

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

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REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr. F. R. Daubney

1. INTRODUCTION

IN preparing this annual report for the Synod we have followed the usual format. Members of the Committee have contributed items which look into some of the subjects which have dominated the media and our thoughts during the past year. Our thanks are due to Dr. Angus MacLeod for the items on abortion and euthanasia. Islam and the atrocities perpetrated by its deluded followers are a continuing concern, not only to the people of God but to the nation in general, and to the nations of the world. The Pope of Rome appears to the world as a genial and kindly old man with a pleasant countenance but Rome never changes and the ugly face of his church continues to be in the news with allegations concerning sexual abuse. The Church of England, to its shame, has some problems of the same kind to contend with. A committee of the Synod is to report on the difficult situation that the Church is faced with following the enactment of the iniquitous Marriage Act of 2014. For that reason the Religion and Morals Committee has not reported on the subject on this occasion. However, to see politicians and same sex couples rejoicing, whilst trampling on God's Word with regard to marriage, is grieving in the extreme.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

2. RELIGION

Scottish ecumenism

The various Churches in Scotland have spent another year pursuing their own courses, most of them refusing to be guided by the teaching of God's Word in doctrine, worship and practice. The deplorable moral and spiritual condition of the people of our land can be traced to a large extent to the unfaithfulness of the professing Church over the years. A false spirit of ecumenism prevails throughout much of the visible Church with, for example, Roman Catholic priests and prelates asked to participate in services with men professing to be Protestant ministers of the gospel. While there have been no unions between any of the various denominations over the past year, it seems clear that the Associated Presbyterian Churches and the Free Church of Scotland seem set to unite soon. This is one further indication of the extent to which the APC have departed from the position and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, whom they still claim to represent and whose property

they still occupy unlawfully. We understand that APC groups joining the Free Church will be allowed to keep their own distinct congregations. Whether they will attempt to take Free Presbyterian property into the Free Church remains to be seen.

Romanism

It was reported on the 10th of February 2016, that the Pope of Rome (having previously announced a “Holy Year of Mercy”, beginning in November 2015), had sent more than a thousand priests on a world-wide mission to forgive sins, such as, “. . . defiling consecrated bread and wine, violating confessional secrecy, and plotting to kill a Pope”, whereas, formerly such supposed power had been confined to the Pope or a top official. The Pope here in this directive blasphemously arrogates to himself the power to forgive sins, and the ability to authorise others to do so also, which in reality is the prerogative of God alone, “. . . who can forgive sins but God only?” (Mark 2:7b). Holy Scripture identifies the Pope as a notoriously vile sinner, as the following verses testify: “. . . that man of sin . . .” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b), “. . . that Wicked . . .” (v. 2:8a), “. . . whose coming is after the working of Satan . . .” (v. 9a), taking “. . . pleasure in unrighteousness” (v. 12b), and presiding over an institution referred to as “the mystery of iniquity” (v. 7a). Scripture gives an implicit description of the Pope as reprobate, and guilty of the unforgivable sin, that is, the sin unto death (both being derived by good and necessary consequence). And, also as a mere man, consumed with malice toward Christ and His people, left to contracted obstinacy and judicial obduracy, which may be seen in his striving to destroy the true, Reformed religion. His boast that he is able to forgive sin, and that he can enable certain appointed priests to do the same, is false. He is strongly deluded, and his missionaries are engaged in a futile exercise. If the Pope was truly desirous to see sinners finding their sins forgiven, and hearing the great Forgiver comforting their hearts with, “. . . Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matthew 9:2a), he would be endeavouring to make a whole-souled offer of Christ to all men, which he cannot and will never do. At the Day of Judgment he will only have himself to blame for appearing before the Lord Jesus with his sins not forgiven “and not among the elect, washed sheep and obedient, but among the reprobate, filthy goats and disobedient”.

Islam in the United Kingdom

Population

In 1951 there were only 22,000 in England and Wales who identified themselves as Muslim, which was less than 0.1% of the population. Over the next sixty years that percentage rose steeply through immigration, and a relatively high birth rate, to 4.8% by 2011. The Muslim population in Scotland was 1.4% in 2011, and in Northern Ireland 0.2%. The UK Muslim population is presently increasing ten times faster than the non-Muslim population. The

Pew Research Centre projects that it will reach 5.6 million, or 8.2% of the population, by 2030. Most UK Muslims belong to Sunni sects, with a significant minority of about 15% being Shia.

Education and wealth

Approximately one-third of adult Muslims are unqualified, which is a significantly higher percentage than the general population. This is at least in part due to a higher proportion of uneducated immigrants. Muslim faith schools are reported to have higher academic success rates than average, and there is a higher proportion of Muslims amongst higher education students compared to the general population. Muslims are significantly poorer than other religious groups, having less than a quarter the wealth of Hindus, the next poorest religious group.

Political involvement

There are presently eight Muslim MPs at Westminster, about 1% of the total, one of whom, Sajid Javid, is a cabinet minister. The Scottish National Party MSP, Humza Yousaf, is Scottish Minister for Europe and International Development. He was expected to be the first Muslim Foreign Minister in Europe had the SNP succeeded in the Independence Referendum.

Crime

In England and Wales about 14% of the prison population are Muslim, over two-thirds of whom are British nationals. This proportion increases to 20% in high security (Category A) prisons. Only about 1% of these prisoners have been convicted for terrorism-related offences. The main categories in order of number of offenders are: Violence against the person, Drug offences, Robbery, Sexual offences, Burglary and Fraud.

Threats to the UK from Islam

There is considerable concern in the UK and other Western countries in regard to threats arising from within Muslim communities directed against the wider population. These perceived threats are:

1. Islamist terrorism, from groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda. Young, not necessarily devout, Muslims, particularly those who are disenchanted with their lot, are the target for these terrorist organisations. They are carefully separated from family and other stabilising influences, and subject to extreme propaganda to achieve the aim of the terror organisations of radicalisation and willingness to perform terrorist acts. Polling surveys show that there is a potentially large pool of young Muslims that might be inclined to consider extreme Islamist propaganda. A number of polls have suggested that there is a significant minority, between 10-20% of the Muslim population, who sympathise with ISIS, or fighters joining it in Syria.

2. Criminal offending. Severe forms of punishment are common in many Islamic countries; e.g., Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Western countries are a “soft-touch” by comparison. One possible reason for high crime amongst UK Muslims, particularly immigrants, is that they do not feel the same deterrent as they do in their native cultures. This was evident amongst recent Muslim immigrants to Germany and Sweden, where daring attacks by gangs of Muslim men on western women have been reported. Islamic teaching, concerning an eternal paradise which is carnal in nature, may also have some affect on its devotees’ behaviour in permissive western countries.
3. Spread of Islam and intolerance of other beliefs. Muslims believers are committed to the spread of their religion. There are reported to be over 100,000 converts to Islam in the UK, a number which is increasing by approximately 5,000 a year. These are mainly young white women who have become involved with, or married, Muslim men. In other countries where Islam has increased to become a significant, or majority religion, it has had a tendency to oppress the wider population with the imposition of Sharia law, and the persecution of Christianity and other religions. The fear, therefore, that such process may happen in the UK is very real. In one survey, 36% of young Muslims aged 16-24 believed if a Muslim converts to another religion they should be punished by death. There is a much higher retention of adherents in Islam than in Christianity. Although in part this is likely to be due to the threat of apostasy, education is also a key factor. Islamic sects are careful to teach the tenets of their religion from an early age.

The issue of the trustworthiness of information from the Muslim community is a concern in regard to understanding the threats posed from it. There is an Islamic doctrine, al-Taqiyya, that permits Muslims to lie in certain circumstances, which is similar in nature to the Jesuit doctrine of mental reservation. One such circumstance is when under perceived persecution, believers may outwardly deny their beliefs. To some this doctrine may be practised only when in mortal danger, but others have a more broad interpretation when the interests of property, the community, or even Islam itself, is at stake. This is not to suggest that Muslims typically practise deceit, which is normally forbidden in Islam, but the ambiguity in interpretation of when al-Taqiyya is permissible, inevitably creates distrust, whilst the doctrine is maintained.

Potential for conversion

That there are many young Muslims who are possible terror recruits is evidence that they are seeking a better life than that which they have grown up with. They are often rejecting their parents’ “moderate” religious practice. Some, at least outwardly, are also rejecting permissive western culture. In both

cases they are not wrong to do so. Unfortunately there is little if any exposure to biblical teaching amongst them that might lead them to enquire after the truth of the Gospel. Many Muslim women also find themselves in oppressive circumstances, brought about by their religion and culture. They too, if they had opportunity to hear the Gospel, might well be drawn. We concur with the view that the islamisation of the UK, and the troubles it has brought, are God's judgement upon this nation for rejecting the Gospel. Yet we hope and pray that many UK Muslims, may yet be brought to look unto Jesus, as the One of whom God has promised that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved".

Islamism in the world

Islamism, also known as Political Islam, is an Islamic revival movement often characterised by moral conservatism, a literal following of the Koran and an attempt to implement Islamic values in all spheres of life.

Graham E. Fuller, an American political analyst specialising in Islamic extremism, suggests Islamism can be defined as a form of identity politics or "support for Muslim identity, authenticity, revivalism and revitalisation of the community". This has led to the most ambitious and aggressive Islamist militia to date – ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). The Arab world prefers to call them Daesh, which is an Arabic acronym of the English ISIS, and has a mocking connotation, a name, therefore, that ISIS detests. Islamists press for the implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) and for pan-Islamic political unity, including an Islamic state or Caliphate. They work towards the removal of everything within their power that they believe to be incompatible with Islam.

It is reported that there are over 120 active Islamic extremist groups who have the stated goal of Islamic revolution and the forced implementation of Sharia law and/or an Islamic state Caliphate. These include the notorious al-Qaeda and Hamas (the Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine) whose founding charter calls for the destruction of Israel.

The Sunni branch of Islam stipulates that, as a head of state, a caliph should be elected by Muslims or their representatives. Followers of Shia Islam believe a caliph should be an Imam chosen by God from the Ahl al-Bayt (the "Family of the House", Muhammad's direct descendants).

Charles Moore, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, said: "Islamism is unappeasable because it is a doctrine, not a set of demands. Like Marxist-Leninism, it purports to prove that a conspiracy runs the world. The anti-Muslim capitalist forces – America, Britain, the Jews – and the 'hypocrites' (the corrupt regimes that run so many Muslim states), conspire to prevent the true Islamic state arising. In this crazy, but coherent account it becomes possible to believe, as millions of Muslims apparently do, that it was the Jews who bombed the World Trade Centre."

The brutality against Christians in many countries dominated by Islamists is heart-breaking. The reports we hear are horrific. In Libya such brutality has soared since the emergence of Daesh. The Barnabus Fund reports that in 2015

Daesh filmed the executions of around 50 “followers of the cross” – 21 Egyptians in February, and 30 Ethiopians in April. The list in other countries seems endless and the brutality almost unbelievable. Where Muslims gain the upper-hand in a country, the Islamists almost invariably intimidate and terrify their fellows into these acts of persecution.

There are some exceptions. Tunisia is 99% Muslim and yet its new constitution describes Islam as the religion of the state but not its source of legislation. In general, churches are allowed without harassment, but evangelism among Muslims is not allowed and the growing influence of Daesh is a continuing worry.

We may know very little of the doctrine and practice of these persecuted Christians but we do know that their courage is admirable. For those among them who are true professing Christians, to continue their witness in these dreadful circumstances must be due to the strength of the One whose strength is made perfect in weakness. “For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Romans 8:36).

Cults

There are many cults and it is not possible to give information about them all. From time to time we may encounter groups about which we may be at first unsure. Scripture provides the ultimate test of their teachings. It can be helpful, however, to have some criteria that immediately sound an alarm that such groups may be a cult. The following is not exhaustive but may be helpful.

1. Believing that this organisation/group are the exclusive community of the saved.
2. Rejecting any group/person outside this group as entirely false/evil/unsaved. Adherents are required/encouraged to sever ties with family outside the group. When anyone leaves the group they must be largely ostracised.
3. A source of authority other than, equal to and in addition to, the Bible (organisation, leadership, book). Frequently, they have their own translation or “correction” of a Bible translation.
4. Practical denial of justification by faith in Christ alone. Various practices or beliefs are deemed necessary in addition for salvation.
5. Devaluation of the person and work of Christ (denying His deity or His humanity or shifting the emphasis from Christ alone). Denial of the Trinity or a heretical view of the Trinity is often involved.
6. Authoritarian, controlling leadership focussed in one person or a small group. The leadership is above question and any challenge results in expulsion.
7. Levels of initiation. Connected with such secrecy there may be different messages for public and private audiences.

8. False prophecy, changeable teaching and practices. This may include intentional deception about the group's history, teachings, leadership, etc.
9. All details of life controlled by the leadership. A requirement to make very high personal commitment of time and money to the group.

The Watchtower Society (so-called Jehovah's Witnesses) is one of the most prominent cults. While they appear prominent, American research has estimated that they have the lowest retention rate of any religious tradition. In recent years, they have begun a "metropolitan public witnessing programme". They offer their literature in prominent places within cities where there are a lot of pedestrians. It is deeply saddening to witness this, together with the comparative lack of the true Gospel being promoted in such spaces of our cities. It would, at least, be helpful if a tract would be produced which could be given to them (though they are not always willing to receive literature).

The Charity Commission opened a statutory inquiry into Watchtower Society activities several years ago. They are seeking access to its documents. The inquiry relates in part to how it safeguards children. It has been alleged in the media that the organisation issued an edict ordering the destruction of records relating to incidents relating to individuals. This is said to be a move to avoid the Goddard Inquiry not long after a similar Australian inquiry condemned the Watchtower Society's handling of such cases.

Cults are not the only false prophets in the land but the Saviour's solemn warning certainly applies to them: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

Religious observance in schools

Some believe that the war against Christian influence in Scotland has now moved from the battleground of marriage to education. Secularists appear to be focussing attention on abolishing religious observance in schools. In November 2015 the Arts and Humanities Research Council published its report, *Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the UK*. Its recommendations are as follows:

- (a) *It is recommended that Education Scotland provide clear guidance as to what constitutes religious observance and where worship is situated within that.*
- (b) *It is recommended, in line with Section 6 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, that children are consulted on the day to day running of the school as set out in the school's development plan and that this should include consultation relating to religious observance.*

(c) *It is recommended that the term “Religious Observance” be formally changed to “Time for Reflection” in order to be more inclusive.*

The Scottish Government do not appear to think that the recommendations require any particular course of action. They insist that Religious Observance may take a variety of forms and need not include worship at all. Indeed, official guidance suggests that “an organised act of worship” is better included in the informal curriculum. Sadly, much of the Church worship that takes place in Scotland today is man-centred and no true guide for schools in any case.

The official guidance defines Religious Observance as “Community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community”. These are emphasised as “common human values”. This allows for anything at all. The Scottish Government are content that both traditional religious observance and virtually non-religious activities are included under such a broad umbrella. The confusion and uncertainty surrounding religious observance allows them to seek to please both Churches and secularists. In truth, it was never properly defined, including in 1872 when the Churches gave their schools over to the State.

The truth is that religious observance is rarely religious and rarely observed. Religious observance is expected to occur at least six times a year in non-denominational schools. Such occasions need not have reference to Christianity nor any religion. It is left up to each head teacher but local authorities are becoming increasingly concerned with monitoring the involvement of outside bodies. Of course, in Roman Catholic schools, both religious observance and Religious and Moral Education fully comply with Romanist teachings and rituals.

The main current guidance is “Curriculum for Excellence: Religious Observance (Time for Reflection) Briefing 16”. Its provisions are suitably vague and non-religious. “Effective Religious Observance is active, engaging, challenging and thought provoking. It supports children and young people in the development of their own set of beliefs and values.” There is a tendency in all of this, as with Religious and Moral Education, to philosophise religion. In other words, its answers are viewed through the lens of philosophical inquiry. The student is given many profound ultimate questions and pointed to a confused mass of diverse potential answers. Their “personal search” results in inevitable scepticism or assorted preferred “spiritual” convictions. This may not be the practice in all schools but there is a bias towards this in the new curriculum.

We are thankful wherever we hear of opportunities for faithful input in the life of our schools. Yet, in general, surely we must lament the spiritual famine in which the children of our nation are growing up. Lamentations 2:19: “Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.”

3. MORALS

Abortion and euthanasia

Abortion

The gratuitous and wicked murder of unborn children has continued apace. Although abortion rates in England and Wales were down slightly in 2014, over 1 in 100 women of child-bearing age had an abortion in that year. Disturbingly, more than a third of these abortions were on women who had previously had an abortion. Mercifully, the majority of these were performed early in the pregnancy (four-fifths before 10 weeks' gestation). The writer recently heard a nurse recounting how, when abortion was permitted up to 28 weeks, it was not infrequent that the child delivered during a surgical abortion would be heard crying feebly while being left to stop breathing. While such occurrences are much less likely to happen nowadays, this is a graphic testimony to both the extent of the depravity and the guilt of our nation in permitting such things to occur. We only deserve that the Lord would mark this great iniquity against our nation.

It has been clear for many years that abortion is, in practice, offered on demand in the UK but recent events have demonstrated this with greater clarity. Doctors who were captured on video offering abortion to women on the basis of the child's gender were not prosecuted because it was not in the "public interest". The Westminster Parliament also failed to legislate against gender-selective abortions, despite efforts by some parliamentarians to achieve this. An English barrister discussed this issue in an article in a national newspaper in which he argued that the law allows doctors to balance the physical risks of continuation of pregnancy against the risks of abortion. Thus, he argued, as the medical risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth are always greater than those associated with abortion, any abortion can be justified according to the letter of the 1967 Abortion Act. It seems unlikely this was the intention of the legislators who framed this law, but it now seems inconceivable in the current political climate that a decision to arrange an abortion in the UK will be subject to prosecution (other than for issues surrounding inadequate consent).

