many years but now the work is carried on by two elders, Mr. Manzini and Mr. Moyo, both retired teachers. The assistance of Mr. Van Praag in supplying the congregation, especially the evening service that is usually preached in English, was much appreciated. He has since returned to his home congregation in Australia.

Mr. S. Nxusani, who is also a retired teacher, looks after the congregation of Cameron, which is in the middle of the Xhosa people at Mbembesi. This is an old congregation, which is named after Neil Cameron. Mrs. Mzamo, widow of Rev. Mzamo's brother, used to attend services here, but now she is too old to walk. Together with Mr. Pilani Mzamo, Mr. Nxusani also looks after Kadade. The people who attend services at both Cameron and Kadade are mostly women so that these congregations are solely dependent on these elders for supply. Inyathi and Insiza are both resettlement areas – most of our people in these places came from Mbembesi and settled here. The communion at Inyathi was not kept this last year (2001) because we thought that their attendance was

very low. Each time one of the elders or myself went there only a few were gathered, sometimes surprisingly without even a single child, but they have since improved their attendances and we hope, the Lord willing, to celebrate the death and the resurrection of Christ in obedience to His command. In all these congregations famine is ravaging in a way we have not witnessed before. This famine is a continuation of last year's famine in the first place and a failure of rain this season. Normally, if the last season had been good, people would still have something from their last harvest, but not so this year and then at about the end of February people would be getting something green from this present season but there is nothing. There is a vernacular saying which speaks of hiding from the winter, meaning that the people have something to eat until winter is past but it is not so this year. The government is making an effort to import food but many would not have money to buy it. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven."

ZENKA AND NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. P. Mzamo

IN the kindness of the Lord the Church work is preserved by the Lord Himself as He is the Head of the Church and the Foundation of it. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The witness on the Lord's side continues in the middle of much opposition from the camp of the enemy. We endeavour to be on the Lord's side. As the Lord said: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." We endeavour to declare the message of the Gospel as it is given to us in the Holy Scriptures.

Church services were held on the Lord's Day at all preaching stations and also weekday prayer meetings at places where there are residing elders. The Lord's Supper was administered twice at Zenka and once at Nkayi and Donsa. At Zenka I had the assistance of the Rev. Z. Mazvabo and at Nkayi and Donsa I was on my own.

The sacrament of baptism has been administered to adults who expressed genuine repentance towards God and saving faith in the Lord Jesus and also the children of professing parents. There is an urgent need for a residing minister in these parts of the vineyard.

I sincerely thank the friends in Holland who support the Mission work so generously.

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. P. Mzamo

HITHERTO hath the Lord helped us. We have been kept by the power of God in the faith of the Gospel of the Son of God; kept in the work of the Gospel of Christ, as the apostle said it: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

We as a Church, as a Mission school and hospital, endeavour by teaching and by practice to display the Banner of Truth as it was handed to us by the fathers of the Church. We do this in the midst of great spiritual darkness, ignorance and falsehood which prevails in every corner of the country. However, a little light shines brighter in the midst of great darkness. The Banner of Truth is of the Lord and it shall overcome darkness. It is encouraging that this Banner of Truth is now in Kenya and I hope in the near future it will appear in Malawi.

I hope our students will finish their divinity studies satisfactorily and come to the Mission field, not as priests, but as ministers, as pastors and true labourers, as the Lord of the harvest has said it.

The Church work continued as it has done in the past. Services were held on the Lord's Day in all our places of worship, as well as weekday prayer meetings in some of the preaching stations. It is an unusual sight in our day to see a new face darkening the door of the church on the Lord's Day. However, the faithful come regularly to the worship of the true and living God.

The Lord's Supper was dispensed at Mbuma and Somakantana. Large numbers gathered at both places at the time of the communions. Those who come to stay in the Mission come on foot, carrying their bedding on their heads – some are brought by donkey carts on Friday and are collected on Monday after the service.

The sacrament of baptism was administered to adults who expressed genuine repentance and saving faith and also to children of professing parents. I had several marriages to perform and a number of funerals, where I had to speak a word of comfort to the bereaved, a word of warning to the ungodly and to the rejectors of the Gospel of Christ, being the only means God has provided for the salvation of sinners. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

One male Church member at Singwangombe congregation died suddenly. On Sabbath he witnessed the baptism of his three grandchildren and on the following Tuesday night he passed away. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

The drought is very severe. There will be no new harvest this year almost throughout the whole of the country. It appears there will be loss of human life through starvation and a great number of animals will die.

I now take this opportunity of sincerely thanking the fathers and mothers of the Church, the sons and the daughters and now the grandsons and

granddaughters of the Church who have shown wonderful interest in the Mission work in Zimbabwe. We are now nearing one hundred years of Gospel witness in connection with ourselves, in spite of many setbacks, difficulties and heart-breaking disappointment. Yet interest is alive and active. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. J. Benschop

DURING last year the hospital faced some very trying situations, in such a way that it was difficult to see how essential medical services could be continued. However, through the goodness and mercy of the Most High they have been sustained so far. The biggest problem was the shortage of qualified staff, seriously threatening the continuation of the present hospital services. This has not been solved yet and still needs urgent attention. At present there are 10 vacancies for qualified staff. Two of our expatriate nurses, Lia Terlouw and Margaret Macaskill, decided to resign because of personal circumstances. Lia Terlouw left us in April – this was in connection with the illness of her mother – and Margaret Macaskill, who also felt obliged to take care of her mother at home, left us in October. She had taken charge of the hospital since the time that Jessie Coote left us for Kenya in 1994. They have both served the Mission for many years, Sister Macaskill since 1983 and Sister Terlouw since 1991, both as registered nurse and midwife. They did so, not only by working at the hospital, but also by taking Bible classes for the children and for the staff, and by their personal contacts. Their going meant a heavy blow, since two skilled, experienced, dedicated workers were lost, whose services were most appreciated. Last-minute word came that Louise Leiper and Jessie Coote had decided to come and help out temporarily. The situation was also relieved by attracting local nurses doing locums during their own holidays. This is not ideal though, because it is expensive for the Mission, and it is never possible to plan ahead, as it is often not known how the next month is going to be covered staffwise.

Some of those doing locums have expressed interest in coming here permanently, but so far only one has actually applied. She is now on a trial period, so hopefully it will be possible to employ her permanently. The situation is not attractive to most of them as this is a rural hospital far from town, with all the attendant disadvantages, like lack of electricity, poor availability of food, high bus fares, accommodation not being up to their standard, etc., etc. Also the conditions for those in government service and for those in non government institutions are not the same, which makes it less

attractive to come to a “mission”. For example, allowances are not taxable in government hospitals, but they are being taxed in non government institutions. Also those in non government institutions do not get stand-by and call-out allowances as they do in other places. This on top of the already low salaries, makes it very unattractive for them.

Education for the children is said to be better in town than in rural areas. Accommodation has meanwhile been improved by getting two houses free for qualified staff, which were before used to accommodate the nurse aids. This was not easy, as there was not enough room for everybody in the nurses dormitories, but eventually it was possible by denying any new nurse aids or relief nurse aids a place on the Mission. They were told that if they wanted the job, then they had to look for their own accommodation. Other hospitals in the country are also facing shortages of staff, as the country is being drained of doctors and nurses who have gone for greener pastures. Another measure to ease the shortage of staff was to relieve the qualified staff of duties which were not medical, which could be done, for example, by appointing a new foreman. Mr J. B. Mpfu, the manager, can now go to the foreman when he visits Mbuma, rather than involving the medical staff, which saves them a lot of time. An advertisement has been sent out to all the congregations for a senior clerk/hospital supervisor, who hopefully will be able to relieve the medical personnel of many administrative duties, which are not strictly medical. The actual interviews have been delayed, though, because of the elections and possible unrest in the country.

The hospital suffered also in another way by the departure of Mr. M. Mloyi, who had worked here for many years as a catechist. He was accepted as a student for the ministry, so he was no longer able to continue the work at the hospital. His labour was much appreciated. It had been his duty to take care of worship with staff and patients at the hospital morning and evening. He was also involved in reading and speaking to individual patients in the wards. The worship times are now taken care of, but there is nobody to go and read and speak with the patients when needed. The public address system is working very well, so that patients in the wards can hear the reading at worship times, and they can also listen to the church services via the same system.

Apart from the shortage of staff, there was a financial crisis, because by August 2001 the hospital budget had already been exhausted for the rest of the year, and it could not be seen where to get extra funds from. The FMC kindly agreed to send out more money so that the remaining months could be covered. The reason for the crisis was a combination of factors:

1. Reduced “income” from overseas, because of the fixed low exchange rate at the bank, so that even the pound had no more value when exchanged for Zimbabwean dollars.
2. Our supply of drugs used to come from the Government Medical Stores, who were supplying free of charge, but because the needed drugs were

not always available, we often had to go and buy the much needed drugs privately at a high cost.

3. The increasing cost of drugs and other items. The market does not consider the low bank exchange rates, but follows its own rates, the so-called parallel market rates, which could be 4 or 5 times higher than the “bank rates”. Other companies who had a sort of monopoly on certain drugs decided to charge outrageous prices for common indispensable articles like betadin. To relieve the situation it has been decided to purchase drugs overseas, but this system has not worked very well so far, and it is not known whether this may improve in the future.
4. There was an increase of 42% in the wages of the staff paid by the Mission. These rates are set officially and are binding.
5. All relief workers, whether relief nurses doing locums, or relief nurse aids, or other relief staff, are no longer paid by the government, as they were before, so this was an extra heavy burden on the Mission budget, especially towards the end of the year when the hospital started to rely on qualified staff doing locums.
6. We lost income on grants for expatriate staff, because of long delays in getting their permits extended (they are to be renewed every two years).

From the beginning of the year 2002 the situation will be more difficult, because the Government Medical Stores have been privatised. This means that the drugs which we received free of charge before are now to be bought, either at GMS or at other companies. These drugs were given on top of the government grants, but now they are to be bought using that grant. Everything taken together, the grants from the Ministry of Health and the extra funds from the Mission were, and are, no longer covering the “cost of living”. For the year 2002 an application was made for an increase of the government grant from \$2 million to \$7.2 million. Later it was realised that even the \$7 million would not cover the costs, as the continuing inflation and the extra expense of drugs which now have to be bought using the grant, were not included in the calculations. The government grants for 2002 have been increased, but only to \$5.6 million. This is clearly not sufficient to run the hospital as it is. So extra funds are still needed for the Mission. It needs to be mentioned that the situation has been much relieved, since the Mission managed to secure another legal system of exchange against higher rates. Hopefully this system will not change, as otherwise it is going to be impossible to continue the work

How much we are dependent on the Lord, who is able to provide all the needs, and who has been long-suffering and plenteous in mercy. The spiritual need amongst these people is immense, though that need is not felt. The greatest need is for labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. But also the shortage of medically trained personnel is a burden, because the continuation of the hospital services is threatened, as there is no other medical care for this

community. At the same time the people are struck by the food shortages, which are worse than in the time of the great drought in 1992. Also the crops are burnt because of lack of continuous rain. We want to give it all up into God's hands, and leave it all to the Lord who knows what is best for the Church and for the community. If He comes with His judgements, who can stand before Him? We hope there may be repentance still and a return unto the living God.

Enclosed are the statistics for the year. It may be noticed that there is a reduction in the number of outpatients. This is most likely due to the increased hospital fees, which were thought necessary, although they do not cover the cost in any way.

STATISTICS

	2000	2001
Admissions		
General, including TB	1,394	1082
Maternity	651	616
Discharges		
General.....	1,280	977
Maternity	617	606
Bed occupancy		
General.....	21,865	19,237
Maternity	2,410	5,167
Deaths, including NND		
General.....	146	110
Maternity	3	0
Outpatients		
New.....	18,039	12,750
Total	22,275	17,378
Confinements		
Total	658	605
Live births.....	654	602
Still births	15	13
NND (up to 1 month)	11	12
Antenatal Clinic attendances.....	3,805	3,485
Child Welfare Clinic attendances.....	5,785	5,351
Major Operations		
General.....	—	—
Maternity	2	2

Minor Operations		
General.....	182	146
Maternity	156	127
X-Rays		
Patients.....	474	459
Films	704	719
Ambulance		
Number of trips	139	150
Km covered	26,244	28,464

Five major health problems	2000	2001
<i>Age below 5 years</i>	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Skin disease 3. Diarrhoea 4. Malaria 5. Eye disease	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Skin disease 3. Diarrhoea 4. Malaria 5. Eye disease + malnutrition
<i>Age 5-14 years</i>	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Skin disease 3. Injuries 4. Malaria 5. Eye disease	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Skin disease 3. Malaria 4. Injuries 5. Eye disease
<i>Age 15 and over</i>	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Sexually transmitted disease 3. Malaria 4. Skin disease 5. Dental conditions	1. Acute respiratory infections 2. Sexually transmitted disease 3. Malaria 4. Skin disease 5. Injuries

JOHN TALLACH SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT

Miss N. B. MacLean, Deputy Headmistress

MISS NICOLSON concluded her book on *John Boyana Radasi* with the words: "The fields are white unto harvest. The great need is for the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit, and for the earnest prayer of His people that He would send out labourers unto His harvest." We were forcefully reminded

at Ingwenya of the continuing relevance of these words with the retiral, early in the year, of our much respected pastor, Rev. A. B. Ndebele, after 34 years as minister here. Mr. Ndebele commanded great personal respect and his services and personal warmth were very much appreciated by staff and pupils over the years, so a great blank was left at Ingwenya when he and Mrs. Ndebele left for their retiral home in Bulawayo. Many children have testified that under his sermons something of their own hearts was revealed to them and we trust that such impressions will yet bear fruit to God's glory. It is a great loss to us at the school not to be under a settled ministry but we were very thankful to have Rev. J. Goldby deputising for several weeks and, later on in the year we were very much encouraged to have the hope that new labourers are indeed being sent to the harvest, when Mr. M. Mloyi and Mr. S. Khumalo, the two divinity students, were resident here while undergoing several weeks of tuition with Rev. K. D. Macleod, whose services among us were also much appreciated. In the absence of ministerial supply we were thankful for the efforts of the elders, Mr. P. Moyo and Mr. I. Manzini, who were generously assisted by Mr. J. Van Pragg. In spite of our sense of loss, therefore, we have to acknowledge that "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us".

