

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

Submitted to Synod in May 2014

BLANK

INDEX

Report of the Religion and Morals Committee.....	page 5
Sabbath Observance Committee's Report	28
Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee's Report.....	31
Ingwenya Mission Report	34
John Tallach High School Report	35
Zenka Mission Report.....	39
Nkayi Mission Report	41
Zvishavane Mission Report	42
Mbumba Mission Report	43
Mbumba Mission Hospital Report.....	44
Mbumba Mission Hospital Anniversary Visit.....	54
Bulawayo Mission Report.....	56
Zimbabwe Presbytery Shona Bible Translation Committee's Report....	57
Thembiso Children's Home Report	59
Zimbabwe Mission Administrator's Report.....	61
Dominions and Overseas Committee's Report	64
Australian and Singapore Report	66
New Zealand Report	68
Eastern Europe Mission Report	70
Report of Deputy to Australia, New Zealand and Singapore	72
Report of Deputy to Texas	74
Training of the Ministry Committee's Report	75
Theological Tutor's Report	76
Welfare of Youth Committee's Report.....	79
Ballifeary Residential Care Home Committee's Report.....	80
Leverburgh Residential Care Home Committee's Report	81
Outreach Committee's Report.....	82
Publications and Bookroom Committee's Report	84
Church Archives Committee's Report	85
Website Committee's Report.....	86

BLANK

REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev. D. Campbell

THIS report details the work done by the committee during the year since the last meeting of Synod and reports with comments on a selected number of issues relating to religion and morals in the nation. The report was prepared by all members of the committee and as Convener I would like to thank the members of the committee for their work. The committee feels it is only touching the surface of the subjects taken up and that the influence of such efforts as it does make to testify to the truth and against evil in the nation is very small. Yet we continue in this duty in the prayerful hope that the Lord will hear the cry of those who tremble at His Word and who increasingly sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land (Ezekiel 9:4). In part this report is intended to act as a prompt and encouragement to more fervent prayer to the Most High that He would in wrath remember mercy (Habakkuk 3:1-3). It is also intended to convey to the Synod and its members the great burden of spiritual desolation that faces those who are called to preach the gospel in our generation. The great apostasy in our own beloved land is the particular burden that we ought to feel pressing on us and in view of it to pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His own harvest in this land.

1. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee carried out its duties to the Synod according to Synod instructions and some of these duties involve the presentation of material for Synod approval this year. Other matters that arose during the course of the year and which were either drawn to the attention of the committee by others or which commended themselves to the committee's attention, were dealt with.

1. Protest and appeal re Abortion Act 1967

As instructed by the Synod, the committee drew up a renewed appeal according to the terms of the resolution passed in 1978. The committee considered this renewed appeal at both its meetings and believed that it was wise to leave the matter with the Synod to give a final decision on. The committee would like to remind the Synod that in recent years, as pointed out in previous reports, it has sent letters to the Cabinet minister for Health on the evils of abortion calling for a review of the Act of 1967. On this occasion the committee took into consideration the terms of the Act, its relation to other Acts of Parliament past and present and the Synod resolution of 1978. The committee found evidence that the great majority (95% in England and Wales in 2004) of abortions in the UK are carried out on the basis of the first section 1(1(a)) of the Abortion Act 1967. The protest and appeal therefore seeks to

concentrate on that part of the Act in particular and commends an approach that the committee believes is in accordance with biblical principles.

2. Same-sex marriage legislation

The committee continued throughout the year to represent to the Scottish Government the biblical and constitutional position relative to marriage in opposition to the terms of the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Bill. In the week prior to the third and final stage of Parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, the Convener wrote a personal letter to all 129 MSPs setting out the solemn action that the Parliament would be taking if it agreed to the Bill and warning of Divine judgement following such a course. Part of this letter was referred to in the debate by John Finnie MSP in a scornful manner and other MSPs responded by letter in the weeks that followed. However limited the effect of this warning and however mocked by those who fear not God, our prayer remains that the witness against our national sin will yet be honoured by the Lord in national repentance. The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Bill was passed on 4th February 2014 by a majority of 105 to 18 with no abstentions. It is a Bill that has nothing whatever to commend it and on the back of changing the definition of marriage it also removes several scriptural impediments to marriage by affinity which ought to be retained. A reforming Scottish Parliament would be required to strike down this Bill if it becomes an Act because it contains nothing that is morally good or even indifferent.

The committee was instructed by the Synod to prepare a report “setting out proposals whereby the Synod would in future approach the subject of biblical marriage in the light of legislation in Scotland, the UK and overseas introducing sodomite marriage”. In its approach to this task the committee considered an extended discussion document at its meeting in October 2013 which offered some proposals for withdrawal by ministers of the Church from the present status of “approved celebrant” under the Marriages (Scotland) Act 1977 as amended by the Act redefining marriage. After considerable discussion of this document and following consultation with the Church legal advisor, the committee considered a shorter document setting out a variety of options. This document is now offered to the Synod together with the legal advice obtained relative to the various options it contains. The committee did not feel it possible to investigate the legal implication of these options for ministers and congregations overseas but understands that the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery prepared a similar report on the issue.

It is a view held by some on the committee that the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Act 2014 is *ultra vires* of the constitution of the United Kingdom and is vulnerable to the restrictions of the Scotland Act 1998 which lists reserved matters not competent to the Scottish Parliament. While marriage law is not a reserved matter, constitutional matters are reserved to the UK Parliament, including the terms and conditions of the Treaty of Union. Accordingly it is the opinion of some in the legal profession that in theory

this legislation could be subjected to judicial review on the ground that it is a breach of the Act of Security. This Act, as office-bearers in the Church will well know from the Claim, Declaration and Protest to which they give their agreement at ordination, enshrines the *Westminster Confession of Faith* as the religion of the realm protected by and an inviolable condition of the Treaty of Union.

The prospect of success in seeking judicial review may be very small and the Synod did not opt to pursue that line on a previous occasion. However, the terms on which the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Act was passed are such that the implementation of the Act is delayed until the UK Parliament amends the Equality Act (2010). This interval of time (possibly extending to October 2014) makes a petition for judicial review a feasible option for the Church to consider again. This approach commends itself as that which is most honouring to the Lord and as having the precedent of the approach taken by the Disruption fathers when the co-operation of the Church with the State in matters in which both had an interest became impossible to preserve with a good conscience. The committee is not making any formal proposals on this matter, but invites the Synod to recognise the right and liberty of individual ministers to take such action as in conscience they must in accordance with their solemn vows of ordination relative to the constitution and their pastoral duties, notwithstanding what persecution may arise.