Euthanasia

Humanly speaking, it is surprising that euthanasia and assisted suicide remain illegal in the UK, considering the prevailing secularism, irreligion, and disregard for the sanctity of human life. In the providence of God, recent attempts in both the Scottish Parliament and the House of Lords to legalise such practices were unsuccessful, although in other places assisted suicide has recently been legalised. It is also worrying how in certain countries, such as Belgium and Switzerland, those who are not terminally ill occasionally receive assisted suicide, and particularly those who are mentally ill have been assisted to commit suicide.

Clearly, any form of assisted suicide or euthanasia is prohibited by God's law. However, it is useful to be armed with a variety of arguments against this practice which may be more likely to carry weight with those who have no respect to God's law. The most powerful argument is probably that vulnerable elderly people will feel under pressure to undergo assisted suicide to unburden their relatives. This is not an idle concern: a recently-published, well-conducted Swiss study provided evidence that assisted suicide was more common in those who lived alone or in those who were divorced, substantiating suggestions that people in situations of greater vulnerability are more likely to undergo assisted suicide. Proponents of assisted suicide should explain how many vulnerable individuals pressurised into assisted suicide would be an acceptable price to pay for the legalisation of this practice.

While it is disturbing to think of the huge numbers of unborn children murdered and the substantial numbers euthanised in the past year, we must remain steadfast and pray that God would turn the nations to fear him: "Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah 32:17).

Continuing encroachment upon parental responsibility in the family

The most obvious example of continuing encroachment upon parental responsibility in the home is the "Named Person Scheme". The Scottish Parliament has decided that every child in Scotland should have a "named person" – a state official tasked with looking after their "wellbeing" – regardless of whether or not children or parents wish to have one and regardless of whether there is any need for State intervention. A named person will have the power to speak to a child, including about very personal issues, and provide information or advice – all potentially without parent consent. This will undermine the unique roles of parents, eroding the right to family life and privacy. It could also create potential for abuse, as with the infamous Orkney scandal of 1991 when 9 children were wrongly removed from their families over false accusations they had been abused by their parents. Children as young as eight were denied any contact with their families for several weeks before the allegations were dismissed by a Court.

First taste of Named Person Scheme

A mother in Aberdeen, who has 5 children, reported March 2015 in Archbishop Cranmer's blog on the internet, about an interview her youngest child, aged almost 13, had been subjected to at her school, Harlaw Academy. Without prior notice the child was taken out of her class, and told she had an appointment with the school nurse, who was not the usual school nurse and one whom the child had never seen before. She was asked a lot of personal questions and felt very uncomfortable and taken aback. She rang her mother as soon as she could. The mother spoke to the school and filed a complaint against the NHS. The Headmaster said he had no prior knowledge of the questions. The lead nurse mentioned (1) SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy,

Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included), (2) GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and (3) The Named Person Scheme which is already being implemented at Harlaw Academy. She refused to give a copy of the notes that the nurse had taken at the interview on the grounds of confidentiality. It appears that the intention is to ask these questions of all children in their first year in Aberdeen secondary schools.

Scotland's acceptance of the "Named Person Scheme" may lead to what happened to a couple in Norway who were bringing up their children as a Christian family and had all 5 seized and removed from them by the Barnevernet, the country's child welfare service. The parents, Marius and Ruth Bodnariu, were accused of "Christian radicalism and indoctrination". Their appeal against the State's intervention was rejected. A petition on their behalf has attracted nearly 30,000 signatures. Ongoing worries about Barnevernet have led concerned professionals, including lawyers, psychologists, and social workers, to petition the Norwegian Parliament in June 2015 seeking assurances: "Society wants to be confident that Barnevernet operates with high professional competence and exercises good judgement but those of us involved in individual cases unfortunately see another reality too often".

In the present climate in Scotland where the Christian religion is being rejected and marginalised the fear is that Christian families will be similarly persecuted.

As the police forces are now combined into one force answerable to the Government instead of local forces under local authority control, this could be used as an instrument of oppression as Christianity declines and the Government becomes more intolerant.

What a need there is for prayer without ceasing: "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2).

Crime and misuse of drugs and alcohol

There are a number of ways in which crime and drugs are linked. We often think of the "petty" crimes, such as shoplifting, theft, burglary and fraud, committed by those who are drug and alcohol dependant to fund their addiction. (It has been suggested that one third to a half of all thefts is related to illegal drug use.) But there are also the crimes committed by those who supply illegal drugs, fights with rival gangs of drug pushers, and violence towards drug users who are indebted to them. There are also many acts of violence committed while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. It is reported that drunkenness is associated with a majority of murders, manslaughters, stabbings and half of domestic assaults. In addition to this, there are those who drive whilst under the influence of drink and drugs.

Recent figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) show that there were just under 230,000 recorded drug offences involving the trafficking of illegal drugs committed in one year alone in the UK. It has been estimated that there are around 300,000 heroin and crack cocaine users in England, with

around 200,000 of them receiving treatment in any one year. Because of the high cost of funding their habit, and the low price which stolen goods will fetch, it is believed that the market value of stolen goods could be as high as £2.5 billion each year.

With regard to alcohol, the ONS statistics have highlighted that 53% of violent incidents involving adults were alcohol-related; the victims of which were (in order of frequency) most often male, strangers, acquaintances and a member of the perpetrator's household.

The UK drink driving statistics show that an average 3,000 people are killed or seriously injured each year in drink driving collisions; nearly one in six deaths on the road involve drivers who are over the legal alcohol limit; young men aged 17-29 figure particularly in both casualties and positive breath tests following an incident.

Strong drink has been a temptation to mankind since the Fall. In this current day we are also faced with the ready availability of a variety of harmful narcotic drugs and the situation is now of epidemic proportions. The damage to society, family life, and especially to the souls of our fellow-men is alarming. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

4. CONCLUSION

The Committee has been kept busy during the past year revising the "Statement of Differences". All the Presbyteries responded comprehensively to the request for comments on the draft which had been presented to the Synod of 2015. On the basis of those comments it was decided to carry out a complete review of the document for presentation this year. Our thanks are due to Rev. D. W. B. Somerset for the enormous effort he put into it. Other work involved a sub-committee addressing the feasibility of a form of Church school, to report to Synod this year. We are grateful to Mr. David Norris and Mr. Alex Ross for their hard work and devotion to this.

The Convener wrote to the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport to complain about the rules which require nurses to wear trousers when on duty. Andrew Macfarlane, a civil servant in Ms. Robison's staff, replied (see below) to say that individual Boards as employers should resolve any issues or grievances which arise. Boards are required to ensure that all staff are "treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect in an environment in which diversity is valued". However, although this would indicate the possibility of flexibility, the dispensation seems to be widely ignored or unknown.

There is much to grieve and concern the Lord's people as they look at the state of religion and the moral condition of the nation but we must ever remember that the Lord is able to bring about a complete transformation of our nation in a very short period of time, and continue to pray that such a change

would take place. “And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory” (Psalm 72:19).

Dear Mr. Daubney,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd November 2015 to Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport concerning uniform policy in the NHS. I have been asked to reply on Ms Robison's behalf.

NHSScotland Boards, as employers, have full delegated powers in relation to employment issues, including National Uniform, Dress Code and Laundering Policy, which is set out in guidance letter CEL 42 (2010) and which was agreed by the Scottish Workforce and Staff Governance Committee (SWAG). This means it is for individual Boards as employers to resolve any issues or grievances arising directly with their employees. As such it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to comment or become directly involved in individual cases.

The Scottish Government is committed to equality and diversity, and that commitment extends to ensuring that these values are fully respected by, and reflected in the operation of NHSScotland

It may be helpful to explain some of the policies in place to support equality and diversity within the NHSScotland workforce. The Staff Governance Standard for NHSScotland requires Boards as employers to ensure that all staff are “treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect in an environment in which diversity is valued”.

To support this, the nationally agreed Partnership Information Network (PIN) policy “Embracing Equality, Diversity and Human Rights” published in December 2013 sets out a model policy that all NHSScotland Boards must meet or exceed in their own local policies. The objective is to ensure not only compliance with relevant legislation but also a culture that respects and values a diverse workforce.

The National Uniform & Dress Code policies were initially launched in 2008 with the aim of providing patients and the public with a consistent way of recognising uniformed staff by their role and to provide a commonly applied dress code standard across NHSScotland Boards.

Any member of NHSScotland staff who may have a concern with her Board in relation to the local staff uniform and dress policy can raise the issue with their staff representative or directly with their employer. Policies for employment issues are guided by the PIN policy “Dealing with Employee Grievances”.

Yours Sincerely

[Signed] Andrew Macfarlane

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

THE New Testament Church assembled on the first day of the week to worship God. It was on the Sabbath that they met to have fellowship with each other, to receive offerings and keep the Lord's Supper. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The Sabbath is to be continued to be kept as the day on which Christ rose from the dead and in order to follow the example of the early Church. The Sabbath is to be kept holy to the Lord in our hearts and homes.

The work of the Committee continues as in previous years.

The following letters were issued but few replies were received. A sample of the replies received has been given.

Agricultural Shows and Sales

Turriff Show No response
Blair Atholl International Horse Trails..... No response

Festivals

Inverness Festival of Lights:

1. Drew Hendry, MP No response
2. Cllr. Helen Carmichael, Provost..... No response
3. Steve Barron, Chief Executive Acknowledgement

Burns and a' that Festival

"Your comments have been duly noted."

Glasgow International Comedy Festival..... No response

Edinburgh International Film Festival No response

Scotland's Big Nature Festival

"I feel it is necessary to inform you that the RSPB is a non-denominational organisation and is therefore not constrained by or restricted to any particular or specific religious order."

Loch Fyne Food Fair..... No response

Moray Premier Wedding Show No response

Connect with Colonsay No response

Royal National Mòd

A letter of apology was sent to An Comunn Gàidhealach after they advised that no formal activities took place on the Sabbath, although it was advertised as taking place over the Sabbath.

Shetland Accordion and Fiddle Festival No response

Ullapool Guitar Festival..... No response

Inverness Festivals Team..... Acknowledgment
“Your thoughts and preferences relating to the events staged in our community have been noted by the Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group as requested.”

Golspie Gala Week No response

Nairn Book and Arts Festival..... No response

Orkney International Science Festival No response

Highland Military Tattoo

“Due to time limitations of our military bands and the challenges of civilians taking time off work during the week, we are forced into having a Sunday performance. Our performers and audiences are content with these timings. . . . We are sympathetic to the concerns of the Sabbath Observance Committee but unless critical timings can be changed then we will have to continue holding a Sunday performance which we believe has many good charitable benefits.”

Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival No response

Sabbath Transport

Highland Council No response

Businesses

Tekton Property Maintenance and Development Ltd. No response

Sport

Badminton

Badminton England No response

Handball

England Handball Association No response

Scottish Handball Association..... No response

Running

Wild Hearts Foundation No response

Spean Bridge Fun Run No response

Great Northern Run..... No response

Baxter’s Loch Ness Marathon and Festival of Running. No response

Football

Inverness Caledonian No response

Berwick Rangers No response

Motherwell No response

Ipswich Town	No response
Chelsea	
“Your comments have been noted.”	
Southampton.....	No response
Manchester United	No response
Manchester City	No response
Sunderland.....	No response
Newcastle United	No response
Stoke City.....	No response
Hull City.....	No response
Aston Villa.....	No response
Arsenal.....	No response
West Bromwich	No response
Leicester City	No response
Norwich City	No response
West Ham	No response
Everton	No response
Tottenham Hotspur	No response
Burnley	No response
Liverpool	No response
Stranraer	No response
Hamilton Academicals	No response
Aberdeen.....	Acknowledgment
Celtic.....	Acknowledgment
Dundee United	
“While we very much respect your beliefs, and indeed that of others, the Club currently operates in a social and economic environment that requires us to work on selected Sundays throughout the season. Our business operates within the wider 42 member club Scottish Premier Football League (SPFL) and under the umbrella of the Scottish Football Association. If you have not done so already you may wish to approach these organisations to express your views to them.”	
Heart of Midlothian	No response
Rangers.....	No response
Hibernian	No response
Table Tennis	
Table Tennis Scotland.....	No response
Table Tennis England	No response

Tennis

Lawn Tennis Association..... No response
International Tennis Association No response

Political Party Conferences

As there seems now to be much Party Conference activity on Sabbath, the leader of each political party (Holyrood and Westminster) was contacted regarding the matter. Only two responses were received, and although courteous, were totally non-committal on the matter.

Conservative Party No response
Labour Party..... No response
Liberal Democrat Party No response
Green Party..... No response
UKIP..... No response
Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party..... Acknowledgement
Scottish Liberal Democrat Party Acknowledgement
Scottish National Party..... No response

Political Elections on the Lord's Day, especially the European Elections

All the returning Officers of each of Scotland's 32 Councils were contacted. A total of 16 replies were received; most were of a courteous nature but, in general, indifferent to Sabbath observance.

Western Isles

Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive

“ . . . that the Western Isles votes are counted either on Saturday, with the result being kept confidential until the Monday morning, or on Monday morning itself, to reflect the custom and practice within the Western Isles and indeed, the policy position of the Comhairle that employees are not required to undertake work of this kind in Sundays.”

Cllr. D. J. MacRae No response

Cllr. Catherine Macdonald

“If such a proposal were made to the Council the matter would have to go before the full Council for a decision. If that were to happen I am certain the Council would not agree to it.”

Angus B. MacNeil MP

“I would certainly pursue and argue against any moves that may arise to bring about Sunday voting.”

Scotland

Acknowledgments were received from the following:
Alistair Buchan, Chief Executive, Orkney Isles Council

Fiona Lees, Chief Executive, East Ayrshire Council
Stewart Carruth, Chief Executive, Stirling Council
Tracy Logan, Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council
Graham Hope, Chief Executive, West Lothian Council
Sally Loudon, Returning Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Bernadette Malone, Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross Council
Eileen Howat, Chief Executive, South Ayrshire Council
Mark Palmer, Returning Officer, Moray Council
Elma Murray, Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council
Roger Mennie, Deputy Returning Officer, Dundee City Council
Angela Leitch, Chief Executive, East Lothian Council
David W. Henderson, Deputy Returning Officer, Fife Council
Jenny Wilkinson, Deputy Returning Officer, Scottish Borders Council
Paul Dukes, Returning Officer, North Lanarkshire Council
Lindsay Freeland, Returning Officer, South Lanarkshire Council
Steve Barron, Returning Officer, Highland Council

“I have no intention to hold any Holyrood, Westminster or Local Government Election Counts on Sundays.”

Some replies directed the Committee to the response of the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland.

Mary Pitcaithly, Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and Returning Officer, Falkirk Council

“Councils and returning Officers seek to take account of all such matters and would not wish for anyone to compromise their beliefs.”

No acknowledgement was received from the following:

Jim Savage, Returning Officer, Aberdeenshire Council
Sheona Hunter, Returning Officer, Angus Council
Angela Leitch, Chief Executive, Clackmannanshire Council
Jan Riise, Returning Officer, Shetland Islands Council
Angela Scott, Returning Officer, Aberdeen City Council
Andrew Kerr, Returning Officer, Edinburgh City Council
Returning Officer, Glasgow City Council
Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive, Midlothian Council
Alex Haswell, Returning Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Returning Officer, Inverclyde Council
Sandra Black, Returning Officer, Renfrewshire Council
Lorraine McMillan, Returning Officer, East Renfrewshire Council

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

IN view of the more informative and detailed Reports which will be submitted by “on the ground” members of staff in Zimbabwe and to avoid duplication, this Report will be couched in general terms and merely refer to matters relating to the Committee’s overall supervisory role. As the Synod will already know, this embraces the appointment of staff, both temporary and permanent, matters relating to the John Tallach High School, the five Primary Schools which still remain under Mission control, the Mbumba Mission Hospital and the Thembeiso Children’s Home. We refer to these institutions as “handmaids to the Gospel” and the maintaining of them is ever to be regarded as subordinate to what is our paramount aim in Zimbabwe which is to exalt the name of the Saviour and spread abroad “His most renowned fame”.

January 2015 saw the introduction of the new management structure of the Zimbabwe Mission, where governance responsibility was given by Synod to the Boards of Mbumba, Ingwenya and Thembeiso respectively. This took place in parallel with the dissolution of the Mission Field Committee and the downsizing of Head Office. The main objectives of the restructuring was to devolve authority and responsibility to each Institution, to reduce staff costs and duplication of effort in administration and, most especially, to strengthen the representation of the Presbytery within the Institutions. Each Board, under the chairmanship of the Mission Administrator, meets every month and by minutes of all relevant business, reports to the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee. Evaluation of the implemented changes is ongoing and it is hoped that the anticipated financial savings, increased effectiveness and improved communication will be measured against reality after a year’s experience.

At **Ingwenya**, as reported in previous years, the John Tallach High School (JTHS) and Ingwenya Primary School continue to deliver education under the sound guidelines of biblical Christianity. The Gospel work of teaching and learning at JTHS is organised around the general subject of Bible Knowledge. The template for this form of progressive teaching and assessment is also being adopted by the Primary Schools at Thembeiso, Ingwenya, Zenka, Lutsha and Mbumba, for which the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is the Responsible Authority.

The extension of the teaching of Commerce to Form 6 has increased the number of pupils who can complete their secondary education at Ingwenya. Previously they would have had to move on to other schools and denominations after Form 4. The benefit of two further years of formative development under Gospel teaching is considered very beneficial in maturing their young minds in the Truth. The development of Form 6 makes demands on resources, not least in providing suitable staff and accommodation. We are

glad to report that under the capable supervision of Mr. B. Ncube, the Headmaster, his deputy Miss N. B. MacLean, and skilled teaching staff, the JTHS continues to occupy a place among the top schools in Zimbabwe.