Mr. and Mrs. Van Praag returned to Australia in September after two years of service: their energetic help and talents in their various spheres was of great assistance and around the Mission we are left with constant reminders of their time with us.

Staffing

The administration of the school has continued under the able direction of Mr. Bonakele Ncube, although his appointment as Headmaster has still not been confirmed by the Ministry of Education. Mr. Ncube was at the head of a staff of 23 teachers supplied by the Ministry of Education; Miss Macaulay assisted as an unaided teacher, making a total of 24 on the teaching staff. We were very thankful to have three Free Presbyterian young women on the teaching staff who could help with the teaching of Bible Knowledge: Mrs. Maphosa, Miss Ncube and Miss Dube. Mrs. Maphosa left the school in Term 2 to join her husband but we were able to fill that gap by employing, on a temporary basis while the university was on holiday, Mr. T. Mashavakure, a university student who belongs to the Church. By Term 3, however, we were again short staffed in the Bible Knowledge department and it is a matter of continuing regret that we have such difficulty in covering the subject which is at the core of our activities. It was a great encouragement to hear of Miss Rhoda MacKay's application to come to help and that she was granted a work permit but we are in great need of further help. We would plead the prayers of the Lord's people that He would give a mind to some others to come and help in this area of His Cause where there is such a rare opportunity and privilege of bringing so many young people in contact with the truths of the Bible.

Other departments were adequately staffed, although it is difficult to find permanent Science teachers so there is too much dependence on temporary

staff in that department: Mr. Ntini, the head of department, and Miss Ryce were the only permanent members of staff in the Science department during 2001 which is clearly an unsatisfactory situation. We were disappointed during the year to lose the services of Mrs. Mabhena, our Resource Room teacher, but were very pleased that a replacement, Mrs. Muzanargwo, was found quickly. Our Resource Room assistant, Mrs. N. Sibanda, cheerfully and competently took on all the extra duties necessary during the vacancy.

We do, of course, have a large number of ancillary staff, in the Office, the Boarding Department, the Dining Hall and the Maintenance Squad, whose work is essential to the smooth running of the school. Mrs. Mathe, the Boarding Matron, has been with us for 26 years but is now anxious to retire and it is a matter of concern that a suitable replacement be found for this key post.

Pupil enrolment

As in previous years, we had no difficulty in filling our Form 1 places. In 2001 our enrolment over Forms 1 to 4 was 604 pupils, with approximately 100 being day pupils from the local community and the remainder being boarders. Nine pupils with varying degrees of visual impairment benefited from the facilities of the Resource Room.

We are facing an increasing number of requests for transfers from pupils who wish to leave us for other schools: reasons most commonly quoted are inability to continue paying for boarding and dissatisfaction with the curriculum. There is little that can be done about the financial situation as boarding throughout the country is becoming increasingly expensive and we are by far the cheapest non-Government boarding school. We are hoping that when our computer classes start there will be fewer transfers because of dissatisfaction with the curriculum.

School activities have continued as normal with the usual daily routine, each day bringing its own problems and successes – the danger with “routine” is that we can be forgetful that there is an end to all that we do and that our main aim ought to be to “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”. We were reminded very forcefully and painfully this year with the death of one of our students in Form 4 that there is an end to our lives in this world. Ngqabutho had been very ill with a liver complaint for some months and some of those in his year group in particular did appear at the time to be solemnised. It is only the Holy Spirit who can make lasting impressions and it was our very fervent desire that the children would be worked on by Him so that they would seek to number their days so as to apply their hearts to wisdom – that is the whole aim of our work here.

O Level Examination results

These continue to be very pleasing, with an improvement on last year’s figures: 123 out of 139 candidates passed 5 or more subjects; i.e. 88%. Two pupils managed to achieve 9 A passes, 2 managed 8 A passes, 32 pupils

managed 5 A passes (23% of the total number of pupils in Form 4). In 2001 the Ministry of Education introduced awards for best performance in each subject in the province. We were delighted to be named as first in Matabeleland North for O Level Biology, Mathematics and Woodwork.

Finance

We have again been able to complete the year within our budget, in spite of rapidly rising prices throughout the economy. No Government salaries were paid to missionary teachers – in the past these salaries subsidised the fees of local children, so without that subsidy the fees for non-boarding had to be restructured. It was, however, a concern that many local families would be unable to meet their commitment, so the offer of the Foreign Missions Committee to provide a subsidy for each local child was very welcome and there is no doubt that without it many local children would be denied access to the school.

Vehicles and Buildings

It is a matter of thankfulness that our vehicles continue to be reliable when we are so dependent on transport for bringing supplies out to the school. The new storage facilities for diesel at Ingwenya helped us to survive the fuel shortages which occurred from time to time.

The new girls' dormitory, which was started in August 2000, was eventually completed in September this year and there was much excitement when the Form 3 girls were allowed to move in. The dormitory accommodates 65 girls very comfortably and has, therefore, greatly reduced the crowding in the girls' boarding department. We are deeply thankful to the FMC and Mbumba Zending for sponsoring this large-scale project. In order to complete the improvements in the girls' department, the old building which houses the Form 1 girls needs to be replaced whenever finance would be available. Overcrowding in the boys' dormitories is at a worrying level and will need to be attended to.

Since the school budget was in such a healthy state, it was possible to undertake major maintenance in the old Form 3 girls' dormitory after the girls moved into the new building: much needed repairs were carried out, the bathroom area was transformed with tiling, all rooms were painted and new curtains were made. The improvements were greatly appreciated by the girls and there was much debate among them as to who would move into this "almost-new" dormitory!

There was also enough money left over at the end of the year to purchase new, thicker mattresses for the Form 4 boys: replacement of mattresses is an ongoing but slow project.

In Term 3 we were informed by the Regional Director of ZIMSEC (the national examination board) that, for a school of our calibre, our examination security facilities were inadequate. It was therefore necessary to convert the examination cupboard into a proper strongroom at fairly short notice before the arrival of the November O Level examination papers. Workmen from our

own squad completed the project in good time and we are very happy now to have such excellent security.

In Term 2 construction of a new classroom began. This project was sponsored by Oikonomos so as to allow us to dedicate another classroom to computer use: plans to introduce computers to the curriculum began as far back as 1996 when a large classroom with suitable storage facilities was built, computers were donated on a regular basis and have been stored in readiness but it was never possible to remove one classroom from regular use. We are, therefore, very thankful to the Oikonomos Foundation for stepping in so as to enable us to take another step nearer this exciting new development in the curriculum.

Donations

The support of donors over the year continued and is much appreciated – without external support such as we generously receive it would not be possible for the school to continue as it does. Mention has already been made of the large-scale support of the Foreign Missions Committee, Mbumba Zending and, this year, the Oikonomos Foundation. However, the extra support of Sabbath Schools, Deacons' Courts and individuals from the UK, Canada and Australia is a great encouragement. Through these donations we are able to:

- cover the extra expenses of the Resource Room for our blind/visually impaired students;
- make additions to the school library;
- provide sponsorship for pupils from poor families who would otherwise have no access to the school;
- undertake extra maintenance.

A large anonymous donation of £2,000 enabled us to undertake some unexpected but much needed maintenance in the Form 3 boys' dormitory: essential repairs were done and all the bedrooms were freshly painted.

Throughout a year fraught with many difficulties we have to acknowledge the kindness of the Most High: we have been very aware of His Providence working ahead of time for us in many ways so that we must say, "The Lord of us hath mindful been" . . . and it is our fervent hope that . . . "he will bless us still".

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. Z. Mazvabo

BULAWAYO is a growing congregation. Visibly it grows in numbers – that is what we can see with our naked eye. But one hopes that this is not all, but that it also grows in other ways. If one visits the congregations of many of the sects, one will find big numbers, but the big numbers that there are today are not the same as were there last year. The old ones have gone away and new ones have come. It is not so in our congregation of Bulawayo – here, although new ones have come, older ones still remain. The question arises, What is it that attracts them in the first place and what is it that keeps them? We have no drums or any other instruments to please the flesh. It must be they are attracted by the truth of the Word of God; it must be that some of them have begun to see beauty in the sound doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. Ours is to pray that what He has started He will perform.

Bulawayo is like a big jungle, where it is easier to get lost on one of the paths that seem good on one side than to be on the narrow way that leads to everlasting life. It is of great interest for me to speak about Bulawayo because I have a feeling of belonging with them as I witnessed their humble beginnings. I still feel very much at home among them. They need a young and energetic minister to be settled among them, not only because they are many, but also because they are young and situated in such a jungle where the need of a suitable shepherd is outstanding. The Lord will provide.

Nkulumane is another of the FP congregations in Bulawayo. The two – Lobengula, the main congregation, and Nkulumane – come together whenever I visit them and the good-sized Lobengula church is full to capacity. May the Lord bless the Word preached at these places from time to time.

Umguza is an outer station of the Bulawayo congregation. It is situated on one of the farms outside Bulawayo and was started by Mr. Ross, who also started the Bulawayo congregation. Many of the people who attended here were of alien origin who worked on the farm but now it is mostly children that attend services at Umguza. Here only one service is kept on the Lord's Day between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m., whereas there are two services both at Lobengula and Nkulumane on the Lord's Day. The inmates of Thembiso Children's Home are also brought to the services at Lobengula. It is of greater interest still for me to speak about Thembiso Children's Home, because when first I left the classroom, it was to work for the Ebenezer Scripture Mission which later built Thembiso Children's Home. A weekday prayer meeting is usually kept at Thembiso on a Tuesday morning, taken either by Mr. Mpofu, the superintendent, or by Mr. Mashavakure, who works as a watchman. The death of the Lord is commemorated twice a year in these congregations during the last Sabbath of June and the second Sabbath of December. May it be for them as we read about the Lord's vineyard: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land" (Psalm 80:8-9).

EBENEZER SCRIPTURE MISSION REPORT

Mr. S. B. Mpofu, Superintendent

Thembiso Children's Home

Thembiso has about 76 occupants ranging from 1 year to 18 years. Children appear healthy and we have to give thanks to the Most High. Drugs are difficult to come by these days and mention must be made about Mbumba Mission Hospital that comes to our help on drugs if they have them.

We try to bring up these children in a Christian way. We have worship at 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. They also attend with the primary school prayer meetings on Tuesdays and go to church with the Lobengula congregation. Thembiso staff have problems that arise at times unexpectedly. One has to be very conversant with labour laws to be on the safe side. Controls on stuff used seem not to be welcomed by the staff.

Adult Literacy Classes

During 2001 we had to close one of the three classes that existed. The old lady at Magwegwe ALOZ Centre had to retire after turning 65. The Field Committee found it necessary to close the centre as fee payments by the students did not meet the tutors' salaries. Students in these classes are taught the catechisms together with their usual lessons.

Reformed Bookroom

Our application to be a member of the Book Sellers' Association was successful. The Bookroom can now supply schools of its choice. Stock controls, introduced by the finance supervisor, are helping to monitor sales and stocks. So far during 2002 I have had problems to look into which did not give me sufficient time to attend to my own duties. The manager, Mr. N. Moyo, is not well. He has been off duty for two weeks. The till-attendant is on maternity leave without pay. She never applied for leave in good time and yet this is her second maternity leave in less than two years. Without these two I had to be around the bookshop for most of the day. It made my work load heavier than usual.

Our matter with the mentors still stands unsettled. We have to be thankful that we are still alive and safe, though threats surround us.

Improvements

We renovated two pre-school classrooms, of which one was later given to the primary. It took some money to convert the pre-school classroom into a primary school classroom. We were able to repair and re-enforced the fowl run at a cost of about \$80,000. We now hope thieves will be unable to break in again. Both primary school cupboards and pre-school cupboards were repaired as these had been eaten by white ants.