3. Relationships, sexual health and parenting guidance

The committee was approached by the Scottish government asking for comments on proposed guidance for local authorities relating to the new subject of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenting to be taught in Scottish Schools. RSHP guidance replaces guidance on sex education and takes into account the changes in the law brought about by the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Act of 2014. The committee took this opportunity to respond in considerable detail to the guidance and offered the following points to the consideration of the government department involved, for each of which detailed evidence and supporting argument was also given:

1. The Church considers the subject to be an ethical one which ought to be approached from a Christian ethical position. The Christian ethic found in the Bible regards the homosexual lifestyle as sinful and requires that sexual relationships be within a monogamous marriage union between a man and a woman.
2. The Church does not consider the duties of informing parents and carers outlined in the guidance to be adequate and calls for all actual classroom materials to be provided to parents and carers upon request.
3. The Church considers the provision for withdrawal from RSHP education to be an essential right of parents and is concerned that perceived rights of a child to be consulted will be unduly divisive

and destructive of the partnership with parents that the guidance seeks to promote.

4. The Church is concerned at the definitions used in identifying bullying on grounds of sexual orientation, at the one-sided approach to bullying in this area and at the unqualified acceptance of an unscientific and very limited survey of bullying by lobby groups promoting a homosexual life-style.
5. The Church calls for Christian resources to be made available which explain the value of monogamous marriage between a man and a woman and for true objectivity to be achieved through factual information being provided to senior age groups on the health dangers of aspects of the homosexual lifestyle.
6. The Church, in consideration of the revolutionary nature of the legislation presently passing through the Scottish Parliament, on which the guidance is based, calls for a national consultation on the guidance prior to any implementation.

In issuing this response, the committee agreed to provide a press release and to circulate the response among media outlets, including the Christian Institute, the *English Churchman* and the *British Church Newspaper*. It is not yet known when the guidance will be given and how it will be adapted in light of responses offered but to date the committee has not received any formal confirmation that its response has in any way affected the final version of the guidance. The committee considers this subject one which will certainly meet parents and children in the Church involved with State schools at primary and secondary level. The full response can be made available on the Church website.

4. Protest re Law of Succession

The committee prepared a Protest against the terms of the Succession to the Crown Act 2013 which it now offers to the Synod.

5. Resolution re Scottish Independence referendum

The committee prepared a Resolution in opposition to Scottish Independence and appealing to the nation in connection with the forth-coming Scottish Independence referendum which it now offers to the Synod. After discussion it was agreed to incorporate the following reasons to support the proposed resolution in this report. These set out some of the issues which make this referendum such a serious constitutional issue as to require this particular intervention by the Synod.

1. The forth-coming referendum is, in our considered opinion, a manifest constitutional illegality authorising as it does the potential destruction of what is an international treaty and inviolable for all time coming and

protected by the oath of the Sovereign and binding statutes of the realm of Scotland and of England prior to the Union in 1707 which no Act or decision of the present UK Parliament can overturn.

2. The forth-coming referendum is also a manifest injustice towards the people in the rest of the United Kingdom outside Scotland and in the Commonwealth whose rights and liberties under the constitution it disregards and subverts, they not being permitted any voice in a decision which will necessarily affect them profoundly and which will utterly remove the protections presently enshrined in our statutes and Treaty of Union which constitute this nation a United Kingdom.
3. The Prime Minister and the Scottish First Minister had neither a mandate nor a constitutional liberty to enforce this referendum on Scottish Independence on the Scottish people in the manner in which they did, and the terms under which the referendum will be carried out contain manifest contradictions and is essentially unfair and unjust in that (a) the question to be voted on is not consistent with the true legal status of Scotland as a nation with an independent legal system already and (b) the final outcome in favour of independence does not require a majority of people in the nation voting for it.
4. The proposal in favour of Scottish Independence produced by the Scottish Government, entitled *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland*, contains inaccuracy when it declares that Independence will result in “no change to the legal status of any religion or of Scotland’s churches” (page 564).
5. The proposal in favour of Scottish Independence produced by the Scottish Government, referred to above thus provides no security for the doctrine, worship or government of the Church of Scotland, nor the rights and privileges of the Church as secured by the oath of the Sovereign and therefore Scottish Independence would represent an act of treason against Her Majesty the Queen and her subjects, and would therefore not be binding upon any citizen of the United Kingdom or the Commonwealth whom she reigns over under that oath.

6. Letter to HRH the Prince of Wales

The committee agreed to write a letter to the Prince of Wales objecting to his attendance at a requiem mass in September 2013. The letter was in the following terms:

Your Royal Highness,

We write with regret and sadness over a subject of concern to us which we were only recently informed of and which, while some time ago, remains to us a point of principle. As loyal subjects to a Protestant Queen and concerned for the future of her throne, we are painfully

constrained to express our grief that in showing your respects in connection with the lamented death of your late friend Hugh van Cutsem, you, together with your sons, HRH the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry, attended a Roman Catholic requiem mass at Brentwood Cathedral. We feel it our sad and difficult duty to remind Your Highness that this attendance is injurious to Your Highnesses' spiritual welfare and that it is an ill-advised example in a constitutionally Protestant nation.

As heir to the throne of the United Kingdom, Your Highness is bound to show respect to the laws of God and the religion of the realm which, in both England and Scotland, recognises the requiem mass of the Roman Catholic religion as injurious and blasphemous. The Reformation of the 16th century demonstrated to all succeeding generations the dangerous nature of Roman Catholic theology respecting the dead and exposed the falsehood of the arrogated power of Roman priests to help souls in so-called purgatory.

We fully recognise that this position and this letter may be viewed as offensive and even hurtful to you. This we sincerely wish to mitigate and so we do most earnestly ask that you would receive it as from those prayerfully concerned for you and for the religious future of this nation. With due respect to Your Highnesses' feelings of loss and recognising Your Highnesses' duty and wish to share your sympathy and condolences with the bereaved at a time of mourning, we would respectfully suggest that attendance at a requiem mass cannot but confirm them and others in grievous error.

Yours sincerely

7. Other business still in hand

The committee made considerable progress in drafting a revised statement of differences but requires further time to have this document in a state of readiness for Synod discussion and adoption.

The committee has not been able to make further progress with papers on the subject of divorce and proposes that this matter be taken up by the Training of the Ministry Committee at a Theological Conference as relevant to the training of present and future ministers of the Church.

The convener of the committee attended a conference in May 2013 on the future of Scottish Education and reported to the committee on the papers and discussions.

8. Items of business relating to Presbyteries

While the committee is not accountable to the Presbyteries of the Church, it sees its role as including being of service to Presbyteries in connection with matters it has taken in hand or has been instructed by the Synod to pursue. In

the past year the committee took in hand business first raised at the Southern Presbytery in connection with the use of Church properties following the implementation of the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Scotland) Act 2014. This business involved reviewing a note by the Church legal advisor on this question. The committee agreed to include this with a separate brief report to the Synod.