At the Head Office in **Bulawayo**, Mr. M. A. Mpofu, the Administrator, has continued to perform the multifarious duties which fall to him day by day. The main function of Head Office is to provide a service to the Mission at large, especially in relation to payment of wages and expenses for non-graded staff. With the introduction of the new management structure across the Institutions from January 2015, the Head Office workload has been substantially reduced. Rationalisation of staff and procedures has also reduced the running cost of the administration.

At **Thembeiso** the Children's Home continues to be a place of refuge to disadvantaged, abandoned and orphaned children, who are cared for within family units staffed by house mothers, assistants and relievers. The overall supervision of the Home is the responsibility of the Home Superintendent. The current roll of 41 is made up of boys and girls of varying ages who are placed in families according to suitability of age, gender and temperament. The family units are governed by the standards of the Church, Sabbath and weekdays; where attendance on the public and private Means of Grace is compulsory. Bible teaching is conducted at three levels, within the family by the mothers, within the Home by the Superintendent, and by regular visits from Rev. S. Khumalo and his elders. We are grateful to Miss M. MacAskill and Miss P. Beukers for their annual visits to provide refresher courses for the house mothers and assistants.

At the **Mbumba Hospital**, Dr. A. Snoek, Dr. J. L. Bezemer, and the expatriate Nursing Sisters (W. Geurtsen and G. Wijngaarden), together with indigenous Zimbabwean Staff, continue to deliver the expected basics of medical care, alongside spiritual and social care. Having successfully completed the pilot stage of the Rural Health Clinic project by bringing Lutsha RHC on stream earlier in the year, it is now proposed that the project move to the phased implementation of the remaining clinics, beginning in 2016 with Vova, located in Ward 25. The work will proceed along the lines adopted for the Lutsha clinic which provides valuable input from the lessons learned. The Vova Community will clear the site, build the access road, and provide local materials and labour.

At **Zvishavane** the Shona Bible Translation team consists of three persons: Mr. Teus Benschop, manager; Mr. Trycot Mwedzi, main translator; Mrs. Kerin Mapiye, assistant translator. Mr. Benschop writes:

During the past year the following books were translated: 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, and at the time of writing the report in October, Psalms 1 to 25 were completed. Careful comparisons were made with the original languages and other reliable Bibles like the Statenbijbel, the King James Bible, and the already translated Ndebele Bible, to be sure the translation is

accurate and reliable. Several people, members of the Church, were given portions of the translated books for proof-reading. The team praises God for prospering the work.

Looking to 2016, under the providence of God, the plans are to complete Psalms to Lamentations. A lot of work is to be done for that. Attention is to be paid to details. A considerable portion consists of poetry, which is more difficult to translate. Other parts are narratives, which are easier to translate.

The team looks to the Lord for help during this year.

Israel

The Rev. J. L. Goldby continues faithfully to attend to the work that is still ongoing in Israel. The translation of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is now almost ready for printing and its production must surely be regarded as a worthwhile project and expresses our continued interest in the salvation of the Jews. There is also the input that Mr. Goldby contributes to the revision of the Hebrew Delitzsch New Testament. Mr. Goldby's health has been a concern and we trust that there will be an improvement in order that he may continue to labour in a work that is so clearly dear to his heart.

Conclusion

We are thankful that the four ministers – Rev. A. B. MacLean, Rev. S. Khumalo, Rev. M. Mloyi and Rev. N. Sibanda – have been sustained in health of body and mind and, as their own Reports will indicate, that they have continued to sow the seed of the Word. It is our hope and prayer that they will discover that their labours have not been in vain and that the harvest will follow.

This Committee avoids trespassing on Zimbabwe Presbytery ground. Mr. H. Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, has performed his duties in an exemplary way and the work of the Committee continues to benefit greatly from having harnessed to it his considerable organisational skills.

The writer is much indebted to him for having provided much of the contents of this Report, some of it taken almost verbatim (with his knowledge) from his Development Plan. We have once again to acknowledge the increasing support of the Mbema Zending. The Convener and Clerk, together with Mr. William Campbell and Mr. Hugh Mackenzie, met with Mbema Zending Board in January and it proved to be a cordial and helpful meeting pervaded by a Christian atmosphere. The kindness, generosity, and prayerful interest of our Dutch friends is very much appreciated.

JEWISH MISSION REPORT

Rev. J. L. Goldby

1. Visits to Israel re the Jewish Mission work over the last year

I returned from Israel on 29th January 2015 having renewed my visa as Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Representative to Israel. The visa is valid for two years. I am grateful to the JFMC for allowing me to increase my annual visits to six in order to allow for more flexibility to accommodate other duties, medical requirements, etc. These are the dates of my visits to Israel since January 2015.

18th May-5th June 2015

3rd-20th August 2015

14th September-1st October 2015

26th November-10th December 2015

11th February to 10th March 2016

2. Summary of duties carried out during these visits

The revision of the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament

This work continues, sponsored by the Trinitarian Bible Society and Friends from Finland. I continue to act as team leader under the management of the TBS. The members of the revision team from the end of 2014 are as follows: Mr. Tom Jamison (Pastor of a Messianic congregation), Mr. Albert Hembd (TBS Language Consultant), Ms. Tamar Agnon (Hebrew Linguist and native speaker), and Ms. Etti Shoshani (Hebrew specialist and native speaker). They are supported by other external Hebrew Grammar specialists.

In addition to the team I am assisted by a Dutch couple (they prefer not to be mentioned by name) whose activities will be noted in more detail later in this report. Their role is to distribute Bibles, the Revised Hebrew Gospel of John, and information on text and translation issues. They work for the TBS as unpaid volunteers.

Recently the team completed the revision of Romans and Galatians. Because of the nature and importance of the doctrine, these Epistles presented a greater challenge but the result of the team's efforts is a much clearer translation of the Greek text.

Hebrew Westminster Confession of Faith

This project has been delayed by the lack of a suitably qualified editor, skilled in English and Hebrew and with some knowledge of doctrine. Prior to my most recent visit, which ended in March 2016, I received information that the editing had been completed and that the Hebrew proof texts had been added to the Confession. The editor's proposed amendments have also been reviewed by the translator. The editor, Miriam Givoni, has suggested some useful

improvements to the work, particularly on grammatical issues, but in other cases she did not properly understand the theology and her suggestions on these points were not accepted by the translator. In the light of this situation it was essential for us to review the editor's comments and the translator's responses. I therefore made this task my first priority and began work with one of our team members, Etti Shoshani. We are going over the whole Hebrew *WCF* text word by word. I read over the English aloud whilst Etti checks the translation and any issues arising are then considered. I have an electronic copy of Shaw on the *WCF* at hand and this is often consulted. At the same time we are checking that all the proof texts have been added. Hitherto, we have found a significant number of proof texts which have been omitted. It is disappointing that the Hebrew *WCF* is not yet ready to print. However, there is a benefit arising from the delay in that the value of the *WCF* is being more widely recognised. Etti Shoshani is a respected, long-standing member of the Messianic community but is finding that the doctrine of the *WCF* is not taught or understood by most Jewish Christians. Etti, realising the richness of the *WCF* theology, is communicating something of this to other Jewish Christians in her wider sphere of influence. On leaving Israel on 9th March we had reached the *WCF* chapter 11. Ms. Shonani will now incorporate the agreed revisions into the Hebrew text. We will then continue our revision by Skype until my next visit, planned for early May. The intention is that this will be the final editing before printing.

Another significant problem was that the proof texts added to the edited *WCF* text were taken from the Modern Hebrew New Testament based on the Critical Text. Mr. A. Hembd discovered this mistake whilst examining the edited text. This appears to have arisen due to a breakdown of communication between the printer and the person who added the text. This may be in part due to the fact that a reliable electronic text of the DHNT was not available to the printer's staff, who perhaps also were unaware of the textual differences. In carrying out the work of revising the Delitzsch Hebrew NT the team use the online electronic 10th edition. Unfortunately, this is an inferior text to that of the 8th edition, not only in the text but also has many problems arising from poor quality electronic transmission. Before any revision work is done the team corrects the 10th to the 8th edition. Eventually we will have our own complete electronic revised Delitzsch text.

Meanwhile, in order to solve the problem of having a reliable DHNT text for the *WCF*, we approached Elie Smadja of Yanetz Press. They have their own electronic DHNT 8th edition. Whilst they do not give out their whole text to anyone, they did kindly agree to give us the 1,200 or so NT Scripture quotations cited in the *WCF*. Mrs. Rebecca Hembd was asked to collect all the Scripture references and these were sent to Yanetz on an Excel spread sheet. Yanetz quickly returned the file with the full proof texts and these are now being added to the Hebrew *WCF* text.

It has become very clear in our discussions with Jewish Christians (and Arabs for that matter) that very few have a right understanding of the

relationship between the Old Testament and the New. Most have a vague idea that the Old Testament was some kind of Covenant of Works and the Jewish Church is desperately in need of sound teaching regarding the same Everlasting Covenant of Grace being dispensed under the Old Testament as that of the NT which exhibits the same Covenant in more fullness. The very important verse, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel" (Jeremiah 31:31) is not rightly understood. We trust that the promulgation of the Hebrew *WCF* will help to open up the true and important understanding of this wonderful doctrine among the Jews.

Early on Monday 15th February I flew to Israel, arriving at the Jerusalem flat around 18.00. The Dutch couple who share the flat were due to leave for Holland the following morning. It was useful to have a handover period to discuss and plan the way forward. They gave me a report of their work over the previous six weeks carried out on behalf of the TBS and in connection with our own work.

Circulation of Bibles and Text and translation principles

G&M (the Dutch who assist us) distribute Hebrew and Russian Bibles printed locally, also our revised Hebrew Gospel of John (TBS) and other material explaining the text and translation problems of modern versions, such as, the TBS' *Textual Key to the NT*, etc. The *Penknife of Jehoiakim* has been published in English in booklet form by the Dutch couple. It is currently being translated into Russian with funds supplied by the Reformed Congregations' "Board for Israel". G&M met with Church leaders in Tel Aviv and held new and follow-up meetings with other persons in different parts of Israel, some of whom were encountered on previous occasions. As a result of these endeavours there is a growing body, within and without the Jewish Messianic Community, who are grasping the significance of these issues. G&M are also of considerable help to me as they are able to travel around Israel by hired car, whereas I am still at present confined to using public transport.

TBS visit to Israel

Mr. Paul Rowland (CEO) and Mr. Philip Hopkins (Editorial Manager) of the TBS visited Israel 7th-14th December 2015 to assess the work of the team first-hand and to visit various persons with whom we are involved. I was able to join with them for three days prior to my return to the UK. On my last day we visited Beer Sheba where our co-sponsor, Olavi Syvanto, lives and where he has functioned as an elder in the Beer Sheba congregation for many years. We had a positive meeting with Olavi and the TBS agreed to supply English Bibles for his distribution needs.

Other Jewish contacts

During our time in Israel we were providentially placed among Orthodox Jews and I am careful therefore to maintain a witness among them. One Rabbi to

whom I had given a Scottish Metrical Psalm book described it as a work of genius in that the original meaning had been maintained whilst putting the text into rhyme. Whilst a guest in a Jewish home for a Kabbalah Shabbat meal we discussed the portion of Scripture read in the Synagogue that week which relates Aaron's sin in making the golden calf and to the idolatry of the Jews in subsequent ages resulting in the Babylonian captivity. One of the Rabbis maintained that there is a close connection between the sins of idolatry and immorality. Discussion of biblical topics also took place with various other Jewish individuals. One Jewish lady told me of how they had been hidden from the Nazis during WW2, living on minimal food supplies and never venturing out in the daytime. They survived but most of their family and friends perished in the gas chambers. It should be noted that the Palestinian leadership during the 1930s until the end of the war were pro-Nazi and the Grand Mufti, Amin Al Hussein, worked out a plan with Hitler for a mass extermination of the Jews in Palestine. He also raised a Muslim SS Regiment who fought with the Germans. I also discussed with some young Ultra-Orthodox Jews the significance of the name of the snake/satan in Genesis which is "nachash" and the Hebrew infinitive for "to guess" (L'nachesh) which comes from the same root. The idea of doubt concerning the requirements of God's law is linked to this word. The consequence of giving heed to such a doubt, as we know, were and are fearful. This is a theme which might be developed further when in discussion with Orthodox Jews who deny original sin.

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

THE Synod report for 2016 falls due. The Saviour said at His arrest, "this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53).

Throughout the year the preaching of the Gospel continued. Attendances vary, especially at prayer meetings during the week, but are generally consistent. It is a day of declension. Some might have the view that there is a readiness to hear the Word and so the mission field is a fruitful place. Actually this view is incorrect. The rising generation are rejecting and departing from the Word of God to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Four communion seasons were held during the year. Thanks are given to Rev. M. Mloyi and Rev. N. Sibanda for their assistance.

The usual communions at Cameron and Nyathi also took place during the year. The communions are well attended, even by people who for the remainder of the year are irregular in their attendance.

In September 2015 the local council, after a building inspection, approved the use of the new church building at Insisa. The construction of the building

took some time. The donors from Holland, the Jewish and Foreign Missions committee and Ingwenya congregation, who contributed to the funds required to erect the church, are thanked for doing so. The church people deserve special thanks. They laboured with their own hands in the construction of the church. It is now used for public worship.

Two major events of superstition took place during the year under review. Some members of the local community appointed a tree near the mission as their rain-making tree. Here they assembled from time to time for ceremonies to try and induce the spirits to give rain. The second event, still ongoing at the time of writing, is the arrival in the community of individuals claiming great powers that are able to remove bad luck charms and mythical creatures, akin to the British fairy, which are believed to be the source of troubles and poverty in houses. These persons charge hefty fees for their services, including cattle. Their schemes are basically confidence tricks that deceive the gullible and superstitious and are well organised and involve intimidation and harassment akin to that of a Mafia extortion gang. The community is thrown into a state of disorder and confusion when they arrive with their superstitious practices. Some reject them but many receive them. They started in Bembesi and have now moved to the villages opposite Ingwenya. An attempt to witness against them has been made but the community has been largely overwhelmed by this darkness. It might be thought that the people are ignorant of the Word of God but it is just not the case. The Word of God has been rejected by them in favour of these practices. Many who are ensnared recently received free Bibles from the Mission.

One reason for the unpopularity of our church is that we allow no synthesis between Christianity and superstition, whereas the other churches do. The Saviour at His arrest said, "this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53), and so it is here. At Cameron there was no difficulty within the church on account of them. At Ingwenya, sad to say, some adherents have been ensnared by them. These individuals have not as yet gone to Insisia and Nyathi.

It was a pleasure to see Rev. John MacLeod here during the year and I thank him for the various duties he undertook at Ingwenya. Mr. MacLeod does not spare himself in these trips and worked like a Trojan.

I would conclude by thanking the elders of the congregation and the deacon for all their assistance throughout the year. I would especially, on this occasion, thank the elder at Cameron and the two elders at Ingwenya, who endured trying times due to the events mentioned in this report.

"Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered" (Psalm 68:1).

JOHN TALLACH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

THE start of 2016 brought another milestone in the history of John Tallach School when the school was officially granted the status of High School by the Ministry of Education thus recognising the Form 6 development: all signs and logos now have to be changed to reflect this new status.

January 2016 saw the 58th new intake of Form 1 pupils to the school and, in February, the 5th Form 6 group was enrolled. Most of the Form 1s and a few of the Lower 6th group thus began their journey of exposure to the Reformed Faith. This is brought before the children in the long-established daily and weekly routine at the school: all church services on the Mission are attended by the pupils; each class has Bible lessons throughout the week; there is a wide variety of religious books available in the school library; worship is held morning and evening every day and, every Sabbath Day, one hour is set aside in the morning for Sabbath School in which the emphasis is on memory work.

Every Monday, at assembly, the school “anthem” is sung. These are the words of Psalm 119:103-106. After singing the verses of the Psalm, the school “motto”, contained in verse 105, is repeated, “Thy word is to my feet a lamp, and to my path a light”. The whole purpose of the work among the children at the school is that they would come to see their need of the light of the Gospel and that they would submit themselves to the One who said “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”.

Staffing

The school now has a teaching staff of 33, supported by ancillary staff: the Bursar and the Clerk in the office, the Librarian and the Science Laboratory Technician. In addition, there are 10 staff employed in the boarding school, most of whom work in the school kitchen. All the cleaning, apart from in the toilet facilities, and most of the grounds work, is done by the children themselves so as to keep costs down. This cleaning is referred to as “manual work” and is generally disliked by all. It is, however, a useful exercise in teaching the children to have responsibility for their own environment and to learn to look after themselves. These staff are all paid from John Tallach School funds but the Mission pays for 6 security staff: two gatemen and 4 night guards. The school pays a contribution towards the wages of the security staff: in 2015 this amounted to \$12,240.

Since the reduction of the Mission payroll at the end of 2014, the use of contract labour has increased. Although there are some challenges in accountability and responsibility, the shift to contract labour has resulted in greater efficiency and in cost savings.

Mr. B. Ncube continues to be a busy and high profile Headmaster with many responsibilities both in and out of the school. Mr. R. Bartle gave invaluable

help in the Bible Knowledge Department and in Sabbath School during his time at the school. A new development, initiated by him, was participation by Form 6 pupils in the Scottish Reformation Society Knox Essay competition. We were absolutely delighted when 2 of our boys won first and second place. Now that Mr. Bartle has returned to the UK, Messrs. B. Chokuda, N. Khumalo and O. Moyo again share the Bible Knowledge timetable for the whole school. Mr. Chokuda and Mr. Moyo continue faithfully to remain behind at school every weekend to help with the Sabbath School.

Pupils

The school roll currently stands at 638 pupils: 42 of whom are day pupils and 596 are boarders. There are 311 boys and 327 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 who is in Form 1.

“O” Level Results

The pupils in Forms 4 and 6 were again very successful in the public examinations. The school remained in first position in Matabeleland North with a pass rate of 97.6% for ZIMSEC “O” Level results. This was 4% higher than the 2014 pass rate.

