

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

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INDEX

Report of the Religion and Morals Committee.....	page 5
Sabbath Observance Committee's Report	22
Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee's Report.....	26
Ingwenya Mission Report	30
John Tallach High School Report	32
Zenka Mission Report	37
Nkayi Mission Report	38
Zvishavane Mission Report	39
Mbumba Mission Report	40
Mbumba Mission Hospital Report.....	41
Bulawayo Mission Report.....	51
Thembiso Children's Home Report	52
Zimbabwe Mission Administrator's Report.....	54
Kenya Report	57
Dominions and Overseas Committee's Report	58
Australian and Singapore Report	60
New Zealand Report	62
Eastern Europe Mission Report	64
Report of Deputy to North America	67
Training of the Ministry Committee's Report	68
Welfare of Youth Committee's Report.....	69
Ballifeary Residential Care Home Committee's Report.....	71
Leverburgh Residential Care Home Committee's Report	72
Outreach Committee's Report.....	73
Publications and Bookroom Committee's Report	75
Church Archives Committee's Report	76
Website Committee's Report.....	77

REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr. F. R. Daubney

1. INTRODUCTION

IT is with sadness that the Committee has to report a continuing erosion in the religious and moral state of the world and nation. In the past year the news has been dominated by the reported atrocities and brutalities of the so-called Islamic State in Syria, Iraq and Libya. We read of young Muslim men from this country fired up with zeal for the cause of those who would brutally suppress disagreement with their odious beliefs. We have seen further revelations of child abuse and of sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people. The sodomite lobby is becoming more bold and vociferous in its demands. The prosecution of Christian people with small businesses who, for instance, refuse to print sodomite literature or decorate their “wedding” cakes, is becoming more frequently heard of. The greed and avarice of the banking crisis, of a few years ago, still reverberates with further revelations of wrong doing. All of which vividly highlights a continuing falling away from the gospel truths with which this nation, and others, have been so greatly favoured. God has a controversy with us and unless we return to Him in repentance, then the flood of our iniquity will carry us away.

In the visible church we have witnessed a turning away from God’s Word in the embracing of sodomites, the appointment of women ministers and priests, and now the inevitable woman bishop. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Reverend John Chalmers, has invited the Pope of Rome to visit Scotland. In his fulsome invitation he said that “All people of faith would welcome him”. The Convener of this Committee has written to Mr. Chalmers to protest but no reply has been received.

We must pray with Habakkuk, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years . . . make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2).

2. RELIGION

A review of Christianity worldwide

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation” (Luke 17:20), and there may be many things happening in Christ’s Kingdom, even of great importance, which do not make the news, or even come to the ears of those concerned for the well-being of the Kingdom. The purpose of this survey, therefore, is simply to state how world Christianity presently appears from Scotland.

European peoples

Among the European peoples, now spread not only in Europe but in North America and the Antipodes, the reluctance to hear the Gospel or to give it any

serious consideration continues unabated. The general impression throughout the western world is one of decline in Christianity, with just a few encouragements here and there. In Britain there has been a significant increase in minor persecution during the last year.

South and Central America

Interest in evangelical Christianity is much greater in these parts of the world than it is in the West. However, reports of persecution, even death, at the hands of Roman Catholics come in from some countries in Central America. In Brazil there is a discernible and heartening enthusiasm for Protestantism and Calvinism, but not sufficient at present to counter the endemic corruption.

Africa

The Islamic violence against Christianity continues, especially in Nigeria, Niger, Central African Republic, Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania. There is great interest in Christianity in southern Nigeria, with very large charismatic churches, but little progress in reformed religion.

The Middle East

Violence against “Christians” continues throughout the Middle East. Many of these sufferers adhere to false forms of Christianity but we hear of true believers as well, and the interest in the Gospel is far greater than in the West.

India and Pakistan

Christianity is widespread in southern India, but there are outbreaks of persecution from resentful Hindus. There is little evidence of reformed religion. In Pakistan the small number of Christians are the frequent victims of persecution.

China and the Far East

A substantial proportion of the South Korean population profess Christianity. The proportion is lower in China, but the numbers involved are large, and in both countries there is significant interest in reformed religion. Persecution in China appears to have worsened in the last year.

In summary, the persecution of Christians is very widespread, but tends to be localised rather than universal. The Gospel continues to spread in some parts of the world, generally in the face of fierce opposition. When a longer view is taken, countries such as Korea, Brazil, China, Russia, and Israel have seen a striking increase in true religion.

The suppression of Christianity in Britain today

Those who profess to hold to the Word of God as their supreme authority, are presently tolerated in public national life, only in so far as they remain silent. The Bible has long been a forgotten guide for governments and their agencies

of law and justice. In more recent times the public expression of any opinion that is consistent with a belief in the Bible is almost always condemned, to the extent that it has become a rarity. In January 2014 there was a well-publicised letter to the Press by the Henley Councillor, Mr. David Silvester, in which he accused the Prime Minister of acting “arrogantly against the Gospel”, and implied that the floods of December 2013 were God’s judgment on the nation for the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act. In addition to much mocking in the Press, his statement elicited a response by the local Conservative MP, John Howell: “I thought Mr. Silvester’s letter was not the sort of thing that he should have written in today’s age.” This view is so pervasive, that the UK Independence Party felt that they had “no choice” but to expel Mr. Silvester. The implication of the view expressed by Mr. Howell is that biblical Christianity is not a reasonable belief for people to hold; and that there is an incompatibility with a view of God as the Governor of the nations, and a person’s participation in the earthly government of a nation. This state of *de facto* censorship of Christians in the UK looks to be worsening. Employment opportunities, particularly with government agencies, are increasingly restricted for those who refuse to act contrary to the Word of God.

Whilst the chief responsibility for this shameful condition lies with the churches who have not contended for scriptural truth, it is the education system, particularly the universities, that has been powerfully instrumental in the suppression of a public Christian voice over the past few decades. The pervasive teaching of evolutionary theory and liberal moral philosophy has had a profoundly deleterious effect. Journalists and teachers have for generations graduated from universities believing in, and relentlessly promoting, an atheist-leaning agenda; to the extent that dissenting voices have now largely been removed from the schools and the mainstream media. Children are taught according to an anti-Christian agenda which includes a distorted view of history, including the use of historical fiction. The nation is daily bombarded by the publicly-funded BBC and other privately-owned, and equally-corrupting media, with a similar agenda.

Very few people in Britain will now acknowledge the truth of the Genesis creation narrative. Indeed, belief in Darwinism and other forms of evolution is considered to be so sacrosanct, that most will not even publicly acknowledge God as the Creator – considering the issue of creation irrelevant when “scientists have shown the universe to have evolved over billions of years”. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a great many have now discounted the possibility of life after death, and the necessity of the salvation of their eternal souls. They thus refrain from reading the Word of God, attending a church, or otherwise preparing to meet their God.

In the universities, modern philosophers have espoused man-centric moral theories to fill the vacuum in the nation created by the forsaking of the law of God as a moral compass. Such theories exclude the possibility of the operation of a sovereign God and are therefore rooted in atheism. The late American philosopher, John Rawls of Harvard University, has been the most influential

in this regard. His *Theory of Justice*, first published in 1971, was founded on the principle that, “Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others”. Equality legislation, which is firmly based on Rawlsianism, is now an iron hand on all the nations of the west for the suppression of Christianity. One of the basic liberties that Rawls espoused was liberty of conscience. In equality legislation, however, the right to liberty of conscience for Christians has been overridden time and again by the supposed rights of homosexuals and others. Every mainstream political party in Britain, whether on the right or the left, fully supports this equality legislation and its consequential suppression of Christian morality. However, the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland has recently proposed an amendment in the Province’s legislation to “make reasonable accommodation for people with sincere and deeply-held religious beliefs”. Were this proposal to be taken up in Edinburgh and Westminster it would be an encouraging development, but that seems highly unlikely at present.

Although there have been well-publicised cases of individual Christians losing rights as a consequence of recent legislation, these matters are relatively inconsequential compared to the much more pernicious suppression of Christianity in Britain through the purging of Christian teaching in the education system, in regard to both teaching the Gospel, the teaching of creation and of biblical morality. The vilification of biblical Christianity by all branches of the media, both in terms of news and entertainments, greatly compounds the anti-Christian message that young people are hearing from day to day.

Another way in which Christian moral teaching is suppressed in the UK is through “relationship and sex education” in schools. It is required for all state-funded schools in England to provide such lessons for children from the age of eleven. Parents currently have the right to remove children from these lessons, but this veto was restricted by the last Labour Government to children up to the age of fifteen. If elected the Labour Party propose to make sex education compulsory from the age of five, and will be required to be “LGBT-inclusive”. Although there is no such statutory obligation in Scotland, schools are expected to provide “relationships, sexual health and parenthood education”, and guidelines are issued by the Scottish Government on its provision. Parents may withdraw their children but are discouraged from doing so. Amongst other troubling unbiblical aspects contained in the latest guidelines, issued in December 2014, it is recommended that secondary school pupils may make the decision independent of their parents as to whether they wish to attend such lessons. The purpose seems to be to make it as difficult as possible for parents to withdraw their children without enforcing a legal requirement.

So far suppression of Christianity in Britain is largely confined to public life. The state has not yet taken an active interest in what goes on in the church or in the home and, as long as there is no perceived difficulty for the state, this situation may well persist for some time. However, the history of persecution

of Christians suggests that neither the individual, the family nor the church, will be immune from oppression by the state if there is an effective witness against its own evil legislation and practise. One of the immediate dangers for families in Scotland is the “State Guardian” legislation. This law, which was passed by MSPs in 2014, and is due to come into effect in 2016, gives a government-appointed person access to every child in the land to check their wellbeing is not “compromised” in their family situation. The legality of the legislation is being challenged through Judicial Review by a group of petitioners led by Colin Hart of the Christian Institute. Biblical teaching has already been effectively barred from the public classroom as “not preparing children for life in modern Britain”. It is no great stretch of the imagination to see this prohibition extended to private schools and, by means of the above legislation, even to the family itself.

Unless the Lord will restrain the evildoers in His mercy, troubled times lie ahead. If that is the case, we ought neither to be surprised nor fearful of such troubles, but rather to rejoice that we are thus privileged (1 Peter 4:12-19). The suppression of Christianity in the UK to the point of persecution has long been foreseen. For example, in a letter to a correspondent at the close of the 18th century, Bishop Samuel Horsley made a very prescient prediction of a time when the state would turn against Christianity. He wrote: “This desertion will begin in a professed indifference to any particular form of Christianity, under the pretence of universal toleration; which toleration will proceed from no true spirit of charity and forbearance, but from a design to undermine Christianity, by multiplying and encouraging sectaries [members of sects]. The pretended toleration will go far beyond a just toleration, even as it regards the different sects of Christians. For governments will pretend an indifference to all, and will give a protection in preference to none. All establishments will be set aside. From the toleration of the most pestilent heresies, they will proceed to the toleration of Mahometanism, atheism, and at last to a positive persecution of the truth of Christianity.” More than two centuries later, his prediction has been fully realised.

Popery (Romanism)

Popery is described in Holy Scripture as that “. . . MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5), a “. . . woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . .” (Revelation 17:6), and a “. . . habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Revelation 18:2b). Its head, the Pope of Rome is declared to be “. . . that man of sin . . . the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b), who blasphemously “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). And as a satanic institution (2 Thessalonians 2:9) beclouded with strong delusion, and believing a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

In July 2014, the Pope, in a homily delivered before an audience which included some who had been abused by paedophile priests, addressed the scandal of wide-spread child sex abuse by Popish priests and, more strongly than previously, condemned the way in which the abuse crisis had been handled. Whilst so speaking, he said: “Before God and His people, I express my sorrow for the sins and grave crimes of clerical sexual abuse committed against you. And I humbly ask forgiveness.” However, his words were greeted with much scepticism, and largely dismissed as a mere superficial gesture. One report stated: “They have found fault with the way the pope, 77, has approached the scandal since his election last March. While condemning the abuse, Francis has seemed reluctant to mount a full-frontal attack on the church and angered many by claiming that no other organisation has ‘done more’ to tackle child abuse.” It appears to have been a reluctant, insincere, cynical damage-limitation exercise. Whilst Popery’s blasphemous priests are forbidden to marry, and remain in the heart-hardening, devilish environment of that system, Romanism will continue to breed paedophiles and sodomites.

The Pope granted the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Reverend John Chalmers, an audience, which took place on the 16th February 2015. He, in seemingly eager anticipation of the meeting, said, “I am honoured to be able to meet with his Holiness Pope Francis. I hope to be able to discuss a range of issues including how faith is regarded in the 21st century.” He ought to flee from Popery’s idolatry, recoil from acknowledging the Pope’s blasphemous usurping of the designation “His Holiness”, and condemn his heretical doctrine of justification by works. He by his declared intention, and grateful acknowledgement of the Pope, exposes himself as a blind leader of the blind, and yet another dupe of Rome, that, as Satan’s masterpiece, excels at pretending a love to Christ, to truth and to holiness. Woe to him that embraces damnable heresy and idolatry, and woe to him that does not condemn it with all his power. “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 17:15).

Islam (Mohammedanism)

There are an estimated 1.3 billion Muslims world-wide, about a quarter of the world’s population. These people are carried away with Islam in evidence of the righteous judgement of God. Islam is Britain’s fastest growing religion, numbering around 3 million, having almost trebled in size since 2001; 1 in 10 children under the age of 4 are Muslim. It is predicted that Islam will be the largest religion in Britain by 2030. There are about 1,500 mosques, and approximately 90 Muslim schools in England. Some areas have become predominantly Muslim, and it is reported that Sharia law is practiced there. Media accounts of the Muslim Community in general give the impression that it is becoming more assertive, even aggressive, with a few declaring that Britain will eventually become an Islamic State.

The Koran is the principal book from which the Muslim derives his teaching and practice. James Durham, in his commentary on the Book of Revelation,

chapter 9:13-21, states that the Koran was written by Mohammed, a non-Christian, together with Sergius, a Nestorian (who say Christ is two persons), Joannes Antiochenus, an Arian (who deny the Godhead of the Son and Holy Ghost), and some Jews. He also asserts that the Koran is a mere human composition (not given to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel as he claimed), but is instead a mixture of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity. The Koran includes many heresies, especially the denial of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. It is devoid of all the fundamental articles of truth, which without the knowledge and faith thereof, it is impossible to be saved: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . ." (Acts 16:31).

Islamic scholars disagree amongst themselves as to the meaning of the word Islam (*Salafi*); some consider that it means "peace", and others that it means "submission". It has been contended that Islam, in its traditional formulations and core text, mandates warfare against, and subjugation of, unbelievers (non-Muslims). Muslim jurists (experts in Islamic law) agree that the purpose of fighting against Christians and Jews is two-fold; either their conversion to Islam or their submission to it, and payment of the poll-tax (*jizya*). The Koran in 9:29 declares, "Fight those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and who forbid not what Allah and His messenger have forbidden – who do not practice the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the Book – until they pay the poll-tax out of hand and are humbled". It makes a sharp distinction between the believer (Muslim) and the non-believer (non-Muslim), therefore, effectively teaching that the Muslim is superior to the non-Muslim, and also advocates a global agenda, the prospective establishment of a world-dominating Caliphate (Islamic Kingdom).

There are tensions in Britain between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is evident that many apparently moderate Muslims do not condemn extremist atrocities as strongly as may be desired, and they will not march en-masse publicly in condemnation of Islamic terrorist murder. Many non-Muslims are suspicious of Muslims, even when they condemn extremist violence. The 7/7 bombings, the murder of Lee Rigby, and the very frequent reports of thwarted terrorist attacks, have created an atmosphere of fear and wariness throughout the land. The Government is not unaffected by fear, and seems to be intimidated by the lurking bomber, shooter or be-header. It has publicly admitted that its security is insufficient to prevent all terrorist attacks, and that such are inevitable. The Government is in desperate need of wise biblical advice.

The truly godly are to take encouragement from the fact that better days are promised, indeed pre-fixed, in Holy Scripture (the Christian Bible), when the living and true God will bring about the propagation of the Gospel (a good report of Christ) and the spreading of the kingdom of Christ to all nations, This will involve the conversion of the Jews, the fullness of the Gentiles (which will include millions of Muslims) and the fall of Islam, and all other false religions. These better days of the glorious millennium will last for a very long time and during this blessed period the true Christian Church will thrive in fulfilment of

the Scriptural promises; “. . . the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9b).

Islamic terrorism and persecution of Christians

Following the death of Osama bin Laden it seemed, for a brief time, that the Islamist threat was in decline. However, what would appear to be a more sinister and random form of terrorism has emerged with the brutal activities of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Isis). The members of Isis are determined to form a Caliphate, an Islamic state, which would be intolerant of any form of opposition or disagreement.

In June 2014, the group renamed itself Islamic State (IS). The group sprang up in Iraq and then entered into the Syrian conflict with its own purposes, supporting neither the Syrian government nor the rebels. As a Caliphate it claims religious, political and military authority over all Muslims worldwide. This has been widely denounced by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

There have been many instances of what Isis regards as “reprisals” against those who criticise Islam or Mohammed. Their dreadful and wicked treatment of their captives and hostages is beyond description. The beheadings, burnings and stonings are not simply executions but an indulgence in gratuitous sadism.

Towards the end of 2014, Isis claimed that it would fly the “flag of Allah” over the White House. Recruits are encouraged to “set out in jihad” if they “desire what God has promised”. In late September 2014 it was revealed that Isis planned to kill ten million Americans as retribution for their perceived role in killing ten million Muslims.

The members of Isis are Sunni Muslims and direct their violence against all who oppose them or refuse to pledge allegiance to the so-called Islamic State. Shia Muslims are also very much at risk. Amnesty International has said that Isis is responsible for “ethnic cleansing” in northern Iraq on a “historic scale”. They systematically target non-Arab and non-Sunni Muslim communities, killing and abducting possibly thousands.