The committee also agreed to incorporate in this report on religion and morals part of a report prepared for the Outer Isles Presbytery on the subject of spiritual declension and false evangelism. This report, together with the resolution of that Presbytery, was made available to the public and was authored by two members of the committee on behalf of the Presbytery. It is felt that because the resolution received significant coverage in the local press, the underlying report on which it was based would with advantage be shared with the wider Church through this report on religion and morals.

As already mentioned, the committee interacted in a limited way with members of the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery on the subject of same-sex marriage legislation.

2. REPORT ON ASPECTS OF RELIGION AND MORALS

This second part of the report was prepared by members of the committee and covers a number of subjects. These observations are offered to the Synod with a deep consciousness of the spiritual declension that we must acknowledge among ourselves and the great forsaking in the midst of the land which we have witnessed among our families and congregations in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This report is offered also in the hope and prayer that the spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out on the Church, both among office-bearers and people and that the Lord will have respect to the prayers of His poor and needy people who mourn over sin and plead with Him not to leave His heritage to reproach. The subjects dealt with in this report do not make encouraging reading and we feel pained that over many years this report has treated the state of religion and morals in the nation with such a sense of foreboding and dejection. Our hope is in the Lord and we would encourage all the readers of this report to cast their eye often with longing and believing prayer to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's work being revived. In the certain hope of better days, we seek to be marked as those who sigh and cry and who are grieved for the afflictions of Joseph.

1. Census information

The Scottish census figures from 2011 have been gradually made available over the past year. The details regarding religion make sad reading and make plain the great need that Scotland has of a spiritual awakening. In a population of 5,295,403 Scots, a total of 1,717,871 claim to belong to the Church of Scotland and 841,053 claim to be Roman Catholics. Those identifying as what the census defines as "Other Christian" number 291,275 of which 66,717

identify as Church of England. The variety of categories under this section makes for disturbing reading yet some interesting figures emerge. Pentecostals number 12,357 while those identifying themselves as Free Church of Scotland number 10,896. Those describing themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses number 8,543, while Mormons living in Scotland number 4,651. The figures possibly do not reveal the true picture for any of the categories because several identifications overlap within this category of "Other Christian", such as 36,208 identifying themselves as Christian, while another 16,609 identify themselves as Protestant and a further separate figure of 13,229 refer to themselves as Evangelical. Thus while 3,553 self-identify as Presbyterians, some Presbyterians may describe themselves as Protestant, some as Christian and some as Evangelical, while all may belong to a small Church such as our own. There are two figures for Free Presbyterians, one with 1,197 and the other with 132. A total of 368,039 did not state their religion.

About a third of Scots (1,941,996) described themselves as having no religion in what was a voluntary part of the census. This shocking figure has of course been eagerly seized on by secularists who wish to further undermine the Christian heritage of the nation. There are several responses to the reaction that this figure supports further secularising of national institutions.

Firstly, the concept that the number of people adhering to truth determines whether truth should be publicly recognised and supported is deeply flawed. Truth is not relative nor can it be determined in terms of democratic choice.

Secondly, the question of whether people's own perception of their religious stance is accurate is far from simple. Many people who would consider themselves as having no religion mean by this that they are not connected to any religious organisation. This does not always mean that they have no religion whatsoever. Furthermore, being a voluntary question, the distortion in the figures could be quite considerable.

Thirdly, it is of great interest to learn that in spite of nearly 2 million Scots describing themselves as having no religion, only 2,992 described themselves as being humanists and 2,848 others described themselves as being atheists. These statistics confirm what is the truth of the human heart – that man has a religious nature and that real and genuine atheism is a matter of the heart and will, not of the conscience and intellect. The plea of secularists for the removal of religion from state institutions cannot be supported on democratic grounds from the census figures because to enforce national atheism would be in theory the choice of only 3,000 people out of over 5 million.

Fourthly, the fact remains that two thirds of the population did not say that they have no religion and so must view themselves as having a religion. Such a percentage in any democratic election would be considered so overwhelming that governments and politicians would consider themselves mandated to act for that majority in any way they saw fit. If public religion and the recognition of religion in national institutions was something that should be determined by force of numbers, it is clear from the census that secularists have no grounds to demand the abolition of religion in the state.

Nevertheless, the figures cannot but be viewed as a most grievous illustration of the degeneracy of the nation in spiritual things. The true children of God in Scotland are very few in number and those who prize the testimony of the Reformation that was only comparatively recently professed by the whole nation, are becoming fewer still. Every kind of false creed and superstition is practised and encouraged to flourish in Scotland today. This is the boast of our politicians and of multitudes of professing Christians who have lost all sense of what is truth and error. For the Church of God in Scotland, one fact is now plain – “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few”. Some might respond to this that the neglect of the means of grace by the nation generally would suggest that a harvest is not set before the Church. However, the Saviour spoke these words when He saw the multitudes fainting and scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd and He was moved with compassion towards them (Matthew 9:36). This is the true picture of Scotland today – many multitudes fainting in spiritual death, ready to perish in hell for ever; scattered abroad like sheep because of false shepherds and hirelings who lead them astray with false doctrine and perverse rituals; without a shepherd to lead them and having no knowledge of the great Shepherd of the sheep.

We firmly believe that the census figures are a particular call to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to earnestly, consistently and solemnly pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His own harvest. Our land is now a mission field needing missionary labourers as much, if not more, than darkest Africa and Asia. If we ignore this fact and do not act and take our responsibilities to perishing souls seriously, the Lord will certainly cast us off from further usefulness and will raise up deliverance from the sons of strangers. Of the precious Church of Christ in Scotland we may ask, are there none among her sons whom she hath brought forth to take her by the hand and guide her? (Isaiah 51:18)

2. The Church of Scotland

The present Church of Scotland is unrecognisable from the body incepted by John Knox in 1560. It is no true Church, being devoid of all of its marks; that is, the faithful proclamation of all the counsel of God, the right administration of the sacraments and biblical discipline. In May 2013, its General Assembly (moderated by a woman ineligible to hold office in the Church, 1 Timothy 3:2), in evidence of increasing defection from Scripture truth and holiness, decided to allow liberal congregations to call known sodomites. It seems likely, in view of the current trend within that organisation, that this wicked proposal will be ratified in 2015. This institution falsely claims adherence to its previous, long-standing opposition to sodomy. The fact is, that it is promoting that grievous sin, which is condemned in Scripture as wicked (Romans 1:28), vile and unnatural (Romans 1:26), and unseemly (Romans 1:27). This is especially obvious in the odious spectacle of a shameless sodomite occupying one of its pulpits in Aberdeen. A faithful Church would

not tolerate such wickedness, but rather condemn it, and depose the offender. He needs to be reproved of his gross sin against the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14), in the sincere hope that he may be convinced of his sin, condemn himself, and come to Christ for salvation; as was the blessed case of some sodomites at Corinth: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus . . .” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

In January this year, one of its Ministers, the Reverend Donald MacInnes (Gairbraid) described sodomy as a “perversion” and “disorder”, and further stated that should the Scottish Government succeed in legalising sodomite marriage it would be a “tragic day”. However, he also stated that he favoured civil partnerships. Despite this inconsistent and tempered denunciation of sodomy, he was removed from his position as Chaplain at the prestigious Glasgow Gaelic School. Mr. MacInnes thereafter did not publicly repeat and defend his derogation of sodomy, nor did his denomination endorse his previous remarks, but rather kept a strange and conniving silence in the matter, implying that it does not regard sodomy as a detestable sin; “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 17:15).