ZIMSEC (Zimbabwe Examinations Council)

Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	96.00%	Geography	95.31%
Agriculture	100.00%	History	99.21%
Bible Knowledge	97.65%	Integrated Science	94.53%
Biology.....	100.00%	Literature in English.....	100.00%
Business Studies	96.00%	Mathematics.....	85.93%
Chemistry.....	100.00%	Ndebele.....	99.21%
English Language	96.87%	Physics.....	100.00%
Fashion & Fabrics.....	100.00%	Woodwork	77.77%

The quality of passes improved again in 2015. For the first time one class – the Science group – presented for 11 “O” levels. Out of 128 candidates:

11 x “A” passes	– 3 pupils
10 x “A” passes	– 10 pupils
9 x “A” passes	– 7 pupils
8 x “A” passes	– 5 pupils
% with 5 or more “A” passes	– 53.12% (68 pupils)

CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)

Since 2011 the school has been offering Cambridge Examinations as an associate centre of the British Council and the fees to be paid have been

determined by the British Council. In 2015 the fees of \$87 per subject proved to be a discouragement to parents and there was a decrease in the number registering: 34 in 2015 as opposed to 42 in 2014.

Pass rates were again impressive:

Accounts	85.71%	English Language	96.96%
Bible Knowledge	100.00%	Geography	95.80%
Biology	100.00%	Literature in English.....	100.00%
Business Studies	83.00%	Mathematics.....	94.00%
Chemistry.....	100.00%	Physics	100.00%
Combined Science	100.00%	Zulu.....	100.00%

“A” Level Results

ZIMSEC

We were delighted with the “A” Level results for 2015. There was a 100% pass rate in each subject and quality passes. Further Mathematics was introduced to benefit those who hope to proceed to study Engineering.

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

Of the 17 candidates: 3 passed with 19 points – 3 “A”s, 1 “B”
 2 passed with 18 points – 2 “A”s, 2 “B”s
 1 passed with 17 points – 1 “A”, 3 “B”s
 2 passed with 15 points – 3 “A”s

The lowest number of points was 10, which is still enough to qualify for university entrance.

CIE

The British Council fee of \$145 per “A” Level subject proved to be prohibitive so only 3 pupils registered as compared with 11 in 2014. The 3 candidates passed all their subjects with one boy scoring an A* in Mathematics.

The exorbitant cost of the examinations through the British Council has resulted in an application being lodged with Cambridge for John Tallach School to be accorded independent centre status. The initial application fees are costly but large savings are anticipated in the individual subject fees and this should enable more pupils to consider registering for the Cambridge examinations. This application is in its final stages and confirmation that the school has been accepted as an independent centre for Cambridge international examinations is expected soon.

Finance

Expenditure at the school continues to be tightly controlled and is supervised by the parents’ Finance Committee at monthly meetings: the budget for last

year was over \$800,000 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.

Although there was no increase to school fees in 2015, many families are struggling to meet their financial commitments at the school and some pupils have transferred to day schools elsewhere.

The parents' Finance Committee also raises funds through development levies for a limited number of projects.

Developments

1. Introduction of Form 6 Commercial Class

The final development to cater for the Form 6 Commercial Class was the need to complete one wing on each of the boys' and girls' dormitories to accommodate the second year intake of the Commercial Class. The construction started in Term 3 of 2015 and is expected to be completed by May 2016.

2. New borehole

A new borehole site was identified and the borehole sunk to replace one old borehole which had dried up. The amount of water produced by the new borehole is prolific but there are ongoing problems caused by the fluctuating electricity supply.

3. Purchase of 38-seater bus

In December 2015, the parents' committee purchased a new 38-seater bus, primarily for transporting teachers to and from Bulawayo at the weekends. It is also intended for the use of small groups of pupils attending activities outside of school.

Conclusion

As usual thanks are due to all friends and donors whose generosity helps to finance the work. While it is very gratifying to have such contributions to the material needs of the school, the much greater need is that all, who have an interest in the work and the salvation of the souls of the children and all who work with us, would pray for the Lord's blessing on all that is done in His name.

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

THE year 2015 has passed and another year arisen in the loving kindness of God. All things come to pass according to His own will. We thank the Most High for taking us through the mighty storm of 2015, excessive heat, and low in-flow of money, which thus affected the lives of the unemployed people. The Church was also hard hit in contributions. Our congregations are mainly composed of old people and others who are not employed.

Gospel work is progressing fairly well in sowing the seed of the kingdom of God in all preaching stations. Our encouragement is in Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

We are thankful for the help of the Mission in enabling us to put up church structures at Mabayi and Fudu. We now have our own places of worship independent from the schools that were helping us on the Sabbath and weekday prayer meetings. Only minor finishing touches still have to be done at Fudu.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed twice at Zenka as usual in February and August. There was the baptism of a girl and the headmaster of Zenka School and his wife. Recently we lost through death Mrs. Ngulube, sister to the late Paul Magaya Ncube, who worked with late Rev. James Fraser. Mrs. Ngulube was 84 years old when she passed on.

At the time of writing this report the rain situation is poor and thus we do not expect a harvest this year if no more rain is received. It seems that all of Southern Africa is going to face a severe drought. The Lord is showing His displeasure because of our sin.

The local leadership is forcing people to observe traditional customs, hoping this will bring rain. Those who do not conform are fined. This is real evidence of heathenism. We have since engaged the local leadership on the matter because our constitution allows for freedom of worship.

We pray that the Lord will intervene for our cause in this spiritual warfare, for without the Lord we can do nothing. Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Sabbath classes are going on fairly well. Regarding the school, the teaching of Scripture will in future need teachers who have a sound knowledge of our Church's doctrine. Some of the teachers who are expected to teach Scripture are not of our Church.

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

BLESSED is the Lord who cares for us. Giving us life, food, water, rain and all these things are the mercies of God which we do not deserve because of our sinfulness.

In the loving kindness of the Lord we have seen another year in time. It is, then, our desire and prayer that the Lord would lead us through this year if it is His will.

We are thankful for the help from the Mission. Lodging places for the Communion Seasons at Nkayi are almost complete. Only plastering of walls and glazing are still outstanding. These, hopefully, will be completed during the course of this year (DV).

Gospel work is progressing well in all preaching stations. All doors were kept open on Sabbath and prayer meeting days. The Lord's Supper was dispensed twice at Nkayi in January and June. There was the baptism of an old man at Mathetshaneni and an old woman at Nkuba.

At Donsa an elder under the Nkayi Kirk Session was suspended and deposed from eldership for engaging in a superstitious way of life. The wife was also suspended for the same offence. This was a sad experience for the Kirk Session. The powers of darkness are prevailing in our midst and some of our people are caught by the snares of the devil.

We pray for the downpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lands for a revival to enlighten many in the saving knowledge of the Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ and that people would be delivered from the sin of unbelief and mistrust of God.

Nkayi, just like all other places, will not have a harvest if the rain situation does not improve. There is a fear that people will starve and animals may die, since the pastures are poor and the dams that provide water for the animals have not had an inflow of rain water. In prayer we cast our entire burden on the Lord so as to sustain us. Psalm 37:25: "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

ZVISHAVANE REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

AS another year passes, there is much reason to give thanks to the Lord for His preserving mercies despite challenges faced in this world of sin.

Year after year experiencing drought has seen many people, especially the poor, adversely affected. This rainy season has been the worst, as efforts to plant and replant have failed because of very little or no rain and extreme heat which has scorched crops and grass, affecting both men and livestock. As most

of our congregations are situated in low rainfall regions, we have not been spared at all. This drought comes as a reminder that we are sinners and is a call to repentance, as it was during the time of Israel when they turned away from the true and living God.

What we are most thankful for is that the Gospel call of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ continues in all our congregations in Zvishavane, Mberengwa and Chivi districts. As we pray for the rains we also pray for the Holy Spirit to rain upon our souls through the Gospel, which is preached every Sabbath and at weekday prayer meetings in our nine preaching stations.

I am thankful to the elders of the congregations and professing men for keeping the doors open every Sabbath and at prayer meetings. Occasionally these meetings are taken by myself as the interim moderator on visits that I make at least once a month. We have been enabled by the Almighty to observe 6 communions in the year. These were held at New Canaan in January, at Lot 4 in Zvishavane town in August, Maware in April, Chiedza in May and November, and then Munaka in September.

It has been encouraging to have some accepted in the communion roll and for baptism and discouraging when seeing some falling aside on the way. Death has not spared us among the congregations and some are laid aside due to illness and old age. Labourers are still few, as one of the elders at Munaka fell incapacitated due to blindness and another at Maware is having health problems.

With the help of the Mission, the Deacons' court was able to make some repairs on Chiedza church, for which we are thankful to the JFMC and the mission administration for granting the facilitation of funds.

In conclusion, we plead for the prayers of the brethren for the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his vineyard. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. N. Sibanda

THROUGHOUT 2015 services of public worship were maintained in our stations. Three Communion services were held: two at Mbumba and one at Somakantana. The gatherings during the Mbumba Communion services numbered around 350 adults. People from other denominations around Mbumba attend our services during the Communion. One hopes that they would not be like Herod who heard John the Baptist "and heard him gladly" but mocked the Lord and Saviour whom John preached.

Three adults and two infants were baptised during the year. One elder and four deacons were ordained.

Two visits were made to Binga during the year. Binga is a very remote area which is 400 km. from Mboma. An arrangement was put in place years back to visit this area at least 3 times a year. Most of the people who were there when services were started in Binga still do come out. Our prayers are that more would be done for these needy souls. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into his harvest."

The year 2015 experienced very little rainfall, and 2016 does not look any better. Non-governmental organisations (NGO) have already moved in to feed the people. We see crowds converging at food distribution points and very few people where the "living bread that came down from heaven" is freely offered.

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

THE major event of the year 2015 was the opening of Lutsha Rural Health Centre. After years of preparation the first step in the devolvement of primary and preventive care services to strategically located Rural Health Centres was made, as formulated in the Option Appraisal Report of 2012. On the 1st of March 2015 the clinic was ready to open its doors.

The need of the Clinic was greatly demonstrated by the high number of OPD¹/OIC² patients and MCH³ attendances, who started to seek care in the Clinic from the first day on.

The official opening was held on the 24th of June 2015 by Dr. D. Parirenyatwa, the Minister of Health and Child Care. Present were representatives from the JFMC and Mboma Zending, the Chief and local leadership, Provincial and District Health Executive teams, District Administration Offices and Council, Political parties, Church ministers and elders, other Clinics and Schools, Non Governmental Organisations and staff from Mboma, besides approximately 500 community members.

In the course of 2015 meetings were held with Community leaders and other stakeholders about the way forward for the next clinic. Rural District Council approval was received for the building of Rural Health Centres in three other Wards in the catchment area of Mboma Mission Hospital. Ward 25, which is situated south of Mboma Mission, was regarded as the area which needs most urgent attention and the village Vova in this Ward was chosen as a suitable place for a clinic. In the course of 2016 the building of the second clinic is expected to happen under the guidance of Mr. M. A. Mpfu, who has proven to be a very capable project leader.

A change in the history of Mboma Mission Hospital happened with the arrival of Dr. J. Bezemer, together with his wife and two children, in January 2015. It is the first time that there has been two expatriate doctors in Mboma. Dr. Bezemer has been of huge help with the work in Mboma and Lutsha. What

followed was that which usually happens with a doctor of high quality – the number of patients did not decrease, but increase.

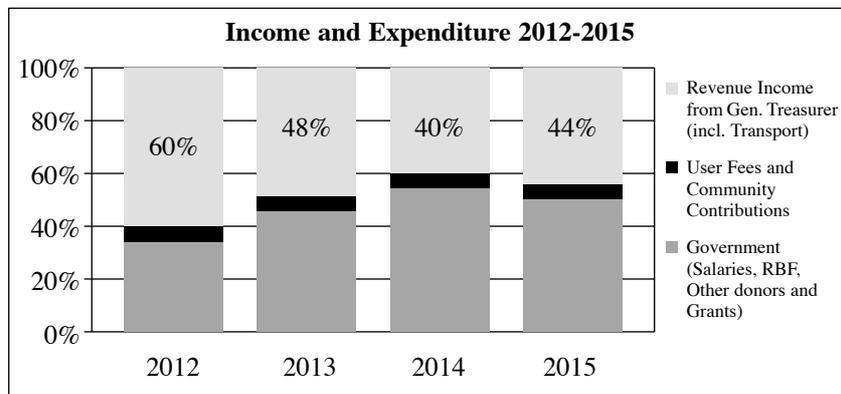
Another change in the life at Mbumba Mission has been the coming of a telephone network. Although the hospital had a satellite and thus could communicate via internet, due to the high expenses this channel was not available for private use by the general staff. The landline broke down in 2007 and was never repaired by the responsible authority, wherefore for nearly ten years no communication via telephone had been possible for the staff. As nowadays the majority of our staff members are not from the surroundings of Mbumba, discontentment with this situation was recurrently expressed.

However, on 18th May 2015 at 15.00 hrs., mobile phones started to bleep and ring. This not only silenced some criticisms among the staff, but also increased access to the hospital in case of emergencies, since the community can now call for an ambulance.

Administration

The inauguration of Board of Governors in January 2015 marked the end of the Field and Sub-Committee meetings. Under the guidance of Mr. H. Mackenzie, the restructuring devolved authority and responsibility to the Institution, reduced staff costs and duplication of effort in administration and, most especially, strengthened the representation of the Presbytery within the Institutions.

The Revenue Income and Expenditure increased from 40% to 44% of the total budget, due to the inclusion of Service Provision and the transfer of overheads from Town Office to the hospital.



Maintenance and capital projects

Buildings

The upgrading and furnishing of the Waiting Mothers' Dorm in 2014 by UNFPA⁴ created a serious shortage of sleeping places for our expecting

mothers. Thankfully this problem was solved by UNFPA themselves by building a new Waiting Mothers' Dorm together with a spacious kitchen.

Serious cracks in one of the staff houses for nurses meant the house had to be destroyed. The house was replaced by the installation of a modified container unit with a sleeping room and bath room. Under the supervision of Mr. M. Ndlovu (ATM), the purchase and installation was done by Ben Hicklin and Roy Bartle, who visited Mbuma in April 2015.

New solar boilers for the manse, management houses and part of the hospital were organised by them as well, which has been an appreciated improvement.

Roy started with the installation of solar power for fridges for the houses too, to offload the generator, but the system was not yet functional at the end of 2015.

Severe cracks re-occurred in the Matron's house, which were attended to, besides the installation of gutters and a water drainage system, which is believed to prevent the development of the cracks.

With the coming of the digital X-ray machine in 2012, the dark room had become redundant. Restructuring was therefore done and the room was added to the area used by the Office Clerks, which greatly improved their working space.

Equipment

Air-conditioners for the operating theatre, a GeneXpert machine (to diagnose drug resistant TB) and a solar fridge for the MCH⁵ department, were received via the Ministry of Health and installed in the different departments. Donations of stationery for hospital use were received via ZACH,⁶ who are supporting the OIC⁷ programme.

Transport

The lorry, tractor and staff car (Ford Ranger) are in reasonable condition. The two Toyota Landcruisers, however, which are used for Outreaches, Community meetings and Ambulance trips, needed regular repairs. Although the car engines are still in good condition, the safety and comfort of the patients is no longer guaranteed, therefore a new ambulance will be needed in 2016.

The motorbike continued to have regular breakdowns.

Electricity and Water

Our main generator was down during the first half of the year, caused by the fact that the contracted engineering company failed to get the needed parts. We relied on our old back-up generator. Once the main generator was repaired, electricity has been satisfactorily reliable, as well as the water supply.

Lutsha Rural Health Centre

In the first two months of the year the furbishing and finishing touches, like plumbing, painting, landscaping, guttering and water drainage, was done.

A solar fridge was received from the Ministry of Health and installed. An incinerator was built in July. The community started with the building of a second Staff dorm, but is awaiting (RBF⁸) funds to get it finished. This dorm is needed since 3 staff members of the clinic are temporarily residing in the Primary School premises.

The borehole of the Primary School supplies the water for the clinic, but the water is heavily tainted with iron particles. Therefore the plan is to drill a new borehole for the clinic in 2016.

Staffing

Dr. J. Bezemer arrived on the 16th of January 2015. He started working as Medical Officer on the 1st of April.

Two staff members retired: Mrs. E. Moyo and Mrs. Q. Maphala.

Sr. E. Moyo started working as a Nurse Aide in Zenka Mission Clinic in 1970. She went for SCN and RGN training in 1987 and 2001 respectively and worked for several years in Nkayi and Zenka Rural Health Centre. She came back to Mbumba in 2010 and worked with us during the last years before her retirement.

Mrs. Q. Maphala worked as General Hand in the Hospital and Sewing room for 14 years. She was an industrious worker and besides this she greatly assisted with the work in the Sabbath School, for which we are thankful.

Two RGNs were added to our staff complement: Mrs. S. Sibanda and Miss W. Moombe.

Sr. W. Geurtsen lost her mother and Sr. G. van Wijngaarden lost her brother during the year – they went home in February/March and August/September respectively.

Sr. G. van Wijngaarden was on furlough in January/February, Dr. A. Snoek in October/November and Sr. W. Geurtsen in December.

Continuous efforts to transfer staff members from the Mission payroll to the Government payroll, resulted in a change of 1%.