Needs and Expectations

1. The primary school needs a playground and application was made to the city council. We still await their approval of the ground we proposed.
2. Thembiso stand has been applied for purchasing. Assessors came and we are hoping we shall be soon told of the cost.
3. Our geyser tanks are now leaking and we have given Supermark plumbers the order to supply us with four tanks at a cost of \$70,000.
4. We have made application to the city council for a block of two classrooms as present classrooms are not up to the standard. We have also applied for an additional toilet for the primary school as health inspectors say the one used is insufficient.

“Happy is the man that feareth alway, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Proverbs 20:14).

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Mr. E. B. Zikhali, Administrator

THE year 2001 was more or less similar in many aspects to the year 2000, if not worse insofar as difficult conditions were concerned. The inflation rose to 112%. The shortage of basic commodities shot up and prices trebled. The political situation, with the forthcoming Presidential Elections, worsened and at least 60 lives have been lost as I write this report. However, church services continued to operate at every station in the country. We are very thankful that we are still spared. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

The Field Committee, which is responsible for financial administration, continued to meet as usual and had four meetings in the year. The salaries/wages of the graded staff continued to rise at such an alarming rate that it has caused concern lest the Mission would fail to meet these in the near future. The lowest grade is now at \$12,638 per month +1% service award rise per year and the highest is at \$23,776 per month +1% service award per year with effect from 1st January 2002. It is very likely that their salaries will supercede the non-graded staff before the end of the year because of the percentage service award which is added on their normal salaries.

The cost of ordinary vehicles has also trebled. An ordinary small truck used by our ministers is now at \$5,000,000 on average.

Visitors during the year

We were very pleased to receive Mr. Murdo Morrison, North Tolsta, an electrician who briefly worked with Mr. Jake van Praag and soon departed to

his home in Scotland. We were also pleased to see the return of Sister Coote to take over a very demanding position left vacant by Sister Margaret Macaskill who also left after years of good service at Mbumba Mission Hospital to help her elderly mother at home. May the Lord be with her mother.

Rev. K. D. Macleod had a very busy schedule with the Divinity students, taking weekly services at Ingwenya and Bulawayo. His coming to Zimbabwe was of great help to the souls of these two congregations because there are no resident ministers at these two stations. Miss Sheena Ross had a short visit to the Mission during the year after her resignation. We were happy to see her again in Zimbabwe. The Mission in Zimbabwe was very delighted to hear that Miss Rhoda Mackay's Temporary Work Permit had been granted. She is back to her old job of now teaching Bible Knowledge. Mr. Van der Kooij and his wife, of the Oikonomos Foundation, arrived in January 2002 to stay in Zimbabwe for the granted period of two years. They came with their two-month-old baby boy. They are comfortably accommodated at Ingwenya Mission to the end of this year. Mr. Van der Kooij is managing all the Mission projects at Mbumba, Lutsha, Zenka and Ingwenya for the Oikonomos Foundation. We were also very pleased to receive Miss Sheila MacLeod, who looked at the financial books and made recommendations which helped the Mission to operate smoothly.

Mr. Jake van Praag and his wife departed from Zimbabwe after serving the Mission for about three years as an electrician.

This report would be incomplete without the mention of our elderly lady, Miss Macaulay. She has done a marvellous job in Zimbabwe, in spite of her age, in the revision of the Ndebele Bible and the teaching of Bible Knowledge before the arrival of Miss Mackay at John Tallach Secondary School. She is on furlough as I write this report with the hope of returning to Zimbabwe in April to devote all her time on the Bible revision.

The Presbytery meetings continued to be held three times in the year on the average, March, June and October respectively.

As Kenya in Sengera is part of our Presbytery, Rev K. M. Watkins assists the two ministers whenever he comes to the meetings in Zimbabwe, with Communion which fall within those months. We are very thankful to the Almighty for this providence.

General Mission Finances

The financial standing of the Mission is presently stable since the additional £3,750 to Mbumba Mission Hospital. However, the bank rates are still very low and we have, as a result of this, resorted to selling our foreign currency to companies which give us better rates, although this is temporary because the government is not in favour of it.

I have a strong feeling that the Mission in Zimbabwe should strictly maintain the existing structures and avoid expansion as much as possible, as was recommended by the Foreign Missions Committee because of the escalating cost of building materials.

We are also thankful to the FMC for allowing us to employ a mechanic because the expenditure on our fleet has been drastically reduced.

Shortage of Foreign Currency

The shortage of foreign currency continued for another year which forced the shortage of essential drugs in our Mbuma Hospital and the cost was beyond the reach of many ordinary people. Our own hospital is still battling to obtain a licence to import drugs which may lessen the cost of medicines.

Finally, the Mission is now looking forward to reducing the number of employees where there is not much need, especially the watchmen at rural churches, because of unending salary/wages adjustments. The Mission has reached a stage where employees now take more than one million dollars per month in salaries/wages.

“Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Deuteronomy 31:7).

BUILDING AND TRANSPORT REPORT

Mr. J. B. Mpofo

Building

The building programme in the year 2002 commenced with some work carried over from the year 2001. This included the extended fence at Mbuma Mission, the classroom roof repairs at Mbuma Primary School, and roof repairs to the Rev. Mzamo’s house.

Repairs were carried out to some staff houses which are made of pole and dassa – these need attention after the rains.

On behalf of the building side I would like to thank the Oikonomos friends for helping our Mission by providing money to enable a classroom to be built at Mbuma Mission, and teacher’s houses at Lutsha and at Zenka Mission. Thanks to the Lord who enabled them to provide us with help.

Zenka Mission, which has had a boarding facility for some years, has houses which were used as dormitories for boarders but which are now used as classrooms. These need more light so we have bought more windows to improve classwork and are also making blackboards.

I have again to thank the Oikonomos Foundation for funds to build the new classroom at Ingwenya Mission. Here at Ingwenya stood an old dining room which was later renovated to form a dormitory. This was later demolished and a nice new up-to-date dormitory built in the same situation. More renovations have been done on the girls’ dormitories which give more room for the pupils. We are presently doing some painting in the girls’ dormitories.

We were asked to improve our strongroom where we keep the examination papers. This work was so satisfactorily carried out that other school representatives have been sent to see the Ingwenya Mission strongroom.

There are many other maintenance works being carried out at all our Mission stations.

Transport

Our transport remains the same with a few changes. The brown Nissan, used by the building and transport manager, was sold and the car which was used by Jack van Praag is now used by him. The Ford Triton lorry at Mbuma has been sold and an Isuzu truck was bought to replace it. The car that was used by the Rev. A. B. Ndebele is now used by the Bulawayo office.

Other Mission cars are still roadworthy. The Thembiso Mazda was involved in an accident in town but we are thankful that no one was injured. The car has now to be repaired in a garage.

From the beginning of 2002 the Mission has employed a mechanic to repair and service the Mission cars. We are hoping that this will bring down the cost of repairing them at various garages.

I close the end of my report by quoting John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

KENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. K. M. Watkins

ONE of the main reasons why I was drawn to Kenya was the wide open door for the Gospel, and for these past eight, busy, months I have not been disappointed. So many opportunities present themselves continually, one hardly knows which to turn to next. Probably the motives among the people are wide-ranging, but one thing is certain: many Kisii people are willing to hear and keen to understand the Word of God.

Public duties on the Sabbath begin with the Catechism class at 9.30 a.m. Not long ago we reached the 107th question, and so we have started at the beginning again. This encouraged many more to attend, and now we have some 100 people attending and well over 40 answering the question, most in English and some in Ekegusii. Each week we spend towards half an hour explaining and illustrating the doctrine, with a brief time for answering any questions.

The morning service follows at 10.30 a.m. Attendance has steadily increased and in recent weeks has been well over 300. The afternoon service at 2.00 p.m. has shown a marked increase in numbers attending and recently has been well over 200. It is, of course, encouraging to have so many under the

preaching of the Gospel, but we feel increasingly conscious that it is only the Lord who can add to the Church such as should be saved. The people's attention to the Word of God is good. Oh that for many it would be like Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, to attend *savingly* to the preaching of the Gospel!

Sabbath School classes for the children begin immediately after the afternoon service. With some 200 children attending regularly, we have had to increase the number of classes to five. I am grateful to the teachers and their helpers, both African and European, for their labours among these young souls of Sengera. We hope that many will come to know and serve the Lord.

Each weekday morning, work begins with worship at 8.00 a.m. All Mission workers attend, together with patients and their relatives waiting for the clinic to open. This follows the format of family worship, with the addition of a brief explanation and application of the Scripture passage. When the worship is concluded, there is time for questions. Usually there is at least one question; frequently there are several. This can be a most profitable exercise and one needs to be well prepared to answer some of the questions.

On Wednesday afternoons we have begun to hold a Bible Study with the female Mission workers. Beginning with the Book of Genesis, we have looked at some of the main women of Scripture. We have just reached Deborah in the Book of Judges. The ladies seem to find it helpful to have the teachings of the Bible brought out in this practical way. On Thursday afternoons it is the turn of the men. The Bible Studies with them have dealt mainly with the disciples of Christ. Again, these character studies bring out Scripture truths in a way that seems to make things clear.

On Friday mornings, I hold a catechism class with the children of the local primary and junior school. The older ones usually know the question very well, and again there is ample time to explain the meaning, illustrating this from Scripture. About 200 children are in attendance, along with their teachers. Some of these children are part of our own congregation, but many are not, so this is an opportunity which we relish. Friday afternoons finish with the singing class. As the Mission workers endeavour to master the tunes, it helps the whole congregation's singing in the Sabbath services.

Of course, there are also more private labours among the people. Usually, families are eager for worship to be held when you visit them. This invariably includes a brief exposition of the Bible portion read. Often the conversation turns very easily to spiritual matters. Visits to the sick and bereaved are greatly appreciated. In Africa, a family visit frequently becomes a visit to all the neighbours as well. Either they will join with the visited family for the worship, or insist that you visit their home immediately and hold worship with them also.

I need to acknowledge the invaluable help of those who have interpreted for me in these Gospel labours. Without them it would not have been possible. The Ekegusii language is far from easy. My wife and I have been privileged to have six weeks of dedicated language study with a most able teacher. Much

translation work is needed. Very little sound Christian literature exists in the language of the people. Considerable time has been spent already on revising and expanding the Psalms in metre for singing. As we see the great things God has done in other places through Christian literature, it is envisaged that translation and publication will form a major focus of the Mission's efforts in the coming years. We were thankful for the substantial legacy left to the Kenya Mission by the late Catherine Morrison, which will help to finance this.

I was glad to be able to visit Zimbabwe in October, to attend the Presbytery meeting and to assist at Ingwenya communion. I also supplied Bulawayo for one Sabbath. The Presbytery appointed two assessor elders from Zimbabwe for the Sengera Kirk Session. Our friends in Zimbabwe have been much on our minds here in Kenya and we pray that the Gospel would prosper in spite of troubles filling that land.

Although no Deacons' Court is functioning here, the congregation continues to help itself by means of the Poor Fund administered by a joint committee of Africans and Europeans. The Fund relieves the poor in various ways. At harvest time maize is purchased; this provides much needed cash for the people. When food starts to run out before the next harvest, maize is distributed freely or at a subsidised price to those in need. Contributions from the home Church are much valued, enabling the Fund to make a real difference to people's lives. We hope that it will lead them to consider the goodness of God in the gift of His Son, the Bread of Life from heaven.

We are pleased that the services of our Omorembe Health Centre are being called upon increasingly, as the Matron's separate clinic report explains. The administrative and practical side of Mission affairs has been taken care of by Mr Hugh Mackenzie, along with the various African staff assisting him. We are thankful to all the staff for their labours over another year.

The year has seen a measure of upgrading to the Mission's compound and facilities. Among other things, paths have been concreted; the previously treacherous road to the centre of Sengera has been greatly improved; a new telephone exchange with an increased number of extensions has been installed; a "training room" complete with whiteboard has been set up; security has been tightened; and the offices are in process of being overhauled. A library full of good books, generously donated by people from home, has been opened and is well used by members of the congregation, especially by the young people, and it is hoped that a small bookshop will soon be opened in the clinic. A speaker system, donated by friends from Holland, has been installed in the church. Two new four-wheel-drive vehicles have been purchased, one to replace an existing Mission business vehicle and the other for the minister to fulfil his pastoral duties. We are thankful to all those who have made these things possible, and in particular to Mbuma Zending for their commitment to provide the finance necessary for the ongoing needs of the Mission here.

Above all, we are thankful to the Lord of heaven, who has seen fit to preserve our Church's witness to the pure Gospel in this spiritually dark part

of Africa. How we need Him to pour out His blessing and grace upon us! “Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him” (Psalm 67:5-7).