Christians living in areas under Isis control who wish to remain where they are face three options: converting to Islam, paying a religious levy, or death. The number of their atrocities in Iraq and in Syria is legion. We regularly read of the murders of Christians and the destruction of church buildings by Isis. In February this year Isis released a video showing the apparent beheadings of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya. They were Egyptians who had gone to Libya looking for work. They were abducted and murdered for no other reason than that they were Christians. This is occurring wherever Isis operates.

Many of the terrorist attacks in Europe and the United Kingdom are by al-Qaeda related fanatics, such as the two brothers responsible for the murders of the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists in Paris. Theresa May, the Home Secretary, has said that forty terror plots have been foiled by British security services since the 7/7 bombings in 2005. The foiled plots include a planned Mumbai

style gun attack, the planned murder of members of the armed forces, an attempt to assassinate an ambassador, and an attempt to bring down a plane. She has said that since April 2010, 753 people have been charged and 148 have been successfully prosecuted. Arrests are being made every day. Boko Haram is a Muslim terrorist organisation in Nigeria which, as well as terrorising and abducting villagers in remote areas, has a policy of murdering Christians and burning churches. Those who refuse to convert are tortured and murdered. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a dramatic increase in religious persecution in the past year with Islamic extremism being the major cause. Kenya, Niger and Nigeria, where once different faiths lived peacefully together, have now become areas of persecution.

Pakistan also sees the widespread persecution of Christians. The law in that country prohibits blasphemy against any recognised religion. However, the great majority of accusations of blasphemy have been levelled at non-Muslim religious minorities, mostly for perceived offences against Mohammed or the Koran. It is reported that in excess of 50 people accused of blasphemy have been murdered before their respective trials had been concluded. Once an accusation of blasphemy has been made it is common for not only the accused, but police, lawyers and judges to be subject to harassment and threats. The law is often used to persecute religious minorities and settle personal feuds. In August 2012, a young Christian girl in her early teens, illiterate and with mental disabilities, was accused of blasphemy for burning pages from a book containing verses from the Koran. Following a global outcry she was acquitted for lack of evidence. Subsequently, the imam who first gave the police the burned pages, was himself arrested for desecrating the Koran and tampering with evidence.

Scores of violent incidents have occurred in recent years against entire communities, places of worship and individuals, often perpetrated under the pretext of the country's blasphemy laws.

China, where there is a very large number of Christians, is another place where persecution is increasing. North Korea, which is said to be the worst country in the world for persecution, forces Christians into labour camps for refusing to join the cult of the state's founder, Kim Il-Sung.

According to the International Society for Human Rights, 80 per cent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

3. MORALS

Abortion

Solomon exhorts in Proverbs 31:8, "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction".

When he came to consider the subject of his own formation in the womb, the Psalmist put his hand on his mouth in astonished wonder saying, "I will

praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well". (There is a paraphrase which brings out the force of the Hebrew words used: "I have wonderfully come into being under fearful circumstances; i.e., circumstances exciting a shudder, viz., of astonishment".) Even Solomon was nonplussed by the formation of a human being in the womb: Ecclesiastes 11:5: "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."

It will clear up some questions if we explain the most important terms. By **abortion** we understand the deliberate termination of the life of a prenatal child. If we often use the term **child** in preference to embryo or foetus, it is because the learned translators of the AV frequently translated the biblical text using the personal expression "with child" to speak of a pregnant woman. By the **image of God** in man we understand a human being with rational and volitional faculties.

Abortion was legalised in England, Wales and Scotland in 1967. There have been over 8 million abortions in Great Britain since the 1967 Act. A general guide is that, at present, just under 200,000 abortions are carried out per year for social reasons. "Social reasons", in this context, refers to one or more of the following: a mother or parents in poverty; a mother deemed unable to cope with a child, the mother being herself too young to cope with a child. A number amounting to 3,063 are performed because the child is likely to be born handicapped. In the case where the life of the mother is in danger – if competent authorities have to make the sad choice between the life of the mother and the life of the unborn babe – reason requires them to choose the life of the mother, upon whom so much and so many depend. This should not be regarded as a breach of the 6th Commandment.¹

In recent months, after reports of UK doctors referring women for abortions for no reason other than the mother being disappointed with the gender of the child in her womb, MP Fiona Bruce sought to add an amendment to the Serious Crime Bill, which stated, "nothing in Section 1 of the Abortion Act

¹ Abortion under any other circumstance was universally regarded among the Jews as an aggravated breach of the 6th Commandment. The seriousness of the violation of the 6th Commandment is based on the fact of man's having been made in the image of God, as we learn from Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

One writer who has studied rabbinical literature said that in all known Jewish literature to AD 500, there was no record of an abortion which was not carried out to preserve the mother's life (M. J. Gorman, quoted in *Love Your Unborn Neighbour*, page 2).

Josephus stated that, "The law forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the foetus; a woman convicted of this is regarded as an infanticide" (Against Apion, ii, 25, cited in G. J. Wenham, "A Biblical theologian looks at abortion", in *Abortion: The Biblical and Medical Challenges*).

If one consults the religious literature of the early New Testament Church, intended for the Gentile nations, the same prohibition is found. The *Didache*, a brief early Christian treatise dealing with Christian ethics, prohibits abortion.

1967 is to be interpreted as allowing a pregnancy to be terminated on the grounds of the sex of the unborn child". MPs rejected the Bill.

The situation in the European Court of Human Rights (as far as we can ascertain) was made clear in a case in 2004. Because of a failure in communication, a woman's pregnancy was wrongly terminated in a French hospital. According to BBC reports, French courts said the doctor could not be prosecuted for homicide as the foetus did not have the right to life. She appealed to the ECHR to accept a "foetus's right to life". She and her lawyers argued that an unborn child has the right to live. But the Court ruled against her.

To ordinary people this state of affairs is utterly confounding. When a child dies in the mother's womb, doctors say that the baby died. That means the baby was alive but it died.

There are laws protecting vulnerable children and adults from exploitation. There are laws protecting animals from cruelty. Why is there no law to protect the lives of prenatal children? Why do Judges not protest that the law leaves them with no option but to get the blood of innocents upon their garments?

What says the Bible? Some say that there is no categorical statement in the Bible regarding the standing of the unborn child: in the law; in respect of its independent life; its relation to the rest of humanity; in respect of its being or not being a person.

Is not the general impression made by reading the Holy Scriptures, that the babe in the womb is a living pre-natal human being, made in the image of God and protected with the right to live?

Besides, if there is insufficiently detailed biblical teaching to construct a systematic doctrine in respect of the rights in law of the unborn child, this may be explained by the distinct possibility that the deliberate termination of the life of a prenatal child is regarded by God as a breach of the 6th Commandment and that the detailed biblical teaching regarding other categories of human beings applies to this class of human beings as well. Infants and octogenarians, boys and girls, men and women, young and old, sick and well people, are all protected by law: only one category of human being – our most tender little ones – may be dashed against the stones almost at will.

Do we know if the prenatal child is a human being or not?

John Calvin believed he had good ground for knowing it. Commenting on Exodus 21:22, he wrote: "the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy."

Do we know if the prenatal child is a person or not?

Recently, the Court of Appeal found that a child born with foetal alcohol syndrome was not legally entitled to compensation. Lawyers argued her mother had poisoned her foetus through the excessive consumption of strong

drink. But appeal judges ruled she had not committed a criminal offence. At the same time, men have been found guilty of committing a crime for cruelly poisoning birds and other animals. Lord Justice Treacy said an “essential ingredient” for a crime to be committed “is the infliction of grievous bodily harm on a person – grievous bodily harm on a foetus will not suffice”. The case is significant because it made a judgement on whether or not a foetus is considered a person, independent of its mother.

But many able and reliable students of Scripture argue that the Scriptures speak of a continuity, not only of life but of individual personality, from the womb. One example of the kind of argument that is used, is in connection with Job 10:18-19. Here Job says that had he died in the womb he would be as though [he] had not been. He does not say “I, Job, would not have been” but “I should have been *as though* I had not been”. The argument is that this points to a continuity of not only his life but his person, from the womb. If he must live, Job wished that he had known nothing of life but the first stage of his life, in the warmth of his mother’s womb. But the point is this – it was life and furthermore he refers to it as his life – the life of an individual person.

Similar arguments are based on statements found in Jeremiah’s writings. Also, Psalm 139 is particularly interesting to any who wish to understand this subject. Students of this topic should note that the Hebrew word translated “unperfect substance” in Psalm 139 is the word which also translates “embryo”. This is important because the Psalmist uses the personal pronoun with regard to the embryo. Psalm 139:16: “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

Woven into the question about the continuum of prenatal and postnatal personality is the question of the time of ensoulment

Some argue that ensoulment is at the time of birth. However, there are strong arguments, found by good and necessary inference in the Scriptures of Truth, for an early ensoulment. One such argument is based on Psalm 51:5: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” David traces the presence of sin in his soul back to conception. But guilt is possible only where there is moral agency. Moral agency requires a rational and volitional nature, i.e. a soul. If the foetus is a body without a soul until the moment of birth then moral agency is not attributable to it until birth. If that is the case then how are we to understand David in Psalm 51:5?

There is an argument based on the prophecy regarding the spiritual unction of John the Baptist from the womb. An angel informed Zacharias that John would be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb. Luke 1:15: “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” Not the body but the soul can be the receptacle for this spiritual unction.

Another argument is based on the prenatal joy of John the Baptist. When the virgin Mary visited John's mother Elizabeth, she said to Mary, "as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:44). It is argued by those who deny early ensoulment, that because there is a kind of physiological sympathy between the mother and the babe in the womb, that this is sufficient to explain this event in the Gospel narrative. But it is asked, first, Why would the Holy Spirit record a physical effect of Elizabeth's unctuous joy, which might be misleading? and secondly, Why would He attribute joy to the babe in the womb if not to show that indeed John manifested the effects of spiritual life from the womb? It is suggested that it is more honouring to the Spirit and to the Holy Scriptures to say that the joy spoken of is a mysterious and spiritual joy in the soul of the prenatal child, corresponding to what the angel had promised. It is very significant that the same Greek word translated "babe" in reference to John in the womb, is used to speak of postnatal infants in other places (see Luke 1:41; 44; 2:12, 16; Luke 18:15; Acts 7:19; 2 Timothy 3:15).

It has been claimed that in his 9th Topic, 12th Question, that Francis Turretin is speaking about the creation of the soul at birth but this is a misrepresentation of Turretin's teaching. He is speaking about the propagation of sin from our first parents, and not the creation (much less the propagation) of the soul thence. Not the soul but sin is the "tinder" he refers to.

It has been claimed that Thomas Boston expressed the view that ensoulment is at the time of birth. But in his lecture on the creation of man Boston says, "God infuseth the soul created by him of nothing, into the body formed in the womb when it is fitly organised to receive it".

It has been claimed that Boston wrote that ensoulment takes place when the body is "fully developed". As far as the writer can see, he did not use that term. It could be argued that he consistently and studiously avoided using that very expression, preferring to employ the more ambiguous term "fitly" or "fully organised". It has also been said that Boston taught "the full preparation of the body [was necessary] before the soul is infused". To be able to make this affirmation, one needs to replace the expressions "fitly" and "fully organised" which Boston uses, into "fully developed" and "fully prepared" which, as far as we know, he never used in this context. Besides, the term "full preparation" doesn't necessarily refer to the time of birth.

It has been argued from the creation of Adam, because the soul was united to the body of Adam only when his body was fully formed, that the soul of his seed is united to the body only when it is fully formed at birth. This argument ignores the fact that in Adam's case there was no other stage at which the soul could join his body because he was created in a state of perfect humanity. One might as easily argue, that, as Adam was ensouled as soon as his body came into being, so the unborn child is ensouled as soon as it comes into being.

There are various views as to the precise interpretation of Exodus 21:22: "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's

husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.” Seeing that it is not a woman simply considered but a child-bearing woman that is referred to, it would be difficult to deny that the fruit of the womb had protection not only under Old Testament civil law but under the sixth commandment specifically.

Several other biblical texts show that the heinous crime of the murder of a woman is an aggravated breach of the 6th Commandment if she is pregnant and the life of the child is taken away: see Amos 1:13; 2 Kings 8:12; 15:16. To one who fears to offend God and believes that he must give an account to God, the implications of this cannot be dismissed lightly.

The clamorous demands of a secular and promiscuous society have run ahead of us. Our Church has been warning against the wickedness of non-essential abortions since 1967. But we have not convinced the nation of the implications of taking away the life of the unborn child unnecessarily. Yet the consequences seem most definitely to be most tragically sad. Doleful as are the ramifications for mothers, fathers, medical practitioners, judges and, especially, for our legislators, there is a strong tide of biblical interpretation, of Patristic and Reformed theology, of reasonable arguments, and of good and necessary inference, based on the facts of revelation and of science, which oblige us in the fear of God to accept that the prenatal child is a living human person made in the image of God, possessing body and soul and that we are looking at a slaughter of unprecedented proportions and of unimaginable wickedness. “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction” (Proverbs 31:8).

Euthanasia

NHS guidelines on euthanasia are as follows:

Euthanasia is the act of deliberately ending a person’s life to relieve suffering.

A doctor who gives a patient with terminal cancer an overdose of muscle relaxants to end their life would be considered to have carried out euthanasia. Assisted suicide is the act of deliberately assisting or encouraging another person to kill themselves. If a relative of a person with a terminal illness were to obtain powerful sedatives, knowing that the person intended to take an overdose of sedatives to kill themselves, they may be considered to be assisting suicide.

Both euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal under English law. Depending on the circumstances, euthanasia is regarded as either manslaughter or murder and is punishable by law, with a maximum penalty of up to life imprisonment. Assisted suicide is illegal under the terms of the Suicide Act (1961) and is punishable by up to 14 years’ imprisonment. Attempting to kill yourself is not a criminal act in itself.

Attempts to legalise euthanasia in Britain have so far failed. But “when abortion and infanticide have been accepted by society, euthanasia cannot be far behind. All the same arguments can be used, in particular those based on the cost to society of supporting the ‘useless’ lives of those who, viewed from a purely utilitarian perspective, are regarded as ‘better off dead’. The notion of the life not worth living is a flexible one” (*Love Your Unborn Neighbour*, page 77).

The promotion of homosexuality in society

The passing into law of the Same-Sex Marriage Act is one of the main contributory factors in promoting homosexuality in society. Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing in the Scottish Government, said, “We are introducing same-sex marriage in Scotland because it is the right thing to do”. Obviously he is a blind leader of the blind.

Another contributory factor is pressure groups such as “Stonewall”, who claim on their website that they have trained OFSTED’s lead Inspectors and advised the government on the Equality Act, and also claim that the group is perfectly placed to help schools to “celebrate different families” because Stonewall has worked with OFSTED and other government agencies to create these legal requirements.

“Shall of iniquity the throne
Have fellowship with thee,
Which mischief, cunningly contriv’d
Doth by a law decree?

(Psalm 94:20, metrical version)

The future of biblical marriage in Scotland

The future of marriage in our land is a cause of great concern to those who seek to uphold the teaching of the Word of God in every area of life. In addition to the fearful immorality of our generation in general, we can clearly discern the hand of the great enemy of souls endeavouring to destroy the institution of marriage, the stability of society and the usefulness of the Church, in the introduction of same-sex “marriages” by the nation’s legislature. At present, marriage in Scotland is regulated by the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 as amended by the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Act 2014, which has been operative since the end of 2014. This evil piece of legislation has redefined what marriage is so that it is no longer solely the union of one man and one woman according to the biblical law of marriage but now also includes sodomite couples – both male and female – as equally valid “marriages” in the eyes of the law of the land. This is the great difference between the current legislation and every previous unbiblical encroachment in the realm of marriage and divorce since the state began to regulate marriage in the mid-nineteenth century. Marriage, according to the new definition of Scots law, is not marriage according to the law of God. This is the only definition of marriage which the state recognises and under which it is prepared to allow our

ministers and people their civil rights. This is a fearful and deplorable state of affairs for us to find ourselves in as a nation. The marriage schedule itself has been altered in a way so as to incorporate same-sex couples. However, the form whereby marriages are conducted by Free Presbyterian ministers remains outwardly the same as before.

When we turn our eyes to the future of marriage in our nation we cannot help but observe the precarious nature of the current situation. Currently, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is one of a limited number of “approved celebrants” of marriage under the 1977 legislation as recently amended. The Scottish Government is seeking to draw up a new list of “approved celebrants”. Given the decision of Synod in 2014 to continue to perform marriages under the auspices of the new legislation, it is likely that the Church would initially seek to remain on any list of marriage celebrants authorised by the state. Since the amending of the Equalities Act by the Westminster Parliament last year, there are legal securities provided to stop any church or individual celebrant being forced to marry same-sex couples against their own convictions. The Committee wishes to draw attention to the fact that if the civil authorities can currently legislate to protect the rights of those who object to same-sex “marriage”, a future legislature could conceivably move to undermine or even abolish those rights.

It has been suggested that the government may seek to hold a consultation regarding the nature of any legal tests and requirements with which approved celebrants must comply, ostensibly to clamp down on bodies and individuals performing “sham” marriages. Again, if the tests to be imposed on approved celebrants were to be changed in future in the direction of compromising the rights of those who object to same-sex “marriage”, then this would be a matter of the utmost gravity for the Synod’s consideration.

Encroachments upon parental responsibility in the family

One great danger in this area is the passing by the Scottish Government of the Young People (Scotland) Bill. This concerns the appointment of a state guardian for all children from birth to 18. The NHS will appoint a health worker to act as a “named person” for every child under 5. School teachers are likely to be appointed by the local authority. As a result of this change the state will have greater powers over the child’s life and will be able to override parents’ wishes. Christian families will have parental rights eroded by a secular state which will give greater opportunities for the insidious culture of “children’s rights”. Christian parents vow to bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord”, but the child may decide that it is too strict; for example he or she may demand rights to go to a football match on Sabbath, or a girl may wish to gain information on contraception. Many situations which should be under the parents’ control could be manipulated so that the child would be able to complain to their guardian and in so doing the parents’ wishes may be overridden.