	Government payroll	Mission payroll
2014	63 (68%)	29 (32%)
2015	66 (69%)	29 (31%)

The overview of staff at the end of 2015 was as follows:

Mbuma Mission Hospital	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
Catechist	–	–	3	3
GMO	1	1	–	2
Matron	–	–	1	1
Adm. & Techn. Manager	–	–	1	1
RGN	1	8	2	11
Rehab Techn.	–	1	–	1
EH Techn.	–	1	–	1
PCN	5	11	–	16
Counsellor	3	1	–	4
Microscopist	2	–	–	2
Office Clerk	2	–	–	2
Clerk	1	2	2	5
Field Orderly	2	–	1	3
Pharmacy Asst.	2	–	–	2
Nurse Aide	9	–	7	16
Foreman	1	–	–	1
Storekeeper	1	–	–	1
Driver	–	–	2	2
Gateman	3	–	1	4
General Hand	3	–	9	12
Total	36	25	29	90

Lutsha Rural Health Centre	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
PCN	2	–	–	2
Counsellor	1	–	–	1
Field Orderly	1	–	–	1
Nurse Aide	1	–	–	1
Total	5	–	–	5

Voluntary services from Red Cross nurses and Community Security were received in Mbumba as well in Lutsha, which were greatly appreciated.

We received voluntary services from overseas visitors also. In April Ben Hicklin and Roy Bartle helped with the maintenance as mentioned above. Marieke Klok and Aafke van den Brink, a student Nurse and a Radiology Nurse from Holland, stayed with us from April till June. They assisted the Rehabilitation Technician with a research on the rehabilitation needs in our community. In August Anja Voogd and Annemarie Visser, two teachers from Holland, trained the Sabbath School teachers of Mbumba and outstations on how to tell a Bible story. After this, together with the Sabbath School teachers, a "Bible week" was organised, which was attended by 180 children. Family Nap from South Africa passed by Mbumba on their way to Victoria Falls and donated consumables for the hospital and money for the Orphans' Care Project. Sam Zwemer and Jan Willem Boone, two young men from Holland, came along with them and stayed with us for some days.

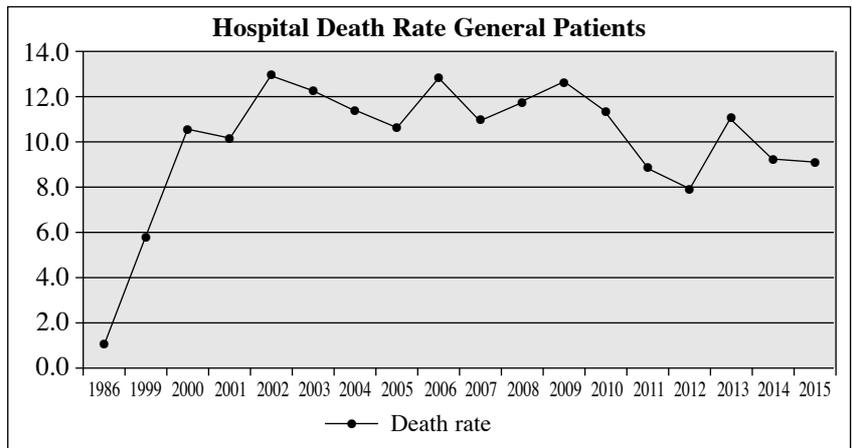
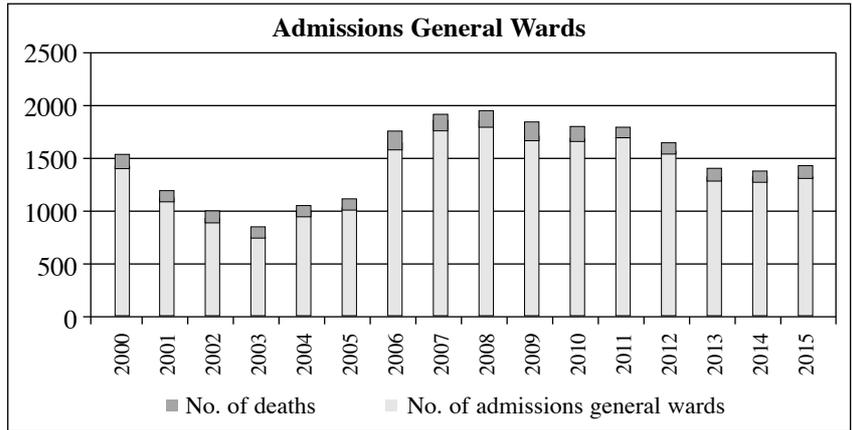
In October, Naomi Roland, Abi Main (Physiotherapist) and Jantine van Laar (Dental Assistant) stayed a few days with us. Relatives and friends of Dr. and Mrs. Bezemer visited us in November and December.

Hospital services

The different services and care delivered by the hospital staff continued as in previous years. Although basic, we are aiming for the best quality of care in the local circumstances. Thanks to the supervision and support given by the Results Based Finance programme and other programmes, the quality of record keeping and reporting is equally improving.

	2014	2015
Admissions	2,158	2,294
General	871	992
Paediatrics	391	337
Maternity	814	899
Neonatal	82	66
Bed occupancy rate		
General	63.4%	57.3%
Paediatrics	52.8%	64.1%
Maternity	76.5%	85.8%
Deaths	129	133
General	97	115
Paediatrics	19	7
Early/Late Neonatal	13	11
Maternity	–	–

The total number of admissions increased by 6%, the presence of a second doctor most likely being a contributing factor. The death rate remained the same at 9.2%.

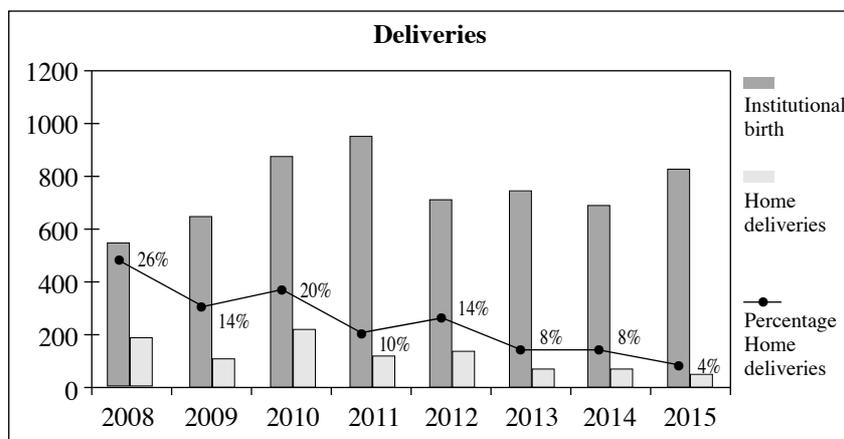


The number of deliveries increased, due to an increased number of transfers in from the District Hospital. Especially in the beginning of the year, the transfers were sent far too late, resulting in an increased number of fresh Stillbirths.

Total Births	2014	2015 Mbuma	2015 Lutsha
Live births	799	824	35
Still births	11	16	0

2015	Still births			Early Neonatal deaths			Maternal deaths		
	Fresh	Macerated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
	12	4	16	8	3	11	–	–	–

Thankfully we did not have any Maternal Deaths in 2015; the downwards trend of Home Deliveries is a major contributing factor. Besides the upgrade of the Waiting Mothers' Dorms, the support we get from local leadership has been very important to reach as low as 4%.



Our Caesarean Section rate went up from 9% to 13%, which is high, but still within the expected range of 5-15%.

Theatre/Labour ward	2014	2015
Caesarean section	70	107
Other major operations	48	88
Assisted deliveries (Vacuum extractions and Symphysiotomies)	100	133

The Maternal and Child Health department continued to deliver its important services of preventive care. 16% of the work is now done in Lutsha Rural Health Centre, which is a good indicator of the devolvement of care which has happened so far.

	2014	2015 Mbumba	2015 Lutsha
ANC+PNC (Antenatal/Postnatal Clinic) attendances	3,521	3,129	675
CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances	7,459	6,771	1,174

Radiology services increased, the non-availability of radiology services in neighbouring hospitals and districts being a contributing factor.

The number of Laboratory tests increased due to the new equipment and test (GeneXpert and Viral Load) which we received.

It is pleasing to see the number of newly infected persons with HIV steadily going down, from 25% in 2005 to 5.6% in 2015.

	2014	2015
Radiology services		
Number of X-rays taken	1,817	2,367
Number of Ultrasound Scans taken	363	571
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	6,172	7,703
Number of HIV tests (excluding ANC)	1,843	1,155
Positivity rate for HIV	10.3%	5.6%

Although the HIV incidence is going down, the number of patients diagnosed with TB still goes up, with a cure rate of only 60% (which is supposed to be >85%).

A small research carried out by our TB department in 2015 showed that a majority of the patients (67%) who are diagnosed in Mbuma with TB come from outside our catchment area and even from outside Nkayi District. When they finally arrive at Mbuma, after having been (mis)diagnosed and (mis)treated in other facilities, often their TB is already advanced, which greatly contributes to our death rate.

The spraying against malaria was done well in December 2014, resulting in few malaria cases in 2015, although we had 1 malaria death. This patient most likely contracted malaria outside Nkayi District. She became ill 4 days before reaching our hospital in an unconscious state.

Environmental Health Department	2014	2015
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	339	392
Number of sputum +ve	38	45
Number of sputum -ve	228	334
Number of sputum not done	-	-
Extra pulmonary TB	27	13
<i>Multi-Drug Resistant TB</i>	9	3
TB patients who are HIV positive	72.6%	68%
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	29	9

The sanitation coverage in our catchment area still remains very low, although much effort has been put into the teaching of the community on

Health and Hygiene. In the 2 wards which were targeted during 2015, 33 households managed to build a toilet.

Water, sanitation and hygiene programme	2014	2015
Number of toilets built	26	33

	Households	Households with toilets	% coverage	
			2014	2015
Ward 13	427	86	14.2	20.0
Ward 14	1065	258	23.0	24.0

In 2015 the Out Patients Department in Mbumba saw 518 patients less than previous years. The number seen in Lutsha was, however, 1,447, showing the improved accessibility to care for the community around Lutsha, which was one of the purposes of the clinic.

Out Patients Department	2014	2015 Mbumba	2015 Lutsha
New Clients	4,219	3,701	1,447
Repeat visit/Chronic Clients	3,522	3,520	219
Total	7,741	7,221	1,666

The Rehabilitation Department was newly opened in 2014. Handicapped persons and children are visited in the community and followed up where needed.

Rehabilitation Department	2015
Number of Patients	674
Number of treatments	2,140

The Opportunistic Infection Clinic, together with the Catechists and Home Based Care Department, continued to try to improve knowledge, behaviour and attitude towards relationship and HIV/AIDS.

Besides the monthly Community meetings and the annual Refresher courses for HBC and VHW, in 2015 members of ZINATHA⁹ and so-called “prophets” of local churches were invited for a five-day workshop on HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues. Although only 11 people attended, many misunderstandings and wrong beliefs were addressed, which will hopefully be disseminated in these circles.

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2014	2015 Mbuma	2015 Lutsha
No. of OIC visits	10,042	11,107	2,853
No. of patients started on ARVs till date	2,827	2,981	–
No. of patients who died while on ARVs till date	366	406	–
No. of patients transferred out or lost to follow-up	856	1,393	–
No. of patients continuing on treatment till date	1,605	1,182	322

Throughout another year the Lord has enabled us to care for our neighbours and to sow the seed of His Word. Many things continued as in previous years; in other areas there were great changes. The Lord, however, says: “For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” – a humbling thought.

After acknowledging the Lord’s kindness, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all our donors who remembered us in prayer or gave otherwise to the work in Mbuma and Lutsha.

NOTES:

- ¹ OPD = Out Patient Department.
- ² OIC = Opportunistic Infections Clinic.
- ³ MCH = Maternal and Child Health Department.
- ⁴ UNFPA = United Nations Population Fund.
- ⁵ MCH = Mother and Child Health Department.
- ⁶ ZACH = Zimbabwe Association of Church related Hospitals.
- ⁷ OIC = Opportunistic Infections Clinic.
- ⁸ RBF = Results Based Finance.
- ⁹ ZINATHA = Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association.

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

“O GIVE thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because His mercy endureth forever” (Psalm 118:1).

There is a good reason to say so as the year ended and a new one began. As one looks back, there had been some encouragements and discouragements but above all the difficulties we take courage from the Lord, who in His Word says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”.

In the kindness of the Lord the Church work is preserved by Himself as He is the Head of the Church and the foundation of it. The witness on the Lord’s

side has continued throughout the whole year, despite much opposition from false prophets and their kind, deceiving many from going in the way of truth. It is my prayer and all God-fearing people that the Lord by His grace may enable us to lift up Christ and Him crucified. Bulawayo has continued to have a stable attendance on its stations, despite some relocation of our young people to other cities and countries in pursuance of education and employment.

It is very pleasing to continue seeing some of the young people coming to church during school holidays or whenever they visit Bulawayo. Sadly it is not the case with some who get engulfed by the world. It is our prayer that the Lord by His grace will, in His own time, make them to come to themselves, like the prodigal son.

The services are held each Sabbath at all our stations, they being Lobengula, Nkulumane and Umguza, except for Mahatshula where in the last quarter of 2015 services were temporarily suspended as the place we were using was a private home. We extend our thankfulness to the owners of the home for offering us their place over past years. We are hopeful and prayerful that, before very long, our church building at Mahatshula will be ready for use.

Prayer meetings are held at Thembiso every Tuesday at 07:30 hrs., Lobengula on Friday at 16:00 hrs. and Umguza on Thursday at 15:00 hrs. Bulawayo has two communions, in June and December. We were thankful to have Rev. J. MacLeod from London who preached at our June communion and, then in December, Rev. A. B. MacLean was invited. It was good to see that the majority who were present at the December communion were mostly young people and it was also pleasing to have some students from John Tallach High School – especially girls, as it has been the boys whom we have been seeing most in the past years.

Bulawayo Kirk Session now takes oversight of the spiritual affairs of Thembiso Children's home and school visits are made on Friday to help the teaching of Scripture and Psalm singing.

In December, the Theological Youth Conference was held in Bulawayo at Lobengula church and a total of 115 were in attendance. It is our prayer that the work done will be profitable to all of our people, young and old. We leave everything to the Lord Himself. "Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim" (John 2:7). The turning of water to wine was of the Lord.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the JFMC, the Mbumba Zending, the Mission office in Zimbabwe, and all friends and brethren overseas for their generous support for the Gospel and Mission work in Africa and especially for prayers.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

GWERU MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

GWERU is the capital city of Midlands and is situated 160 km. from Bulawayo along Harare road, where there is a large university called the Midlands State University. Two of the students who are members of the church are studying there and they are from Zvishavane and Bulawayo congregations respectively. We have Tinomuonga Mashavakure, Mr. Mashavakure's (elder, Zvishavane) son, and Mr. Nyoni's (elder, working in Gweru), son Akori.

Services have been held occasionally for some years, but as of last year the supply was improved to at least two to three times a month with the help of other ministers and elders, mainly from Bulawayo and Zvishavane. Over past years we were using the home of Tino Mashavakure, but now by the good providence of the Lord a convenient place of meeting has been offered at a Reformed Dutch church. We are very thankful to the Most High and Pastor Muzenda who made their place available for us. Services are held at 12:00 hrs. and 14:00 hrs. The attendance is encouraging, with 15 to 25 souls, amongst whom, interestingly, is a man who never attended any place of worship until he came to the Free Presbyterian Church, and who has developed a lot of interest in its teaching and doctrine. He has become one of those whom, when informed in time, does not miss the services.

I would like to express my gratitude to the JFMC for making funds available for the continued and improved supply in Gweru.

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT

B. Maphala, Home Superintendent

Introduction

IN my humble report as a frail creature, I am thankful to the Lord for giving me the strength and direction to share with you information in this vineyard. In His word, in Micah 6:8, it is said: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” I hope and believe God will lead me according to His statutes in all my endeavours.

The Home

As a home we endeavour to have the Word of God as a banner and fortress of the institution. The psalmist had this to say: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). With the help of the Lord our

children are taught Bible lessons on a daily basis; i.e. in the mornings and evenings. External church members come on board weekly on Friday afternoons. Rev. S. Khumalo, our resident minister, plays a pivotal role in the spiritual upbringing of our children and the conduct of the home in general, according to the Word of God.

Children

Currently we have 43 children in total – 24 boys and 19 girls. All attend formal education except for 6 who are still toddlers. We are thankful to the Lord that two of our boys excelled in their respective examinations. Siphso Zama got 13 points in his November “A” level results, whilst Thandazani Dube got 7 “O” levels from his November results. Siphso Zama has now enrolled at Lupane State University in the faculty of Development Studies. Thandazani Dube is proceeding to “A” level, DV. The boys have done us proud and have set a standard for others to emulate.

Staff

Sadly we have to record the death of Mrs. E. Ndlovu, one of our house mothers, last year in June 2015. As I had previously reported, she was not feeling well and finally passed on. Nonceba Mzamo was hired to fill the void left by Mrs. E. Ndlovu. Our driver lost his job because of improper behaviour. Two of our watch men at Nkulumane church were retrenched last December 2015.

Refresher course

Last year, from mid-April to May 2015, we had a refresher course for house mothers. The course was smoothly run and conducted by Sister Petra Beukers and Sister Margaret MacAskill. We are thankful to the two ladies for a job well done. Above all we thank the Lord for showing His mercies in causing the course to take place.

Projects

The Dura wall, domestic accommodation upgrade, computer lab, asbestos replacements and solar pilot projects, were successfully accomplished on time and with dexterity. The home compound has a different face from what it used to have. We are thankful to the JFMC and our donors for helping us keep afloat and making it happen.

Conclusion

With the help of the Lord, we are committed to bringing up a holistic child, physically, emotionally and spiritually, as well as teaching them to be upright citizens who will be accepted in society. This can only be achieved when we entrust everything unto Him. As it is said in John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” We all need Him, young and old.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. M. A. Mpfu

Introduction

YET another year has come to an end and one has to give a report concerning work in this part of the Mission Field. Time passes unfelt and unnoticed, but the fact is that its passage draws man nearer than ever to that time when he shall give account of every moment of his life to the Judge of the quick and dead. Oh! what a solemn matter indeed.