In the same month, a female minister of this body joined with a humanist group (in an unlawful association) that is bent upon the complete destruction of religious instruction in State Schools, and agreed to support a proposal by them to change the term “Religious Observance” to that of “Time for Reflection”.

3. Spiritual declension and loss of Church discipline

This part of the report is the first section of a report submitted by two members of the Committee when acting for the Outer Isles Presbytery. This report was dealt with at a public meeting of Presbytery and was available to the public and this extract is used to illustrate what may be considered true of many parts of the nation.

General outlook of spiritual declension –

(i) Within our own Church

If we are to be faithful to the souls of our generation and to those whom the Lord has given us the charge and care of in spiritual things, we must acknowledge the low state of religion among ourselves. While this report seeks to address movements outside our borders as a Church, it does so with a deep sense of sorrow and pain at the low spiritual temperature of the congregations in our own Church within the Presbytery. It is to be greatly lamented that there are few conversions to Christ and few evidences of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit among our people, young or old. This shows itself in the fewness of additions to the rolls of communicants in our congregations and in the very limited impact of the work of the ministry among the people in our parishes and communities. We must therefore confess

that there is manifest spiritual declension among ourselves over which the ministers of the Lord are called to weep and mourn.

It is the duty of every congregation of the Lord's people to search and examine the reasons for such a withdrawing of the working of the Holy Spirit in His convicting and converting power and to prayerfully entreat His return. In adopting this report, the Presbytery therefore would seek to encourage and exhort the brethren and the Lord's people to more fervent prayerfulness and diligence in the use of all the appointed and instituted means of grace so graciously preserved to us. Our heritage of the gospel is very dear to us and we are determined not to allow it to be diluted or corrupted in our hands with false and erroneous methods or expedients in so-called evangelism. We believe that the Lord does and will honour His own appointed means in the reviving of His cause and in restoring to us "the years that the locust hath eaten" (Joel 2:25).

(ii) In other Presbyterian Churches

We are grieved to record that there seems to us to be but little sign of the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction and true conversion in other Presbyterian Churches in the Western Isles either. That there is much religious activity in these islands cannot be disputed. However, when we contrast this religious activity with what was the religion of previous generations since the gospel first arrived in spiritual power to these islands, we find a great and sad difference. Most evident is the manifest worldliness of many professing Christians, and the failure of Church courts to exercise spiritual discipline over such as live as the world in their activities, interests and pursuits, while professing Christ in full communion. Without descending to specifics, we find that many professing Christians in the Churches are actively encouraged to continue their former worldly interest in professional and amateur sport, worldly music, entertainments such as the cinema, dances, use of public houses, concerts and ceilidhs, and that many speak and dress like the world with little distinction to be found between them and their former companions. This is a marked declension from former times of spiritual awakening and blessing.

We are not in a position to identify what is amiss or defective in the preaching within other Churches other than by occasional report and even more occasional listening to online sermons. However, we infer from the above general picture that a clear distinction between sin and holiness, as defined by the Word and law of God, is not being made in preaching as in former days. We fear that the solemn voice of the law of God and its searching demands for holiness, separation from the world and watchfulness against temptation and sinful practices is not being sounded. However fervently, sincerely and accurately the truths of the gospel may be preached – and we can neither affirm nor deny the reality of this – we believe that the trumpet must be giving an uncertain sound if law and gospel are not both preached and sinners warned against sin as well as called to Christ as a Saviour from sin. The

spiritual declension apparent in our islands is, we firmly believe, largely owing to the decline of the pulpit and the unfaithfulness of ministers and of Kirk Sessions in connection with the sins of the generation.

Areas of particular concern:

(i) Corruptions in worship

The practice of adding to the worship of God what is not commanded or allowed in His Word is nothing new in the Western Isles. In Church of Scotland congregations, particularly, uninspired hymns and instrumental music have had a place for many years with the obvious effects of declension and sin associated with that. The recent permissive legislation brought into the Free Church has not yet, as far as we know, resulted in actual corruption of the purity of worship formerly known and practised in Island congregations. However, it is manifest that the Free Church now publically teaches through this legislation that both uninspired hymns and instrumental music are sanctioned by the Word of God and this teaching will certainly have a corrosive and damaging effect on the present generation. We believe that many in the Free Church are sincerely grieved at this development and yet we fear that the lack of action on their part to remove the offence will bring forth bitter fruits of further declension from purity of worship in the future.

Within some congregations, notably in the Church of Scotland, worship practices, including loud and boisterous music accompaniment, have drawn in many young people and many of these have made professions of faith within that Church. The use of entertainment (for it is not more than that) is an old device for drawing young people into public worship, but we believe it is sinful and dangerous. Such manifestly worldly activities in the worship of God and in the public assemblies have no sanction in the Word and are therefore idolatrous worship and cannot be identified with that worship “in spirit and in truth” which the Lord requires. This ought to be a special concern because young people from our own congregations have been, and are presently being, drawn into the congregations where such worship practices are going on. This is not something that the Presbytery can look at as though it does not affect our people.

(ii) Admission to the Lord's Supper

It is to be noted that large-scale admission to the Lord's Supper following a profession of saving faith is not an altogether new practice in Presbyterian Churches in recent decades. It is sad to reflect on how many who were formerly encouraged to make and accepted by Kirk Sessions in making such a profession, have now renounced that profession. It is true that in times of revival there have always been such as have not continued in their profession, but we believe this feature is particularly noticeable in the past few decades in Lewis. This is an alarming trend which ought to be inquired into. We greatly fear that the process of admission to the Lord's Table has changed and that standards formerly recognised in the Scottish Church have been systematically

abandoned. It is now accepted practice within the Free Church, as it has been in the Church of Scotland for some time to leave applicants for the Lord's Table to approach this ordinance without any meaningful examination by the Kirk Session. We have reason to fear that this tendency has also become common in the Western Isles in some Churches.