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

THE year 2001 is passed. Looking back upon it gives us much cause for thankfulness to the God of all grace. He is the One who kept us and gave us health and strength to perform our duties. Omorembe in our Ekegusii language here means Peace. With regard to our working among the Kisii people here, we can report to have had a peaceful year in our “Peace Clinic”.

It will be helpful for our people at home to give a brief outline of our services and staff again. We are registered as a health centre and give outpatient services to communities near and far.

• **Outpatient Department**

Opening hours: on workdays 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. After 5 p.m. and during weekends there is an “on call service”, which is regularly made use of, especially during the weekends. In our OPD it is possible to let one or two sick patients stay overnight when, for instance, they come far and need to come back for short duration clinic treatment or observation.

• **Ambulance Service** available 24 hours

• **Staff**

European –

Sister C. Renes
Sister G. L. Ringelberg
Sister P. van de Ridder

African –

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

Since the beginning of 2002, the Mission appointed a Kenya Registered Staff Nurse/Midwife, who used to work with us before the Hospital closed in 1998. We are pleased to have her back with us to support us in our work which

is increasing as the statistics show. Another reason for appointing her is that the Government has stopped unqualified Nurse Aids from doing any nursing duties, hence we changed the name Nurse Aids into Supportive Staff. They are now assisting us in cleaning and many other supportive duties.

CLINIC STATISTICS FOR 2001

	General Outpatients	Malaria Cases	STD Cases	Ante Natal Cases	Deliveries	Stillbirths/ Perinatals	Referral by Ambulance	Other Referrals	Lab Tests
Jan	335	185	51	120	36	2	17	7	325
Feb	380	313	29	79	23	3	13	17	336
Mar	438	262	51	80	29	2	11	11	368
Apr	249	178	41	88	24	1	7	10	308
May	309	122	44	152	24	0	5	3	254
Jun	420	174	38	142	23	1	11	13	188
Jul	326	189	26	83	33	2	6	14	280
Aug	313	160	54	161	43	2	12	8	237
Sep	317	121	62	127	32	2	7	6	252
Oct	364	141	105	165	39	3	6	4	269
Nov	315	154	48	125	30	0	7	2	223
Dec	312	175	27	86	26	0	11	16	238
Totals	4078	2174	576	1408	362	18	113	111	3278

It is with pleasure that compared to last year we are able to report a marked increase in our outpatient and maternity services. In fact the numbers have doubled in all areas. This is not due to increase or outbreaks of certain diseases among our people, but because they value and know about our services.

Attending to our OPD clients mainly involves us in treating:

Malaria

Not one day passes without having to treat malaria cases. As our people say themselves: "Malaria is with us all the time." As the year went on we could identify two seasons by noticing a rise in the number and severity of cases. Thankfully, so far we have not had to cope with serious outbreaks accompanied with many deaths, like in the past. This also applies to other health institutions around us.

STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) and AIDS

We attend to quite a few of these patients. They require extensive counselling about their condition and their immoral behaviour, which is very time consuming. Especially with these patients we are given good opportunities to speak to them based on the Word of God. The reasons we see many are:

- Sad to say, many who see their need of treatment are very unwilling to change their behaviour.

- They value our medicines, which seem to cure better than those of other clinics.
- The Government issued a kit for free treatment almost two years ago. However, these are now finished, which may cause a fall in attendances in the future.

Casualties

We attend to minor casualties and sometimes some more major cases. People who have had accidents at home or at work may need their wounds stitched up. Quite a large proportion of the casualties have more or less extensive cuts after having been involved in drinking and subsequent fighting.

Maternity

Maternity cases have doubled in the past year. We are comparatively cheap and the people like our services. Another attraction is that after giving birth, mothers get a little present for their baby. During their ante natal visits we provide them with a free test to trace STD. In doing so quite a few show up and are then counselled to have treatment together with their husband.

Deaths

The number of deaths refer mainly to stillbirths and not to adults and children. Often these deaths are due to STD and AIDS.

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In conclusion we plead for the prayers of the people of the Church for the blessing of the Lord on the bodily healing but more so for the spiritual welfare of our people among whom we labour.

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

A NUMBER of ministers in the home Church were asked to visit Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, but they were not in a position to do so. However, it is hoped that in the summer of this year, or very shortly afterwards, a minister will be able to visit these places.

Rev. Edward Rayner and Rev. Johannes van Dorp keep reminding us that, as always, they would very much appreciate having ministerial supply among the scattered flocks under their pastoral care. Indeed, one minister partially attributes the leaving of some families from a congregation to the lack of a permanent ministry or at least long-term supply.

There are times when the congregations in Australia and New Zealand ask probationers to spend some time among them preaching the Gospel. The Rev. David Campbell, who agreed to go at the request of the Auckland Congregation, left for Auckland at the beginning of this year and spent most of his time in the Auckland congregation but also helped elsewhere. He assisted also at the Sydney Communion, where he took most of the services. The congregations which invite probationers also pay their fares. Mr. Campbell's services were much appreciated by all the congregations.

The Reports of Rev. Edward Rayner and Rev. Johannes van Dorp tell of their work, not only in their own congregations but also in other congregations under their superintendence. Along with certain elders they managed to visit the Singapore congregation for nine Sabbaths, which is very commendable considering their other commitments. The young Singapore congregation appears to be in good heart and continues steadfast in the teachings of the Word of God.

It is encouraging to read that some people have made a profession of religion for the first time, and that there were a number of baptisms. The main way in which the Lord in His providence continues the work of the Gospel in congregations is by raising up the children of Christian parents to follow in their footsteps, and we hope and pray these children baptized into the Christian Church will yet be true followers of the Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus.

Last year, the Rev. John MacLeod visited Vancouver congregation for two Sabbaths and returned with an encouraging report. During the month of April, the Rev. Neil Ross will visit Vancouver for two Sabbaths, God willing. The deacon there, Mr. John A. MacLeod, as well as others, have expressed their gratitude at the prospect of another visit. Were it not for Mr. MacLeod's firm resolve to remain with the Free Presbyterian Church when others left at the time of the APC movement, we would have lost our place as a Church in Vancouver, as well as our property. We are therefore indebted to him for all he has done to this present moment. We hope and pray that the Lord will reward him for his perseverance in that many others will be raised up to support the cause of Christ in Vancouver.

Rev. George Hutton has visited the congregations in Chesley and Richmond, Texas. There have been a number of new communicants at both places. Some people of the Chesley congregation live at a great distance from the church and cannot possibly attend every Sabbath. It is cause for thankfulness that the Chesley congregation, despite its troubles over the years, continues steadfastly upholding the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church. The Texas congregation, which has been in the Church for only a few years, continues following the Reformed Faith with unabated zeal. In the absence of ministers, the elders in Chesley continue to take the services there, and in the Texas congregation two of the men read sermons in the public worship. We are much indebted to all that give help, in whatever way, for the maintaining the Cause of Christ in these places. It is expected that Rev. Neil Ross will visit both congregations in April.

Visits by ministers to overseas congregations are much appreciated, both by the residing minister (if there is one) and the congregations themselves. Their only complaint is that the visits are all too few – and we are sorry that that is so. If any of our ministers were able to give some of their time to visiting these congregations, the Committee would be glad to hear from them.

Mr. Lucio Strata has visited the small group in Fornaci di Barga, Italy, for some Sabbaths. It was the hope of both Mr. Strata and the Committee that he would have managed to make more visits, but he was prevented over the past year by a serious illness. It is intended that the Rev. D. A. Ross, along with Mr. Strata, will visit Fornaci di Barga in March, when we will take the usual services on the Sabbath and weekdays. The Sabbath services are kept in a hotel room and during the week in Mr. and Mrs. Campani's home. It is gratifying that our friends in Italy gave donations of money which covered most of the expenses of the visits made to them, and we believe it is an evidence of their gratitude for our continuing to bring the Gospel to them. At the same time, while some in the group do have a degree of appreciation of the scriptural basis of the Free Presbyterian Church and that it is the Church which holds nearest to the Word of God, they are at sea when it comes to giving undivided loyalty to our Church. However, for my own part, I would not like to abandon them and I hope that as we continue to instruct them in the Word of God, they will incline more and more to the doctrine, worship and practice required by the Divine Head of the Church. It seems to us that it was detrimental to them that certain ex-ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church who visited them did not emphasise all the biblical principles and practices required to be observed. Christ requires us to not only preach the Gospel to those to whom He sends us but also says, “. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

In the face of many difficulties, our work for the Gospel continues in Eastern Europe. One difficulty in the past in Odessa was harassment of our small congregation by government officials, which scattered the group and left only a few to continue. Thankfully, all seems to be now quiet on that front, although at times one feels a little nervous that it may erupt again. Our friends there continue steadfast in the doctrine, worship and practice of the Scriptures and in their great longing to be fully incorporated into the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Mr. Igor Zadoroshney says that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* fell into their hands when they, as families, were going through a crisis about settling in a suitable Church. It was the means, in the providence of God, through which they asked that the Free Presbyterian Church be established among them. As Mr. Zadoroshney now posts these Confessions to many people throughout the Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe, he says that his prayer is that they will arrive when they too are in a crisis over spiritual matters.

We are also continuing to do some work in Romania and other places by way of bringing aid and literature, but as yet there is no group which has asked us to establish the Free Presbyterian Church in Romania. In this report

I will write no more about the work in Eastern Europe since there is a separate fuller report.

We constantly look to the Lord to bless all these labours of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland overseas. We are assured in Psalm 126:6 of a measure of success: "That man who, bearing precious seed, in going forth doth mourn, He doubtless, bringing back his sheaves, rejoicing shall return."

AUSTRALIAN REPORT

Rev. E. A. Rayner

ALTHOUGH this year we did not have the privilege of a deputy, we were encouraged to have visits from some of the younger generation from the Church in Scotland. However, the great need is that labourers would be raised up and sent into this part of the vineyard if vacant congregations are to be maintained and increased. Both ministers of our Presbytery are now past normal retiring age, though it is a matter for thankfulness that at the time of writing, health and strength has been given to continue not only with the ministry and labours in the local congregations but both ministers are still able to travel the distances to meet at Presbyteries and assist at communions as well as give supply to other congregations.

Some years ago, during a visit of the previous Convener of the Dominions and Overseas Committee, the Rev. D. Campbell, he mentioned to me that while Scotland was able to supply two ministers for the establishment of our congregations, in his view we should seek that the Lord would raise up Ministers from this side of the world. There have been applications, either for the ministry or to become students for the ministry, but they have not turned out as we had hoped. Matthew Winzer, who was accepted by the Grafton Session and was ready to be examined by Presbytery in January 2001, resigned over the issue of holding the New Year's Day service. On the other hand it is encouraging to note the addition of ministers and students in Scotland. So in the meantime we would urge that supply to the vacancies in our Presbytery would be increased if that is possible.

We were glad of the return of the Van Praags from the Mission as the Sydney congregation has been depleted with the departure of John Marshall and his large family. That left the congregation with only one resident elder till the return of Jacob van Praag. In the last few years the Sydney congregation has lost several families. While various factors are involved there is no doubt that the lack of having a settled minister, or at least a longer term supply, has contributed to this. On the encouraging side, the congregation sold a block of land which had originally been purchased in view of building church property. Since we were able to purchase the present church, the block of land was redundant but it proved difficult to sell because of zoning requirements. There

was a purpose in this delay as it eventually sold well and now the congregation is in the midst of purchasing a good brick and tile manse with four bedrooms fairly close to the church.

The Grafton church extension is now in use and the extra room in the church is much appreciated. The session room is now a good size and an additional room for the use of mothers and Sabbath School is proving to be a great benefit. Many of the children are now becoming young adults and are at the age that their parents were when I first came to Grafton. This is a critical stage in the lives of the young and there is need for the Lord's blessing upon them so that there would be those raised up in the place of the fathers if the witness is to continue from one generation to the next. Although we had several baptisms in both Sydney and Grafton there have been no new members in full communion for some time.

At the annual general meeting of the Clarence Valley Auxiliary of the TBS, held in the Grafton church, it was reported that sales over the past year have almost doubled in Australia. One reason for this is the good work done by Mrs. Dannel White, who has responsibility for the distribution of Bibles and TBS literature for the whole of Australia. New and larger premises are now in use in Grafton for storage and retail and we pray that the Lord will continue to prosper this new development.

By the time this report is read we hope to have had the pleasure of a visit by the Rev. David Campbell, who has been invited by the Auckland congregation to give supply at their expense. Although not an official deputy arranged by the Dominions and Overseas Committee, he is also expected to supply Sydney for two Sabbaths on his return to Scotland. Both Sydney and Auckland have been without a minister for many years and feel the need for longer periods of supply from Scotland if that can be arranged.

While we continue to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers, we also need grace to continue to be steadfast and unmoveable so that we may always abound in the work of the Lord.

NEW ZEALAND REPORT

Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp

THE preaching of the Gospel was maintained in the congregations throughout the year. In Wellington I am indebted to Hank Optland and Neil Hicklin, the two resident Elders, who conduct the services there from week to week. In Auckland, Ken and Cornell van Kralingen undertake these labours, whilst in Tauranga Dick Vermeulen conducts the weekly services.