Boards of Governors

In 2014 the Synod approved the constitutions of the Ingwenya, Thembiso and Mbumba Boards, which replaced the Field and Sub-Committees. At first some of the staff were skeptical about the introduction of the boards, but once they started to operate all fears were allayed and people are happy with the efficient and professional manner in which business is conducted, and also the optimal utilization of resources.

Staffing

During the period under review staff levels were greatly reduced when a number of workers at Head Office and Ingwenya were retrenched because of the devolving of the majority of the Head Office activities to institutions.

Retrenchment is an expensive exercise but once completed a lot of savings are made.

Currently Head Office has a staff complement of three and things are running smoothly.

It is now the policy of the Mission not to replace staff who leave employment by reason of retirement, death or disciplinary action, unless it is essential that a replacement be recruited.

Finances

After the establishment of the boards of governors, each board now receives its own remittances from the General Treasurer directly into its own board bank account. This is a very welcome development in that Head Office no longer has to deal with huge sums of money each month. Service provision has improved because each institution now deals directly with its suppliers and service providers.

Sustentation Fund

Head Office received the following amounts from congregations, being contributions to the Sustentation Fund.

Ingwenya	\$1,926.00
Zenka	\$471.00
Bulawayo.....	\$461.00

Zvishavane.....	\$35.00
Nkayi.....	\$20.00
Total.....	\$2,913.00

Primary Schools

The five primary schools which are under the authority of the Church are running well. They all have substantive Head and Deputy Head Masters, except Ingwenya, Zenka and Lutsha, which have Acting Deputies. The Acting Deputy at Zenka has since attained a university degree, therefore now qualifies for substantive appointment.

The majority of the teachers in our schools are not members of our Church, consequently teaching of Bible Knowledge can be a problem at times but our ministers are doing their best to assist the teachers with the Bible lessons.

All the schools have a full stock of Scripture literature; i.e., English Bibles, Ndebele Bibles, Ndebele Psalm Books, English and Ndebele Catechisms, and the books, *Line upon Line* and the *Peep of Day*, which have also been translated into IsiNdebele.

All students in the schools do Scripture and Catechism Exercises. The Administrator translates the questions into IsiNdebele for the benefit of the younger classes. Revs. Sibanda and Mloyi undertake the translations. Marking is done at Head Office by selected teachers who are supervised by Mr. M. Mpofu.

The annual Bible Quiz was held at Ingwenya and the host school came out top. For this year students are studying 2 Samuel and the Acts of the Apostles.

School statistics

School	Enrolment	Staffing	Grade 7 Results	2015
Zenka	1000	30	53.00%	59.00%
Mbuma	750	21	34.00%	34.83%
Thembiso	439	14	82.22%	78.00%
Ingwenya	320	10	57.00%	28.00%
Lutsha	500	15	15.00%	21.42%

Transport

The new transport scheme has worked very well and it is evident that a lot of saving is going to be realized, since all car repairs, maintenance, insurance and road tax are now the responsibility of the vehicle owners.

Only one vehicle remains at Head Office. It is used for official visitors, daily runs into town and also provides back-up in cases of emergency.

Rural Health Centres (Clinics)

Lutsha Clinic was completed on time and was officially opened by a government minister in June. The convener of the JFMC and friends from Mbumba Zending were able to attend the function which was held at Lutsha Primary School.

We have now started preparatory work on the next clinic, which is in Ward 25 at a place called Vova; consequently the clinic is known as Vova Clinic because of the site. A partnership agreement with the community has been signed and the stand has been serviced and fenced.

Currently the community is busy piling up stones that will be used in the foundations of the buildings. Building plans for the clinic are being finalised and, according to our plans, the actual work on the structures it is hoped will start in May (DV) or as soon as funds are available.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to express our gratitude to all our friends wherever they are who are given the heart and mind to help in this great work of bringing light to the dark corners of Africa.

“Bong’ iNkosi, mphefum’lo wam” (Psalm 103:1).

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

FROM the beginning of our denomination it has always been the desire of our people that our Church would expand, not least because we are privileged to have the doctrine, worship and practice given by Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church. We were wonderfully blessed by being given some increase in this and certain other countries. Presently, we are witnessing a sad decline in church attendance in Britain, but it is heartening to observe the ongoing prosperity of our congregations in the Antipodes, where they have grown from small beginnings.

In New Zealand, to which many of our people emigrated, there was one “mother in Israel” who left Scotland with her husband and settled in the Tokomaru Bay area where he was a sheep farmer. As their family of boys and girls grew she was ever anxious that they all would attend a place of worship, but the churches there at that time had Arminian teaching and unscriptural practices, which left the family with no choice but to remain at home and hear scriptural sermons read each Sabbath.

The eventual fruit of this stance, and of much anxious wrestling at the throne of grace, was contact with our Church in Scotland and eventually the

establishing of our congregation in Gisborne and also, many years later, a small congregation in Tauranga, not far from Gisborne. Likewise in Auckland, a family in the King Country area, which had the same concern, was eventually used in the providence of God for the establishing of our congregation in a suburb of that city. In Napier, at present, there is a small group with which we have contact and which prefers to continue worshipping at home rather than be part of the present worldly church scene in their area. Since they are anxious not to despise the day of small things, we hope that the Lord in His time will hear their prayers and reward their patience by providing for them a permanent place for public worship and a pastor, and also incline many people there to gather with them.

Likewise in Australia, from small beginnings we now have, in the goodness of the Most High, two mature congregations with pastors. These well-established congregations, and those in Canada, Texas, and Singapore, have not only the spiritual good of their own people in view but also that of people beyond, in the prayerful hope that they, hearing of our Reformed witness, will wish to identify with it. At the moment this seems to be the case in Vancouver, where a group appear to desire purity of worship. This Committee sent Rev. Keith Watkins to visit them, and he has given us an encouraging report which is included in these reports to Synod.

There is nothing new under the sun we are told in Ecclesiastes. In all ages of the Church of God, small beginnings are recorded. The Apostle Paul, during his time, sent greetings to what is described as “the church in thy house”. Further back, in Old Testament times, we may surmise that there was a little gathering somewhere in Moab where a mother-in-law stayed well clear of religions which were contrary to the mind of God, and patiently instructed her daughters-in-law in the truth concerning the God of Israel. Although one daughter-in-law returned to her false gods, the other is a perpetual example of small beginnings from which flowed great things.

However, there are times also in the history of the Church, including our own branch of it, when congregations are reduced to a mere handful – a Noah’s congregation as it were. Even worse is the case of congregations closing down, which includes two of our own in Canada. The Associated Presbyterian Churches, being the cause of some closures, did a great disservice to the cause of Reformed doctrine, worship and practice, and it seems to us that they little realise they have done a great disservice also to themselves and following generations.

However, despite these setbacks, one of the recent accessions to the Free Presbyterian Church is in Eastern Europe, a place where Communism not so very long ago ruled with an iron fist. We gave support to some churches already there, and indeed had they been Reformed that is exactly what we ought to have continued to do. Although we failed to find such churches, we were led to discover, in the wonderful providence of God, a small group in Odessa, which appeared to us to be open to, and truly appreciative of, the main tenets of the Reformed Faith. On hearing more of these teachings they became

anxious for a closer association with our Church and for a fuller understanding of our witness – their attitude being so different to that of some other Christians in Odessa, who when they heard of the doctrine of election warned their congregations (just as John Wesley did in his day) that this was a dreadful heresy. Now, more than 20 years after our first visit to Odessa by Rev. N. M. Ross and Mr. E. Ross, a place of worship has been built, and a small congregation with a pastor and an elder is established. As Paul had to face “many adversaries”, so does our Eastern Europe Mission and, we suppose, will yet have to.

While the Odessa congregation is a long way from being self-supporting (but we trust that one day it will be), it is gratifying to see congregations elsewhere being self-supporting and, not least, the remarkable amounts of donations given by the Texas congregation to the funds of the Church. Of course, they could not do so unless the Lord had blessed them with the means in the first instance, but no doubt their example is an encouragement to us all to try to do better in supporting the cause of Christ.

An update on the situation in these overseas congregations is to be found elsewhere in this booklet. The Committee is deeply appreciative of the work of Church deputies who go to these far away places (as they also are of the labours of Interim Moderators appointed by Presbyteries) without which, there would be a danger of the loosening of the close and beneficial ties we have with our brethren abroad. We are, after all, workers together for the ongoing advancement and comfort of the body of Christ in this world. Whatever successes in the cause of Christ there may be among us, the glory is entirely the Lord’s. On the other hand, wherever there is a distressing diminishing, we need to smite ourselves and wonder that the Almighty leaves His promise with us: “The Lord of us hath mindful been, and he will bless us still” (Psalm 115:12, metrical).

One last matter: it seems to your Committee that the time has come for a fuller history to be written of our congregations in what were known as the “Dominions”. To this end, the Committee has put in motion a scheme to gather as much information as possible so that a fuller record may be produced of this important part of the history of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which we believe would be to the encouragement of our Church people at large. The prayerful desire which marks a Reformed witness surely is: “The whole earth let His glory fill. Amen, so let it be.”

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Rev. G. B. Macdonald

ON the 21st of August 1973, the first meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland was held in Auckland, New Zealand. On that occasion, the Rev. William MacLean was Moderator and the Rev. D. M. Macleod was Clerk. Our congregations in these far-off parts of the earth continue to value the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the bonds of the Gospel long held between the congregations here and the brethren in Scotland and other lands.

Australia

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has two congregations in Australia. One is located in the western suburbs of Sydney, and one in Grafton in Northern New South Wales. In the goodness of the Lord, both of these congregations have been encouraged with increased attendances in recent years and, we trust, with some hopeful signs of the Lord's blessing upon the preaching of the Word. The Rev. E. A. Rayner (retired) continues to be a source of encouragement to both our ministers in Australia.

Sydney

The Sydney congregation continues to meet in the suburb of Riverstone to the West of the city. In 2015, large-scale housing, infrastructure and retail development continued in the general area and it seems that this part of the city is set for continued major expansion. One hopes that among those who will move into the area there may be found some who will appreciate the Reformed principles held by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The congregation was delighted to be blessed with four baby boys born to families in 2015. Three children and one adult were baptised in 2015 and two people were admitted to sit at the Lord's Table for the first time in the congregation. One couple were joined in marriage, forming a new family unit. A number of visitors from overseas attended services of worship. These included friends and family from Scotland and the Netherlands. The Sydney congregation, as is true of a number of the congregations in the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery, is largely made up of those who can trace their heritage to Scotland and Holland and this is reflected by the surnames of many of the members and adherents. The average Sabbath attendance would be around 45 souls, and some travel quite a distance to be present at services of public worship.

An opportunity has arisen to take a short service of worship, once every fortnight on a Monday morning, in a Nursing Home in the Blue Mountains, about 30 minutes drive from the Sydney manse. In the Lord's goodness, this continues a valuable work long attended to single-handedly by Mr. Alex Neil,

an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, who (with his late mother) was a friend and encourager of Rev. William MacLean during his visits to Sydney. As is true of such services in Scotland, and elsewhere, there are challenges but also great rewards in such a work. Who can tell what a blessing a seasonable word might be to the residents, staff and visitors who are within earshot? “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2).

Grafton

The congregation in Grafton, under the ministry of Rev. G. G. Hutton, continues by divine grace to bear witness on the side of the Reformed faith and practice. Our practice within the ecclesiastical community of conducting two services of worship on the Lord’s Day is somewhat unique. The customary practice, even in so-called evangelical churches, is to hold one worship service early on the Lord’s Day, freeing the worshippers for the remainder of the day to follow their own pursuits, sport and recreation. Regrettably these are the gods of the masses in this country and sadly many professing the name of Christ are not exempt from becoming dangerously attached to these idols.

Attendance at the public worship services continues to steadily increase, with an encouraging number at the mid-week prayer meeting. In general, the congregation demonstrates a genuine attachment to the truth. Although there is no room for complacency, there are encouraging signs of spiritual growth, accompanied by an obvious appreciation for the exposition of the Word week by week. In more recent times, increasing numbers from outside the Free Presbyterian Church have been in attendance, bringing their questions with them. Some have no church background with very little knowledge of anything biblical. All these require patient teaching and instruction in the hope that they will come to know the Saviour, through the regenerating power and work of the Holy Spirit, and in due course feel they have found a spiritual home amongst us.

New Zealand

When brought before Pilate, the Divine Head of the Church declared, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37). It is the privilege and duty of every Christian to be as his Master, and to do all in his power to bear witness unto every truth in the Word of God. Sadly, in modern times, few have been willing to display the banner of truth in the matters of doctrine, worship, practice, and church government. In some cases, the numbers fell so low that Christians from another country had to come and help to raise aloft the banner which had been cast away by the backsliding churches of the land.

Such was the case in New Zealand in the early 20th century. No church could be found that was willing to bear witness unto the whole truth of the Word of God. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland became the honoured instrument of establishing such a witness that will be whole-heartedly

embraced in the Millennium, when “all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him” (Psalm 72:11). In the meantime, the Church continues to support the New Zealand brethren and this is much appreciated.

Historically, Presbyterianism has had a stronger presence on the South Island. The Free Presbyterian witness, however, has been established only on the North Island, where it can be found in four places.

Auckland

As the largest city in New Zealand, Auckland continues to attract many people for education or employment opportunities. It has long been the best attended of the New Zealand congregations, with more than 60 souls present on Sabbaths. The congregation regularly welcomes visitors who come from a variety of places and backgrounds, such as South Korea. Since the writing of the last report there was one marriage and two baptisms. The Rev. Jett Smith has now laboured here for over four years and for much of that time was the only minister in New Zealand. We trust he will find tokens that his labour has not been in vain in the Lord.

Tauranga (preaching station)

This preaching station is about 125 miles south-east of Auckland. The city numbers about 130,000 and is growing rapidly. Mr. Dick Vermeulen, an elder who gave many valuable years of service on our missions in Africa, has taken most of the services here. At the time of writing he is recovering from a serious illness, and we hope that the Lord will grant him additional years of usefulness in His vineyard. Currently several male communicant members take the services, with 12 people regularly attending.

Gisborne

The Rev. Caleb Hembd has been ministering in Gisborne since he was ordained and inducted to the pastorate there last October. He himself observes that other men have laboured, and we are entered into their labours. Establishing and maintaining the witness of the Church has many challenges, and therefore we are indebted to the ministers and elders who have laboured faithfully here over the years.

During the communion season in October, the Kirk Session examined and accepted one new applicant. On Sabbath, however, the congregation was saddened to learn of the passing away of Mrs. Maria Geuze, wife of Mr. Jacob Geuze, one of the elders. She was a communicant who faithfully attended the means of grace for many years, and is now entered, we believe, into that eternal rest that remains for the people of God.

The congregation was glad to welcome a young family of six from the South Island in the past year. This addition brings the attendance to at least 25 on Sabbaths. In addition, a small group in Hastings (about 150 miles south-west of Gisborne) has been associated with the congregation for many years, and their generous support of the congregation is appreciated.

Wellington (Carterton)

Carterton (population: 5,030) lies within the Wellington Region, near the southern tip of the North Island. We appreciate the efforts of Mr. Hank Optland, elder, who continues to take the services there as well as acting as congregational treasurer. Currently the services are held in a senior citizen's hall, but a building in a very visible location has been purchased and strengthening against earthquakes is planned to make it a suitable place of worship. A communion season is held each February and attracts a number of visitors from the Netherlands Reformed Congregation nearby. About 6 regularly attend the services, and there was one baptism in the past year.

We acknowledge that our greatest need is for the outpouring of the Spirit to bless the preaching of the Gospel and beget a godly fear in the hearts of those who hear it. We are conscious that while people may be intellectually persuaded that the doctrine, worship, practice, and government of our Church are biblical, none but those who have a Spirit-wrought fear in their hearts will be faithful to the end in holding fast to the whole truth. The Lord's banner is given to those that fear Him (Psalm 60:4) and it is taken away from those who fear Him not (Revelation 2:5). What need we have to plead the promise, "I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jeremiah 32:40).

Singapore

Throughout 2015 services of public worship were maintained in our Singapore congregation. The congregation has not been able to secure a suitable building of its own, but the rented accommodation it uses is suitable for its present needs. Though they are few in number in comparison to some of the large congregations in Singapore, they are faithful to the Reformed faith and the principles of the Word of God, which is what truly matters.

It is a very pleasant experience to worship in this congregation, since it has of course the very same order of worship service that one finds throughout the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The scene outside is that of a busy cosmopolitan city, but the congregation find within, in the regular services of public worship, a spiritual haven. There are two services of worship on the Sabbath, and one prayer meeting during the week.

We are thankful that Mr. Bernard Yong, the elder of the congregation, was sustained in health throughout 2015 and that in spite of his heavy workload he faithfully attends to his duties. Mr. Angus Lau continues to serve in the office of deacon, and his support to Mr. Yong, especially in attending to the financial and practical affairs of the congregation, is greatly appreciated.

In December 2015, the communion season was held and I was privileged to have the help of Mr. Jake van Praag (Sydney), an assessor elder on the Kirk Session. At the communion, an average of 16 souls gathered for the services. We were encouraged to have a lady from Aberdeen (Scotland) attend the service on Sabbath morning.

In 2015, Singapore celebrated 50 years as an independent nation state. Various events were held to mark this notable occasion. It was poignant that 2015 was also the year in which Mr. Lee Kuan Yew (the long-time Prime Minister of Singapore) passed away. Largely through his influence, Singapore rose from an impoverished state to become a leading financial hub and modern city-state. When such a prominent person has died, all in Singapore should lay to heart that even the most influential are upon this scene of time but for a moment. It becomes us all to seek that which Abraham looked for, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

I would acknowledge the assistance of my brethren on the Presbytery in the compilation of this report to the 2016 Synod. May He continue to uphold and strengthen His work among us. "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands" (Isaiah 42:12).