A member of Big Brother Watch says: “This whole scheme is an unprecedented attack on the privacy of families and the civil liberties of law-abiding parents and children.” In a day when family life is at a low ebb, should not the state be using all means to encourage the relationship between parents and children?

An article by the Christian Institute in the *English Churchman* quotes the *Daily Mail* on “The guidance behind schools regulator OFSTED’s inappropriate questioning of 10-year-olds about lesbians. Inspectors are briefed to ask pupils as young as four about homosexuality, trans-sexualism and same-sex parents. They are instructed to ask pupils about different types of families including having ‘two mums or two dads’ but no reference to families with both a mum and a dad. Parents at Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland complained at intrusive questioning as did parents at the Durham Free School.”

The UK Constitution in the light of the No vote

With thankfulness we acknowledge the Lord’s goodness in the outcome of the referendum of 19th September 2014, which sought to separate Scotland from the United Kingdom. Immediately prior to the referendum, the Unionist parties, fearing imminent defeat, collectively made a promise to give further devolved powers to the Scottish Parliament in the event of a No vote, without specifying exactly what these powers would be. Following the No vote the Smith Commission was set up by the UK Government to determine these powers. The powers that were subsequently agreed were significant, but involve only taxation, welfare and other economic matters. There is an ongoing debate between the main political parties as to the extent to which English legislation will be determined by English MPs, and to what extent devolution may be introduced into England. No consensus has yet been achieved, and these matters have now been effectively left in abeyance at the time of writing.

There has thus been a further loosening of the practical ties that bind the UK, and there is potential for further weakening in the next parliament, after the general election of May 2015. This is indeed a cause of regret to some, but the essential constitutional ties of the Act of Settlement (1701), and the Act of Union (1707), the foundational documents that bind the UK as one Protestant country, are still unbroken. For that we ought to give abundant thanks to the Most High for His goodness to us as a nation, undeserved as it is.

4. CONCLUSION

In addition to the usual meetings, a sub-committee met by teleconference on three separate occasions to press on with the production of a “Statement of Differences” to be presented at the Synod and, following this, to be passed on to presbyteries for comment. A lot of work has been put into this document and

our thanks are due to Mr. Matthew Vogan who, though not a member of the Committee, has put in a great deal of time and effort into its production.

A small sub-committee has been asked to look into the possibility of the provision of Christian schooling which could be made available to our families. The remit is wide and the group's thinking will be as lateral as possible. A single location for the "school" would not seem to be viable and, therefore, it may prove necessary for the facility to be internet based.

A lot more could have gone into this report but there is sufficient here to show that there is a continuing, fearful, downward slide with respect to the religion and morals of this nation. This is also true of those other nations where we have congregations. Both in Church and in State we have lost our way. We can all see it for ourselves. However, there are wonderful promises which shall be fulfilled. The Lord will not forget His people. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet I will not forget thee" (Isaiah 49:15). "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

THE Sabbath Day is a divine and priceless institution. The Puritan Richard Baxter exhorted that "the Lord's Day should be spent in holy preparation for eternity". But this sentiment has been forgotten in our day when the Sabbath is a day for one's personal enjoyment and pleasure in recreational activities, or the day for shopping. Instead of spending the time in shopping, the Lord's Day should be a market for the soul. However, whether or not men keep the Sabbath, it remains a commandment of the law of God and a special gift to man. It is one of the main ways to prolong natural life and promote spiritual life. "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:14).

When a nation keeps the Sabbath it does something which is not only pleasing to God but beneficial to the nation. "But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:30). It calls down the blessing of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord will be a dreadful day to those that despise the Lord's Day. Those who want to prepare for heaven properly must keep the Sabbath here.

The work of the Committee continues as in previous years.

Tracts

The following tracts have been passed to the Outreach Committee, who are arranging for their publication in the coming months.

1. *I Love the Lord's Day.*
2. *The State must keep the Sabbath.*
3. *The duty of parents regarding the Sabbath.*
4. *The Sabbath and You.*

The Committee continues to work on the following tracts:

1. *What is a work of necessity and mercy?*
2. *The duty of children to keep the Sabbath.*
3. *The Sabbath and your legal rights.*

The Committee have also looked at republishing *A Treatise on the Sanctification of the Sabbath*, by Rev. John Willison.

Letters

Agricultural Shows and Sales

- New Deer Show
- Royal Highland Show

Festivals

- Findhorn Bay Arts Festival
- Shetland Food
- Edinburgh International Festival
- Edinburgh Fringe Festival
- Edinburgh Arts Festival
- Colonsay Festival of Spring
- Knockengoroch World Ceilidh Festival
- Perth Arts Festival
- Orkney Folk Festival
- Ballater Royal Deeside Walking Festival
- Fyrefest
- European Festival of Brass

Museums

- Cultybraggan Camp

Businesses

- Fort William Post Office

Companies issuing emails on the Sabbath

- Jellyfish Publishing

- Holland and Barratt
- Currys
- Sports Direct
- Craft Superstore
- Travelodge

Sabbath transport

- Edinburgh Trams

The use of public transport run in systematic disregard of the Lord's Day is fearfully prevalent in Britain today. We consider this to be a grievous sin against the Fourth Commandment, even when an attempt is made to justify it on the grounds of allowing people to attend Christian worship. The example of modern Jerusalem shows that it is perfectly possible for a modern city to function with a complete cessation of public transport for one day in seven. We believe that the only consistent position for the Christian Church to take on this matter is to avoid the use of public transport on Sabbath run in such flagrant disregard of God's law.

It is sad to note that increasing numbers of Church members, elders and even ministers are reported as making use of Sabbath-desecrating ferries and air services in such places as the Western Isles and Skye. It is inconsistent to protest against ferries running to and from the Hebrides on the Lord's Day while at the same time tolerating the use of public transport in our towns and cities.

Our position on this issue is a distinctive part of our testimony and we believe it is the duty of the Free Presbyterian Church to maintain it at all costs.

Sport

Cricket

- The England and Wales Cricket Board

Cycling

- The Tour of Britain
- Hebridean Cycle Club
- British Cycling

Darts

- Professional Darts Corporation Ltd.
- British Darts Organisation

Diving

- Amateur Swimming Association

Show Jumping

- The British Show Jumping Association
- Horse of the Year Show

Football

- Football Association
- Scottish Football Association
- Scottish Woman's Football

Gaelic Football

- Gaelic Athletic Association

Golf

- Ryder Cup
- PGA European Tour
- The Royal and Ancient

Hockey

- England Hockey

Hurling

- Gaelic Athletic Association

Motor Sport

- MSVR

Pool

- Matchroom Pool

Rugby

- Rugby Football Union

Snooker

- World Snooker

Swimming

- British Swimming

Very few replies were received.

During the year Royal Mail, with the agreement of the Communications Workers' Union, began extending its operation to further encroach on the Sabbath. The Committee wrote to the following in connection with this:

Royal Mail Board

- Donald Brydon, Chairman.
- Moya Green, Chief Executive.

- Orna Ni-Chionna, Senior Independent Non-Executive Director.
- Mark Higson, MD Operations and Modernisation.
- John Allan, Non-Executive Director.
- Nick Horler, Non-Executive Director.
- Cath Keers, Non-Executive Director.
- Paul Murray, Non-Executive Director.
- Les Owen, Non-Executive Director.
- Stephen Agur, MD Consumer and Network Access.
- Rico Back, GLS Chief Executive Officer.
- Catherine Doran, Chief Information Officer.
- Neil Harnby, General Counsel.
- Mike Newham, Chief Customer Officer.
- Shane O’Riordain, MD Communication, Strategy, Regulation and Pricing.
- Emily Pang, Company Secretary.
- Stuart Simpson, Deputy Chief Operations Officer.
- Sue Whalley, Chief Operations Officer.

Communication Workers’ Union Officers

- Billy Hayes, General Secretary.
- Tony Kearns, Senior Deputy General Secretary.
- Dave Ward, Deputy General Secretary (Postal).
- Andy Furey, Postal.
- Bob Gibson, Postal.
- Ray Ellis, Postal.
- Terry Pullinger, Postal.

Unsatisfactory replies were received from both Royal Mail and the CWU.

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

**JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS
COMMITTEE’S REPORT
Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod**

Zimbabwe

THE Committee has to report that, in the Lord’s kindness, the mission work in Zimbabwe has continued unimpeded over another year. We are confident that “the Gospel of the grace of God” continues to be preached, and, as to practice,

the same pattern, established so many years ago, continues to be followed and no course of action is adopted that might be construed as inconsistent with practice of the Church in the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in the world wherever our witness is maintained. Making use of the opportunities and resources available to us, our primary aim is to enlighten the minds of sinners, young and old, in the knowledge of Christ as “the only Redeemer of God’s elect”, and that we continue to operate a High School, a Hospital, a Children’s Home and several Primary Schools, is to be regarded as subservient to that object.

We are thankful to report that our four ministers, namely, the Rev. S. Khumalo, the Rev. A. B. MacLean, the Rev. M. Mloyi and the Rev. N. Sibanda, continue to enjoy good health and are faithfully attending to the many and multifarious duties which fall to them in their own particular charges. We hope and pray that they will be helped and sustained by the Head of the Church to continue to do so for many more years. These ministers are endeavouring to instruct the men – usually elders – who take services at outstations at times when they themselves are not able to be there. The basic, foundation doctrines of the Gospel are emphasized and every endeavour is made to ensure that, as these men attempt to expound the Scriptures, that they do so in a manner consistent with what is taught in the Shorter Catechism and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

The Constitutions as approved by the Synod in 2014 were implemented at Mbuma, Thembiso and Ingwenya, with effect from the first day of January 2015. In this connection, tribute has to be paid to Mr. Hugh Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, without whose diligence, perseverance, patience and hard work this would not have been achieved as seamlessly as it has. Monthly meetings of the respective Boards of Governors take place and the relevant minutes are duly forwarded to the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee. While it is yet early days, the setting up of these Boards has been well received by all concerned. It may also be mentioned that the setting up of “The Head Office Overseeing Panel” has also been achieved.

We shall now offer a brief round-up of the situation at each station in turn. The reports submitted by ministers and others who are the vanguard labourers in the field will provide first hand information so that it is not necessary for the summaries in this report to be other than short.

At **Ingwenya**, the Rev. A. B. MacLean has the burden of caring for many souls within the compound there, but also such as attend the services held at the various outstations which are placed under that congregation’s umbrella. This involves him in much travelling over rugged, pot-holed roads.

We have to report that the high reputation of the John Tallach High School remains intact, occupying, as it does, the Number 8 position nationally. This means that many parents residing in locations near to, and far removed from, Ingwenya, desire their children to be educated there. Each year the competition for the limited places available is very keen. The smooth, efficient running of a six-form boarding school with a roll of over six hundred pupils

must be very demanding and the fact that such excellent results are achieved annually bears testimony to the skill and diligence of the teachers. This – as we now note every year – is particularly true of Mr. B. Ncube, the Headmaster, and his Deputy, Miss N. B. MacLean. Instruction from the Word of God and the Shorter Catechism occupy an important place at all levels and that is what makes this school unique. The presence of Mr. Roy Bartle, who, the Lord willing, is to be at Ingwenya for a year will, we are sure, be of great help in this department.

Moving to **Bulawayo**, we have the Rev. S. Khumalo as the minister of that congregation. In addition, he, meantime, as interim Moderator of the Zvishavani congregation attends to the duties which belong to that office and also duties connected with the Thembiso Home and school as well as other outstations. It is expected that he will, personally, present his own report to the Synod.

As reported in past years, at **Thembiso**, the children continue to be very well cared for by the Superintendent, Mr. Busiso Maphala, and his staff. Much thought is being given to finding ways of helping children who reach the stage when they have to leave the Home and make their own way in the outside world. It is the hope and prayer of all who cared for them, and all well-wishers, that the Lord will provide gainful employment for them. It is good that they do not leave Thembiso without having been taught what they are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man. The division of the Home into family units has been a success and we are grateful to Miss Margaret MacAskill and Miss Petra Beukers for their visits to Zimbabwe and the valuable contribution they make to the on-going training of staff.

At **Zenka**, the Rev. M. Mloyi has a Primary School almost on his doorstep. It has a Roll of over 1,000 pupils. The church and congregation at Zenka itself requires constant attention, but so do the scattered, numerous outstations within his charge. With the settlement of a minister at Mbumba this burden may have been slightly reduced, but the pastoral work and the time spent travelling from one station to another still remains considerable. **Nkayi** is a separate charge and we are glad that James Mpofu and his brethren are there to keep the banner of truth unfurled at times when Mr. Mloyi is not present.

At **Mbumba**, The Rev. N. Sibanda is settling in as pastor. He, also, has, not only souls in his immediate congregation – assembling within the compound – to care for, but also those residing in other areas and attending at outstations. Both the Hospital at Mbumba and the new Rural Clinic at Lutsha are within his charge and the arranging of worship services at both of them and the maintaining of a Christian ethos falls to him. The services rendered by the catechists – G. Nkiwane, S. Ncube and J. Maduna, under the oversight of the Mbumba Kirk Session, are much appreciated.

The **Mbumba Hospital** continues to provide much-needed medical care under the supervision of Dr. A. Snoek and her assistant, the recently-appointed Dr. J. L. Bezemer. The Nursing Sisters – W. Geurtsen and G. Wijngaarden – complete the number of expatriate staff members. We know that all who

minister to the sick at Mbuma, in whatever capacity, do so with Christian compassion and love, self-denyingly, and often far beyond the call of duty. We are thankful for that. Dr. Snoek will be giving in her usual report.

Zvishavane

As already mentioned, this charge – the only one in Mashonaland – is at present vacant, without a pastor. The two catechists – Mr. N. Siziba and Mr. J. Mashavakure, provided with motor cycles by the Mission, travel from outstation to outstation to keep the services. Their labours are much appreciated. In Zvishivane itself, the new church is well-attended and we hope and pray that a minister will soon be provided by the Lord of the harvest.

It is in the Manse here that the **Shona Bible Translation Team** meets, in regular contact with its leader – Teus Benschop – who occasionally visits Zimbabwe, but for the most part, works from Holland. Modern technology makes it possible to be in close contact although physically separated by thousands of miles. Much progress has been made and it is hoped that this important project will be completed in the not too distant future. The Translation Team recently reported as follows:

We were enabled by the grace of God through the prayers of the true Church of God which was manifested through a great support from the JFMC, Zimbabwe Presbytery and Mission administration, Mbuma Zending through the mother church in Scotland, the Gerefomeerde Bijbelstichting and the Trinitarian Bible Society, to complete the Greek translation of the Shona New Testament, translated from the Received New Testament text (Textus Receptus); thus it was great news for us to hear about the arrival of forty five thousand copies in Bulawayo freely offered by the Trinitarian Bible Society in partnership with the Gerefomeerde Bijbelstichting. The Publications Committee of the Zimbabwe Presbytery agreed that eighteen thousand copies should be distributed from Zvishavane which is a Shona speaking area.

Work on the Old Testament is proceeding well and at the time of the last report the team had reached 1 Samuel. As in the case of the Ndebele Bible, the Trinitarian Bible Society will supervise the printing and distribution of the completed Shona Bible in due course.

Jewish Work

The Rev. John Goldby, although now a retired minister, has maintained the link to the work begun in Israel when he was settled there. This mainly consists of helping (1) to complete the revision of the Hebrew Delitzsch New Testament, bringing it into line with the Textus Receptus and to be printed by the Trinitarian Bible Society, and (2) to oversee the proof-reading, printing and distribution of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* translated into Hebrew. The Committee met the expenses involved in visiting Israel on four occasions

in the year, each visit not to exceed four weeks. We are sorry that Mr. Goldby has had health problems in recent times, but we are grateful to him for the work that he does and the dedication with which he attends to it.

Conclusion

The Committee has carried out the duties laid upon it by the Synod to the best of its ability. We hope and pray that the predicted stretching forth of Ethiopia's hands unto God will soon be a reality and likewise the ingathering of the Jews, which is to be such a momentously important event in the history of the church and of the world. Lastly, but certainly not least in importance, we thankfully acknowledge the continued and increasing help of the Mbuma Zending in Holland. In January the Convener, accompanied by the General Treasurer and the Mission Co-ordinator, met with the Mbuma Zending Board in Holland, when a very cordial reception was extended. The presence of a very efficient interpreter smoothed the proceedings and we now look forward to welcoming Mbuma Zending representatives, Ds. A. C. Rijken, Mr. A. B. den Breejen and Mr. D. van de Sluis, when the Synod meets (DV). We deeply appreciate their help and we trust that Scripture will be fulfilled and that the experience of our friends in Holland, and our own people throughout the church, in giving so generously, will be that which is on record: "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth even as it is in heaven."

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

"HE that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). The day we live in is a day of rejecting Christ and His Word. Although there are a few that say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68), most do not.

I tried to supply not just Ingwenya but also the stations throughout the year. The stations are Cameron, Gadade, Inyathi and Insisa. The Matapa station was closed and we no longer go there. The people left the village due to problems of water, lack of grazing and poor facilities. They have gone to different places, although it is pleasing that two families moved near to Ingwenya and now attend at Ingwenya. A class called Timothy's is taken on Monday afternoons during term time with the John Tallach High School senior pupils. It is a voluntary class and the normal numbers would be 50-70. The young mind seeks to demonstrate knowledge to others but the seed is being sown. They are very much saturated with the Word of God both in church and school. This demonstrates the need of Divine power to bless the Word. If any persons had, as it were, enough of the Word of God for a blessing, then it is truly the

children, but more is needed and man cannot do it. I go to the Primary School about once a month to ask questions on books of the Bible they are covering in the school. The children are enthusiastic in their answers and the seed is being sown there also. The community is full of churches, sects and doctrines of devils. Strong drink has a grip of many men with all the attendant evil consequences. Although the call to repentance is given, the words of Isaiah apply (53:1).