The sacraments were again dispensed this year in all the congregations, except Tauranga. The Tauranga preaching station consists of a small number of worshippers and the two communicant members have been coming to the

other congregations when the Lord's Supper was dispensed there. The sacrament of Baptism was dispensed once in Auckland and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed once in Wellington and twice in Auckland and Gisborne.

The religious scene continues to present a sad spectacle in New Zealand, as in other nations. For many years this has been evident in the ecumenical co-operation with the Roman Catholic Church. This year the declension reached a new height when the Anglican Church introduced a service for animals. The ceremony is in honour of the patron saint of animals, St. Francis. A newspaper article stated: "About 15 dogs, cats and stuffed animals were blessed at the service." The accompanying photograph showed two clerics complete in white officiating robes laying hands on a "somewhat reluctant pooch". The picture takes on a particularly blasphemous aspect when the person holding the animal is dressed up with the grotesque garments and appearance of a clown called "trinity". The sad part was that even members of the Presbyterian Church were involved in this ludicrous and objectionable performance.

Another ceremony that saddened the hearts of the godly took place on the 15th August 2001. Thirty-four years after being acquitted of heresy by the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, the Wellington theologian, Professor Lloyd Geering, was invested with one of the country's highest honours. Professor Geering who taught that Christ did not rise from the dead, received the insignia of a Principal Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to religious studies, the equivalent of the old knighthood.

One congregation, outside our own denomination, with which there has been a measure of contact through family relationships and TBS membership, is the NRC or Netherlands Reformed Congregation. When the first minister was inducted in that congregation late in 2000 it was a shock to discover that he had entered into a marriage relationship that is contrary to the Word of God, namely with the sister of his deceased wife. New Zealand had at one time, in line with Britain, legislation in force forbidding marriage within certain degrees of consanguinity as well as affinity. In Britain the law was relaxed in 1907 in terms of the Deceased Wife's Sister Act, legislation against which the Free Presbyterian Church protested. In New Zealand similar legislation had been passed much earlier. The Westminster Confession of Faith in chapter XXIV, paragraph iv, points out the unscripturalness of such legislation. Shaw in his commentary on the Confession states: "Marriages contracted within these degrees are in themselves justly deemed invalid, and may properly be dissolved."

We were glad to have a visit from Rev. R. MacLeod during the closing weeks of the year 2000 and the first month of 2001. His visit here was as Church deputy. At the time of writing this report, the itinerary of Rev. D. Campbell has just been completed and travel arrangements are being made for his visit out here. This tour of duty is at the invitation of the Auckland Kirk Session. Prayer is made that his work out here will be in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel. I wish to express my appreciation of these contacts

with the brethren from Scotland, which always involve them in long and tiring flights, as well as long absences from their families. May the time soon come when by the grace of God the earth will be filled with His glory so that there will be no more need for these long journeys.

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

THE support given to this mission work by our people and also by others outwith the Free Presbyterian Church is remarkable. It has always been a sign of submission and obedience to the great Head of the Church, Christ Jesus, that the people in it brought their gold and silver for His work. Just as believers under the Old Testament dispensation gave willingly to the Lord, so in the New Testament era, Gentiles who came into the Church did as the promise of God said they would do – they brought not only themselves but also their silver and gold (Isaiah 60:9).

Among the many donations received for the work of the Gospel being carried out by our Church in Eastern Europe, there was a large legacy of £45,723.50 from the estate of the late Mrs. Catherine Morrison, Ness. It would appear to me that this, among other things, is an indication that the Most High is countenancing our work in Eastern Europe. Some may wonder what a small mission like our Eastern Europe Mission will do with such a large amount of money. They need not wonder when they consider the amount of money which has already been prudently used by the Church for Eastern Europe since 1975 (when we began supporting what was called the “Underground Church”), and especially since 1986 (when we first visited persecuted Christians behind the then Iron Curtain). In 2000 alone our expenditure stood at £32,206.

The distribution of the Word of God, which is our main work in Eastern Europe, continues steadily. The disposal of our large stock of 20,000 Kulish Bibles will very soon be completed. These Bibles were given, of course, by the Trinitarian Bible Society, which was able to grant them when they received a donation from a friend in the Free Presbyterian Church for this purpose. Mr. Igor Zadoroshney writes: “For the last two years we have distributed by post approximately 7,000 copies of the Kulish Version Ukrainian Bible which you sent us in April 1999 from London.” May God in His mercy continue to provide the means for the distribution of His precious Word in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, without which sinners will most certainly die in their sins.

In 2001, Mr. Zadoroshney distributed 1,624 Ukrainian Bibles, which were posted to individual people; a gift of 100 Ukrainian Bibles to students of Odessa National University; 70 Ukrainian Bibles granted to the Methodist and Baptist Churches; and 40 Russian Bibles to different people. There was also a

number of Hungarian Bibles distributed, there being a large colony of Hungarians in the western part of the Ukraine.

The reason why so few Russian Bibles were distributed was that for a time we were not able to fulfil our posting schedule to the Ukraine because of lack of manpower. Since then, the Trinitarian Bible Society, on our behalf, has posted 20 Russian Bibles to Odessa each month, and these are then distributed by Mr. Zadoroshney. In addition, during 2001, Miss Norma Morrison in our Administration Office has posted 248 Hungarian Bibles, 122 Russian Bibles and 2,000 Gospels of John to different people all over Eastern Europe.

In addition to distributing the above mentioned Bibles, Mr. Zadoroshney has also distributed the following literature in Russian during the past year: 642 copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the Catechisms in one volume; 1,624 copies each of the the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism; and 1,830 copies of the *Children's Catechism* (known here as the *Mother's Catechism*). When we give literature to those who contact us, we normally begin with the Shorter Catechism or the Confession of Faith booklet. Only when there appears to be a significant degree of interest in the Bible doctrines summarised in the Confession of Faith, do we give the complete volume of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, containing also the Larger Catechism, the Shorter Catechism, the Sum Of Saving Knowledge, the Directory for the Publick Worship of God, the Form of Presbyterial Church Government, and Directions for Family Worship.

Mr. Zadoroshney also distributes other literature such as Gospel tracts and leaflets exposing the heresies of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons. Miss Norma Morrison also has posted 3,150 tracts, as well as various other pieces of literature, including books and Bibles in the English language. Due to Miss Morrison's many other commitments as secretary it was necessary for us to employ a helper for posting the Bibles and literature, and we were glad therefore to obtain the assistance of Mrs. C. King.

In connection with our visits to Odessa we were pleased, as were our people in Odessa, to make three last year. The little congregation had a total of six Sabbaths of preaching supply given by Rev. Neil Ross and myself. It is intended that the Rev. John Goldby will go to Odessa for two Sabbaths in April, God willing. The church services were conducted as usual and the numbers attending remain the same. In addition to the Sabbath services there was the weekly prayer meeting, and a number of lectures were given. The subjects chosen were at times those requested by the people who wanted to hear about some particular Scripture topic. The numbers attending the weekly address are less because of work commitments and the need to hold these during the day. Also the services on the Sabbath are held within a short time of each other to allow the people to return home in the daytime. In the absence of supply, Mr. Igor Zadoroshney and Mr. Dmytryy Levytsky take the services. Mr. Levytsky writes: "Regarding whether or not we had a 'profitable Sabbath', Yes, we had. The Lord in His mercy sent us a big volume of 'McCheyne's sermons in Russian', 700 pages, and Igor read one of them. It

was a sermon on John 14:9 preached on 31st December 1837 in Dundee.” In another message he says: “We had a pleasant Sabbath. Igor read one of the M’Cheyne’s sermons about the Lord’s Supper.”

We also visited the group in Romania with which we have been in contact in the past. It is called Fundatiei Karolyi Gaspear and consists of a number of young men who profess an attachment to the Reformed Faith and are preaching and distributing Bibles in a number of cities. During the last visit by Mr. Edward Ross and myself (already reported in the Church magazine), they received for free distribution 480 Hungarian Bibles, 2,400 Russian Gospels of John, and some Ukrainian Kulish Bibles. The Russian Gospels were to be taken over the border into the Ukraine. We also delivered 15,000 *Words of Life* calendars in the Romanian and Hungarian languages.

The calendars were supplied by the Trinitarian Bible Society. Because it is not possible for us to carry calendars to Odessa, the Trinitarian Bible Society posted the consignment to four different addresses connected with the congregation in Odessa. Mr. Zadoroshney tells how pleased people are to receive the calendars, and also writes: “The Odessa group which belongs to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland give thanks to the Christians of the United Kingdom, who donated the means for providing Calendars for 2002 in Russian. In October and November of 2001 we received from the Trinitarian Bible Society 10,000 copies of the *Words of Life* calendars in Russian. It is a magnificent gift for the Ukrainian people. Many people with great thankfulness received this gift and blessed the Christians of the United Kingdom.”

Our latest publishing project is the translation of Robert Shaw’s *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* into Russian. It is no small undertaking and occasions much concern as to the final correctness of the translation. Our excellent translator, Mrs. Hopkins, had to give up translation work because of family commitments. Our new translator appears to be an able person. However, before translation work is finally accepted it has to pass through many hands to be checked and rechecked. Translation work alone for this book will cost in the region of £3,500.

The printing of 10,000 copies of *The Apostolic Church* by Thomas Witherow will be completed in March at a cost of £1,553. Also there has been a reprint of 5,000 copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* booklet at £2,046, plus 10,000 Shorter Catechisms with full Scripture proofs at a cost of £1,310, and 20,000 copies of the leaflets by Ergatees exposing the errors of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormon cults, at a cost of £221.

We assist Mr. Dymtryy Leyvetsky while he studies the English language and other subjects by giving £1,600 each year to maintain his family. This is over and above the cost of his studies which we also pay. We also assist Mr. Igor Zadoroshney, who spends most of his time packing, posting and distributing Bibles and literature, as well as renovating another building for worship (for which a donation of £500 was specifically given).

We continue to take humanitarian aid to the Ukraine and Romania. A donation of £2,000 was given by a friend in the Church in answer to an appeal

to our Church from the Ukrainian Embassy in London for victims of severe flooding in the Rachiv District. Rachiv is in southwest Ukraine close by the Romanian border. Mr. Edward Ross and myself delivered the aid to a Government Department, and at the same time a small amount of Bibles and literature. For this kindness shown by the Church, there were genuine expressions of gratitude from the Embassy and from others in high places. We were very sorry that our time was so limited in Rachiv that we did not have the opportunity to distribute some Bibles and literature to the local churches. We left them with Mrs. Hafia Danyshek, the Rachiv District Administrator, who promised to deliver them on our behalf.

With regard to aid given to the Odessa Children's Hospital in the past it was a pleasure on a later visit to be shown the furniture and other items being put to good use there. On each visit to Odessa we buy a quantity of medicine and medical materials locally and deliver it to the Children's Hospital, and this is deeply appreciated by the Heads of Departments.

In response to the aid given to the Fundatiei Karolyi Gaspear in Romania, one pastor wrote: "We distributed the calendars, Bibles and clothes in equal parts for use in the places where our work is going on. The clothes we received here in Gherla are good and useful. The new suits were a special gift from you and a big joy for our men involved in preaching. Most of us can't afford to buy a new suit, maybe not even a used one. I also received one and I already preached last two Lord's Day wearing it. Special thanks for them. . . . Thank you again for being involved in helping our work in so many ways. May our Lord bless you for it!"

We are indebted to friends in Holland who gave a large quantity of new and nearly new clothing, and also to people in our own country who constantly hand in good quality clothing. Were it not for the ladies of the Inverness congregation and elsewhere, who select and sort the clothing and other stuff, we could not possibly undertake this task. To each person who has helped in connection with the work of the Gospel in Eastern Europe we extend our heartfelt thanks. We have a duty to our neighbour not only to bring the Gospel to him but also to give him material help in his poverty when it is in our power to do so. The stranger in Israel was to be treated with the greatest kindness – so likewise those who are strangers to the grace of God are to be treated with every kindness as opportunity is given, not only for their spiritual benefit but also, if there is need, for their temporal relief.

Our main motive in all the work related above is to be instrumental in bringing the people, who have precious immortal souls, to the knowledge of the truth and to have a saving interest in the Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus. We are assured from the Scriptures that "the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12); and that this same Word will not return to God without accomplishing the purpose for which He has sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA

Rev. J. MacLeod

AS requested by the Dominions and Overseas Committee, I visited Vancouver in the summer of 2001, arriving there on 4th July. Mr. John A. MacLeod met me at the Airport.