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. Levytskyi

THE work of the Eastern Europe Mission of our Church continues as in previous years. It is cause for thankfulness that the Most High sees fit that the work should continue, especially when there is a war situation in the eastern parts of Ukraine. Many people had to move from that area and some of them came to Odessa district as temporarily moved persons. However, judging by the present situation, one can hardly imagine that they will return to their homes in the near future. These people became the main recipients of our literature. Many of them had to leave their homes with nothing and run for their lives to the inner parts of Ukraine to find a place of safety. We have, of course, invited those of them who now live in a certain place outside Odessa to our services. But because they cannot come by public transport on the Lord's Day it has been suggested to us by another missionary who works among them that we take part in the joint worship services that he has organized for them. However, we had to refuse because they use unbiblical methods of worshipping the Most High, as we pointed out to them. But we continue to work among them.

Among our other mission activities, we receive people who come to find out what a Presbyterian Church is. For them it is something new. While history proves that the first Reformed Congregation in Odessa was established in 1842 and existed in Odessa until the Bolshevik revolt in 1917, this Reformed heritage was completely erased from the minds of the people by the Communists. Therefore the present generation of citizens of Odessa look at a Reformed church as something new, although it was known by previous generations of Odessans. For example, two men, Alexander and Oleg (40 and

42 years old), visited us. They had received literature from the Mission by post and became interested in the *Confession of Faith*. Then they visited our Odessa congregation for worship on a Sabbath. They told us they had never read the *Westminster Confession of Faith* before and did not know at all what the Presbyterian Church is.

So the distribution of biblical literature is an ongoing and useful work. People are continuing to come from various congregations in cities and towns of the region requesting literature and we hope and pray the Most High will bless the seed sown in their hearts.

The Odessa congregation itself gathers together for worship every Sabbath and Wednesday. Now that the congregation has a settled minister we hope to soon fix a notice board on the front wall of the Mission Building as it is done in all congregations of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The small number attending is still the same and it is our prayer that the Lord will give an increase.

We are indebted to Mr. Zadorozhnyi, our elder, for most of the following information. “The war in the east of Ukraine has continued non-stop. Since it began, 9,167 people lost their lives and 21,000 were wounded, according to official statistics. Also, there are about 2 million refugees resettled in the central and south-west parts of Ukraine, and wounded Ukrainian soldiers are being continually brought to Odessa Army Hospital.

“In these difficult circumstances, we had to partially change the character of our missionary work. At the end of the year, members of our congregation prepared about thirty food packs and delivered these, along with the book *Line upon Line* and the *Mother’s Catechism* to wounded soldiers in Odessa Army Hospital. Also, a Reformed Baptist pastor, who is labouring among the refugees, requested Bibles for those who gather for worship with him. We were able to present Bibles, Scripture calendars and children’s literature to these poor people. To wounded soldiers in the city of Dnepropetrovsk we have distributed Bibles and calendars through our volunteer, Vladimir Yeliseyenko.

“We recently received a phone call from a Baptist pastor, who said he was deeply impressed by chapter 21, entitled ‘Of Religious Worship and Sabbath Day’ in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* we had sent to him. After reading that chapter, he told the people from the pulpit that ‘our parents have left to us a perverted form of worship, but we have to fulfill the commandment about the Day of Rest’. He also asked for another 10 copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, a few copies of *Sermons by Rev. D. Macfarlane*, and copies of the *Mother’s Catechism* for their Sabbath School.

“We ask our friends in Scotland and elsewhere to pray for peace in Ukraine and in Odessa in particular. Last year, in Odessa, there were more than twenty terrorist attacks with the use of explosive devices, one attack being close to a kindergarten.”

During the past year, free literature was sent by post to people in Ukraine, including ministers of various denominations. Most of the recipients live in rural areas and some of them have sent donations to cover postage costs. The

numbers of copies sent out are as follows: Ukrainian Bibles, 74; Russian Bibles 169; *Sermons by Rev. D Macfarlane*, 49; *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Russian, 276; *Westminster Confession of Faith* in Ukrainian, 72; Scripture Calendars in Russian and Ukrainian, 2,200; Russian *Golden Thoughts* Calendars, 3,000; *Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* by Robert Shaw, 84; *Line Upon Line* by F. L. Mortimer, 530; and *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald Macdonald*, 4. This is a total of 6,458 copies sent out by 289 parcels and 38 letters. In addition there has been, of course, much literature given out directly by hand to visitors, refugees and soldiers.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that in our everyday mission work, we can see the working of the mighty hand of God, who blesses us and directs our paths by His Spirit. It is a matter of prayer to God that His Word would be distributed to the Ukrainian people and His truth preached to poor sinners, even in such a city as Odessa. The Lord is prolonging the time when preaching of His truth is still possible in this land. We are very grateful to the Most High that He gave to the people in Scotland a desire to support mission work in Ukraine, which is a key place for us in spreading biblical teaching among Slavic nations. Although the Ukrainian nation is in a time of distress, and even despair for some, the Lord has graciously sustained our work in Ukraine, and for this we are humbly thankful. May the great Head of the Church, in His mercy, continue to direct us in this mission field, preserving the preaching of the Gospel from His and our enemies, and provide the necessary means for it, because it is He “that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth” (Revelation 3:7).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CHESLEY

Rev. R. MacLeod

IN November of 1901 the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland received a petition, signed by forty-nine men, representing a group of people in south-western Ontario, Canada, wishing to be associated with the Church of the second Disruption in Scotland. The crave of their petition was that the Synod would send a minister to dispense the ordinances of the Gospel among them. In August of the following year Rev. Neil Cameron was sent as a Deputy, accompanied by an elder. Mr. Cameron was well received in various localities, the most important of these being Lochalsh, Edmondville, East, and West Williams, Lobo, Northline Kincardine, Town of Kincardine, Brucefield, Newton, as well as other places.

Mr. Cameron’s Report was adopted by our Synod of November 1902. It said: “In every place visited by us we were received with open arms. It is impossible to over-estimate their kindness to us, and though we were willing to get back to our beloved friends in Scotland when our duties were

accomplished, we must confess that parting with our dear people there was to us like cutting off a hand or a foot. We can never forget them, and indeed, we don't desire to forget them." What was then the Canadian Mission is now a sanctioned charge in the town of Chesley and having visited each home whose families attend our services there, this deputy's Report can be given in terms identical to Mr. Cameron's.

It might appear that identical reports from Church deputies 114 years apart suggests a continuity of Gospel prosperity in the intervening years. What it does show is that, despite a reduction from their original numbers, despite the cessation of Free Presbyterian involvement for almost 50 years, and despite many disappointments over the years, there remains the same deeply held love to the distinctive witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This was felt in the homes we visited in Chesley and I can say that they value the visits of our Church's representatives as much as their fathers did.

Having mentioned ecclesiastical vicissitudes as a part of the history of the Canadian Mission, a brief account of them should not be amiss as a part of the Report of the congregation at present. The first Free Presbyterian minister was Rev. Walter Scott. Mr. Scott was set over a charge whose focal point was Chesley in 1912. He died in 1916 after a short but faithful ministry. In August 1917, Mr. William Mathieson was ordained missionary to the Free Presbyterian Church Mission in Canada. In 1929, Mr. Mathieson went against the Synod finding, prohibiting travel by transport run in systematic disregard to the Lord's Day. His ties with our church were as a result severed. Many were very sad, both in Scotland and in Canada, that the link with our church was at that time broken.

Mr. Mathieson continued to act as minister in Chesley, calling his church the Free Presbyterian Church of Ontario. Early in the summer of 1974, Mr. Robert Elliot, Mr. Gerrit Schuit (who was well known to most of us) and others, wished to leave that congregation (by this time amalgamated with another), desiring to secure the link with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland again. Mr. Elliot died that year but after a few months of holding separate services the desire of this group was realised. The Rev. John A. MacDonald was sent to Canada before the end of 1974 for eight weeks. At a *pro re nata* Synod held in December 1974 the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland agreed to embrace the congregation from Southern Ontario for a second time.

Mr. David Kuiper, elder in Chesley, recently sent the writer a historical account of the Chesley congregation. In that account he speaks of a Mrs. Edwards who was baptised by Mr. Cameron in 1902. Her family had been part of the original Free Presbyterian mission in Lochalsh and later in the congregation in Chesley. Having witnessed the resumption of ties with our Church, she said with much emotion, "My late father always prayed for the return of the Free Presbyterian witness and I live to see it". This renewed link with the Church in Scotland has continued till the present day.

Today, the elders, Mr. Kuiper and Mr. Zekveld, take all the regular services. It is usual that they would read a sermon of one worthy preacher or another.

The sacraments are administered by one of our ministers when they visit the congregation. There are two communion seasons in the year. There is a great desire for more frequent ministerial supply and the Committee is well placed to ensure that this happens.

Mr. Kuiper's pen sketches some aspects of the life of this interesting congregation today. He reports that "a few of the youth in the Chesley congregation came to a saving knowledge of the truth in the early 2000s" and that "some young people of Dutch background started attending our church". Despite his time being as precious as any self-employed carpenter, Mr. Kuiper holds a bi-weekly Bible class for the youth. He says that this was "started in my home having particularly these new people in mind". There are several people who have asked to be associated with the congregation, though they live at a great distance from Chesley. These people travel when they can to be associated with the congregation simply because of the distinctive witness for the Truth in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland there. When I was in Chesley in January, I asked one such person what his motivation was. He replied that Chesley was a cold place in winter but that the Gospel was warm there.

There are nineteen communicants on the communion roll. The total communicants and adherents of the Chesley congregation is fifty-four. The usual number in attendance on the Sabbath is between forty and forty-five. There will be over thirty people as a rule at the prayer meeting. Nine persons associated with the congregation live at such a distance that they cannot always be present. A sizeable proportion of the congregation is under forty years of age. The loyal adherence of young men and women to their own Church is one of the most warming aspects of the congregation. Mr. Kuiper ends his interesting account in these terms: "The Lord has been merciful to us notwithstanding our sins. His forbearance and longsuffering towards us as a congregation and as individuals is great. That we yet have a church in Chesley must be the Lord's doing, for we have forfeited any claim to it. 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy' (Micah 7:18)."

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CHESLEY AND TEXAS

Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

THIS short report outlines my visit to America and Canada as Church deputy sent out by the Dominions and Overseas Committee. I left North Uist on Monday 8th June 2015; flew from London Heathrow to Houston on Tuesday, arriving at 7 p.m. local time after a flight of about 10 hours. I was met at the airport by Mr. Mark Smith and taken to my accommodation close to Santa Fe.

On Wednesday I met up with Rev. John Macleod, London, Interim Moderator of the Santa Fe Kirk Session, who arrived the previous week and was in the same accommodation as myself. My duty that first week was to assist Mr. Macleod at the communion season in the congregation, starting on Wednesday evening by preaching at the prayer meeting. There were 26 souls present, some of them children.

The usual communion preparatory services were held and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper observed on Sabbath, all the services being well attended. There were no new communicants received on this occasion. We hope and pray that this occasion may be blessed and that fruit will follow. Mr. Macleod and Mr. Alasdair Macpherson, assessor elder, flew to Britain on Monday 15th June and arrived safely the following day.

I remained for another week in the congregation and held the usual Sabbath and prayer meeting services, and was able to visit some of the homes. I thank the congregation and the various families for their kindness and hospitality during the communion and afterwards. I also thank Rev. Caleb Hembd and family, who were still resident in the manse in Santa Fe, for their kindness. Mr. Hembd transported us from our lodgings to the church most of the time during our stay. As I write this report, Mr. Hembd is now settled as pastor over the Gisborne congregation in New Zealand. We hope and pray that his ministry will flourish in that part of the world.

On Tuesday 23rd June I took leave of Santa Fe and flew from Houston to Toronto, a two-and-half-hours' flight. I was met by Mrs. Heather Kuiper and taken to Chesley where I spent the remaining week and was glad to be with the friends there once again. On Thursday, I took the prayer meeting which was attended by about 30 people. The Sabbath services were also well attended. My final duty was on Monday, when I took the prayer meeting.

Next day, Mr. Rick Bouman and his wife kindly drove me to Toronto Airport from where I flew to Scotland, and in the good providence of God arrived safely at home on Wednesday 1st July. I wish to thank the congregation in Chesley for their kindness to me during my stay there.

A striking feature of these congregations in America and Canada is the good number of young families and children in them, which in a sense is the future of the cause of Christ in any place. This is in contrast with our congregations in Scotland, especially on the west coast, where we have few families and ageing congregations. May the Lord build up Sion again. With regard to our Santa Fe and Chesley congregations, we hope and pray that it will not be too long until they will be provided with pastors in the Lord's providence.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO VANCOUVER

Rev. K. M. Watkins

THE visit to Vancouver in February 2016 was, I hope, most profitable. At Vancouver airport I was met by Douglas and Flo Spratt, who were to extend to me the warmth of their hospitable home and Christian fellowship throughout my stay. I met with the people attending the services and a number of other contacts, either by going to their homes or by their visiting the Spratts' home. I received much kindness from all.

I also had the pleasure of visiting Mrs. Mary Hardy, a longstanding communicant member of our church on Vancouver Island; but sadly I was not able to contact Mr. John A. MacLeod, another longstanding member and one who has done much to preserve Free Presbyterian interests in Vancouver since 1989.

On the two Sabbaths, morning and evening services were held exactly according to usual Free Presbyterian practice. For various reasons only a handful attended on the first Sabbath, but on the second there were more: 14 in the morning and 13 in the evening. We met in the suitable community hall in the Burnaby district which the group uses Sabbath by Sabbath. Usually, Mr. Spratt, who is an ordained Presbyterian elder, conducts the services. In addition a lecture on Instrumental Music in the Worship of God was held on the intervening Saturday, which over 25 people attended.

Currently the group comprises several families that have a committed interest, at various levels of understanding, in Reformed worship and doctrine. Separate meetings were first begun as a result of increasing unease with unscriptural aspects of other Reformed witness in Vancouver. Since then, the group's interest in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has crystallised and grown into a desire to be part of the Church. Interactions with the Chesley congregation are progressing well, and the Mun family were given the privilege of baptism for their two children at the end of last year. Visits have been made to London as well as Chesley, and are planned for Scotland too. The group has greatly appreciated visits to Vancouver by elders from Scotland, England and Chesley.

Any interest beyond the core group, of the Spratt, Mun, Schneider and Johnson families, would appear to be somewhat tentative at this stage. Nevertheless our prayerful hope is that this may lead to the Free Presbyterian witness being re-established in Vancouver. In a discouraging and cloudy day, finding any who seek to walk in the old paths and the good way is something to be welcomed. It should encourage us that there are still people who want to learn more of our witness and desire to adhere themselves to us. I hope that more can be done for them in their isolated position. Meanwhile we commit them to the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ZIMBABWE MISSION

Rev. J. MacLeod

FROM Johannesburg I arrived at Bulawayo Airport around 12 noon on Tuesday 23rd June. The Rev. A. B. MacLean and the Rev. S. Khumalo were there to greet me. Mr. MacLean then transported me to Ingwenya where I took up residence on my own in one of the unoccupied, but fully furnished, expatriate staff houses. Occa (who was Miss K. M. MacAulay's "housegirl" for many, many years and is, I believe, a God-fearing lady) faithfully came every day except Sabbath to attend to household duties. Miss N. B. MacLean was home on furlough and her presence was very much missed.

Early the following morning we set off for Lutsha where the official opening of the Rural Health Clinic was scheduled to take place. The road there was very rough, dusty, and the driver had to weave his way through and around potholes innumerable. Mr. MacLean (and the car!) did well to arrive there in just over two hours. By that time there were already assembled hundreds of people, most of them from the surrounding area, but there was a good number of representatives from all our mission stations also there, including all our ministers. Also present were the Chairman and Treasurer of the Mbumba Zending Board with their wives.

The Cabinet Minister who was to perform the opening ceremony duly arrived and we all stood up until he was seated. The proceedings began with worship. That duty was allotted to me. Some verses of a psalm were sung, then a portion of Scripture was read, followed by prayer to the Most High. After worship, I was further assigned the duty of making a short speech in which I drew attention to the history of our mission in Zimbabwe and in particular the background to the founding of the Mbumba Mission Hospital. It was emphasized that our presence in the country was not primarily to provide educational and medical facilities, but to bring the Gospel to the ears of sinners and, accordingly, the importance of the holding of divine worship each day at the Lutsha Clinic was emphasized.

Other and more lengthy speeches followed, the final speaker being Mr. David Perirenyatwa, the Minister for Health in the Zimbabwean Cabinet. Very articulate, he spoke in flowing English and appeared to be very well-disposed toward our mission. His father was a Shona, but his mother, he told us privately, was from the Ingwenya area and had attended the services at Ingwenya when she was young. After the speeches, the cutting of the ribbon took place and then there was a buffet meal. The day's proceedings were very well organised with Melusi Mpofu acting as the master of ceremonies. Although maintaining a low profile herself, it appeared to me that it was Dr. Snoek that was really the person responsible for the planning and smooth running of the event. One got the impression that the local people, who had themselves by voluntary labour made a substantial contribution to the building of the Clinic, much welcomed the provision. It was an event of such

significance that “The Voice of America” apparently thought it worthy of a mention in its news broadcast that evening!

We made our bone-shaking way back to Ingwenya from Lutsha the same way as we went there in the morning. It was only when we were safely at our destination that we discovered that the car battery had at some point in the journey toppled off its base with the result that the engine, once switched off, could not be restarted. If, in the gathering darkness, it had cut out when plunging into one of those craters on the road between Ingwenya and Turk Mine (at a point where there was no phone signal) we would certainly have had problems! On Thursday, Mr. MacLean took me to Bulawayo where I was to assist at the communion. The services were well-attended and the hospitality shown by the Rev. S. Khumalo and his wife was beyond praise.