It is part of the Reformed Church's historic testimony and practice to require applicants for the Lord's Supper to have sufficient knowledge of the truth and of Christian ordinances and to have a walk in life that is both credible and does not contradict the profession of godliness required for the use of the Lord's Supper. When professors of Christ are outwardly conformed to the world and live in practices manifestly inconsistent with the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper, not only is Christ and His Name dishonoured, but the Church is made a scorn in the world and its usefulness among the ungodly greatly hindered. We therefore must solemnly warn against indiscriminate and irresponsible admission of young people especially to the Lord's Supper. We do so by way of duty, not to discourage those who are truly and sincerely following Christ. We can and do only wish young people who are made willing to take up the cross and follow Christ well in the Lord. Yet we believe that a call to greater self-examination and greater Sessional examination of applicants for the Lord's Supper is urgently needed in our day, lest this solemn ordinance be treated with the dishonour and indifference so common in many Christian Churches in the world.

4. Our present need of Home Missionaries

The committee feels that the people of the Church are apt to be very discouraged reading many of the details and comments in this report. Many among us are holding on to the testimony of the Church under extremely difficult circumstances. The Lord alone is our refuge in time of trouble and to Him we must ever look when the interests of the cause of truth are before us. "By whom shall Jacob arise? For he is small" (Amos 7:2). The committee wants to suggest a possible way to address the very serious need for a re-construction of a national Church in Scotland. Such a reconstruction was clearly considered by the founders of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, both in their Deed of Separation and when they began to establish congregations up and down the land.

It is abundantly clear from early editions of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* that while the number of ministers was always low, the Church was greatly aided by the appointment of many home missionaries. From 1893 onwards, for several generations, the Church employed home missionaries to conduct the services in many of the pastor-less congregations. However, from 1960 onwards their number decreased until, at presently only one is employed, in the Southern Presbytery. The committee feels that this is a situation that has emerged without any planning or decision and that there is good reason to seek to reverse the trend and to adopt the former practice of the Church in times when, however small and despised, it enjoyed much of the Lord's gracious

favour. At present there are around sixteen congregations which are pastor-less and these are supplied by elders, a number of whom are gainfully employed during the week and it is quite a burden for them to have to take services most Sabbaths. Several of these congregations are in danger of closing due to their being no resident person qualified to engage in pastoral or missionary activity. “Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest is truly 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).

5. The UK constitution and Scottish Independence

On 18th September 2014 the Scottish National Party instigated Independence proceedings. A Referendum will be held which will ask the question of eligible voters: “Should Scotland be an independent country?” A simple majority in favour will result in the dissolution of the United Kingdom as presently constituted. Scotland has not been an independently governed country since 1st May 1707, when Acts of Union were passed in both the English and Scottish Parliaments giving rise to the Treaty of Union. The momentum for union came initially from the ascension of King James VI of Scotland to the throne of England in 1603 in the union of the crowns. A further, and most important, impetus towards a beneficial Union was occasioned by the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant between the Parliaments of England and Scotland in 1643. That agreement resulted in the good labours of the Westminster Assembly Divines toward church reform in both nations, which have proved such a blessing, as the subordinate standards of the true church of Christ in Scotland; which we as a denomination profess to be, by virtue of maintaining those standards when others have let them fall.

In order to safeguard the then established Church of Scotland, which had fully subscribed the Westminster Standards, one of the last acts passed by the Scottish Parliament before its dissolution, was the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Act 1707. This Act stated that: “Her Majesty with advice and consent of the said Estates of Parliament Doth hereby Establish and Confirm the said true Protestant Religion and the Worship Discipline and Government of this Church to continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding generations.” This Act was a condition of Union “expressly declared to be a fundamental and essential Condition of the said Treaty or Union in all time coming”, and remains to this day the law of the land. Unquestionably our Protestant constitution has been seriously undermined by legislation in recent years, but its continued existence is a restraint on the evil schemes of those in high places in the government and judiciary, who desire the obliteration of our nation’s godly heritage; and in some measure is a holding on to the good old paths for which we may expect a continued blessing.

The SNP have not yet proposed a constitution for an independent Scotland. Instead they have produced a discussion paper on the development of a written

constitution, if there should be a “yes” vote in the referendum. They propose to set up a constitutional convention under the authority of the Scottish Parliament. Their discussion paper is very short on detail, but whereas it does not mention churches or religion, it does say that, “a constitutional convention should consider how to further embed equality and human rights within the constitution”. It is all too obvious that the safeguarding of our Protestant heritage will not be a priority, nor likely indeed to feature at all. The token assurance of protection for every citizen to practise their religion, experience has shown will hold only so far as it is considered consistent with human rights and equality legislation. In practise, in recent years the judiciary has given precedence to homosexual equality rights over the objections of those who have refused to provide commercial or public services to practising homosexuals on the grounds of conscience. A new SNP inspired constitution is only likely to make matters worse.

The proposed relationship of an independent Scotland to the Crown is tentative. Initially it would have a similar status to other seceding nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and the Protestant constitution would be protected to the same extent as other commonwealth countries. However, presumably to satisfy pro-independence republicans, the “yes” campaign is emphasising the ability to vote for the abolition of monarchy once independence has been achieved. That would be a much higher risk in an independent Scotland than in the UK as a whole, due to the large Irish RC population, and other ethnic groups, unsympathetic to the Crown.

Thus the referendum represents a very significant and real threat to the well-being of the church and nation. In recognition of which the synod of May 2012 passed a Resolution on Scottish independence which stated that: “The Synod is of the view that the Treaty of Union is inviolable and cannot be lawfully overturned in all time coming and is a fundamental guarantee of the civil and religious liberties of the people of Scotland which cannot be tampered with except at great peril to our spiritual and temporal welfare.” We ought to do what we can to ensure the rejection of this drastic proposal – not only by ourselves voting “no” in the referendum, but where possible encouraging other eligible voters to do so. A postal vote is an option for every eligible voter.

6. Romanism in Scotland

Prior to the Reformation, the church of Rome displayed a moral corruption that revolted the people of Scotland. In divine providence, that corruption gave an impetus to reformation, and the overthrow of the false doctrines, worship and practice, which an unenlightened populace had come to see as essential aspects of true religion. So powerful was the revulsion of Romanism that accompanied the light of truth revealing its real nature, that it was swept almost completely away, being subsequently confined to a few outlying areas. But since the Catholic Emancipation movement in the early nineteenth century, and the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, and the

large-scale Irish immigration that followed, the RC church has risen again in Scotland from a position of relative obscurity, to become once more a major influence in the nation. With her return to a position of strength, the moral perversions of the Church of Rome have once more come to light. That moral corruption, which is an inevitable consequence of this God-dishonouring, man-centred sect, has been oozing into the public domain.