On the first Sabbath there, a service was held in the afternoon which was attended by six people. Two of these had a connection with the island of Harris and had happened to see the advertisement in the newspaper. On Wednesday evening I held a prayer meeting which was attended by about nine souls, some of whom worshipped normally under the auspices of the APCs. The second Sabbath I held services both in the afternoon and evening. In the afternoon eleven souls were present, including a family from Back, Lewis, who happened to be on holiday in the city, and my daughter who had come up from San Francisco for the weekend. In the evening about sixteen were present with the two APC elders and their families making up most of the congregation. A young man, David Harrison, who seemed to have a real attachment to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland attended all the services, some of them accompanied by his wife and young son. I also visited him at his home. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Fraser also very kindly entertained myself and my daughter in their home.

Subsequent to my visit, Mr. John A. MacLeod has been conducting a Sabbath morning service in the church. Because of the APCs use of the building at 11 a.m., the time for the service was set at 9.45 am. Mr. and Mrs. David Harrison and their young son joined Mr. and Mrs. MacLeod for this diet of worship. Mrs. Mary Hardy was unwell at the time of my visit and was thus unable to attend the services. Mrs. Janetta Kurser, with whom I was in telephone contact, was also unwell. My daughter, having hired a car in Vancouver, took both myself and Mr. MacLeod over to Vancouver Island to visit Mrs. Hardy.

Mr. John MacLeod has, over the years, faithfully continued to keep an eye on our property. The manse appears to be in good shape but the church building is much in need of renovation. The congregation's bank account was frozen in 1989 and funding from that source thus remains out of reach. The Church is much indebted to Mr. MacLeod for maintaining our witness in Vancouver. He feels his isolation and he deserves our support in any way that that may be provided. I am grateful to him and his wife for the many kindnesses shown me over the period of my stay.

On 17th July I travelled to San Francisco, at no extra cost to the Church, to spend two days with my daughter and then on the 19th I arrived in Toronto where I was met by Mr. Gerrit Schuit. We arrived at the Chesley manse in the late evening of the same day. The following Sabbath I took the services in Chesley. These were well attended and it was good to meet old friends again. On the following Monday, accompanied by Mr. Schuit, I travelled to Toronto to attend to Church business there. This business will be the subject of a

separate report to the Synod and will be considered at a private sederunt. On Tuesday afternoon I parted company with Mr. Schuit, who was returning to Chesley, and the following evening I boarded the Air Canada flight to Glasgow and, in the Lord's kind providence, arrived home safely on Thursday, 26th July.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA AND USA

Rev. G. G. Hutton

Chesley

I arrived safely, in the kindness of the Lord, in Chesley on the night of Friday, 19th October. The usual worship services were conducted on Sabbath the 21st, with the administration of the sacrament of baptism to the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. David Schuit, at the morning service. There were 30 persons present at the morning service and 36 at the evening service.

The prayer meeting was held on Wednesday the 24th October when 25 persons were present including the children.

The usual Communion services commenced on Thursday 25th. We had two services on Thursday and two on Friday, including the Fellowship meeting in the evening, when the question was given out by Mr. David Kuiper, after which seven men spoke. After the Friday evening service the Kirk Session was constituted in order to examine a young woman from the congregation, desiring to come to the Lord's Table for the first time. After examination, she was granted the privilege. On Saturday, after the usual service, the Kirk Session was again constituted, tokens were given to intending communicants, following which two persons, both male, were examined and granted the privilege of communicating. Another young man was granted the privilege of open communion. The elders conducted the prayer meeting on Saturday evening. On Sabbath, 22 persons, including the minister, took their places at the Lord's Table. The thanksgiving service was held on Monday morning, to give visitors the opportunity to attend, bringing a very pleasant Communion season to a close. Numbers increased during these services with the largest attendance reaching 64 persons. These included a number of visitors from Texas.

I agreed to conduct the midweek prayer meeting on Tuesday evening before leaving for Houston, Texas, on the following morning. During my stay in Chesley I visited the different families connected with the congregation and found them in good heart. Although the numbers attending the ordinary services are less than on previous occasions when I have been in Chesley, I felt there was a greater degree of harmony and unity within the congregation than before.

Texas

On arrival at Houston Intercontinental Airport, on Wednesday evening, 31st October, I was met by some members of the Smith family who transported me to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Smith. I stayed in this home, in Santa Fe, until Tuesday, 6th November, when I moved to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Irvin, north of Richmond. On Thursday, 8th November, I transferred to the home of Mrs. Carol Richards, in Belleville, about one and a quarter hour's drive from Richmond. I remained here with the members of the Kirk Session until leaving to return to Scotland.

While in Santa Fe a service was held in a disused church on Friday evening, 2nd November, when 24 persons attended. On Sabbath 4th we travelled to Richmond twice to conduct the worship services. There were 34 persons, including children, in attendance at each of these services. At the midweek meeting in Richmond, an appropriate address was given before the sacrament of baptism was administered to the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Metcalfe.

The Communion services commenced on Thursday, 8th November. Two services were conducted on Thursday and again on Friday, when the morning service took the form of a Fellowship Meeting. On this occasion the question was given out by Mr. David Kuiper and nine men then spoke to it. The Kirk Session was constituted after this meeting for the purpose of examining any who desired to come to the Lord's Table for the first time on the following Sabbath. In total, eight persons were examined, six being granted the privilege and two were advised to wait. The usual service was conducted on Saturday with a prayer meeting in the evening. After the morning service the Kirk Session was again constituted and tokens were distributed to intending communicants. The Sabbath services were conducted in the usual manner with 26 persons, including the minister, taking their places at the Lord's Table. A service on Monday evening brought the Communion season to a conclusion. Several of those attending the services expressed appreciation for the Lord's favour during them. In my own opinion the Communion was a pleasant and profitable occasion.

On Tuesday, 13th November, Mr. Alistair MacPherson and myself were taken to the airport in Houston, from where we flew to London and then to our respective destinations. In the kind providence of the Lord we both arrived safely home to our families.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE

Rev. J. L. Goldby

I SET off for a two-month tour of duty in Zimbabwe on Thursday, 14th June 2001, via London and Johannesburg, arriving in Bulawayo shortly before 1600 hrs. on Friday, 15th June. I am indebted to the Van Praags and to Miss

C. M. MacAulay for their generous hospitality and to Miss Norma MacLean, who was on furlough in Scotland at the time. Miss MacLean kindly allowed me the use of her house with the help of her cheerful house lady, Mrs. Manzini. My thanks are also due to Rev. and Mrs. Z. Mazvabo, Rev. and Mrs. P. Mzamo, Mr. and Mrs. T. Benschop, and the Mbuma staff.

Bulawayo and Ingwenya Mission

There have been a number of changes at Ingwenya since my last visit in 1997. Old buildings have been demolished and replaced and at present a new girls dormitory is nearing completion. A new classroom is also being built. Mr. Jacob Van Praag, from our Sydney congregation, was assisting Mr. James Mpofo supervising these and other building and maintenance projects throughout the Zimbabwe mission field. Mr. Jacob Van Praag and his wife Nella have both been of great assistance to the permanent staff over their two years of service.

Preaching duties began in Bulawayo on Sabbath morning, 17th June, at Lobengula, where between 300 and 400 souls were in attendance. About 80 attended the afternoon service at Nkulumane and at the evening service at Ingwenya 600 pupils of the John Tallach Secondary School were gathered. The Ingwenya prayer meetings are held on Thursday mornings at 8 a.m. On these occasions the pupils and congregation combine. When there is no supply, the Ingwenya elders, Messrs. Moyo and Manzini keep the services.

The Ingwenya pupils are making good progress in their acquisition of Scripture knowledge and some of them are showing a keen interest in the Gospel. On three occasions I attended an afternoon Bible Study with the form four pupils. It is entirely voluntary, with about 60 boys and girls in attendance. The other forms have their own Bible study classes. On the academic side, things are going extremely well and the school results are a credit to both pupils and staff.

Ingwenya has four preaching stations – Inyati, Cameron, Kadade and Insiza. I held services at each of these stations with the exception of Inyati and was able to assist Rev. Z. Mazvabo and join our Zimbabwe friends at communion seasons in Bulawayo and Cameron.

On Tuesday, 19th June, Rev. and Mrs. Ndebele took their final departure from Ingwenya to take up residence in Bulawayo. Mr. Ndebele has been labouring faithfully in the ministry at Ingwenya for the last 33 years. On Wednesday, 25th July, a meeting was held in Bulawayo to mark Mr. Ndebele's retirement. Rev. Petros Mzamo addressed his old friend with great feeling. It was no surprise that Mr. Ndebele was visibly moved as the two ministers have been labouring together in the Gospel for the last 50 years, first as Christian teachers and then as ministers. Representatives from different parts of the Mission gave retirement gifts to Rev. and Mrs. Ndebele, including a fine reclining armchair. Mr. Mzamo introduced a note of humour when he explained that the chair was to be used for "relaxation and meditation"!

Speakers made reference to their sadness and reluctance in parting with their beloved pastor.

Mbuma, Nkayi and Zenka

At Mbuma we received a warm welcome from the Rev. and Mrs. Mzamo. Mr. Mzamo has a substantial charge, with 13 preaching stations in his area.

Dr. Benschop has been leading the medical team at Mbuma Hospital for 13 years, whilst her husband Teus is busy each day revising the Sindebele Bible. He has two assistants, Nathaniel Mpofu and Senzemi Ndlovu. Although Senzemi is blind she is nevertheless able to make a valuable contribution to the work. Mr. Benschop has studied theology in Holland, including advanced studies in Hebrew and Greek.

The Sindebele Bible is now on the computer and the corrections and changes are listed and inserted daily. Mr. Benschop has also had training in electronics and this skill has been useful in setting up a solar system that provides power for the computer equipment.

Mbuma Hospital is suffering from a chronic shortage of qualified nurses. Sister Margaret Macaskill is soon to return home after giving many years of faithful service in Zimbabwe, and Sister Louise Leiper is also planning to return to the UK. At the time of writing, Hannah Buggs, a young nurse from England, is giving valuable temporary assistance to the regular staff. During my visit, the doctor and her team were for a time facing the unwelcome possibility of reducing to the status of a clinic owing to staff shortages. The lack of African staff in sympathy with our beliefs is a concern. It has been suggested that a nursing training school be set up at Mbuma that could recruit trainees from our Zimbabwean churches and schools. The idea was raised by the medical staff and the suggestion was welcomed by Bonakele Ncube, the headmaster of John Tallach. He saw it as a desirable provision for suitable Ingwenya school leavers. I held services in this area at Mbuma, Nkayi and Simbo.

Nkayi Primary School has requested to be brought back under the auspices of the Church. Through our relationship with the schools there is a great opportunity to bring the Gospel to thousands of children if labourers can be found to look after the work. Apart from Ingwenya and Thembisio in Bulawayo, which has a large primary day school attached, there are four other primary schools. Nkayi has 890 pupils, Mbuma 900, Lutsha 600, and Zenka 900, but there are not nearly enough labourers to supervise the spiritual work involved in such a large field.

Zvishavane

My last week in Zimbabwe was spent with Rev. Z. Mazvabo and family in Zvishavane. Many friends gathered for a communion season at New Canaan, where about 80 persons sat at the Lord's Table. On Tuesday, 31st July, we paid a visit to the town of Mazvingo (formerly Fort Victoria), where we were kindly entertained by Mr. Mazvabo's daughter and her husband. The following day I

held a service at our Akori church. We also visited Nguzi and Mawari, where a second service was held by Mr. Mazvabo.

There are three distinct groups of churches under Mr. Mazvabo in Mashonaland. Hundreds are under his ministry in these areas. Zvishavane has two congregations to the north at New Canaan and Makobere. Mawari and Gwengombe lie about 40 minutes' drive to the south. Another half-hour drive to the south brings one to the third group of churches. Chiedza is the main congregation with out stations at Akori, Ngezi, Mnaka and Chiwara. At New Canaan Mr. Mazvabo has the assistance of an able missionary, Mr. Siziba. If a second missionary could be settled at Chiedza this would be a great help to Mr. Mazvabo and would cut down the expense of travelling. Fuel is in short supply and very expensive. Although Mr. Mazvabo is almost blind, he not only labours in his own large field but is also the interim moderator of the Bulawayo congregations and Ingwenya with its out-stations.

Zimbabwe Crisis

In August last year Zimbabwe was facing severe economic problems. The Minister of Finance acknowledged that there was little or no foreign currency to buy in the supplies the country needed. Almost all sectors were in steep decline. Manufacturing was down by 35%, tourism had collapsed, many mines were closed and agriculture – formerly the mainstay of the economy – was in severe crisis. In addition, the country was facing a massive food shortage with no money to buy in the necessary supplies. These problems have now become very much more serious. We need to remember the poor people of Zimbabwe in accordance with the Apostle Paul's exhortation, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. J. MacDonald

THE Committee are glad to report that at its meeting of 19th June 2001, the Southern Presbytery accepted Mr. Alistair B. MacLean, BSc, a member of the Glasgow congregation, as a student studying for the ministry of the Church. At present Mr. MacLean is studying Greek and Hebrew with a view to taking his entrance to the Divinity Examination in time for next session.