On Thursday, chauffeured by the Rev. S. Khumalo, I visited Mashonaland, where the late, lamented Rev. Z. Mazvabo faithfully laboured in the Gospel. Some miles short of our destination the engine bonnet flew off and, bouncing off the windscreen, continued its flight to land about a hundred yards behind us. Mercifully, there were no cars immediately behind us at the time. Minus the engine hood and with a crazed windscreen, we continued on our way and arrived without further difficulty in Zvishavane. There, in the manse, I met the members of the Shona Bible translation team based in Zimbabwe. The importance of their work cannot be overstated. Following that, I conducted a prayer meeting at New Canaan. On the way back to Zvishavane, Mr. Khumalo gave me the opportunity of viewing the new and handsome church there, a building which we hope will prove to be the birthplace of many souls.

On Friday I paid a brief visit to Thembiso where it appeared to me that everything possible was being done to care for the young children who have found refuge there. Most importantly, they are brought into contact with the Gospel.

My last weekend was spent at Ingwenya where I took all the services. It was uplifting to see so many faces before me – young and old – and I found it easy to speak to them from the Word of God. Mr. B. Ncube, the Headmaster, was my interpreter and an excellent one at that. One hopes and prays that the good seed of the kingdom is not being sown in vain. To me it was again an uplifting experience to address so many attentive hearers and to feel helped in commending to them the One who came to seek and to save that which was lost. I regret very much that I was not able to visit Mbuma.

Over the visit I was much helped by the Rev. A. B. MacLean who, among other things, safely transported me, in his own car, over the many miles that I travelled in Matabeleland. A debt of gratitude is owed him. I arrived back in London early in the morning of the eighth day of July. In the Lord’s kindness I was strengthened and sustained in health to attend to all the duties laid upon me. I am grateful to the Committee for having given me the opportunity of visiting our widespread Zimbabwean mission field once again.

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

THOUGH no tuition took place this year, the Committee were encouraged to receive two students, Mr. John Campbell and Mr. John Morrison from the Southern and Outer Isles Presbyteries respectively. Both students will be undergoing two years of general studies, combining this with tuition from the Church tutors in Greek and Hebrew. On successful completion of these studies they will sit the entrance examination for the three-year Theology Course. Our hope and prayer is that, in all these plans and endeavours, the Lord Himself would rule and overrule and to this end the Committee covet the prayers of the Church for the students and the Committee.

The Committee drew up an Overture for this year's Synod on the Synod giving leave to a Presbytery for a student to be taken on trials for licensing. The hope is that this will bring this area of law more into line with the *Manual of Practice*.

The Theology Conference in Glasgow last year was thinly attended but deemed to be profitable by those who did. The subjects and speakers for this year's Conference, to be held in the Inverness Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, on the 25th and 26th October, the Lord willing, are as follows.

Tuesday 25th October

2.30 p.m. **John Love in London** Mr. R. Middleton

7.00 p.m. **Spiritual Life** Rev. R. MacLeod

Wednesday 26th October

10.00 a.m. **The Fossil Record and the
Biblical Record** Dr. A. Ross

2.30 p.m. **Prayer** Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

7.00 p.m. **John Hooper – the Puritan of
the English Reformation** Rev. K. M. Watkins

Chairman: Rev. J. R. Tallach

“Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16).

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 Committee 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 communion seasons, and at our Youth

Conferences. It is our desire and prayer for them that they would seek the Lord in their young years.

I remind the Synod again, that 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 there will 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 their Christian ethos, which may be indicative of what is yet to come. There are grave concerns too about the Named Persons Scheme legislation and its consequences. Although there have been challenges in the law courts which have not succeeded, there has been a further appeal to the Supreme Court in London. We hope and pray that the appeal 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 organization of the Youth Conference – obtaining a suitable venue and the choice of speakers and papers.

The venue for this year's conference is Netherurd House, Blyth Bridge, West Linton, Peebleshire. This part of Scotland has much religious history connected with it: for example, it is in close proximity to the Pentland Hills, which form part of the historical tour.

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

Tuesday April 5th

Singing the praise of God: the case for exclusive psalmody Dr. R. Dickie

The Doctrine of God: God infinite and eternal: from the *Shorter Catechism* Rev. J. R. Tallach

Wednesday April 6th

Church Principles: the Christian Church: an important but neglected subject Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

Historical Tour Rev. D. Campbell

Thomas Boston: his life and ministry Mr. F. Daubney

Thursday April 7th

Job: a character study: fearing God and eschewing evil Rev. D. Campbell

The Committee would thank those who are to gave papers, to the Rev. D. Campbell for also leading the historical tour, and the House Mothers for all their help and hard work. We thank Netherurd 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, both at home and overseas, which appear in the *Young People's Magazine* and on the Church's website. Miss Shona Gillies has retired from setting the senior exercises, being replaced by Mrs. Jaqueline Hicklin, Edinburgh. Mrs. Catherine Hyde has resigned from the marking of the overseas exercises because of family commitments. She has been replaced by Miss Naomi Clemence, Glasgow, and Mrs. Catriona Ross, Barnoldswick. The Committee thank both Miss Gillies and Mrs. Hyde for their work over the years. Our prayerful good wishes go to those taking over this work. We appreciate their prayerful interest in our young people and 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

WITH the passing away over the past year of several who were godly men and women among us for many years, we could not but reflect, not only on the duty we have to care for our elderly, but on the privilege that pertains to caring for the Lord's people in the evening of their declining years.

We have to report with sorrow the passing away of Mr. William Cormack on the 2nd of May, Mrs. Katie Ann MacLeod on 27th June, Mrs. Isabella MacFarlane on 7th July, Miss Katie Graham on 28th September, Mrs Annie Gillies on 1st November, Mr. Ian Campbell on 12th November, and Miss Cathie MacLeod on 20th December.

The following were admitted: Mrs. Audrey Matheson on 9th June, Mrs. Peggy Dunbar on 8th July, Mrs. Chrissie MacDonald on 24th August, Mrs. Nan MacLean on 27th October, Miss Isabella MacRae on 16th November, and Mrs. Chrissie Sutherland on 10th December.

There were no residents admitted for respite during the past year.

A full complement of staff was maintained during the year.

Several of the staff completed courses on a variety of subjects related to caring for the elderly.

The Home had one Care Inspectorate during the year and the following grades were awarded.

Care and Support	Excellent
Environment.....	Excellent

Staffing..... Very Good
Management and Leadership..... Excellent

We record our thanks to all the staff at the Home and in particular to Mrs. E. MacDonald, our retired Matron, and Mrs. MacKenzie, who has ably taken her place. The high standards of this establishment owe a great deal to the dedication of both these ladies.

“And so to count our days that we
Our hearts may still apply
To learn thy wisdom and thy truth
That we may live thereby.”

(Psalm 90:12)

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

THE Committee once again acknowledge that the Home has continued to function successfully over another year and has been provided for. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” We are thankful to management and staff for the successful running of the Home. Our kitchen staff have won an award called “EatSafe” from the department of Environmental Health, the only Care Home in the Western Isles to have received such an reward.

There were some alterations to the Home over the past year. A new extension was added; this included an extra bedroom for respite care and a room for storing equipment. The cost was £93,000; we are grateful for the assistance of the Finance Committee, otherwise this project could not have gone forward.

The existing generator was also replaced by a more powerful machine at the cost of £12,609. This was necessary to meet existing needs, and for the Home to function more normally in the event of power cuts, although the winter just past was largely free from these in contrast with the previous one. The old generator was 28 years old and no longer adequate.

There were a number of bereavements in the Home over the past year; the following residents have passed away: Mr. Donald John MacCuish, Finsbay, Mrs. Mary Macdonald, Scarista, Mrs. Chrissie Mackay, Drinishader, Mrs. Annie Macdonald, Scalpay/Dumbarton, Mrs. Anne Malcolm, Tarbert, Mrs. Joan Bull, Garyvard, Lewis, Mr. John Mackenzie, Leverburgh, Mrs. Katie Macmillan, Rodel, and Mrs. Annabel Slessor, Northton/Edinburgh. The Committee extend their sincere sympathies to all their families.

The recent Care Commission inspections continue to be good; the Home has retained an overall grade of 5 at the recent unannounced inspection. Grade 6

is the highest. The categories are as follows: Care and Support, Environment, Management and Leadership, and Staffing. We once again acknowledge the support of the local services to the Home, and the support of the local community, and all that hold family worship from time to time with the residents.

We wish all the Lord's richest blessing for time and eternity.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

OUTREACH work can be daunting. Little wonder, when "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). However, those who endeavour to spread the Word of God know full well that this was their own spiritual condition until Christ by his Word and Holy Spirit convinced them of their sin and that Christ Jesus was the only answer to their inevitable damnation. Hence our hope for the natural man, and the need to continue confronting lost sinners with the Gospel. This we seek to do at the direction of the great Head of the Church, Christ Jesus.

For some time now we have not been in a position to engage in door-to-door work with the book van but we do manage to visit agricultural shows. The Daviot Agricultural Show, which we were preparing to attend, was cancelled. This was regrettable, since on our visit two years ago there was considerable response. However, we were able to add the Caithness Agricultural Show to our list and hopefully additional shows this year. Agricultural shows may run for two days but usually these are for one day.

Public interest is generally poor, but there are encouragements in the way. Not least, our Bible Text display, clearly visible to catch the eye of passers-by: it is God's Word. And when God sees fit He will accompany it with power. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).

Of those visitors to our book stand, some stop a while and browse. Others purchase a few books. There are those too who want to speak about religion, and in particular the Christian religion, hence the opportunity to speak about the great issues of eternity. Others express appreciation for our attending the agricultural shows and some will leave a donation of money for the work. We also continue to have a section with free literature which is well received. Outwith our work at shows one person bought a large number of books for outreach activity.

Rev. Bruce Jardine continues to engage in the important work of distributing tracts in the Stranraer district. So far he has been able to visit about 1,400 homes in 9 villages. By this method there are opportunities to speak to those

willing to engage in conversation about the Word of God and to offer a free copy of the Bible to every home.

The Committee also offers a free Bible to anyone living in the United Kingdom via an article on the Church's website. The demand for Bibles is encouraging.

Our book van is a most essential implement for our work, yet is in constant need of maintenance. The Lord graciously provided this vehicle, which has done great service, and we trust that those interested in our type of work will be remembering at a Throne of Grace this need also.

Though slow moving, there is the ongoing request for our Gospel tracts, not only from our own people but those of other denominations anxious to spread Gospel teachings by tract distribution.

We again have to express our deep appreciation regarding those who help in any way in this essential work. There are some who are readily available to do what they can, driven by a care for the masses of people in spiritual bondage going blindly on in the broad way that leads to a lost eternity. Without these helpers it would be impossible to do extensive outreach work. We are aware that all Christians to some extent do this kind of work in their everyday meeting with their fellow sinners. Indeed, one of our ministers requested financial assistance in relation to local witness. We as a committee try to broaden this scriptural work and endeavour to go to places where there is little Gospel witness. What of the results? The all-knowing Saviour has put our experience on record. "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented" (Matthew 11:16-17). Despite the Saviour's depressing report about certain of His hearers, He nevertheless continued labouring; and so must we, in the sure confidence that the Saviour's Word will not be in vain: ". . . it shall not return unto me void" (Isaiah 55:11). May our friends continue to support our work and we continue to labour.

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

Magazines

AS in previous years, both the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine* have continued to be issued each month. By the time the Synod meets the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* will have been printed monthly for 120 years and the *Young People's Magazine* for 80 years. Over this extended period it has been the aim of a succession of editors to publish articles and sermons that witness to the Reformed Faith, not only in doctrine

but also with respect to God-honouring worship and to the experimental piety of the Scottish Church in its best days, along with material of an historical or biographical character. Sincere thanks are due to all who have given help over the past year in contributing articles and reviews or have suggested material that might be reprinted. As in previous years the editor is very appreciative of the contributions provided by members of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. The Committee are pleased to report that they have been able to keep the cover price of the Magazines at the same level for 2016. The *Gaelic Supplement*, edited by the Rev. A. W. MacColl, continues to be issued quarterly and it is the Committee's intention that it will eventually be available online on the Church's website in a similar way to the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

Publications

The past year has been a very significant one for Free Presbyterian Publications. Three of our major publications that were no longer available have been reprinted. Two of these are the *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Donald Macfarlane* and the *Sermons by Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands*, both of which were edited by the Rev. Donald Beaton. The third volume to be re-issued was the excellent volume, on types of the Saviour during the time of Moses, by Alexander Stewart of Cromarty, *The Tree of Promise*. All three have been re-issued with attractive new dust jackets.

In addition to these reprints two new publications have been issued. The first, which was published in May 2015, was the translation from Gaelic of Archibald Cook's sermons with the title *Eternal Reality*. Benjamin B. Warfield of Princeton said that Cook's preaching was similar to that of the first professor of Princeton Seminary, Archibald Alexander, "in which the appeal is characteristically to the conscience and the prime quality of which is searching analysis of the state of mind of the sinner lacking and the sinner under the power of grace". The translation work has been done entirely by Free Presbyterians. The first print run of 200 copies was sold out within the year and a reprint has already been necessary. The second new publication, issued in October 2015, is the reprint for the first time since its original publication in 1857 of the two-volume, *Memorials of John Love*. The Free Presbyterian edition has been produced with a new 65-page biographical introduction of Dr. Love's early career. The volumes have been highly prized in the past by the few who were privileged to possess the original edition. Peter MacBride of Rothesay speaks of the *Memorials* as containing "such views of Divine truth and of the nature of true godliness, as . . . are greatly needed in this age of much noise in religion".

The Committee are currently working on the reprinting of a very rare volume edited by Andrew Bonar titled *The Old Gospel Way*. This book, which is largely comprised of quotations, provides in short compass the heart of the teaching associated with the Marrow Theology – the writings of men such as Thomas Boston and the Erskines.

Bookroom

The Free Presbyterian Bookroom is one of the few Christian Bookshops in the United Kingdom that is devoted entirely to distributing the Authorised Version of the Bible and Reformed and Calvinistic literature to various parts of the world. It, therefore, deserves the support of Free Presbyterians. This is the first full year when the Bookroom has been under the day-to-day management of Alexander Smith and the Committee are pleased to report that after several years when the Bookroom had a very significant annual deficit (£15,965 – 2014), the deficit has been reduced to less than £400 in 2015. During the year the Bookroom Manager has continued to send out by email lists of second-hand books for sale and listings of new books that are available. Sales are up year-on-year by 44%. Now whilst much of this is due to increased sales of Free Presbyterian Publications, and to some exceptional items, it has nonetheless been a most encouraging year.

New equipment has been purchased and is currently being installed that is designed both to improve administration and to facilitate online purchasing from the Bookroom. Hopefully online purchasing should be available during the current year. The Committee would take the opportunity provided by this report to express its appreciation of the assistance given by the General Treasurer in setting up the new equipment. They would thank the small sub-committee of the Website Committee for their help and advice in identifying the necessary equipment.

As in previous reports the Committee would call for prayer to the Lord for His blessing on every part of the Committee's work, the production of Magazines month by month and the distribution of Christian literature. Our continued desire is that the Lord would use these means for the good of never-dying souls and the advance of His kingdom in this world.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. M. Watkins

THE Church's new website has been maintained for a second year, with generally increasing numbers of views, numbering between 4,000 and 5,000 each week. One cannot know exactly what people do with the information that they access, but we can only pray that the Lord would be blessing this particular form of publishing His truth. We receive encouraging feedback from time to time.

Each month, both of the Church's magazines are uploaded to the site, one month after their publication in print. Sermons from various congregations and communion seasons are uploaded when they become available. One difficulty is the time needed to prepare and upload suitable new material on a regular

basis. We are grateful to those who have supplied articles and sermons, and would appreciate help from others.

The Committee has been involved in the new till, stock and ordering system in the FP Bookroom, and looks forward to seeing the Bookroom operating with a full website presence in the near future.

At the last Synod, convened in May 2015, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Yong were tasked to study the possibility of creating a Chinese version of the Church's website. The brief findings are:

1. The aim would be for the Chinese website to be accessible by users from mainland China as well as others, to promote the Gospel and the Reformed Faith.
2. The Chinese website can be adapted mostly from the English website except for sermons (which need extensive transcription even before any translation could be done), the FP magazines and some of the more voluminous historical documents.
3. Based on this framework, the word count to be translated stands at about 50,000 words. Some translators have been contacted. It is envisaged that the translation work would take more than 1 year. With that in view, one possibility would be to launch the project in 2 phases. Phase 1 would have all the basic pages and important articles relating to our Reformed standards of worship and practice.
4. The budget to be set aside for creation of the website would be about £5,000, and the cost of translating 50,000 words about £8,000 to £10,000.

At the time of writing, Mr. and Mrs. Yong are in the final stages of compiling a *Website Content* document for the Committee's review.

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, with progress on the records of overseas congregations, particularly those in North America. An attempt has also been made to gather copies of the Synod documents which have been issued prior to each Synod since about the 1970s, and without which it is often impossible to understand the Synod minutes. The Committee now has most (but not all) of the Synod documents back to 1978.

A second part of the work is the digitizing of archives. In the course of the year, the letters and sermon-notes of the late Alexander MacLennan, Muir of Ord (the donation of which was mentioned in last year's report) have been scanned. Among these was an interesting letter to him from Rev. J. P. MacQueen, London, in 1960 making reference to Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones at the Westminster Chapel. We would like to thank those who have undertaken this work of digitizing. The items themselves have been added to the collection of diaries of Mr. MacLennan which are presently kept in the Inverness Church archive. Any further material of this sort would be most welcome.

The third part of the work is the permanent storage of records, both paper and electronic. The suggestion has been 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, but no further progress has been made towards a final decision.

The Committee would reiterate its 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 Committee is grateful to all those who have helped with the various aspects of its work in the last year.