The usual communions were held throughout the year. The last Sabbath of March and the last Sabbath of September are the dates of the Ingwenya communions. My thanks are due to Rev. N. Sibanda and Rev. S. Khumalo for their assistance on these occasions. The Cameron communion takes place on the last Sabbath of July and the services are conducted by myself. The Nyati communion took place on the second Sabbath of November. Again the services are taken by the resident minister. At this communion a man from the congregation applied for and was received for Baptism. The sacrament of Baptism was administered a few weeks after the communion.

The Kirk Session decided to appoint new office bearers. After the usual procedures were followed one man was elected as deacon at Cameron, one deacon was elected elder at Insisa and one man was elected elder at Gadade.

Since the 2014 Synod decision to give funding to the Zimbabwe Presbytery to supply Kenya I have gone there five times. The first visit was in June, followed by visits in August, September, November and January. A further visit is expected in April. The Presbytery, at its meeting in March 2015, has applied to the Synod for similar funding for the year ahead. All God willing.

The year 2015 was the first of the new structure operating in the mission. Board meetings are held at the beginning of each month. There are no problems with the structure and it runs very smoothly.

In this area the rains were particularly poor this year. I would say that the rains were the least that I have seen here. They began late and finished early and were never very substantial. A little harvest or no harvest will be reaped by many.

In conclusion, I would thank the elders and deacon for all their help throughout the year. As I have been many times away in Kenya and also at communions their burden is not light but they engage in it cheerfully. But the Word of God in conclusion is, "hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12).

JOHN TALLACH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

IT is 57 years now since Miss I. MacCuish presided over the opening of John Tallach Secondary School and each year since then the School has continued to fulfil its function of drawing many young people near to the net of the Gospel: as the Form 4 and Form 6 pupils leave to pursue their studies elsewhere, they are replaced with new entrants to the school. The bait which draws them in is the high standard of education and the examination success for which the school is nationally famous.

At the end of 2014, 159 pupils left the school after completing Form 4 and Form 6 and, at the beginning of 2015, 181 pupils were enrolled into Form 1 and Form 5. For the vast majority of the Form 1s and for a few of the Form 5s it will be the first time that they have been exposed to the teaching of the Reformed Faith. They come from a variety of religious backgrounds; e.g. Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals and various sects which still hold on to ancestor worship. The first books which each child is given after entering the school are the Bible and the Westminster Shorter Catechism, so emphasising the supremacy of Scripture in the life of the school.

The pupils attend all of the church services at Ingwenya Mission and religious instruction begins immediately in class on week days. The first lessons for Form 1s are on the creation and the fall of man. For most of the children this is their first exposure to the doctrine of original sin and, for some others, it is during church services and Bible lessons at Ingwenya that they hear for the first time that Jesus is the Eternal Son of God, the Divine Redeemer. And so the work continues every year, hoping and waiting for the Holy Spirit to bless the Word to the children bringing them to faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The religious instruction programme is well established and varies little from year to year. Pupils and teachers all attend the weekly prayer meeting which is incorporated into the school timetable. The pupils and any resident teachers all attend the 2 main church services with the Ingwenya congregation on Sabbath Days and there is a Sabbath evening service especially for the boarding pupils and those resident on the Mission. Sabbath School for all the pupils is held on Sabbath mornings when the emphasis is on memory work mostly from the Psalms and the Shorter Catechism. The Bible teaching programme remains unchanged with all pupils in the school receiving Bible instruction on 4 days out of 5 during the school week. Worship is held in the dining hall twice daily at the first and last meals of the day with reading and singing in course and all the children do the Scripture and Catechism exercises.

Staffing

Staffing remained stable throughout 2014 and into 2015 but it is with sadness that it has to be reported that one of the teachers passed away in 2014. Mr. I. Imbayago, who was a Biology teacher, had been in poor health for some time before he passed away.

Mr. B. Ncube continues as Headmaster: he is now a nationally recognised Headmaster and this places extra burdens on him as he is required to attend workshops and seminars all over the country. Messrs. B. Chokuda, N. Khumalo and O. Moyo continue as the backbone of the Bible Knowledge Department. Mr. Chokoda and Mr. Moyo remain behind at school every weekend to help with the Sabbath School and this dedication is very much appreciated. The Bible Knowledge Department was boosted by the arrival of Mr. Roy Bartle early in 2015. This has made it possible to reallocate the Bible Knowledge classes so that the aforementioned gentlemen are no longer overloaded as before. It also means that there are again five teachers for Sabbath School: one for each Form group so each teacher only has a one-hour session and there is no longer a need for anyone to have a two-hour session.

Due to Ministry of Education national directives, parents' committees are no longer permitted to enhance teachers' salaries. At John Tallach School, the parents' committee has been topping up teachers' salaries since 2009. Teachers are not well paid, so losing these top-ups has been a serious blow and has had an adverse effect on morale.

As a result of the reorganisation of the management of the Zimbabwe Mission, the Mission workers at Ingwenya were retrenched at the end of 2014 and this meant that a driver had to be added to the ancillary staff of the school: this post is paid from parents' funds.

Several volunteers came during 2014: of particular note is Miss A. Fidder from Barneveld in the Netherlands. Miss Fidder has been a regular volunteer for some years now and was at Ingwenya for 3 months at the end of the year: her main project on that occasion was the digitalisation of the school library. As the Library has over 3,000 books this was a huge job and Miss Fidder is to be commended for bringing this project to completion.

Pupils

The 2015 school roll stands at 613 pupils: 34 of whom are day pupils and 579 are boarders. There are 302 boys and 311 girls ranging in age from 12 to 18 years. The Resource Unit with the specialist teacher for the visually impaired now only caters for one boy.

O Level Results

In the Lord's continuing kind Providence, the pupils in Forms 4 and 6 were again very successful in the public examinations. The school remained in the top 10 schools nationally with a pass rate of 93.66% for ZIMSEC "O" Level results.

ZIMSEC (Zimbabwe Examinations Council)

The year 2014's pass rate was 93.66%, taking the school to the number 8 position nationally: to be listed in the top 10 schools, given our wide selection policy, is extremely gratifying. The school was again number 1 in the Matabeleland "O" Level league table.

Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	92.85%	History	84.50%
Agriculture	100.00%	Integrated Science	80.98%
Bible Knowledge	94.36%	Literature in English.....	100.00%
Biology.....	100.00%	Mathematics.....	73.23%
English Language	97.18%	Ndebele.....	97.88%
Fashion & Fabrics.....	100.00%	Physical Science	97.05%
Geography.....	95.07%	Woodwork	33.33%

Particularly pleasing this year was the improvement in the quality of the passes. Out of 142 candidates:

10 x "A" passes	- 4 pupils
9 x "A" passes	- 11 pupils
8 x "A" passes	- 5 pupils
% with 5 or more "A" passes	- 36.00%

Notably there were 91 "A" passes in Bible Knowledge.

CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)

Cambridge Examinations, although expensive at \$80 per subject, remain popular with the candidates because of the international recognition. There was another increase in enrolment in 2014 with 42 pupils registering. Pass rates were as follows:

Accounts	87.50%	Literature in English.....	100.00%
Bible Knowledge	92.80%	Mathematics.....	92.10%
English.....	95.00%	Science.....	100.00%
Geography.....	89.79%	Zulu.....	100.00%

The quality of passes was very satisfactory: across the group there were 15 A*, 54 As, 118 Bs.

A Level Results

ZIMSEC

The A Level results were very encouraging with a 100% pass rate in each subject and quality passes.

Biology.....	100.00%	Mathematics.....	100.00%
Chemistry.....	100.00%	Physics.....	100.00%

Of the 17 candidates, 13 passed with 10 or more points.

CIE

In the Cambridge examinations, the overall pass rate was again 100% with each of the 4 subjects scoring a 100% pass. Of the 11 candidates who presented for Cambridge “A” Levels, 9 achieved 10 or more points. One candidate passed with 3 As.

Finance

The school continues to operate a very tight budget. The parents’ Finance Committee supervises the expenditure of the school at monthly meetings: the budget for last year was over \$700,000 US which was entirely raised from school fees. Expenses covered from this budget include: tuition and boarding expenses, examination expenses, sports expenses, vehicle expenses, electricity, wages of all ancillary staff, all repairs and maintenance to school buildings and teachers’ cottages. As usual, monthly contributions were made to the Mission for use of the Mission security staff, for the use of the driver on a daily basis and for the use of the generator. The total amount remitted to the Mission by John Tallach School from school funds in 2014 was just over \$16,000.

The boarding school budget came under difficulty during the year due to rising costs making it necessary to have an increase in the boarding fee of \$50 per pupil per term. This was the first boarding fee increase since 2011 and it means that most pupils are now paying \$465 per term, which is still significantly cheaper than other similar boarding schools.

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

Developments

1. Establishment of Ingwenya Mission Board

The reorganisation of the management of the Zimbabwe Mission has resulted in the establishment of a Board of Governors to run each Mission station. As already mentioned, at Ingwenya, the previous Mission workers were retrenched at the end of 2014 and, from then on, all works on the Mission will be organised and managed by the administration staff at John Tallach School with a budget from central Mission funds. Only the security staff remain paid directly from central Mission funds. The new system of management is progressing very smoothly with noticeable improvements already being experienced in efficiency and cost saving.

2. Introduction of Form 6 Commercial Class

The second phase of the Form 6 development began in February 2015 with the introduction of an “A” Level Commercial Class, so there is now a total enrolment of 53 pupils in Form 6.

In order to accommodate the Commercial class a new block of 2 classrooms is under construction, this is expected to be ready for use by the beginning of Term 2 in May 2015. This building project is a joint venture between

the parents' committee and the Mission with the parents providing \$25,000 towards the construction and the balance of \$40,000 coming from the Mission.

3. Water Supply from Ingwenya Dam

This project, which began early in 2014, delayed due to various problems the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) experienced in setting up the direct pipeline connection from the nearby Ingwenya Dam to the Mission. As this was raw water it was only used previously for non-domestic purposes. Once connected, however, the direct pipeline proved to be very efficient so, after professional advice, it was decided to try to use this as the main source of water as much as possible. A filtration system has therefore been installed so that the dam water can be used for domestic purposes. After passing through the filtration system the water then passes through the existing chlorination unit.

The system is still being monitored but early observations seem to indicate that it may result in an improvement of the water supply at Ingwenya. The total cost so far has been approximately \$8,000 which has been paid entirely from John Tallach funds.

4. Construction of Pupils' Toilet Block

The day-time toilet facilities of only 2 blair (long drop) cubicles for school pupils were no longer adequate nor desirable as no hand washing facilities could be provided. Therefore, a new 8-cubicle block of flushing toilets was designed by the Head of the Geography Department using recycled waste water from the school kitchen. This very successful new toilet block was completed in 2014 and it has attracted the attention of the Environmental Management Agency which is very impressed by the inventive use of the recycled water. The school is to receive an award for this development. The whole project was entirely paid for from school funds at a total cost of around \$12,000.

5. Installation of Weather Station

A new weather station, which has both manual and digital facilities, was installed in November 2014. Again this was paid for entirely from school funds at a cost of around \$4,000.

6. Former Pupil Project

A welcome development in 2014 was the initiative of a group of former pupils who decided to organise and fund the painting of the school kitchen and dining hall premises.

7. Solar Developments

The costs of solarising the administration block and the computer classroom are prohibitive for the time being but work is continuing on solar security lighting.

Conclusion

A review of the activities of the year brings to mind the generosity of the donors who make so much of the work possible. Thanks are extended to all who contribute to the work at the school whether in an individual capacity or as members of a larger group.

The children have their favourite Psalms and there are few experiences more pleasant at Ingwenya than to hear them singing these Psalms: the hundreds of voices drifting in and out in melody. One of the favourites is the second version of Psalm 143 from verse 6:

“Lo I do stretch my hands
To Thee, my help alone;
For Thou well understands
All my complaint and moan:
My thirsting soul desires,
And longeth after Thee,
As thirsty ground requires
With rain refreshed to be.”

All those who have an interest in the success of the Gospel among the children at John Tallach School are encouraged to pray that they would indeed have that thirsting and longing soul which the Lord will satisfy with His salvation.

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

ANOTHER year has risen according to the Almighty God governing the universe. The past year had its achievements and failures. We are looking forward to yet another year with a desire of spiritual growth and enlightenment of the Word from above. Our desire and prayer is that our people are saved and delivered from the blanket of darkest superstition and have the true saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The year has begun with great sadness at Zenka as we lost a ruling elder, Mr. Douglas Maqeda Ngwenya. He passed on to eternity on the 4th of January 2015 at the age of 76. He had been ill for the past two years. We extend our sympathy to his widow and seven children. The loud voice of death is heard in every part of the country each day as young and old pass on. On the 12th of February we lost yet another member, MaJuba, from the same congregation. She was the widow of John Ndebele, and was aged 84. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15). The sermon of death is appealing to us all to prepare to meet the Lord, who is the most righteous and faithful judge. The apostle Paul says: “For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done

in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

All doors were kept open for weekday Prayer Meetings and Sabbath at the stations. The construction of the church at Mabayi is almost complete, and we are most thankful to the Lord for enabling us thus far. Floors, doors and windows are still outstanding. The congregation is able to gather for worship. The structure at Fudu is at roof level. It is expected to be complete before the end of the year, DV.

The Lord’s Supper was dispensed twice at Zenka during the year. This was in February and August as has been the practice. The sacrament of baptism was dispensed at Zenka. A young man who professed Christ was baptised.

We now have an outreach station in the farms south of Zenka. The people are visited on the first and third Sabbaths of the month. I alternate supply to these farms with Mr. M. A. Mpofu, who is an elder. About thirty souls gather at each visit for worship. We meet in a small hut at one of the homes. This is a promising gathering and we are hopeful that in future a church building will be necessary. These people originally come from Zenka, Gwampa and Katasa areas.

Within the mission itself, several activities are taking place. On Wednesdays there is a Bible class for school children in the morning. The children study the Bible, learn the Catechism and practise singing of Psalms. Mr. W. Nkomo, who is a teacher and an elder, assists when I am away. On Tuesdays there is a Bible study class in the afternoon for upper grades teachers (Grades 4-7). The Bible class for lower grades teachers is held on Wednesdays in the afternoon. On Thursdays there is a Bible class for the congregation immediately after the Prayer Meeting. We pray that the Almighty will bless our labours, when we sow the good seed, which is His Word.

A dry spell has hit the country hard. Very little harvest is expected from the fields this year. May His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This should bring us all on our knees to beseech the Lord for mercy.

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

BY the grace of the Lord we have seen the beginning of yet another year. The Lord has been gracious to us, in that He has spared us in the land of the living. This according to His mercy which we do not deserve.

The country is experiencing peace. We are thankful that we are able to move from one preaching station to another without fear. The Nkayi elders now have a motorcycle which has made movement between preaching stations easier. The Deacons’ Court takes care of the maintenance of the motorcycle.

The Nkuba congregation lost a member during the year. She suffered a stroke that left her bedridden until she passed away. We sympathise with her

husband and children. The Donsa Dam congregation lost a member and an adherent. They both were old women.

The congregation is putting up some rooms within the church premises. These rooms are meant to accommodate people during the communion seasons. These structures are nearing completion. Nkayi Primary School has been giving their classrooms for our use. The school has of late been requiring stringent conditions from us. Our desire is that JFMC would consider taking back Nkayi, Donsa Dam and Somankantana Primary Schools. These schools were once under the Church, but are now under the local authority. All the schools accommodate us at communions.

The Manomano congregation is lagging behind in the construction of a church building. The congregation is supposed to mould bricks and cart some river sand to the site. There has been very little progress. We pray as Moses did, "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it" (Psalm 90:17).

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed twice in the year, in January and June. The sacrament of Baptism was dispensed at Mathetshaneni, which is one of the Nkayi preaching stations. Two infants were baptised.

ZVISHAVANE REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation . . ." (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Another year having come and gone and another one begun, we have every reason to be thankful to the Most High that no effort has been spared to proclaim the gracious words of God to poor sinners.

It is all for His mercies that continue to abound in us, in keeping us under His voice, inviting us to come to Christ by faith and warning us continuously of the judgement to come. We were enabled by His Grace to have the preaching of His Word going on in all our 9 preaching stations. The doors are mainly kept open by the elders and deacons. I, as the Interim Moderator, visit at least once every month. Six communions are held every year, namely at New Canaan in January, Zvishavane Church in August, at Maware in April, at Chiedza in May and November, and at Mnaka in September.

False prophets continue to roam around like lions seeking whom they may devour. Despite all that, the truth of the Word of God is preached and the distribution of the Shona New Testament done. One of the members of the sect which calls itself "Madzibaba", who do not use the Bible as the Word of God, was given the Shona New Testament. After having read it, he met the elder who gave it to him and told him that they are blind-sighted by their leaders

who do not allow them to have the Bible or use the Bible in their worship. He was very thankful for the gift for he had seen the light. We pray that the Lord would bless His Word among those who receive it and that He by His Word would command, "Let there be light".

We are very thankful to have received the Shona New Testament Bibles, generously printed and sent from overseas. These have been distributed to our members, other churches and government departments. The translation, which has remained literal, used simple language and the print is of a very good size that even those with poor eyesight can read it. A total of 53 sermons recorded by the late Rev. Mazvabo have been transformed from digital to print form and are expected by the grace of the Lord to be used by those who keep the doors to our preaching stations open and also to be read at home.