The other two UK students are studying with Rev. H. M. Cartwright, MA, the Church's Tutor in New Testament Greek and cognate subjects. On finishing this course successfully Dr. Douglas Somerset will have finished his Divinity course and will be ready to be taken on trials for licence by his Presbytery. Mr. J. Bruce Jardine will proceed to the second year of his course with Rev. K. D. MacLeod.

The African students, Messrs. M. Mloyi, S. Khumalo, and N. K. Banda will, God willing, have finished the first session of their studies with Rev. K. D. MacLeod, BSc, by the time the Synod meets and, after a break in studies will move to Edinburgh to do their second and final session with Mr. Cartwright. We would ask our praying people to remember our students at a throne of grace as they prepare themselves for the onerous duties of their calling. We would also ask for continued prayer to be made to the Lord to raise up, equip and send forth many more young men who would, in their day, be “able ministers of the New Testament”. There are ten pastorless congregations in the UK alone, as well as those in America, Australia and New Zealand.

The Theological Conference was held in Inverness in December 2001 as reported in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. Again the Committee was heartened by the level of support and interest throughout the Church. We are also grateful to all those who prepared and presented papers. It is our intention, God willing, to hold this year’s Conference on 3rd and 4th December and we hope to have a programme arranged in time for the Synod.

THEOLOGICAL TUTOR’S REPORT

Rev H. M. Cartwright

A REPORT intended for the published papers of the Synod and written with more than half the final term remaining can only contain general information. The course during Session 2001-2002 was taken by Dr. D. Somerset, third year student, and Mr. J. B. Jardine, first year student. Classes met each forenoon from Tuesday to Friday at 9.30 a.m. and endeavoured to follow the well established pattern of the previous Tutor, Rev. J. MacLeod, in the various subjects prescribed. I am grateful to Mr. MacLeod for doing so much to assist my introduction to this new work and to the Committee for providing computer facilities to help in the Greek language part of the course. The classes generally took the form of discussion of previously prescribed work or previously distributed papers.

Greek and New Testament

The students, having passed the Entrance Examination, were expected to have a fair grasp of the elements of the language. The aim of the class was to consolidate a working knowledge of the basics of the language through revision of J. W. Wenham’s *The Elements of New Testament Greek* and reference when appropriate to other works of a comparable standard such as D. A. Black’s *Learn to Read New Testament Greek, Expanded Edition* – hopefully providing some basis for lifelong personal study and for the attainment of something akin to professional proficiency.

The Greek Text for regular reading and translation in class, with discussion of grammatical, exegetical and theological points, was the *Gospel According to Mark*. During the third term this was interspersed with representative passages from other parts of the New Testament. As such studies are a primary part of the minister's response to the exhortation of 2 Timothy 2:15, the students presented exegetical papers from time to time and some consideration was given to the principles of Grammatical, Historical and Theological Interpretation.

A survey of *Textual Criticism and the Canon of the New Testament* was conducted in connection with the study of Chapter I of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, using various resources from an *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* by J. Harold Greenlee to Edward F. Hill's *The King James Version Defended*. This is an area where there is little material wholly in accord with our biblical and confessional position.

In *New Testament Introduction and Theology* an effort was made to study the authorship, background, theme, outline and specially significant aspects of each of the New Testament books, drawing upon the better of the various more conservative *Introductions*, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses.

English Bible

Students were expected to privately read the entire New Testament in English for the purposes of the Course and were assessed by mid-term and end of term examinations. The Church is entitled to expect a high level of competence in the knowledge of the English Bible from her prospective ministers.

Catechetics

This course began with a brief survey of the history and use of Creeds and Confessions and the origins of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The *Confession* was systematically studied throughout the Session with the aid of such volumes as *The Confession of Faith: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine expounding the Westminster Confession*, by A. A. Hodge, supplemented by reference to other commentators on the *Confession*, including Robert Shaw, and to other theologians as various points arose.

Church Polity and Practice

This course began with discussion of what the Church is and what its functions are in the world, basically using Chapters XXV to XXIX of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the relevant parts of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book IV*, James Bannerman's *The Church of Christ* and William Cunningham's *Historical Theology*. Consideration was then given to the biblical principles of Presbyterianism and other forms of Church Government were subjected to scrutiny, account being taken of Chapters XXX and XXXI of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the Westminster Assembly's *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government*, Thomas

Wetherow's *The Apostolic Church: Which is it?*, the relevant parts of James Bannerman's *The Church of Christ* and William Cunningham's *Historical Theology*. There was also some discussion of the principles set out in the "four books of the Reformation" – *The Scots Confession*, *The Book of Common Order* and *The First and Second Books of Discipline*. For the study of the practice of Presbyterian principles in the various courts of the Church, the basic text book was *A Manual of the Practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland* (Second Edition, 1999), the aim being that men entering upon the ministry would be acquainted with the basic principles of Church Government and Discipline and be able to find their way around the *Manual* and around the courts of the Church.

The students appear to have given themselves diligently to the work of the Class and I have appreciated their co-operation and fellowship throughout the session. I would, however, venture the opinion that it would be beneficial for our students to be relieved, at least during term time, of much of the Sabbath supply in which they are engaged so that they can give themselves without reserve to what ought to be an academically rigorous full time course and so that they can sit under a regular pulpit ministry, which should have its own essential place in the spiritual and mental preparation of those who are soon to be thrust forth into this high and holy work.

THEOLOGICAL TUTOR'S REPORT

Rev. K. D. Macleod

CLASSES during the first eight weeks of the period covered by this report were spent in Zimbabwe. Immediately after I arrived from the UK in mid-October, Mr. S. Khumalo and Mr. M. Mloyi began their divinity course with me in Ingwenya. A fortnight later, Mr. N. K. Banda joined the class, initially as an independent student. Shortly afterwards, he was received by the Zimbabwe Presbytery as a student for the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Classes resumed in Leverburgh in mid-January and are scheduled to continue until mid-May.

Each day's class has begun with the study of the Scriptures, with a view to covering the whole of the Old Testament. Apart from Scripture, the main focus of the first part of the course was doctrine, using Louis Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine* as a textbook. It is hoped, towards the end of the course, to begin the study of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* with the help of Robert Shaw's Commentary.

In Church History we have been studying *The History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland*. In Pastoral Theology the main textbook has been *The Christian Ministry* by Charles Bridges. We have also gone over the

Westminster Assembly's *The Directory of Public Worship*. Throughout the year, students were required each week to bring an outline of a sermon based on a prescribed text. These outlines were discussed in the class, and I sought to give them what I believed was appropriate advice. In addition I took the opportunity of listening to the students conducting public worship and also gave them advice. I am grateful to them for the help they have given in taking services in the South Harris congregation and further afield.

The students have tackled their studies with diligence. They have sat class exams, and it is anticipated that, before they leave, they will sit the exit exams which are appropriate to this part of their course.

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

THE Committee had hoped to have to this year's Youth Conference in Fort William but as we could not obtain a suitable venue we opted for Dumfries. Dumfries and the surrounding area have the great advantage of being steeped in Church history and are very suitable for a historical tour. The venue, Dumfries and Galloway College, is a modern building with a lecture theatre and fresh and spacious living quarters, canteen and recreation area.

The dates of the Conference, Tuesday, 2nd April to Thursday, 4th April, are earlier than usual because the school holidays fall in the first week of April. The housemothers are Mrs. C. Ross and Miss Margaret Macaskill. Miss Rhoda Mackay, to whom we are grateful for acting as housemother on two other occasions, has returned to the John Tallach Secondary School for a period of teaching.

The Committee is indebted to the speakers who have undertaken to give papers on this occasion. While it takes forty minutes to read a lecture and one and a half hours to answer questions asked by conference members, it takes very many hours of reading and writing to prepare the papers. We are therefore grateful to those who have given lectures over the years and we hope and pray that it will result in much blessing for the young people who attend.

The lectures and historical tour for this year are as follows:

Muhammad's God – A Christian Perspective on Islam

Rev. A. J. Macdonald

"Come over and Help Us" – Mission Work in Eastern Europe

Rev. D. A. Ross

Man as Made in the Image of God – What Does It Mean for Us Today?

Rev. G. G. Hutton

Some Galloway Covenanters – A Historical Tour

Conducted by Rev. R. MacLeod

The Son of Promise – Lessons from the Life of Isaac

Rev. D. J. MacDonald

The Duty of Prayer – “Let your requests be made know unto God”

Rev. D. A. Ross

At last year’s Youth Conference, held in Portree High School Hostel, Portree, there was an increase in attendance. We were glad to have among us a number of young people from other denominations, as well as some friends from Holland under the care of Ds. Budding.

The young people showed a keen interest throughout, judging by the questions asked. According to the opinion of young and not so young who attended it was a very profitable occasion. Also, the catering and facilities in the Hostel were of a very high standard, and the staff were very kind. It is very important that our young people meet old friends from various congregations in the Church and also make new friends. In a world where there are very few young people who have an interest in spiritual and moral issues it is good that our young friends have this further opportunity of meeting with one another in connection with the Gospel.

We express yet again, our deep indebtedness to the ladies who set the questions for the Scripture and Catechism Exercises and correct the answers three times a year. The numbers from the home Church who do the exercises continue much the same as before, but there has been a considerable increase in the numbers from abroad, which is heartening. We warmly thank those friends also who correct exercises from other countries and as well as our African missions.

How altogether important is this work of instructing our young people in the teachings of the Word of God and the Shorter Catechism. In Eastern Europe, for example, it is the Bible teachings which are systematically laid out in the Shorter Catechism that have been the means of opening the minds of certain church-going people in Eastern Europe to a fuller understanding of the Word of God. And it is these same systematised Bible teachings which have been the means of keeping many of our people from being swept away by the prevailing errors of the day. When such young people come to a saving interest in Christ these doctrines take on a new meaning, and they bless the Lord that they had the privilege of being under sound Bible teaching.

Moreover, the young people in our Church today will hopefully be the people of the Church in years ahead. Some will, we trust, be brought to fear the Lord, and some will be in office in the Church and fill useful positions in it. Also, these Scripture teachings, taken to heart by them, will prove a great defence against the many snares which are set by the ungodly for young people as they settle into their work in the world.

We encourage parents to use these and other means in our Church to instill in their children the teachings of the Bible. This they promised God to do when their children were baptised. God promises families that He will be a Father to

them and that they will be His children when parents and children, by the grace of God, believe and practice these teachings. "The promise is to you and to your children" (Acts 2:39).

BALLIFEARY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

IN the kind providence of the Lord the work of the Ballifeary Care Home has continued for another year. Much has been said concerning free care for the elderly and the debate continues but we have to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord towards us and we count it all as evidence of free grace from the God of all grace and the Father of all mercies.

The financial position of the Home remains healthy as the bed occupancy through the year was 96%. Upgrading work in all the rooms began in June and so far 9 rooms are en suite with toilet and wash handbasin and work continues on the remaining 14. This has, of course, depleted our reserves. The Warrand Road flat has been sold as surplus to requirements.

We are sorry to report the following deaths in the Home: Mrs. Jane Ross, 3rd January; Mrs. Jessie MacKay, 23rd February; Mrs. Joan Munro, 22nd March; Mrs. Flora Grant, 5th August; Mrs. Elizabeth Tallach, 25th August; and Mr. Alistair Grewer, 25th September. They are all sadly missed and our sympathy is with the relatives.

In July, our Assistant Matron passed away at home in Holland after a relatively short illness caused by a brain tumour. She was 61 years old and had been a member of the staff in the Home since January 1988. Miss Crum was not only a responsible and conscientious worker but a gracious believer. We sympathise with Miss Crum's relatives in Holland and commend to them the hope of the resurrection.

The inspections of the Home by the various regulatory bodies were all satisfactory and this reflects faithfully the high standards of care maintained by the Matron, Assistant Matron and staff. We are indebted to the ministers and men who conducted worship and the ladies who visited through the year. We wish to thank the auditors, John Fraser and John G. Macleod and Mr. A. MacRae for his continued interest and advice. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed is the name of the Lord."

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

OVER another year the Home has provided care to 14 elderly residents. We are glad to be able to make this provision for those who no longer feel able to look after themselves. As has been the case in recent years, the Home was almost continuously full.

The distinction between residential care homes and nursing homes has now been abolished. One consequence of this has been that we now are obliged to have two carers, instead of one, on duty at night. This has caused an obvious increase in expense. However, we are thankful that this year's increase in fees takes some account of this. We are again grateful to Mr. Iain Gillies for his help in preparing the budget which was presented to the local Council in justification of our request for a significant increase in the rates payable.

Since the last report was written, two residents have passed away: Mrs. Catherine MacFarlane and Mrs. Margaret MacCuish. We would extend our sympathy to the relatives.