The major scandal was the sudden resignation of Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, following allegations which were brought to light by the *Observer* newspaper. O'Brien had risen rapidly through the hierarchy in Scotland during the Popedom of John-Paul II, who elevated him to Cardinal in 2003. In February 2013, three priests and one former priest (who resigned upon O'Brien being made Cardinal), accused him of engaging in coercive sexual behaviour when he was in a position of authority over them. After initially contesting the allegation, O'Brien's feeble excuses were soon beached by a Vatican announcement that his resignation had been accepted. Although the allegations pre-dated his being made Cardinal, it came to light subsequently that O'Brien had been a practising homosexual "until at least 2009". This has rendered farcical his fierce public opposition against homosexuality, and particularly homosexual marriage. As to whether O'Brien will face a trial under Canon Law, no public announcement has yet been made. At present, he remains Cardinal O'Brien, the most senior RC prelate in Britain.

A further scandal to hit the RC church in Scotland during 2013 was the exposing by the BBC in August of the abuse of school children at the Benedictine Abbey at Fort Augustus, and its preparatory school in East Lothian, Carlekempthe. The television documentary, *Sins of our Fathers*, reported the cruel physical and sexual abuse of children by a number of priests and lay teachers. The pattern of abuse that occurred at these schools is sadly not new, but is indeed a common pattern observed in schools, orphanages and other RC institutions in many countries around the world. (For example, in the USA alone, 4,392 priests have been accused of abuse.) The abuser, often a priest, has manipulated the victim, typically a young boy, emotionally, and threatened them in order to prevent reporting of the abuse to their parents or authorities. As a consequence, in most cases, the abuse has not been reported for many years afterwards. When confronted with the accusation, the abuser is reclusive, and in denial, causing further distress to the victim. The RC church itself often shielded abusive priests. In some cases, as at Fort Augustus, when they were found out, they were merely moved on to create new victims elsewhere. The English Congregation of the Benedictines which owned these schools, has been particularly notorious in the UK, with criminal convictions of serious abuse by priests at their other schools: Ealing Abbey, Downside Abbey, Buckfast Abbey, Belmont Abbey and Ampleforth College. At Fort Augustus, two men have been charged so far with enquiries ongoing. Cardinal O'Brien and the late now notorious child-abuser Jimmy Savile, were visitors to the Abbey.

The least publicised but possibly the most serious scandal to affect the RC church in 2013 was the publication of a book by Father Matthew Despard of St. John Ogilvie RC church in Blantyre, in the Diocese of Motherwell. The book was self-published through Amazon for its Kindle reader. It was written in 2010 but not published until the resignation of Cardinal O'Brien in 2013. The book was removed by Amazon shortly after publication for sale to UK residents, statedly for legal reasons, but it is still available outside the UK. In *Priesthood In Crisis* Despard alleges a "culture of homosexual bullying" within the RC church in Scotland, alleging that sexual misconduct was rife among the clergy. He claims that in seminaries where trainee priests rejected homosexual advances, they were bullied, and that homosexuals were preferentially advanced. When he alerted Church authorities, including his own bishop and the papal nuncio in London, to allegations of sexual misconduct, he was ignored. After the publication of the book, the then bishop of Motherwell, Joseph Devine, stated in April 2013 that no action would be taken against Despard. However, the following month Devine resigned after dissatisfaction was expressed with his handling of the affair. Thereafter a disciplinary process was instigated against Despard, by the new interim Bishop of Motherwell, Joseph Toal. Against the wishes of many of his parishioners, Despard was removed from his duties as parish priest and awaits trial under canon law.

His treatment is in stark contrast to another priest in the archdiocese of Glasgow, Father Paul Milarvie, a former rector of the Scot's College in Rome where priests are trained. Milarvie was subject to an allegation of "unwanted harassment" and trying to "constrain" a male guest at his parish house, and was subsequently found to be involved in "a drunken homosexual incident" by Archbishop Conti with conduct "totally unworthy of a priest"; but was nevertheless allowed to retain his position. Indeed he has reportedly had his responsibilities increased by Conti's successor as Archbishop of Glasgow, Philip Tartaglia, who was a friend of Milarvie's and preceded him as rector of the Scot's college at Rome.

To the outsider, the overwhelming impression of these scandals is that sodomy, whether coercive or consensual, has been an unacknowledged part of the RC church in Scotland for many years. Sodomy, as it was in Sodom, is one of the signature sins of the wicked age in which we live. That culture in the RC church in Scotland goes back many years, and it has become apparent, through these and other scandals, that it has been a breeding ground for this sin – showing that far from being the true Church of Jesus Christ as it claims, it has been a synagogue of Satan. The sad fact is that very few will acknowledge the real link that exists between the notorious behaviour of some of their clergy, and the man-centred worship, doctrines and practise of the church of Rome. The strong public opposition that the RC church had previously shown to the homosexual marriage legislation in Scotland withered, of course, following these scandals, since they could not be taken seriously, and by that means have seriously damaged the opposition to that cursed legislation.

7. Romanism and homosexuality

The Word of God describes the church of Rome in terms which highlight its spiritual adultery and apostasy from Christ. It depicts it as the spiritual Babylon, the “mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Revelation 17:5). The nations of the earth are described as hating her in the time of her fall and the people of God are exhorted to come out of her that they would not be partakers of her sins or receive of her plagues (Revelation 17:16-18 and 18:4). At the time of the destruction of this spiritual Babylon the cry will be heard “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (Revelation 18:2-3). The corruptions exposed within the Roman Catholic system, which have led to calls from the United Nations for tighter controls to be imposed, suggest that the abominations described in the Scriptures are being exposed. There may be small indications at present that, as far as some nations are concerned, the prophecy of them turning against Romanism has some fulfilment in the present day.

We do not profess to have knowledge of the times or the seasons, nor do we claim to understand all that the prophecies concerning the Kingdom of Christ in the Book of the Revelation point to. Yet, the depiction of mystery Babylon as the church of Rome was the faithful exegesis of these passages and others like them since the Reformation. The morality of the Roman Catholic system can only be described as spiritual fornication because it gives doctrinal and practical licence to men to continue in sin and to profess religion at the same time. Whether one considers the nature and use of the confessional, the Mass, the notion of purgatory and the merit of saints, or the distinction made between venial and mortal sins by the church of Rome, a picture emerges of a system which gives free rein to the lusts of men under the cloak of piety and religion. The present pope has instigated a consultation through the entire Roman Catholic Church to obtain the views of what it defines as “the laity” on the morality, among other things of contraception, same-sex marriage, sexual relations outside marriage, and whether divorced and remarried people should be allowed Holy Communion. It is perfectly possible that the official position of Romanism could change on all these matters to give greater freedom in sin. This would be a doctrinally consistent approach.