Death has not spared us as a congregation, as one of our deacons, Mr. Josiah Shumba of Chiwara, was called to eternity through death. Some of our members are now very old so that they are unable to go to church, but the elders visit them occasionally to read the Word to them and pray with them, encouraging them that: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

A severe drought is looming as I write this report and the hope for any harvest is fading away. The crops have totally failed as the dry spell continues. It is of great concern to most of our people as they depend mostly on agriculture. We acknowledge that the Lord has visited our iniquities with this severe drought. We pray that the Lord, the Great Provider, will provide His people with spiritual and temporary blessings.

In conclusion, on behalf of our congregations, I would like to thank the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, the Mbumba Zending Committee and all friends abroad for their support financially, materially and, above all, their prayers, for the prosperity of the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners.

Last but not least, I would like to express our gratitude to the Trinitarian Bible Society for the printing and sending of the Shona New Testament Bibles for free distribution.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. N. Sibanda

THERE are fifteen preaching stations that fall under the Mbumba charge. Eight elders assist with supply. The communion roll stands at 135. Two communions were held at Mbumba with people coming from all the stations. One communion was held at Somakantana for the stations on the other side of the

Shangani River. Some members of the church are now too old and frail to attend the means of grace.

There would be some people who once worked at the mission who remember MaDube. She has been a member since Reverend James Fraser's time. She is now over a hundred years old, and is one of those not able to come out to the means of grace. Although she hardly recognises people these days, her face brightens up every time we visit and pray with her. One baptism was administered.

Death continues to remove mortal creatures and create gaps in the congregation. We are daily reminded of the reality of death when we meet the bereaved in the hospital corridors. Oh that people would seek the Physician!

The whole country is ablaze at the moment. "Prophets" have arisen. They are attracting huge crowds of up to 7,000. People are going to these men and women, not for the Gospel but to see miracles and buy "anointing oil". They flock there to be "blessed" so that they get can rich and healthy. Cities and towns are the most affected, owing to intense advertising and publicity in the media. In the rural areas, we are seeing some smaller versions of these "prophets". "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil," we are reminded in the Word of God.

This year the rains have been erratic. For a community that relies on rain for subsistence farming, this spells disaster. These thirsty souls need that gift from God but are unwilling to ask of Him who would have given them the living water. Some come to the mission to work, others to seek treatment for their ailments or to visit sick relatives. They come into contact with the gospel, yet they remain unmoved, and show no concern for the salvation of their souls. We continue to plant and water and leave everything to Him "that giveth the increase".

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

THE year 2014 started with the 50 years' celebration of Mbuma Mission Hospital. Representatives from the JFMC and Mbuma Zending, ex-missionaries and other visitors from Holland and Zimbabwe, joined the large crowd of people from the Mbuma community.

Many ex-missionaries who had been invited, but who were not able to attend, sent their best wishes and were in thought with us, when we expressed our thanksgiving to the Lord and commemorated His goodness in providing medical and spiritual care during more than 50 years.

In the course of 2014 the wish of the Lutsha community to have their own clinic became a reality. Under the excellent guidance of Mr. M. A. Mpofu and with remarkable commitment from the community, Lutsha Rural Health

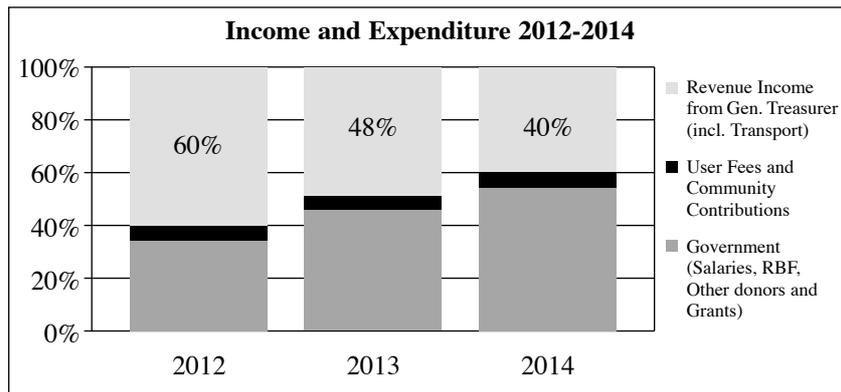
Centre was erected. A couple of nice, well-designed buildings are ready for occupancy. We hope and pray that they will greatly contribute to the spiritual and physical well-being of its community.

Administration and finance

In line with the recommendations of the Option Appraisal, the hospital continued to reduce its dependence on overseas donations, mainly by increased local sources of funds; e.g. patients’ fees and relocation of staff from Mission to Government payroll.

We followed the example of other Rural Health Centres in Nkayi District, where the community has taken the responsibility for the security of the property. One of the two gatemen during a night shift was replaced by a Community volunteer.

Subsequently vacant General Hand posts in the hospital, caused by retirement, were filled by moving members of the male workforce from maintenance to hospital. Maintenance continued to be carried out by the remaining staff and contractors.



Other donations were received in the course of the year from:

Norwegian Embassy	4x4 Ford Ranger
United Nations (FPA)	Upgrade of Antenatal Dorm
Global Fund	Computers (EPMS & ERRS programme)
Rural Electrification Agency (REA)	Biogas installation
World Vision	Filing cupboards and fridge
Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH)	Upgrade of OI-Clinic and staff accommodation

Maintenance and capital projects

Water and electricity problems dominated 2014. Mains electricity has never worked, due to kilometres of stolen copper wire, which seemingly is very difficult to replace. The new generator which we received in December 2013 has not given much satisfaction either. After being in use for six months some parts needed replacement. The contracted engineering company failed to replace them, resulting in a partly seized engine. We had to continue using our old back-up generator, which produced an unstable voltage, resulting in damage to fridges and computers.

As our two submersible water pumps are connected to the electricity as well, the water supply was affected. To avoid further serious interruption of water supply, small generators were connected to the water pumps and, although we experienced almost weekly breakdowns of these generators, this improved the situation.

Adding to the improvement was the mounting of a hand pump.

The general condition of our vehicle fleet has been good throughout the year. The staff car was replaced by a 4x4 Ford Ranger, which we unexpectedly received as a donation from the Norwegian embassy. A new motorbike was purchased with RBF funds.

Service of the X-ray machine and a number of IT and other problems were attended to by Johan Verhaar, who visited Mbuma in June 2014.

Upgrading and furnishing of the AnteNatal Dorm was done by UNFPA. They supplied beds and mattresses for the waiting mothers, which was very kind, but caused a serious shortage of space in our dorm. As a temporary measure the dining room was transformed to an extension of the AnteNatal Dorm.

Repainting of the OI-Clinic was done with the aid of ZACH, besides upgrading of two rooms for staff accommodation.

To comply with the current standards and requirements, modifications were made in the laboratory and theatre, besides the instalment of air-conditioning in the laboratory. The so-called "old dressing room" was changed to Rehabilitation Department and equipment purchased with the aid of a donation.

An increasing number of health programmes are being computerised. To that effect we received a number of computers and IT accessories. To secure all these items, the majority of the rooms in the hospital were burglar proofed.

Another interesting development has been the building of a Biogas installation by REA. Organic waste from hospital and staff houses is collected and put in a large underground tank. The digesting of these materials produces biogas, which is used in the hospital kitchen for cooking, making firewood redundant.

Staffing

Our staff complement has been greatly enhanced by Mr. M. Ndlovu, former Head of Mbuma Primary School, in the post of Administration and Technical Manager. He started working in June 2014.

In February, after a long time of lobbying, we received a Rehabilitation Technician, deployed from Nkayi District. Since the needs for disabled children and adults had not been addressed for many years, we were grateful for this.

One General Hand, Mrs. M. Moyo, retired. She had been working for 20 years with us, of which for many years she worked as cook in the hospital kitchen.

In November interviews were held for Lutsha clinic. 2 PCNs, 1 Nurse Aide, 1 Field Orderly and 1 Counsellor were selected from among our own staff to move to the clinic as soon as it will be ready for use. Dr. A. Snoek, Sr. W. Geurtsen and Sr. G. van Wijngaarden went on furlough in June/September, November and December respectively.

Continuous efforts to transfer staff members from the Mission payroll to the Government payroll, resulted in a change of 3%.

	Government payroll	Mission payroll
2013	61 (65%)	33 (35%)
2014	63 (68%)	29 (32%)

The overview of staff at the end of 2014 was as follows:

	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
Catechist	–	–	3	3
GMO	1	–	–	1
Matron	–	–	1	1
Adm. & Techn. Manager	–	–	1	1
RGN/SCN	1	8	1	10
Rehab Techn.	–	1	–	1
EHT	–	1	–	1
PCN	7	12	–	19
Counsellor	3	–	1	4
Microscopist	2	–	–	2
Office Clerk	1	–	1	2
Clerk	1	–	3	4
Field Orderly	3	–	1	4

	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
Pharmacy asst.	2	–	–	2
Nurse Aide	10	–	3	13
Foreman	1	–	–	1
Storekeeper	1	–	–	1
Driver	–	–	2	2
Gatemen	3	–	1	4
General Hand	5	–	11	16
Total	41	22	29	92

Besides the above mentioned, we received locum services from RGNs and PCNs, and voluntary services from Red Cross nurses and Community Security.

In January we were very pleased to have the following visitors: Rev. and Mrs. J. Tallach, Mr. W. Barth and Ewout Barth, William Campbell, Jessie Coote, Ello Tallach, Margaret Tallach, Margaret Macaskill, Lia and Ina Terlouw, Mr. and Mrs. G. Snoek, Helena Snoek, Teus and Albert de Koning.

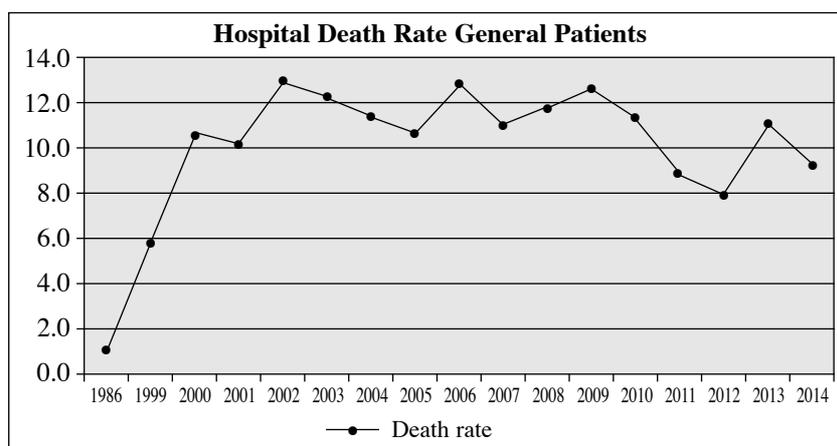
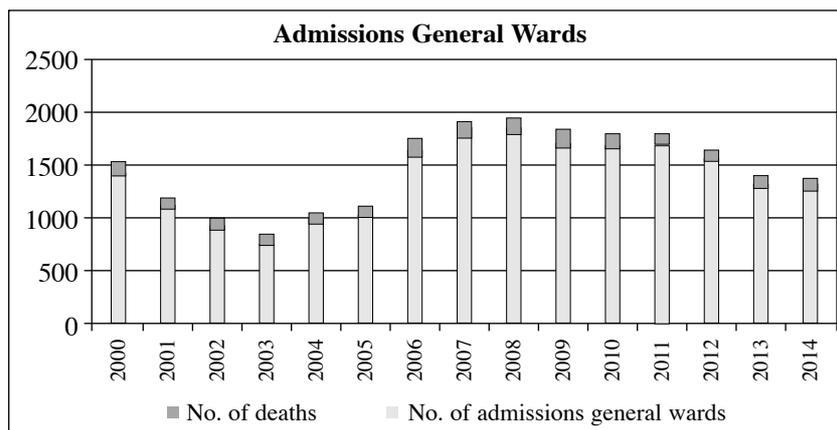
In June/July nurses Dineke van Gurp and Marieke van de Vliert stayed with us; in September/October nurses Barbara Koelewijn and Magriet Pater.

In November Mr. and Mrs. van de Berg from South Africa paid a visit, along with Mr. Westrate and Mrs. W. Haberman.

Hospital services

	2013	2014
Admissions	2,190	2,158
General	884	871
Paediatrics	384	391
Maternity	837	814
Neonatal	85	82
Bed occupancy rate		
General	60.4%	63.4%
Paediatrics	52.9%	52.8%
Maternity	76.4%	76.5%
Deaths	153	129
General	120	97
Paediatrics	20	19
Early/Late Neonatal	10	13
Maternity	3	–

The total number of admissions remained approximately the same (1.5% decrease), while the death rate went down 15%. This brought us again below a 10% inpatient mortality rate, but we are still far away from the pre-AIDS era figure of 1%.



Total Births	2013	2014
Live births	831	799
Still births	6	11

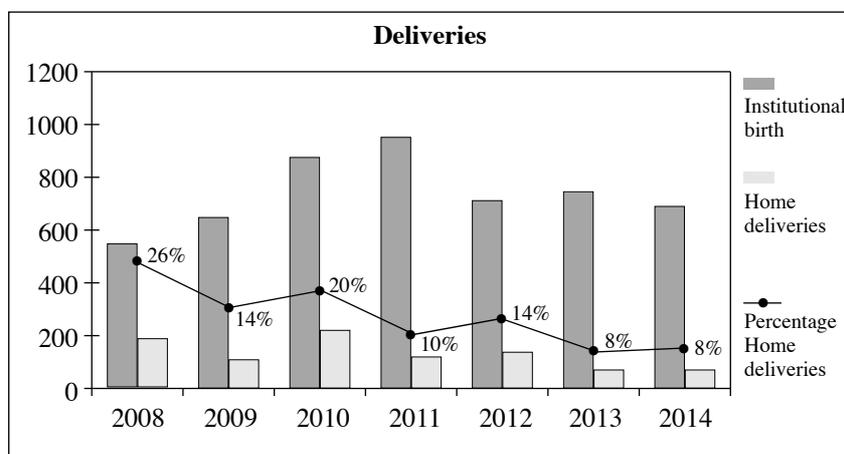
2014	Hospital deliveries		Total	Home deliveries			Total in catchment area
	<2.5kg	>2.5kg		TBA ¹	Other	Total	
	59	675	734	2	63	65	799

¹ TBA = Traditional Birth Attendant.

2014	Still births			Early Neonatal deaths			Maternal deaths		
	Fresh	Macerated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
	7	4	11	6	3	9	–	–	–

The home delivery rate remained at 8%, which is still too high. Hopefully the upgrading of the AnteNatal Dorm will contribute to an increase in hospital deliveries.

The number of fresh stillbirths went up to 7; 5 out of 7 were transfers which arrived too late from the District Hospital. Thankfully we did not have any Maternal deaths in 2014.



Theatre/Labour ward	2013	2014
Caesarean section	35	70
Other major operations	47	48
Assisted deliveries (Vacuum extractions and Symphysiotomies)	67	100

The number of Caesarean sections doubled due to an increased number of transfers from the District Hospital and other clinics.

	2013	2014
ANC+PNC (Antenatal/Postnatal Clinic) attendances	2,958	3,521
CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances	6,952	7,459

The number of attendances in perinatal and Child Welfare clinics is still increasing. More pleasing, however, is the increase of quality in its services,

thanks to strong support and supervision by PEPFAR² and RBF³, resulting in the following outcomes:

Indicator	Target	Achieved
		2014
Number of patients booking in ANC who are tested for HIV	100%	99.3%
HIV incidence in ANC	<6.5%	5.2%
HIV status of partner known	>50%	51%
Number of HIV positive pregnant women started on ART ⁴	100%	144% ⁵
Vertical transmission rate for HIV infection (= % children who get HIV)	<5%	3.5%
Paediatric ART initiation	100%	113% ⁶

The digital X-ray machine (now in use for 2 years) has proved to be a great asset for the hospital. The quality of the pictures and the easiness of its use are a daily pleasure.

Radiology services	2013	2014
Number of X-rays taken	1,742	1,817
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	5,807	6,172
Number of HIV tests (excluding ANC)	2,147	1,843
Positivity rate for HIV	11%	10.3%

Besides the 6,172 laboratory tests which were done in Mbumba, 382 sputums for sensitivity and 109 samples for PCR-HIV test were sent to Nkayi District Hospital and Harare respectively.

The emerging Multi-Drug Resistant TB epidemic is giving cause for concern. Out of the 15 patients who have been on treatment for MDR-TB in Mbumba during the past 2 years, only 6 survived, which gives a death rate of 60%. Over half of the deaths occurred within a month of treatment, the others died due to side-effects of the treatment.

² PEPFAR = President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (USA).

³ RBF = Results Based Finance.

⁴ ART = AntiRetroviral Therapy.

⁵ Due to influx of pregnant women from clinics, who are already tested for HIV, this figure is >100%.

⁶ Due to children transferring in from clinics, who are HIV positive, but not yet on treatment.

Environmental Health Department	2013	2014
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	264	339
Number of sputum +ve	45	38
Number of sputum –ve	147	228
Number of sputum not done	–	–
Extra pulmonary TB	29	27
Relapse	5	7
Re-treatment	38	39
<i>Multi-Drug Resistant TB</i>	3	9
TB patients who are HIV positive	78%	72.6%
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	11	29

In March 2014 a malaria outbreak occurred, a poorly executed spraying exercise by the Provincial team and heavy rainfall being the major contributors. Three patients died because of complications. To prevent a repetition, it was decided to accomplish the spraying exercise by a District team, which was done in November and December.

In April 2014 Nkayi District experienced a Rabies outbreak. Three patients died of which 1 in Mbumba. A massive dog vaccination campaign, which had been neglected for years, was executed by the Veterinary Department with the help of Mbumba.

Water, sanitation and hygiene programme	2013	2014
Number of toilets built	–	26

	Households	Households with toilets	% coverage	
			2013	2014
Ward 13	427	61	9.8	14.2
Ward 14	1065	250	22.0	23.0

The sanitation coverage in our catchment area remained substandard. In the 2 wards which were targeted during 2014, the coverage remained below 25%, mainly due to meagre community interest. As a result Diarrhoea still stayed in the top 5 of Acute conditions in OPD.