The Committee again expresses its sincere thanks to all the staff in the Home for the consistent care they are giving to the residents. We wish them all the Lord's blessing and again commend the work of the Home to the prayers of the Lord's people.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. G. G. Hutton

THE committee has continued throughout the year to act as an important contact point between the Church and many who are outside its ecclesiastical boundaries. Most of these learn something about the Church from our website on the Internet. The interest stimulated by what they read is sufficient to instigate further inquiry. Such inquiries have come from places as far apart as Holland, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Nairobi, Pakistan, Nepal, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, USA and, of course, various parts of the United Kingdom. Questions about our practice in worship, observance of the Sabbath Day, subscription to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and relationships with other Churches, are among those frequently asked. Some are happy to have a response by email while others request literature which explains further why our Church exists and what it stands for.

Not only is the Outreach Committee contacted directly but due to the fact that our bookroom in Glasgow has been promoted on our website, some have contacted the staff there, requesting literature and purchasing from our stock

of books. One such request came recently from Singapore for two hundred tracts. It is our delight as a committee to be in a position to assist others spread the truth in places where it is not possible for us to be in person. Mr. James Macleod, to whom the committee is very much indebted, for his enthusiastic labours month by month, keeping our website up to date, is presently scanning the books stocked in our bookroom, in order to advertise them on the internet. Our hope and prayer is that this will expand our opportunities to spread the Gospel in printed form.

Requests for supplies of Gospel tracts have continued at much the same level as before for which we are thankful. In addition to these, we have received requests for permission to print some of our tracts in other languages. The committee endeavours to discern what the peculiar needs are in particular circumstances and act accordingly. On occasions it is more practical to finance the printing of our tracts where they are to be used, due to the fact we would never be able to get our literature into certain countries by mail. In a “closed country” like Nepal, where evangelical literature is treated as contraband, the desire exists in the hearts of some to reach their fellow-countrymen with the Gospel. We as a committee are glad when someone from inside such a regime seeks our help and we are able in providence to make some little contribution to reach those perishing in spiritual ignorance with the message of the Gospel of redeeming grace.

The committee has found it necessary to reprint some of the tracts from our existing list of titles. One of these, *Which Church?*, has been in particular demand, with one order from Texas alone, for a thousand copies. It is our intention to add two new titles to our list of tracts this year. One dealing with the “Christmas” issue and another on the “Regulative Principle”.

Once again the members of the Outreach Committee request the prayerful support of the congregations throughout the Church. Our day is a day of small things, nevertheless we have reason to thank our sovereign God, that opportunities still exist for us to spread the truth in various parts of the world. We pray for the day, when to a much fuller extent, it shall be said, “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalm 68:11).

MAGAZINES REPORT

Rev. K. D. Macleod, Editor

TWELVE issues of each Magazine have been issued since the last report was written. The contents have followed the same pattern as in previous years, as have those of the Gaelic Supplement.

The appointment of an Editorial Board has been of considerable help in the production of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* – particularly in providing

reaction to contemporary developments, both in the Notes and Comments and Protestant View columns and sometimes in separate articles. I am very grateful to all the members for the various contributions they have made and their help also in the editing of some articles.

I am grateful also to all who have sent in contributions to the Magazines, not least those whose Conference papers have appeared. A great deal of labour has gone into the preparation of these papers, and in this way they can reach a much wider audience than could hear them when they were originally given. I wish also to thank all who helped in other ways in the production of the Magazines, in particular Dr. J. Mitchell for his continued willing help in checking both magazines at the final stages of editing.

Beginning with the January 2002 issues, the contract for printing the Magazines has been given to Settle Graphics, with the actual printing being done by the Pioneer Press in Skipton. In parting with the Stornoway Gazette, who printed the Magazines for six years, I have to acknowledge their constant willingness to help in all my dealings with them.

The number of Magazines sold through agents has fallen, although the number sent directly to subscribers has remained constant. The price of the Magazines for 2002 was left unchanged.

Once more I would conclude by drawing attention to the need for prayer that the magazines would be blessed to those who read them. One occasionally gets reaction, more often than not appreciative, from various parts of the world. The fact that the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* is available on the internet further increases its reach. May the Lord bless the work to many souls!

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

RELIGIOUS books continue to flood onto the market. In one recent year 4,452 new religious books were published in the UK alone. This was twice the number of titles in the fields of social welfare, political science, art, education, travel and law put together. By comparison the output of this Committee is minuscule, but we believe they are faithful to Scripture and we trust that this labour is not in vain in the Lord. The number of titles carried in the Bookroom is also a small fraction of the above figure; it cannot be otherwise if one is to restrict the stock to books which are scriptural. However, we should be thankful for the substantial number of sound books which are available today in English, particularly the reprints of the writings of previous centuries.

Publications

Our major production since the last meeting of Synod was the three-volume set of the *Works of Ebenezer Erskine*. The Committee has also brought out volume 4 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and hopes to proceed gradually with further volumes. We have also produced the *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald Macdonald*, which means that all the books written about the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church are presently in print.

The hardback edition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was again reprinted last year. Thomas Watson's *Art of Divine Contentment* was also reprinted, as was the *Larger Catechism*. At the time of writing, a reprint of the *Mother's Catechism* is in progress. Most recently, it has been made available under the auspices of the Welfare of Youth Committee but, as this Committee has the financial resources, we have taken responsibility for this printing. Total sales of books in 2001 were significantly ahead of the previous year, at well over £23,000. A large proportion of this increase is accounted for by wholesale orders for the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger Catechism* when they were reprinted.

Bookroom

We were extremely sorry to hear at the end of last year that Miss Marion Morrison, who was the much-appreciated Manager for around nine years, was leaving to take up another job. We are indeed grateful to her for the effort she put into running the Bookroom and we wish her well in her new appointment. To fill the gap, Mr. Kenneth Hutton was appointed, on a temporary basis, as Bookroom Manager. That appointment has now been made permanent and we trust that, with the Lord's blessing, he will continue to run the Bookroom effectively into the future.

Total sales for 2001 were up by more than £22,000 on the previous year's total. When allowance is made for the increase in Free Presbyterian publications, retail sales through the Bookroom were up by over £12,000. It is encouraging that the accounts for last year showed a significantly increased surplus, and now, for the first time in several years, there is a credit balance in the Bookroom Fund.

Efforts are being made to put all titles in the Bookroom, with descriptions and pictures, onto the website, and we hope that this work will bear fruit in increased sales. In the first two months of 2002, £1,200 worth of books was ordered from the website.

We are also grateful to the men who have kept the Bookroom open on a Saturday morning and to others also who have given help in various ways. Again the Committee would, in particular, like to thank Mr. Alasdair MacLean for the work he put into pricing second-hand books, particularly those which came from the estate of the late Mr. J. W. S. Dearness of Orkney. Most of these books have now been sold.

We would again request the prayers of the Lord's people for His rich blessing on the work of the Church in trying to put good literature into the

hands of readers throughout many parts of the world – both what we produce ourselves under the Free Presbyterian Publications imprint, and the books of other publishers which we retail in the Bookroom.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO NORTH AMERICA

Rev Neil M. Ross

VISITORS from our Church in Scotland to our far-flung and pastorless congregations in North America come away feeling, in most cases, that we in Scotland are highly favoured in having our congregations not far from one another and that we are able to attend several communion seasons during the year. It is understandable therefore that our Church people in North America are very appreciative of having visitors from Scotland, and more especially of having ministerial supply.

Vancouver

As a Church deputy sent out by the Dominions and Overseas Committee I flew directly to Vancouver, accompanied by my wife. We were met by Mr. John A. MacLeod, deacon, who along with his wife showed us great kindness and was a tremendous help to me. Not only I myself but also the Church as a whole is indebted to Mr. MacLeod for continuing to faithfully maintain its interests in Vancouver.

I conducted four Sabbath services and two midweek services. The cause there is very low indeed but we had eight different visitors worshipping with us in response to our advertising the services.

The church building and manse are carefully looked after by Mr. MacLeod himself, but the church is in need of extensive maintenance because it is a wood frame building with harling applied to the outer boarding. It is used also by the Associated Presbyterian Churches congregation. In fact, during my visit to Vancouver, an APC minister was visiting the APC congregation for a few weeks.

Mr. MacLeod took us to Vancouver Island to visit Mrs. Mary Hardy of our Vancouver congregation. We spent a pleasant and profitable time with her and were grateful recipients of her hospitality.

Texas

The Texas congregation, consisting of 35 people (half of whom are children, and sixteen of whom are communicants), is the result of the families there looking separately for a long time for a fully reformed place of worship. In the providence of the Most High they were led to our Church and to become a congregation of it.

During my two weeks there I preached eleven times, administered the sacrament of baptism on the first Sabbath, and the sacrament of the Lord's

Supper on the following. During the communion season, when attendances were about 40 to 45, we had not only Mr. A. MacPherson, elder, from Scotland, and Mr. D. Kuiper, elder, from Chesley, but also some of the Hembd family from Indiana. It was encouraging that the Kirk Session received a young man as a communicant of the congregation. On my last evening there, and after the prayer meeting, we had a congregational meeting at which the financial statement was read.

I wish to record my heartfelt thanks for the warm hospitality of the families of the congregation.

Chesley

For the next two weeks our abode was the Chesley manse. The Chesley congregation is in good heart although considerably diminished from what it was when I was first there for some weeks in 1976. It numbers 37 people but eleven of them live at great distances and are able to attend but seldom. Again I preached eleven times, administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the first Sabbath and the sacrament of baptism on the second. During the communion season we had several visitors from local places, eleven from Texas and two from Indiana. On Sabbath evening almost 60 were present.

Having been given the use of a car, I was able to visit most of the families of the congregation, who warmly welcomed us and showed us much kindness. Mr. Gerrit Schuit kindly took us to Toronto Airport from which we returned to Scotland.

Conclusion

I was struck by the loyalty to the Church of our people in North America and their deep gratitude to the Church for sending a deputy to them. Seldom do they have a minister among them and it is necessary therefore that in their isolated situation they be given as much pastoral care as possible. They have a crying need for a minister of the Church to be settled among them.

I am grateful to my presbytery for giving me leave to visit those distant parts, and to those who supplied my pulpit in my absence. Above everything I wish to render thanks to the Lord for His preservation and help in my many duties and over many thousands of miles. May He bless what has been done in His name.

REPORT OF DEPUTIES' VISIT TO KENYA MISSION

Rev. Neil M. Ross

LAST year's Synod instructed the Zimbabwe Presbytery to induct Rev. Keith Watkins to the charge of the Preaching Station at Sengera, Kenya, and gave the responsibility of making arrangements for the induction to the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee (FMC), in liaison with the Presbytery. The

Synod also ruled that ministerial deputies visiting within the bounds of the Zimbabwe Presbytery were to be appointed assessor ministers pro tempore of the Presbytery during their stay. Accordingly the FMC appointed the Rev. J. R. Tallach and myself as Church deputies to visit Kenya in July 2001.

Two weeks before the induction I arrived in Sengera, accompanied by my wife, after having been welcomed at Kisumu Airport by Mr. Hugh MacKenzie, Mission Administrator. The mission compound was in beautiful order, and the new church building at the entrance to the Mission, converted from the former hospital wards, is vastly superior to the previous church building.

We saw that there were four European staff and 33 permanent African staff (11 of whom were working for the clinic). We noted too that the clinic, which was quite busy, was continuing to gain the confidence of the people, with increasing demands on its services, especially those of the maternity unit.

It was particularly gratifying that the Sengera congregation was now not only larger (about 320 souls) but also that the congregational singing has greatly improved following psalmody instruction by Sister Celia Renes.

On the two Sabbaths before the induction I preached to large and reverent congregations. During the daily staff worship I continued what Mr. MacKenzie had been doing for some weeks – commenting on those Psalms used by the congregation so that they might have more understanding of what they are singing.

It was with eager anticipation that the people were looking forward to the induction. Mr. Zikahli arrived from Bulawayo on the Monday before the induction, and Dr. Tallach and Mr. and Mrs. Watkins on Tuesday. Next day, Wednesday, 25th July, Mr. Watkins was inducted by the Zimbabwe Presbytery.

A full account of that solemn and happy occasion appeared in the September 2001 issue of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, but we may mention again that approximately 400 people congregated and that after public worship, Mr. Watkins, having answered the customary questions and signed the Formula, was solemnly inducted as the missionary minister of Sengera Mission. Rev. Dr. Tallach addressed him regarding his ministerial duties, and the Moderator pro tem addressed the congregation.

The congregation was truly pleased to have Mr. Watkins settled over them. One of the local men said (and we believe that he was speaking for others also): “We have been praying for a minister to be sent to us – and now God has answered our prayers.” We believe that the prayer of some of them now is, as it is the prayer of mission friends in Britain, Holland, Zimbabwe and elsewhere, that the Mission will prosper spiritually.

Next day I left Sengera to travel home, but Dr. Tallach was able to wait for some more days to assist Mr. Watkins and do some work at the clinic.

Dr. Tallach and I are grateful to our respective presbyteries for releasing us, and we acknowledge the kind providence of the Most High in protecting us in our travels and undertaking for us in our duties. Our prayer is that the Lord would give a great increase to the sowing of the good seed of the Kingdom in Sengera.