The vow of celibacy has for a long time been recognised as a most oppressive yoke and burden on such as come under it and its imposition has made the priesthood a fertile breeding ground for all manner of uncleanness. While many would like to portray Romanism as considerably reformed in this area since the time of the Reformation, there is no reason to credit such an outlook. In countries where Romanism has had a long and established hold of the population, immorality of a most heinous kind has been found to be

rife among priests. It is widely recognised that homosexuality is a large issue among Roman Catholic priests. A Roman Catholic priest, Donald B. Cozzens, in his book, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, gives estimates of between 23% and 58% homosexual priests in the US, with higher percentages among younger priests (see <http://americamagazine.org/node/146081>). In a book written before his death and published in 2003, Gareth Moore, a Dominican priest, seeks to argue against the official position of the Catholic Catechism regarding homosexual practice. Extracts from the book were published by *The Times* in June 2003 under the headline, "The love that is not a sin". It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the wider population has come to view homosexuality with indifference and acceptance.

Even from a pragmatic point of view it is an utterly mistaken and dangerous policy to be associated with Roman priests or officials on subjects of morality. A correct estimate of the nature of Romanism is given to us in the Word of God and our prayer ought to be for its destruction and the deliverance of the many souls, both priests and people, presently kept in spiritual and moral bondage by that system. We firmly believe that the nations of the earth will yet see and expose the filth of that system which contains within it the very principle of lust and concupiscence. The Church of Christ is urgently called to come out of her and to have no part with her in her abominations.

8. Islamic terror and persecution of Christians

Christians have suffered persecution since the time of Christ. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). But the persecution of Christians in the Muslim world is unremitting. Political Islamism calls for the elimination of Christians in many areas and consequently encourages and feeds a climate of sectarian violence.

Professed Christians in Pakistan are persecuted with impunity from the law so that they are afraid to express their religious beliefs. Private religious services are frequently called "gatherings" to avoid arousing the prying of those who may have a malevolent interest. We read of Christians being charged with blasphemy which can lead to very serious consequences, such as imprisonment, torture and, in some cases, lynching. It is always dangerous to keep Christian material in the home as accusations of blasphemy can be raised at any time. There were several violent attacks on Christians and churches during 2013. One bomb attack on the Peshawar All Saints church resulted in the death of 84 of the congregation. The Pakistani government offers little or no protection when attacks occur.

In Egypt, the Coptic community, which represents about 10% of the country's population, has increasingly been targeted in recent years. Following the ousting of President Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood has been responsible for the burning of 38 churches and damaging 23 others.

The western media is more concerned with the perceived persecution of sodomites in Russia than with the genocide of Christians. When the 84

Christians were blown up in Pakistan, the BBC placed it below the Emmy television awards in the news agenda.

It is estimated that since 2004 over a million Christians have fled persecution in the Middle East and thousands have been murdered.

According to an annual list drawn up by Open Doors USA, a non-denominational group supporting persecuted Christians worldwide, the majority of anti-Christian persecution is by Muslims. It reports increasing violence against Christians in Africa and notes that radical Muslims are mainly responsible for persecution in 36 countries on its list. North Korea, where Christianity is completely banned, headed the list of the worst perpetrators for the 12th consecutive year. The next nine countries were Islamic: Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Pakistan, Iran and Yemen.

The courage, faith and fortitude of these persecuted people continuing to live under these regimes is remarkable. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

In Syria, according to the Barnabas Fund, more than 1,200 Christians were reportedly martyred in 2013 alone and over 600,000 have fled the country. Christians are being kidnapped, raped and killed by Islamic militants who are backed and armed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

And yet there are flickers of hope in some of the places of persecution. Following the bombing of the All Saints Church in Pakistan, a body of leading Muslim scholars condemned the incident, saying, "It is an extremely shameful attack which has shamed all Pakistanis and Muslims. There is no room for such terrorist acts in Islam." Both Sunni and Shia Muslims gathered outside a church in Baghdad on the anniversary of an atrocity and said, "The Christians are the people of Iraq, for thousands of years, and Christianity is one of the oldest religions in Iraq. We invite them not to leave Iraq because all Iraqis share their pain."

The Barnabas Fund reports: "It is no small matter for moderate Muslims to take a stand over Islamic violence. Being Muslim does not protect them from becoming targets." In fact the threat to a number of British Muslims who condemned the killing of Drummer Lee Rigby is so great that they are now under police protection.

In September 2013, the King of Jordan convened a conference in the Jordanian capital, Amman, to address the challenge facing Arab Christians, especially those in Egypt and Syria.

At a reception in Clarence House, Prince Charles said that he was deeply troubled by the growing difficulties faced by Christian communities in the Middle East.

Recently, both British Houses of Parliament held debates on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Fiona Bruce MP, said, "We should be crying out with the same abhorrence and horror that we feel about the terrible atrocities towards Jews on Kristallnacht and on other occasions in Germany during the Second World War". It was good to see such debates taking place, but the Government response was disappointing, with no acknowledgement

that our own foreign policy has not been helpful, and in some instances quite the opposite.

The list of atrocities is endless and the number of countries where they are tolerated is large. There is a great need for prayerful support of those being persecuted throughout the world. Over the centuries the Lord has always maintained His cause and that promised day will surely dawn when His enemies shall be His footstool and the knowledge of His glory shall cover the whole earth. “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).

9. Abortion

There are 200,000 abortions in Britain each year and it is believed that over 7 million have been carried out since the Abortion Act was introduced in 1967. The law was intended to allow abortion in only very limited circumstances. 196,000 abortions, which is 95%, are performed on mental health grounds when there is no evidence that carrying a pregnancy for the full term damages a woman’s mental health more than an abortion does. In fact there is growing evidence suggesting just the opposite, that abortion hurts and damages women both mentally and physically.

There is growing public and parliamentary support for a reform of the law. Dr. Peter Saunders, of the Christian Medical Fellowship, reported that 13 of the current 16 Conservative members of the Cabinet voted for a reduction in the upper limit when the issue was last debated in Parliament in 2008, including 7 for a reduction to 20 weeks, 2 for 16 weeks and 3 for 12 weeks. Many European countries, including Germany, France, Italy and Spain, have upper limits of 10 to 12 weeks. A significant body of medical experts are now questioning the controversial claim that babies younger than 24 weeks cannot feel pain.

The statistics for last year disclosed that more than 4,500 women had had at least 4 abortions, 1,334 were on at least their fifth and 33 women had 9 or more terminations. A *Daily Telegraph* investigation uncovered that some doctors had been signing abortion forms for women they had never met. A series of spot inspections by the Care Quality Commission, as a result of the investigation, led to 14 NHS hospitals being formally censured for conducting potentially illegal abortions. Ann Furedi, the chief executive of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, said that pregnant women and doctors actively “pretend” that the women’s mental health is at risk. This was part of her argument for relaxing the requirements.