The total number of patients attending OPD decreased with 10%. The care given by Community Health Workers might be a contributing factor.

Out Patients Department	2013	2014
New Clients	4,668	4,219
Repeat visit/Chronic Clients	3,893	3,522
Total	8,561	7,741

Acute diseases		Chronic diseases
Acute Respiratory infections	1	Hypertension
Skin conditions	2	Epilepsy
Diarrhoea	3	Congestive Cardiac Failure
Eye conditions	4	Asthma
Injuries	5	Diabetes

The OIC department continued to aim at reducing the morbidity and mortality of people living with HIV/AIDS. Among the activities that take place in the department are Provider Initiated Testing and Counselling (PITC) to all people within the catchment area, ART initiation and re-supply within the hospital and in the 11 outreach clinics and social support through a Behaviour Change Programme that focuses on relationships based on biblical views.

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2013	2014
Number of OIC visits	12,002	10,042
Number of patients started on ARVs till date	2,549	2,827
Number of patients who died while on ARVs till date	312	366
Number of patients transferred out or lost to follow-up	792	856
Number of patients continuing on treatment till date	1,445	1,605

An interesting addition to our Behaviour Change Programme was given by World Vision in the form of the manual, *Channels of Hope for Maternal, New-born and Child Health*. The manual deals with a large variety of traditional health beliefs and addresses them in a biblical way. Mr. G. Nkiwane attended the workshop, whereafter he disseminated the information in the Outreaches, during the yearly Congregational Day in Mbuma, in a meeting with the Kirk Session and during workshops with leaders from other church denominations.

Besides the above mentioned, the 3 Catechists were enabled to continue with the diverse activities for spreading the Gospel in and around the hospital.

Looking back on 2014 and hearing about the great turmoil in so many other places in the world, it might fill our hearts with thankfulness and humbleness that we were enabled to do our work in peace. To the Lord be all glory.

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. H. Khumalo

“BLOW ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand” (Joel 2:1).

This has been the duty laid upon us by the Lord; we pray that by His Grace, we will continue doing as the Lord gives us strength and grace to do so.

We saw the year beginning, now it has passed. The talk of many people is that time is swiftly passing: this they acknowledge but very few think about their souls. The Gospel trumpet is blown, the warning is proclaimed that time is short, and the exhortation to flee to the place of refuge which is Christ, is rarely heeded. Those that preach the Gospel will not be judged by how many people took no heed but by their faithfulness in discharging what the Lord has called them to do.

We are thankful to the Most High when we come to the end of the year and looking back we can say “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”, especially in maintaining the truth left with us and for the peaceful environment prevailing in the country to enable the free preaching of the Gospel without any hindrance.

There are, of course, some encouragements and discouragements, when some fall out of the way, some are brought into the way by the power of the preaching of the cross, but “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

It is pleasing that the work of the Gospel still continues in all our stations in Bulawayo. It is more encouraging to see some of the young people interested in coming to the means of grace. We pray that the Lord Himself would enlighten them in the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. As it is in other big cities, Bulawayo is not spared from the false prophets and false preachers who preach the gospel of materialism. It is the truth that shall set our people free and nothing else.

A youth conference was held in Bulawayo for the first time in Zimbabwe and it was pleasing to see such a large crowd of 129 youths in attendance.

Services are held in all our stations – namely Lobengula, Nkulumane, Mahatshula and Mguza every Sabbath and weekday prayer meetings, including at Thembiso, where schoolchildren, teachers, all at the home and from outside the home compound attend. Communion were held in June and December and they were well attended. The sacraments were dispensed, both of the Lord’s Supper and baptism administered to adults and a number of children. Of concern is the movement of our young people, some with their young families, to cities and towns where there is no Free Presbyterian church. Our fear is of the wolves who are roaring, seeking whom they may devour. Above all we commit them to the Keeper and Preserver of Israel.

We are thankful for the Shona Bibles received. They have been received well and with thankfulness. I distributed 1,000 Shona New Testament Bibles to

Imbizo Barracks, 200 to West Commonage Police station. The appreciation for this donation was overwhelming. May the Lord of all grace bless His Word to whosoever has received it.

In conclusion, on behalf of our congregation, I would like to thank the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, Mbumba Zending Committee and all our friends for the financial and material support and, above all, their prayers for the prosperity of the cause of Christ. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Trinitarian Bible Society for the printing and sending of the Shona New Testament Bibles for free distribution, which were well received by many of our people.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

THEMBISO CHILDREN’S HOME REPORT

B. Maphala, Home Superintendent

Introduction

We have seen yet another end of the year and have cause to be thankful to the Almighty. The psalmist had this to say: “My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations” (Psalm 102:11-12). The Lord by His wisdom kept us to see another year. We were enabled to do our tasks unhindered, both with the children and the staff; hence we say, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches” (Psalm 104:24). On that strength, I now share with you the activities of the year ending 2014.

The Home

The corner stone of the Home is the Word of God. Each family unit conducts family prayers in the morning and evening under its house mother when a text is read and praise given unto the Lord. The Superintendent visits different days per week to conduct prayers with them. Workers too begin each working day with the Word of God led by the Superintendent at 8.00 a.m., except for Tuesdays, where the Home joins the school for a prayer meeting at 7.30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Usually Rev. S. Khumalo leads the prayer meeting. In his absence Mr. B. Maphala takes over. On Sabbath we all congregate in the library for worship led by the superintendent. Thereafter the children are taken to Sabbath school in three groups.

The kindergarten children are under Mrs. J. Mhlanga, the juniors are led by two house mothers on a rotational basis, and the seniors are led by the superintendent or I. Sobantu and E. Dube. Each Friday, between 3 p.m. and

4 p.m., Mrs. J. Mhlanga takes all the children, with the exception of infants, for Scripture lessons. This has helped our children in the acquisition of a sound biblical background.

Children

Our children have adjusted well to the new system of family units. They are living happily and most of them are in good shape. The adage which says a healthy mind in a healthy body is being manifested here. Quite a number of them are doing well at school. Those with a sufficient knowledge of English do the *Cheering Words* exercises and most of the older children do the exercises in the *Young People's Magazine*, which are posted to Scotland for marking.

On the development aspects, each child has a profile which is maintained as a record of each child's progress in their passage through the Home. Spiritual exercises and progress, including counselling sessions, are part of the child's profile record.

Staff

We still maintain a sizeable staff that has remained loyal to the Home. They all observe our church values and ethos as outlined in the Thembiso Child Protection and Development Policy. Each member is conversant with the policy and is aware of its implications in as far as the upbringing of the children in a Christian environment is concerned. One of our loyal house mothers who happened to be the head house mother, Mrs. R. Sibanda, retired last October 2014. She had served the institution for 15 years with distinction. We promoted Miss N. Dube to fill up the void left by Mrs. R. Sibanda. She was one of the house mothers. Another of our house mothers (house number one), Mrs. E. Ndlovu, is not feeling well. She is in and out of hospital and is in need of an emergency operation. We have since given her two months' sick leave and are constantly in prayer that the Lord might through His mercies show the way.

Donations

Due to the shrinking economic climate in Zimbabwe, we had a few donations in kind from individuals other than companies. However, we managed to soldier on from our normal revenue. The Lord looketh upon this people, as it is said in Matthew 15:36: "And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." We learn that they were all filled and there was much left over.

Vocational Training Programme

The programme is going on well. The carpentry lessons are conducted twice a week; i.e., Wednesdays and Saturdays. Cookery and sewing lessons are conducted once a week on Saturdays. Children from Grade 4 upwards participate in these lessons. They seem to enjoy them a lot.

Conclusion

Having said all that, one must not lose sight and focus and forget that we can rely absolutely on what the all-knowing God has said. It is summed up in 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." That is what we thrive on as an institution and as a Home in the Lord's vineyard.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. M. A. Mpofu

Introduction

WHEN one looks back upon the year that is past since my last report to the Synod one has reasons for doing so with sincere gratitude to the Most High. Many challenges confronted us but His hand was very evident in removing these challenges and giving us added reasons for saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us".

Field and sub committees

In 2014 the Synod approved the Constitutions of the proposed Boards of Governors which would replace the Field and Sub Committees in 2015. The two Committees continued with their functions until November when they stopped operations. The move was meant to allow a transitional period of the Boards of Governors to get established at Mbumba, Thembiso and Ingwenya.

It was resolved that if during the transitional period urgent matters that needed decisions to be made arose, the immediate past Chairman of the Field Committee would call for emergency meetings.

Staffing

Our staffing levels did not change much during the year under review. The Mission continued to implement the policy adopted by the Field Committee, which stipulated that all graded staff who retired or passed on would not be replaced.

Visitors

In terms of visitors from overseas, the year under review was generally quiet. The Mission did, though, welcome Miss K. Macaulay, who laboured at Mbumba during the time of the late Rev. J. Fraser. Miss Macaulay would spend the rest of her working years at John Tallach Secondary School and with the Bible translation team in Bulawayo. Expatriate staff did welcome friends who visited them during the course of the year.

Finance and capital projects

The General Treasurer continued to timeously send monthly remittances to the Mission. As has been said in past reports, the greater part of the funds go towards wages of employees who sadly do not seem to be thankful that they are employed when others are losing jobs due to the depressed economy of the country. They are always pressing for more money through their unions. One has to report with sadness that some of our professing “friends” who are in Mission employment do not show any sympathy to the Mission when it comes to money issues.

Sustentation Fund

Head Office received the following amounts from Congregations which were their contribution to the Sustentation Fund.

Ingwanya	\$3,015.00
Zenka	\$726.00
Bulawayo.....	\$796.00
Zvishavane.....	\$325.00
Nkayi	\$107.00
Total.....	<u>\$4,969.00</u>

Communication systems

During the course of the year under review we had to terminate the contract we had with the company which was providing us with internet services because they were no longer giving us value for our money. The new service provider seems to be doing well and their charges are competitive.

Bookroom

In the year under review the Field Committee instructed that a cost benefit analysis be made on the operations of the Bookroom. The analysis showed that the Bookroom could no longer sustain itself as the shop rentals were going up time and again. The Field Committee then decided to close the Bookroom and all the religious books were distributed to Congregational libraries after ministers had picked out those they found useful. Bibles are, however, still being sold from Head Office. The two members of staff at the Bookshop were redeployed to Thembiso Children’s Home and Lobengula Church respectively.

Primary schools

The five primary schools which are under the authority of the Church are operating well. All schools now have substantive headmasters and deputy heads, except Zenka and Lutsha that have Acting Deputy Heads. The holders of these posts are connected to our Church. At Lutsha there is Andrew Ndlovu, son of the late David Ndlovu the Mission builder, while at Zenka Mr. W. Nkomo, who is an elder in the Zenka Congregation, holds the post. The two

men need to be encouraged to study for degrees in order for them to be considered for substantive appointment. The table below gives some statistics from the schools.

School	Enrolment	Staffing	Grade 7 Results	2014
Zenka	932	26	59.00%	50.00%
Mbuma	727	21	34.83%	22.00%
Thembiso	–	–	78.00%	67.00%
Ingwenya	316	9	28.00%	36.84%
Lutsha	529	17	21.42%	8.00%

All schools have three periods for teaching Scripture in a week. One lesson is based on the Old Testament while the other two are for the New Testament and Catechism respectively. There is also another period for Psalm singing practice. Ministers have Bible study lessons with teachers in our school.

The Bible Quiz, which takes place in June, will be held at Ingwenya. Last year there was a tie between Zenka and Thembiso. The field of study this year is 1 Samuel and the Gospel of John.

The Primary Schools Development Committee meets once every school term to deal with matters related to the running of schools. Ministers take turns to sit in this committee and the Mission Co-ordinator is also a member of the committee.

Transport

Last year the JFMC approved recommendations that all vehicles that were five years old be handed over to users at no cost. All owners of these vehicles are paid a mileage rate for using the cars on Mission business. Ministers were given an enhanced salary to help them maintain their vehicles. Fuel is still provided to ministers so that they are able to carry out their pastoral and other Mission duties. The new scheme has worked very well and in the long term the Mission will make a great saving, since all repairs, maintenance, insurance and road tax are the responsibility of the vehicle owner.

Head Office has one vehicle which is used for daily runs and also when there are official Mission visitors. When there are serious problems elsewhere in the Mission it provides the necessary back up.

Lutsha Rural Clinic

In the under review I was given the task of supervising the construction of a Clinic in Lutsha. The Clinic was built in partnership with the local community, who provided labour and sourced the locally available materials such as stone and river sand. The Mission provided funds for other building materials which had to be sourced from town. The project was completed on time and as this

report is being written the Clinic is already operating and it is hoped that the official opening will be in June (DV).

Conclusion

In concluding this report I wish to use the words of the late Rev. J. S. Fraser who, in 1958, wrote: "The friends whose support and sympathy have lightened the burdens of another year are not forgotten, although through pressure of work their kindness may not always be acknowledged as it ought to be. I should like to take this opportunity of assuring them once again of our deep appreciation of all they do for us. To those who never fail to remember us in their prayers we are specially indebted. We have daily need of strength and guidance from above and we believe these divine gifts are bestowed when those who fear the Lord wrestle on our behalf. Is it not written, 'He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him'?"

KENYA REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

THE Synod of 2014 authorised the supply of Kenya by the Zimbabwe Presbytery with the expenses met by the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee. The Presbytery gave me the responsibility of arranging supply.

Since the Synod I have visited Sengera five times. The first visit was in June, followed by August, September, November and January. A final visit is planned for April, DV.

Each visit takes the same general format. Services are held on Thursday and Friday. On the Sabbath two services are taken as well as a catechism class and a Sabbath school class. The exception to this was in September when there was no Thursday service. The Sabbath morning service is well attended with the best part of 50-60 adults and also children. At the other services the attendance is much lower, amounting to 20-30 adults. I have visited some sick people during my visits. Sermon reading material was provided for the use of the congregation on Sabbaths.

At the November meeting a congregational meeting was held for the registration of the congregation for another year according to Kenyan law. This continued the registration for another year.

The journey to Kenya from Zimbabwe is considerable. Basically it involves leaving Ingwenya on Tuesday morning to get a flight to Harare, which connects with a flight to Nairobi, arriving there in the afternoon. Accommodation is taken for Tuesday evening and then I drive by a hired car to Sengera, arriving there usually about 5 p.m. in the early evening on Wednesday. The reverse journey begins on Monday morning, arriving back at Ingwenya on Tuesday evening. The August and September visits were made

on my way to and from the UK for furlough. The premises are still in good order with good security and connected electricity.

At the March 2015 meeting of Presbytery it was decided to approach the Synod for funding for similar supply in the coming year. This approach will appear in the Synod business.

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

MR. JOHN A. MACLEOD, of the Vancouver Congregation, has done sterling work in keeping the church and manse properties there secure for the Free Presbyterian Church. Attempts were made by the dissident part of the congregation to obtain the properties but the care, expertise and efforts of Mr. MacLeod were the means, under the hand of God, for keeping them firmly in possession of the Church. Because we did not have the same kind of oversight in Toronto, it appears that we have lost our properties there.

Regrettably the time came when it became necessary to dispose of the Vancouver properties, because so few people remained in the congregation and there were none to follow them. This mammoth task was also undertaken by Mr. McLeod and excellent prices were obtained. There is, however, the sadness of having to witness the demise of our long existence as a Church in Vancouver, but it is with gratitude to the Most High that we acknowledge our privilege, over many years, of having a congregation in that city and of being permitted to labour in the Gospel there. During that period, how many souls were brought to a saving interest in Christ and to feed on the bread of life, the Lord alone knows. His Word does not return to Him without resulting in such blessings among Gospel hearers. It is a hopeful prospect that the proceeds from the sale of the Vancouver properties will continue to be used for the furtherance of the Gospel in Canada and other overseas congregations.

Although we no longer have the Toronto and Vancouver places of worship, nor the majority of our people who worshipped there, it is a consolation that the whole Chesley congregation stood firm throughout those trials of two and a half decades ago. But it is all of grace that any hold fast, for as the Head of the Church Himself says, "Without me ye can do nothing".

The Church is grateful, as is the Chesley congregation, to the Rev. Roderick MacLeod for his work as interim moderator of the Chesley Kirk Session. We are indebted to the Rev. John MacLeod, London, for undertaking deputation work to Canada (which is described in his own report to Synod), and to all others who helped in giving pulpit supply to the congregation.

Rev. John Macleod, as interim moderator of the Sante Fe Kirk Session for several years, has been constant in his duties, which were by no means easy in

the distressing circumstances of the congregation. Again, we deeply appreciate the work of all others who have been helping that vacant congregation.

With regard to our congregations in the Antipodes and Singapore, our prayer over many years has been that the Lord would raise up pastors for those of them that were vacant, and He has done far above our asking or thinking. While we thought it a wonder when the first pastor went to those parts as directed by the Lord, we did not expect to see another two ministers follow, and another waiting to follow. Never before in the history of our Church in Australia and New Zealand, has it been so favoured with pastors to feed the flock of God and be instruments for bringing sinners from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We do recall, however, that probably few have enjoyed as much God-given success in our Church as did the late Rev. William MacLean, who laboured for many years in Gisborne and Grafton. With regard to Gisborne and Grafton congregations, it is wonderful also that they have had a succession of pastors, without prolonged periods of being pastorless. Truly, the Lord provides.

Lastly, a little about our Odessa congregation and mission. This year it is Rev. Dmytro Levitskyy who has written the report, to which Mr. Igor Zadoroshney has also contributed. It was, of course, the intention of the Western Presbytery, at a meeting in Lochcarron, to ordain and induct Mr. Levitskyy to mission work in the Ukraine, with Odessa as his main place of labour. However, due to the war in east Ukraine between pro-Russia terrorists (allied to Russian troops) and the government of the Ukraine on the other side, he was liable to be called for service in the Ukrainian army and was not allowed to leave the country. Since then, a rather shaky peace settlement has been in place.

We trust that in the mercy of the Lord, Russian troops will not advance further west towards Odessa. If Odessa should come under their control, our congregation there would lose much of its religious freedom. The situation would undoubtedly be similar to that in Russia, where very strict laws have been made against small religious groups, and enormous fines imposed on any who break them – all in an attempt to put a stranglehold on evangelisation.

May the Lord be kind to us and leave us with the degree of religious freedom we presently enjoy in the Ukraine. It is a solemn matter when the Church of Christ is deprived of its freedom by godless governments. The devil and wicked men hate it when even one inch of ground is gained by Christ and His Church. "Not this man but Barabbas," is their cry as it were. But despite their success from time to time, Christ has risen from the dead and directed His Church, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature".

May He bless our work in various countries overseas and give the increase by graciously fulfilling His promise, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Rev. G. B. Macdonald

THROUGHOUT 2014, services of public worship were maintained in our congregations in Australia and Singapore. It is cause for thankfulness, given the oppression and persecution of believers in other lands, that we have been able to meet in peace and safety, for the reading of the Scriptures, the singing of the Psalms, prayer and the preaching of the Gospel.

Two Free Presbyterian congregations are located in Australia, one in Sydney and the other in Grafton. In Singapore there is one congregation.

Sydney

In our Sydney congregation, we continue to meet in the suburb of Riverstone, to the west of the city. A major programme of house building and infrastructure development has seen large-scale growth in the area surrounding Riverstone in recent years.

The Sydney congregation was heartened by some further growth in the numbers attending the services in 2014. On the Sabbath, there would be around 40 souls in attendance and, with visitors from time to time, there can be some more.

My own son, Lachlan Fraser, was born in August, and has proved a happy addition to our family. We were delighted that Rev. Rayner could administer his baptism, as he had done for so many of the families in the church in Australia. We are thankful to have a number of young children in the congregation. How mindful parents should be of the importance of praying for their children, but so should congregations. One of the great blessings of a Christian congregation is the presence of children and adults as one congregation.

In September, Finlay and Kate Campbell moved out to Sydney from London, where they had enjoyed the ministry and the fellowship of the congregation for several years, as they both lived and worked in the city. We have also been pleased to welcome a number of overseas visitors, including two Dutch boys who have been with us for a 6 month internship in Sydney. In June we were sorry to say goodbye to Miss Katherine Wells, who left to take up a two-year work secondment in the UK, but are very pleased that she has been able to attend the London congregation. These movements highlight the importance of a Free Presbyterian witness in major cities, where many of our young people often find work. In 2014, the Kirk Session was pleased to add one new communicant member to its communion roll and there was one child baptized.

The congregation was delighted to welcome a number of visitors in October, many of whom came to attend the happy occasion of the wedding of Mr. Alexander Schouten and Miss Laura MacKenzie. It was the first wedding I had been privileged to preside at, and we wish them much of the Lord's blessing in their married life. As with any such solemn occasion, it is good to have a

marriage solemnized, in the company of the Lord's people, whose prayers we value, and we trust this was so.

The Sydney manse was extended during 2014 so that a new study plus a number of bedrooms could be added. We were delighted that Mr. George Harvey and his grandson (on a trip to Australia and New Zealand) could stay in the new extension in December. It would be right and proper to note the thankfulness of the Deacons' Court for some very kind and generous donations and loans received from various sources.

In January 2014 the annual Australia and New Zealand Presbytery Youth Conference was held in the Blue Mountains of Australia, not far from our Sydney congregation. Around 15-16 young people attended and the papers presented proved informative and the time together was enjoyable and encouraging to all who attended.

Grafton

Grafton is the main population centre for the Clarence valley in Northern New South Wales, an area long associated with emigrant Scots settlement. The congregation was most heartened to have had the visit of Rev. George G. Hutton back in November 2013, when he assisted at a communion season and gave pulpit supply. It was with much thanksgiving to the Lord that they met just under a year later, for his induction to the pastoral charge of the Grafton congregation by the Presbytery, on the 31st of October 2014. The kind providence of God was noted, in that the date of the induction marked 2 years to the date since Rev. Rayner's retirement from the pastoral charge of Grafton took effect. It was a great blessing that Rev. Rayner was present to address his successor, on behalf of the Presbytery. At the induction, Rev. Jett Smith, the Moderator of Presbytery, preached from 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Rev. and Mrs. Hutton are settling in well to life in Australia, and we trust that, with the Lord's blessing, his ministry will be most comforting and encouraging to the Lord's people, and instructive to poor and needy sinners in directing them to Christ.

I was thankful to have the help of Rev. Caleb Hembd at the communion in October, and his ministry of the Word was greatly appreciated. Mr. Hembd also took a prayer meeting in Sydney and supplied in New Zealand. These visits greatly strengthen the bonds of fellowship and our congregations in these parts deeply appreciate any such supply. A regular Sabbath attendance in Grafton can be around 60 souls and there are many children and young people. Six new communicants were added to the communion roll in 2014.

Singapore

The congregational elder, Mr. Bernard Yong, continued to shoulder the burden of taking services in Singapore during 2014, and to him thanks are due. He is also helped and supported in various duties by the Deacon, Mr. Angus Lau.

The congregation has been somewhat unsettled by having to move from different properties, due to the uncertainty of being in rental properties and would aspire to secure a building of its own, though, in the Singapore property market, this is proving difficult. In whichever location one is though, one can be sure of a warm welcome in Christian fellowship. Mr. Cornell van Kralingen very kindly attended the communion to make a quorum for the Kirk Session and I was grateful to have his fellowship on that occasion. There were approximately 20 people present on the Sabbath morning of the communion. Regular numbers would be around 15. The Singapore congregation deeply values the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and appreciates any supply and visits they receive.

Conclusion

In this spiritually dark day, may we all take encouragement from such passages of the Scripture, as that found in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 55, verses 10 and 11: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

NEW ZEALAND REPORT

Rev. J. Smith

AT the time of the writing of this report, December 2014 marks the bicentenary of the Gospel first being preached on the shores of New Zealand. Samuel Marsden was the first missionary who then preached to the Maori people the good news of salvation from Luke 2:10: “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.” Since that time other missionaries came to New Zealand and were instrumental in converting the natives to the true religion. Thanks should be given to the Most High for ordering events so that the Gospel has come to this part of the world. And yet there is great cause to mourn over the moral and spiritual declension that is evident in Church and State, knowing that an account must be given for all the blessings and privileges the nation has enjoyed.

Today the Gospel is largely neglected in New Zealand, but there are nevertheless reasons to be thankful that a witness is still preserved. Following the general election of 2014, the Speaker of the newly elected Parliament proposed a change to the Parliamentary prayer which would have omitted the reference to Christ and the glory of God. It appears that many people contacted their respective members of Parliament to object to this. As many as 63% of

MPs who responded to the Speaker's "survey" indicated that they wanted to keep the prayer as it has been since 1962. The end result was that the Speaker of the House decided to keep the prayer unchanged. The prayer that has been retained is as follows:

Almighty God, Humbly acknowledging our need for Thy guidance in all things, and laying aside all private and personal interests, we beseech Thee to grant that we may conduct the affairs of this House and of our country to the glory of Thy holy name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the honour of the Queen, and the public welfare, peace, and tranquillity of New Zealand, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

It may be interesting to note that the very first item of business of New Zealand's first Parliament in 1854 was about prayer. James McAndrew, MP and Presbyterian elder, moved the motion to open sittings of Parliament by acknowledging God and asking the Lord's help and guidance on its business. The motion was passed by 20 votes to 10. Now, 160 years later, the Christian prayer was nearly lost. But for the present, the New Zealand Parliament continues to open with prayer in the name of Christ, and although the prayer may be in form only, yet thanks should be given to the Most High for the prevention of even further moral decline.

The Free Presbyterian congregations in New Zealand, Auckland, Gisborne, Tauranga and Wellington, remain much the same as last time a report was given. However, it may be interesting to note that, since the decision was made to relocate the Wellington Congregation last year, the first preaching service of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in the new location of Carterton (in the Wellington Region) was held on 5th March 2014, at which there was a gathering of over 50 individuals, most of whom were not Free Presbyterians. The text was from Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." At this time a hall is being hired for the services, and an attempt is under way to acquire a permanent place of worship.

In October it was heartening to have Rev. Caleb Hembd with us to conduct services in each of our Congregations, and he provided pulpit supply in the Gisborne Congregation four Sabbaths. His labours in this part of the world were much appreciated. Among the New Zealand Congregations it is also encouraging to report in the year 2014 that baptism was administered to an infant and the privilege of communicant membership granted to an adult in the Auckland Congregation.

It is true that spiritually New Zealand has seen better days. But the Lord has preserved a remnant that seek to honour Him in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We must seek grace in order to be faithful to the divine Head of the Church who has assured us: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ." (Matthew 28:18-19).

We would endeavour to give thanks to the Most High for the Free Presbyterian witness that has been preserved in the four congregations of New Zealand. “For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name” (Psalm 61:5).

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. Levitskyy

THIS report, to which Mr. Igor Zadoroshney has also contributed, confirms that the year 2014 has been a year of great calamities for the people of Ukraine, our country, because of the war here. We believe that the Lord in His providence is punishing this land for transgressing the Fourth Commandment and for its idol worship as found in the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Greek Catholic Church.

It is a matter for thankfulness to the Most High that our congregation here in Odessa still has freedom to worship and continues to meet regularly and safely. It is a great task and responsibility to be an ambassador of the great King of kings. Preaching three times a week in the congregation requires constant preparation, but I do find it easier to preach in Russian than I did in English. In addition to taking the church services, my dealings with government departments on behalf of the Mission, editing, translation work and preparing materials for printing, take up a lot of time. The congregation on the whole and each person apart are doing their best in spreading the Gospel among the people of Odessa and even beyond its boundaries. Once, we had an inspector from the power supply company visiting us who, after he had done all checks in the Mission building, stayed with us for about five hours asking questions about Christ and His Gospel.

There are people coming to us from time to time for public worship but with the present situation it does not happen very often. People are afraid of the Russian invaders; therefore they see a threat in most people on the street and are not ready to speak with a stranger, but in spite of people's fears we had a few visitors coming from remote districts. For example, one couple of reformed believers came and stayed with us for the Wednesday and Sabbath services. We are constantly praying that the Lord would give our country peace and that the war would stop.

With regard to the war, we believe that God has permitted the Russian army to annex the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea. Russian soldiers (who are all of the Orthodox religion), without military badges but equipped with rocket launchers on their backs and crosses on their necks, very rapidly occupied the whole of Crimea, taking over all the airports, railway stations, military bases, aircraft, 71 naval vessels, one submarine, generating plants, and vineyards. Putin's soldiers stole 300 kg of gold and other precious metals

from the Ukrainian banks in Crimea. The peninsula is now a Russian military rocket base.

On 12th April 2014, armed Russian saboteurs invaded the east Ukrainian city of Slavyansk and occupied the police headquarters. On that date began a state of war between Russia and the Ukraine. Some Russian citizens resident in east Ukraine are supporting the Kremlin invasion and are ready with arms to kill peaceful citizens of Ukraine. On 24th August, which is the Day of Independence in Ukraine, the Russian army went further inland, attacked and surrounded Ukrainian forces near the city of Illovaisk and murdered many captured Ukrainian soldiers. Those who escaped death in that “corridor of death” are testifying that Russian soldiers of Asiatic appearance were killing Ukrainian wounded soldiers even with bayonets – a descent, say some commentators, to almost the last stage of moral degradation.

In spite of all these tragic events in the life of Ukraine, and although mission work in the Ukraine is more difficult because of the war, we are still, by the mercy of the Most High, sending out literature and receiving replies from different parts of Ukraine, with requests to send out more copies of the Word of God and reformed literature.

Many citizens of the Ukraine visit our congregational website on the internet, where we have posted an advertisement of our mission work. People can look through a catalogue of Christian literature and order a hard copy or download it from the site. Email is also a good tool for reaching people, especially in the difficult situation in which we are. Also we are communicating with people by Facebook, on which we have over 800 readers. Among these contacts are citizens of Israel who emigrated from Russia and the Ukraine and to whom we are giving the good news about the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

During the year past, we distributed literature, including 25,000 copies of the Gospel according to John, in military hospitals where many wounded Ukrainian soldiers are convalescing. Quite a number of soldiers asked for a complete Bible. Along with bringing the Word of God and Calendars for 2015 to the wounded, we give them fruit, food and juices.

Although the fighting is taking place in east Ukraine, there are warlike incidents here in Odessa. Today, we were informed that another building was blown up in the city but there were no deaths, which is a good reason for thanking the Hearer of prayer. But citizens of Odessa do fear people among them who speak with a Moscow accent and regard them as a potential threat.

Sometimes we receive letters with feedback about the literature we distribute. One person from the city of Losovaya, Kharkov District, has written, “The book with the blue cover, ‘Sermons’, written by Reverend Donald Macfarlane is a blessing to me! In my house, we gather for worship in the evening time, about ten elderly persons, and we read these sermons one by one. It is good that there is no need for ourselves to devise something else when we can use those sermons that once were spoken. After reading, we discuss the sermon that was read and ask a question from the Shorter

Catechism or Mother's Catechism; then everyone present receives a piece of Catechism homework for the next time. All in our group discuss the meaning of the answer in the light of the Scriptures.”

Tracts about different false teachings are very popular. One missionary who distributes our tracts, sent this response: “Your tract on Pentecostalism is very interesting – in our locality this sect has spread over half of citizens of my village, where we have seven thousand dwellers. All your literature will not stay on the shelf to collect dust but will surely be read.”

Here is the report on our distribution in 2014, of Bibles and reformed literature in the Ukraine and countries of the former USSR:

1. Bibles in Ukrainian	112 copies
2. Bibles in Russian	168 copies
3. Sermons by D. Macfarlane	31 copies
4. <i>Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)</i> in Russian	198 copies
5. <i>WCF</i> in Ukrainian.....	74 copies
6. Calendars for 2014.....	3,300 copies
7. Calendars, <i>Golden Thoughts</i> , Russian.....	3,000 copies
8. <i>An Exposition of WCF</i> , by Robert Shaw	28 copies
9. <i>Line upon Line</i> , by F. L. Mortimer	345 copies
10. <i>Memoirs and Remains of Rev. Donald Macdonald</i>	96 copies

As well as very many emails sent out there were 362 parcels and 121 letters posted. Some recipients sent donations in return. The total amount was £406.20, which covered all distribution expenses.

Since the war began, a burst of patriotism has led many people, in the Ukraine as a whole and in Odessa in particular, into the Eastern Orthodox Church camp. This means in turn that patriotism is admired generally only when the patriot is an Orthodox. Also, because of war, many people have become more religious than they were before. We see people gathering for prayer on the squares of the cities. Most of those whom we met during our distribution of literature in military hospitals were expressing themselves as believers in a certain sense. We hope and pray that the literature distributed among them and others will be blessed to the salvation of many souls.

As we look back to our very small beginnings almost 20 years ago, we can testify that our progress as a Mission and congregation is the Lord's doing, not ours, and that the Lord Himself has brought us so far. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO NORTH AMERICA

Rev. J. MacLeod

IN my capacity as interim Moderator of the Santa Fe Kirk Session, I visited Texas in June 2014 in order to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and to attend to other pastoral duties. The visit lasted for seven days. I was met at the airport by Mark Smith and safely driven to the Travel Lodge where I had stayed on several previous occasions. Mr. Alasdair Macpherson, who continues to serve as an Assessor Elder, arrived the following day. The sacrament was administered on the Sabbath and the services throughout, especially the evening ones, were well attended.

Mr. Caleb Hembd, who, within a fortnight was due to be licensed to preach the Gospel by the Southern Presbytery, was present. He, and his wife and family, were resident in the manse. We are grateful to him for conducting most of the services in Santa Fe from the time that he completed his studies, and for continuing to do so up to the present as a probationer. The congregational elders, Mr. Carl Smith, Mr. Jeshurun Hembd and Mr. Joseph Smith, are also to be commended for the faithful manner in which they keep the services, especially the last-named who has, over the years, contributed so much and so self-denyingly to the well-being of the congregation.

The Rev. Roderick MacLeod conducted the communion services in October and when several visitors from Canada and other parts of the United States were present. We are grateful to Mr. MacLeod for doing so and we hope that his labours will prove not to have been in vain in the Lord.

I have also to report that I visited Chesley, Ontario, in October 2014, and conducted all the services connected with the communion season there. This was in place of the Rev. Roderick MacLeod, who is the interim Moderator of the Kirk Session there. Again, the visit was only for one week, but, as at Santa Fe, it was one of many appearances in the pulpit. On this occasion I was met at Toronto Airport by Mr. Gilbert Zekveld and the two and a half hour car journey to the Chesley manse was accomplished without incident. Accommodation was provided for me in the manse where I was very comfortable and well provided for. In the absence of a settled pastor the elders of the Chesley congregation – David Kuiper and Gilbert Zekveld – devotedly attend to their duties, including the keeping of the services on Sabbath and weekday – as, also, does Rick Bouman, Deacon, in his own sphere.

The services were well attended and several visitors from the United States were present – Joseph Smith from Texas (with his wife Carolyn and three children), Parnell McCarter from Grand Rapids and Aashik Rao, from New Jersey. We were glad to see them and happy to renew our acquaintance with them. We welcomed Hector Ross from the London congregation on the Friday and it was by his hired car that we made the journey back to the Toronto Airport on Monday afternoon. The overnight flight back to Heathrow Airport was swift and uneventful.

I have to report that both the congregations visited appeared to be in a healthy condition. They have, in common, many children regularly present in the means of grace with their parents and this is a spectacle that cannot be other than encouraging on the human level. In North America, as everywhere else, at a time when the whole earth seems to be covered by gross darkness, there is a crying need for an outpouring of the Spirit of God. We hope and pray that the Lord of the Harvest will soon provide both congregations with pastors after His own heart.

I would like to express my appreciation of the many kindnesses shown to me both in Santa Fe and Chesley and, above all, and, as is fitting, render thanks to the Keeper of Israel who brought me safely to these faraway destinations and back to my home again. "The whole earth let His glory fill."

TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

SADLY, another year has passed during which no students for the ministry in the Church have been received for training. "Pray the Lord of the harvest." The three students of last year, having finished as previously reported, no tuition of students took place in the past academic year.

An interim inspection of the College by an inspector from the British Accreditation Council took place in Glasgow on 17th December 2014. The following comment is taken from the inspector's report.

The FPC is a close-knit community, working well together though with clear lines of responsibility. All staff are well qualified for their roles and exchange ideas and views on a very regular basis. The Administration was ideal for the purpose of ensuring all records are maintained as well as carrying out other essential duties to ensure the success of the course.

During the year a meeting of the tutors took place, during which it was agreed that both Church Principles and Church Law would be taught by the New Testament tutor in future and that the Systematic Theology tutor would be relieved of the Church Principles element of the curriculum. It was agreed that the doctrine of Inspiration should be taught as part of the course in Systematic Theology and that in the New Testament course the doctrine of Inspiration would also continue to be discussed as part of the course in Catechetics.

The Committee agreed that a certificate of having passed the exit examinations set by the College would be supplied, where this was required, for legitimate purposes such as immigration.

The Theology Conference in 2014 was held in Inverness. Attendance was fair, the papers edifying, subsequent discussion lively, and an interest shown by some of the public.

The speakers and subjects for this year's Conference in Glasgow, the Lord willing, are as follows.

Effectual Calling	Rev. D. A. Ross
Learning from Scottish Church History ...	Rev. D. Campbell
Revival	Rev. W. A. Weale
The Book of Revelation	Rev. A. W. MacColl
Cambuslang and the Seceders	Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

Considerable work is involved in preparing these papers and the Committee would welcome an increase in attendance. The desire of the Committee is that these conferences would be to the advance of the Cause among us as a Church.

“That in thee may thy people joy,
Wilt thou not us revive?
Show us thy mercy Lord, to us
Do thy salvation give.”
(Psalm 85:6-7, metrical)

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. MacDonald

AS I wrote in last year's report, a Church Committee such as the Welfare of Youth should be deeply interested in our young people, particularly in their spiritual wellbeing. It is most pleasant to meet with our young people from time to time at communions, and at our Youth conferences. It is our desire and prayer for them that they would seek the Lord in their young years.

In our liberal society, Christian foundations are constantly under attack and are being eroded. Redefinition of marriage has now passed into law and is permitted, with all its attendant consequences. Apart from the huge moral issues involved, which are the main issue, there will also potentially be an erosion of our civil liberties. This will affect schools, hospitals, other work places and institutions. Our young people will potentially be exposed to trial and maybe hardships. In certain areas of our country, children are already being exposed to political correctness and the acceptability of homosexual practice, which is contrary to the Word of God and dangerous to the morals of our young people. A Christian school is already being closed in England over its Christian ethos, which may be indicative of what is yet to come. There are grave concerns also about the Named Persons Scheme legislation and its

consequences, although there are currently challenges in the law courts with a view to reversing this. We hope and pray that these will be successful; that the Lord will arise and plead His own cause and turn back the flood of moral evil which has come in upon us. In the present weak and fragmented state of the church of Christ, with winds and tides running contrary, there are no easy solutions to the challenges that we face, except by taking comfort from the fact that the Lord reigns.

A major part of the Committee's work over the year is the organisation of the Youth Conference, to obtain a suitable venue and the organisation of speakers and papers. The venue for this year's conference was in Abernethy, Barcaple, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire, in the Borders. This part of Scotland has much religious history connected with it: for example, the birth-place of Rev. James Renwick is nearby, and Wigtown, where the two Margarets were drowned for steadfast adherence to the faith and the Word of God, is also in the same general area.

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

- 1. Martin Luther: The Reformer**
Power point Presentation
Dr. R. Dickie
- 2. Prayer: The Breath of the Soul**
Rev. J. MacLeod
- 3. James Renwick: Grace to Live in Killing Times**
Rev. R. MacLeod
- 4. Historical Tour**
Rev. R. MacLeod
- 5. Saving Faith: What is it?**
Rev D. W. B. Somerset
- 6. Joshua: Moses' Successor**
Rev. Neil Ross

The Committee would thank those who gave papers and to Rev. R. MacLeod for leading the historical tour and the House Mothers for all their help and hard work. We thank Abernethy House and their staff for housing our conference and the use of their facilities.

We as a Committee also thank all those who set and correct the Scripture and Catechism Exercises which appear in the *Young People's Magazine*, both at home and overseas. This they do willingly, and we appreciate their prayerful interest in our young people. We wish them all the Lord's blessing and help. May they know that their "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

**BALLIFEARY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME
COMMITTEE'S REPORT
Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach**

HAVING responsibility for a care home such as Ballifeary is a constant reminder of our frailty, the inevitable end that lies before us all and the inestimable value of that godliness which is profitable for all things, having the promise for the life that now is and that which is to come.

Sadly we have to report the passing away of Mrs. Alexina Morrison on 9th January, Miss Margaret MacKay on 5th July, Mrs. Mary MacDonald on 9th August, Mrs. Margaret MacSwan on 11th August, Mrs. Mary Ross on 13th October and Mrs. Eva MacQueen on 20th November.

The following admissions took place during the year: Mrs. Alice MacGregor on 16th January, Miss Annie MacDonald on 13th July, Mrs. Margaret Sutherland on 29th September, Mr. William Fraser on 29th October, Mr. Duncan MacLennan on 16th December and Mrs. Flora Sutherland on 20th August. Respite was provided for three residents during the year.

There was a full complement of staff through the year and some of the staff completed a variety of courses on such subjects as Diabetes and Medication.

The Home had one Care Inspectorate inspection in April and received the following grades under the grading system.

Care and Support	Excellent
Environment.....	Excellent
Staffing.....	Very Good
Management and Leadership	Excellent

These excellent grades would not have been achieved apart from the sustained effort of our caring workers at Ballifeary through the year and we thank them for this.

A biomass boiler was installed which, in the present climate of environment awareness, is a very economical way of heating the Home. A new stair was also fitted in the basement and work done on the kitchen staff room and pantry.

On 12th August a buffet lunch was provided in a marquee erected in the front of the Home for about 90 guests and staff in order to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Home. It is the prayer of the present committee that the same gracious practical concern for the elderly among us that characterised the Rev. William Grant and the rest of the founding committee so many years ago, will continue to inform our work and witness in Ballifeary.

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

ANOTHER year has passed in the history of the Leverburgh Care Home. Once again we seek to acknowledge the goodness of God in providing for the Home, both in the spiritual and temporal sphere.

We are thankful that over the past year the bed capacity has been almost fully utilised. The committee are thankful that the proposed extension for an extra bed and storage space is now proceeding.

The Home would express their gratitude to the Finance Committee for financial support, otherwise in the current climate of financial restraints we would not have been able to proceed. The Home is grateful for all donations received.

There were four deaths in the Home over the past year: Mr. John Ross, Bunavoneadar, North Harris, Mr. Louis MacInnes, Ardslave, South Harris, Mr. John Mackinnon, Ardslave, South Harris, and Mrs Annie Macdonald, Scalpay, who was living in Balloch, Dunbartonshire. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families.

The negotiations for Home fees between Western Isles Council and Care Homes are now proceeding. The tendering is for three years; for 14 beds, the other 2 beds have been funded by Councils from the mainland.

We thank all the local services for their interest and care of the elderly and the local Fire Brigade who are in close communication with the Home about possible fire hazards. Other inspections are Health and Safety and Kitchen Hygiene.

The recent Care Commission inspections continue to be good; the Home has retained overall Grade of 5 at the recent unannounced inspection. Grade 6 is the highest. Grades are from 1-6. The categories are as follows: Care and Support, Environment, Management and Leadership, and Staffing; all received Grade 5.

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

We again are indebted to the Officer in Charge and her staff for all their hard work and dedication in the care of the elderly and in the administration of the Home. We wish residents and staff the Lord's blessing.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

AN important part of outreach work is visiting different communities with the book van. If possible, we visit every home, intimating our purpose of selling Christian literature and to speak to people about the realities of eternity and leave a suitable Gospel tract. Last year we were unable to undertake this due to our volunteer worker Mr. Alan Boyd being engaged with other commitments. We pray that suitable volunteers will yet offer their services for this important work.

While in this spiritually dark age door-to-door evangelisation, as well as other work connected with the Gospel, appears to be to in vain and tends to breed a sense of despair; yet we receive strength from the promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Should we discontinue spreading the Word of God in sin-darkened areas we cannot expect the enjoyment of the promise in these places. May the Lord provide labourers.

We were glad as a committee for Rev. Bruce Jardine undertaking to spent some time in the Stranraer district distributing the tract, *The Doctor's Bible*. Mr. Jardine is himself a native of Stranraer. There is an insert at the back of the tract telling who the distributor is and how to contact Mr. Jardine. The insert gives information about the Reformed Faith and an offer of a free Bible. We have printed 2,500 of these tracts and bought a number of Bibles from the Trinitarian Bible Society.

It is the intention of Mr. Jardine to visit the surrounding districts, such as Maybole and Girvan. Our intention is to visit these areas on a quarterly basis.

Rev. David Campbell, Edinburgh, received a grant from the Outreach Committee to purchase the Gospel of John and other scriptures from the Trinitarian Bible Society. These were distributed in large numbers in the Queen Street area, and other regions of Edinburgh. We trust that much good will follow this essential work of spreading the Word of God.

We have been favoured to attend a few Agricultural Shows and have added the Nairn Show to our list. Mere curiosity took some to our tent; nevertheless it was an opportunity to speak about the great matters of eternity. The Morayshire MP visited a number of Trade Stands and our book stand also and was very respectful in relationship to our work but would have none of our views regarding same sex marriage and rolled out the usual humanistic arguments to defend this abomination. One biker was very curious about our display. As we talked to him and gave him some literature, he responded that his father would be very interested and went on his way. So who can tell what good will come of these meetings.

Mr. Chris Lamont was to manage the Dornoch Agricultural Show on his own since there was no other person free to help him. However, the day before the Show Mr. Lamont sustained an injury and was unable to be there. This resulted in our having to cancel our visit to Dornoch. However, our presence

at the Black Isle, Portree and Daviot was not without some encouragement. We are much indebted to Edward Ross and Chris Lamont for attending to these shows.

Mr. Lamont writes as follows: "On a warm sunny Saturday in August, Mr. Edward Ross and I set up the book van at the Portree Agricultural Show. Our location had been changed from previous years so we did not have a very prominent position. However, we had a number of visitors; some made purchases but most just browsed round which gave us an opportunity to make conversation and to hand them some Scripture and doctrinal leaflets. Many were very supportive of the witness for the truth though there were many varying views on the witness we endeavour to maintain. How unspeakably sad when you see people you know and who were brought up under the Word of God by their parents and have now no interest in these things. We took comfort in the fact that the wayside pulpit posters were clearly visible for all to see. It was also good to meet again those who make a visit to our book stall each time we have been there.

"Having set up our display at the Daviot Agricultural Show the interest shown was very scant. It was most noticeable how people passing would look away very quickly before you could catch their eye. However, there was not any possibility of them not seeing the wayside Scripture texts that were prominently on display and our prayer is that the Word would be to their awakening. Having said that, we did have some encouragements and these are all due praise to the Lord. One particular instance was a young man, maybe about seventeen years of age, who attended the Free Church but was very unhappy with their changing from the metrical psalms. He purchased a Bible and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and was given some relevant literature; may the Lord be pleased to direct him to where there is no changing the form of worship."

At the Black Isle Show we tested our new but simpler system for displaying literature. While it cost a considerable sum of money to purchase and mount the awning to the side of the book van, we are convinced it is well worth the cost. There are a number of advantages, not least the saving of time as we erect and dismantle the awning as over against the exceeding burdensome and cumbersome use of tents. Also our literature is more readily seen by the passing crowd. The free literature was well received; one tourist from Spain took a good stock and went on his way somewhat burdened, we trust, to put his takings to good use.

There are other matters we could report but what we have stated will let our people know something about our work as a Committee and how their necessary and welcome donations are used. May this labour, theirs and ours, result in there being "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

Magazines

Both the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine* continue to be issued each month, and continue to be produced on the same lines as in previous years. The *Gaelic Supplement* also continues to be published quarterly.

Again it was felt reasonable to leave the cover price of the Magazines at the same level for 2015. The cost of printing has decreased slightly, because of a decrease in circulation. A major factor in this decrease is a reduction in supply of magazines to Kenya. Postages continue to increase.

Sincere thanks are due to all who have given help in various ways over the past year. They include those who have sent in articles and, in particular, the members of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

Publications

The translation from Gaelic of the sermons of Archibald Cook, with the title *Eternal Reality*, is now at the printers and we fully expect that copies will be available for sale before the Synod meets, DV. Further copies of the *Works of Ebenezer Erskine* (3 volumes), the *Works of Ralph Erskine* (6 volumes), *Christ in the Old Testament* (4 volumes) and the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 3, have been produced during the year. Also Volumes 12 and 13 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* have been printed as hardbacks for the first time. In addition, the Committee are currently reprinting the following three titles that have gone out of print: *Memoir & Remains of Rev. Donald Macfarlane*, *Sermons by Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands*, and the *Tree of Promise*.

The Committee has also decided to reprint the two volumes of John Love's *Memorials*. Love (1757-1825) was a noted minister, latterly in Glasgow, and the *Memorials* consist of "diary reminiscences and original papers". The original editor(s) speak of these as "writings so full of just views of divine truth . . . and so rich in Christian experience".

Sales in 2014 of books produced by Free Presbyterian Publications were a little up on the previous year.

Bookroom

The Bookroom continues its work of sending out Bibles and other Christian literature to various parts of the world. Mr. Alexander Smith was appointed Manager last year and began work at the beginning of August. We wish him well in his new responsibilities. We trust that his retail background will be of assistance to him in the particular field of distributing religious books.

We would express our thanks to Miss Ruth Macleod, from Dingwall, who stepped in at short notice for several weeks last year before the new manager was appointed; she ran the Bookroom very efficiently. We would also thank all others who have helped in the work of the Bookroom, in particular those who have kept the Bookroom open during the Manager's holidays.

The overall financial outcome for 2014 was disappointing, but we hope that increased sales for most recent months will continue and that the new Bookroom website, which we expect to go online later in the year, will be a significant factor in an improved sales performance. We do believe that the Bookroom has a useful function to play in spreading sound Christian literature, even when the internet is a source of increased competition for sales and also provides a diversion from the printed page.

The Committee is very conscious of the need for God's blessing on every part of its work. They would therefore call for prayer to the Lord for His blessing on, in particular, the production of the Magazines and the publication and circulation of other Christian literature. Our desire is that the Lord would use these means for the good of souls wherever these Bibles, books and magazines are read.

CHURCH ARCHIVES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

THE remit of the Committee is to oversee the important work of preserving the Church's archives. One part of this work is the maintaining of an inventory of home and overseas records presently in the possession of the Church, including Synod, Presbytery, Kirk Session, Deacons' Court, and Committee records. The compiling of this inventory has continued in the last year, although the work is still not finished. We have been gratified to find that with one or two exceptions, the Kirk Session records of the congregations in the Outer Isles Presbytery are complete.

A second part of the work is the digitizing of archives. The eight volumes of Synod minutes covering the period 1896-2008 have now all been scanned, along with the minutes of the single Presbytery which preceded the formation of the Synod (1893-1896), and the minutes of the Northern Presbytery from 1896-1902. Mr. Roy Middleton is in the process of preparing an index of Synod Resolutions and other important decisions of Synod, which should be of general use to the Church. The Committee would reiterate its urgent recommendation that all Church Courts and committees photocopy their records and store the photocopy in a separate place from the originals. The photocopy should also be scanned so as to have a digital copy.

The third part of the work is the permanent storage of records, both paper and electronic. The suggestion is that paper records should be stored at the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness and electronic records at a secure

location (intranet) on the Church's website. No final decision has been reached on these proposals, however.

During the course of the year, the Committee received a donation of letters and notes of sermons taken by the late Alexander Maclellan, Muir of Ord. The Committee is grateful to Mrs. Lilian Campbell, Chesley, for this donation, and to others who have helped with the various aspects of its work in the last year.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. M. Watkins

AFTER many committee and sub-committee meetings, with and without the site designers, and many discussions of both policy and detailed content, the Church's website was relaunched on 6th August 2014, with a complete redesign, and with a revised and much expanded content. It has been functioning satisfactorily since then, with a responsive design that means its display automatically adapts to whatever device is being used to access it. Modifications and improvements to the design are implemented as they arise.

Each month, both of the church's magazines are uploaded to the site, one month after their publication in print. Care has been taken to ensure that the website does not take over from the magazines, which are the Church's official monthly publications. Sermons from various congregations are uploaded when they become available.

People have made contact from different parts of the world, predictably from places such as the United Kingdom, North America and Holland, but also serious enquiries have been received from places such as Iceland and Serbia. The contacts which ask for more clarification on aspects of the Church's testimony are the more encouraging ones, but there have not been many of these.

At the time of writing, there have been more than 150,000 views of the website's various pages. Almost every day, apart from the Sabbath when the site is closed, there are more than 500 page views, and often well in excess of that. On most days 100 to 200 different users visit the site, with a steadily increasing upward trend.

The committee is working with the Bookroom Committee towards the relaunch of a redesigned and properly functioning website for the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