New government guidelines, proposed by ministers, state that there will be no legal requirement that a woman must consult a doctor before terminating her unborn child. This renders meaningless the central safeguard of the 1967 Abortion Act – that two doctors must authorise a termination. If these regulations go through, nurses or others can gather the information and all that the doctor needs to do is sign the form. It is also worded in such a way as to allow nurses to prescribe abortion drugs.

In 1966, when Parliament was debating the bill, David Steel, one of its architects, said, "It is not the intention of the promoters of the bill to leave a wide open door for abortion on request". Since the Act became law, 7 million abortions have been carried out in Britain.

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect" (Psalm 139:14-16).

10. Euthanasia

The British Social Attitudes survey, conducted by the National Centre for Social Research, shows that for a number of years there has been widespread support for voluntary euthanasia of terminally ill patients. However, it is thought that Lord Falconer's Assisted Dying Bill is unlikely to make the statute books in Westminster, although Margo MacDonald MSP, who has launched her latest assisted suicide bill, claims to have high hopes of its success in Holyrood. Although the electorate support assisted dying, they do so in a very restricted way. They generally think that it should be medically supervised and should only apply in cases of incurable and painful medical conditions, and must be entirely voluntary. The problem facing the legislators is ensuring the safeguards.

Belgium legalised euthanasia in 2002. In 2003 the number of Belgians euthanised was 235 and numbers continue to increase and are now at about 1,400 per year. As was reported in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* of February 2014, the Belgians now intend to extend it to children of any age. There will be no age limit to minors suffering from terminal illness who can seek a lethal injection. There will be safeguards but how can there be any assurance that a small child will be making a lucid decision to die? The number of cases in Holland has doubled over the last few years and now stands at 1 in 30 deaths. Their definition of unbearable suffering now includes mental and emotional distress. Peter Franklin, writing in *The Times*, said that "psychiatric patients are among those helped to die by Dutch physicians". Furthermore we are likely to see an increase following an article by Dutch authors in their *Journal of Psychiatry*, advocating the expansion of euthanasia for psychiatric patients.

If euthanasia is legalised in the United Kingdom then step-by-step it will become normal. Definitions will be stretched, restrictions will be re-interpreted and safeguards will be lowered. Slowly but surely, as with abortion, the lid will come off and those who are unable to live independently or are in great pain will be encouraged to think that they can take the readily available option to escape at a time of their choosing. They will then discover, too late, that the Lord is sovereign and that their "escape" was an illusion. How very dreadful it is for those who suffer such awful pain, living without hope and believing that life is unbearable; so much so that they wish to end it. The

command “Thou shall not kill” applies just as surely to euthanasia as to any other form of the taking of a human life.

II. Crime

Drug-related crime is a serious problem in Britain and in a number of other countries throughout the world. A high proportion of those convicted for property and drug offences have committed their crimes to get money for drugs. A typical addict spends around £1,400 per month on drugs and many addicts commit crime to pay for their drugs. Treatment and recovery are key parts of the Government’s strategy to tackle drug addiction and the crime it causes. The annual bill for drug-related crime runs to billions of pounds. Ten addicts who began treatment in 2011 admitted a total of 13 robberies and bag snatches, 23 burglaries, 21 car-related thefts and more than 380 shoplifting thefts. It is estimated that crimes prevented as a result of treatment in 2011/12, numbered 95,000 with an estimated benefit to society of £17.9 million. The misery caused to addicts, their families and the victims of their crimes is incalculable.

Police figures show that overall crime fell in England and Wales for the year to September 2013 by 10%. Household crime related to vehicles and property was down 10%, while personal crime, including thefts from persons and violent crime, fell by 9%. The number of sexual offences recorded increased by 17%. This followed the dreadful Savile revelations. It would seem that there is now a greater willingness on the part of victims of sexual crime to come forward. Recent claims that police have “massaged” the crime figures to make them look better have obscured the picture, but *The Crime Survey*, which is independent of the police, suggests that there has been a reduction. It is expected that when the statistics for Scotland are published they will reveal a similar downward trend.

The prison population in Scotland in 2010/11 was 7,853. Prisoners suspected or known to have a drugs problem undergo an addiction prevalence test on arrival. 1,343 tests were carried out and 73% were positive for illegal drug use, including illegal use of prescribed drugs. Of 735 addiction prevalence tests carried out on prisoner release, 17% were positive for illegal drug use. Prisoners are offered treatment for addiction and one-to-one motivational support sessions are given.

It should also be noted that many crimes go unreported for a variety of reasons, one of which seems to be a public perception that the police downgrade crime and do not take sufficient interest in what they categorise as minor offences.

Whatever is revealed by the official statistics, theft, violence and other transgressions of God’s law, are rebellion against God and a lack of love for our neighbour. Paul said that the works of the flesh are manifest but the fruit of the Spirit is love. He exhorted the Corinthians to “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God” (1 Corinthians 15:34). And there we have the root of it!

CONCLUSION

The nation of Scotland has had great privileges since the Reformation and is now in the process of casting off the knowledge of God. Multitudes in our land are in great spiritual and moral darkness and rush along the broad road which leads to eternal destruction, blind to their danger and rejoicing in their iniquity. Many are filled with enmity towards the truth and towards anything that savours of the gospel, deceiving themselves with dreams of atheism and evolution as reliable answers to the Bible and its claims. Children grow up in Scotland not only having never heard of John Knox, the *Shorter Catechism* and the Sabbath, but having never heard of Christ, the Bible and salvation from sin. The urgency with which this gross darkness ought to stir the Church of God to prayer and duty cannot be over emphasised. Those who possess the gospel and who have the means to send it or ensure that it is sent to those who are their neighbours, acquaintances and fellow-citizens are bound to seek to be serviceable to the interests of Christ's cause. The Lord alone can give the increase to the small efforts made in His Name to spread that gospel in Scotland and while we may yet become weaker and smaller before the tide turns, we firmly believe that,

“God in His glory shall appear,
When Sion He builds and repairs.
He shall regard and lend His ear
Unto the needy's humble pray'rs.”

(Psalm 102:16-17, second version, metrical)

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

THE Committee would use this opportunity to remind the people of the Church of the spiritual danger of breaking the Sabbath Day and becoming unnecessarily involved in the things of the world during the Lord's Day.

Tracts

The following tracts are now ready to be published in the coming year:

- *The Sabbath and You? A tract for visitors*
- *The Duty of Parents regarding the Sabbath*
- *The State Must Keep the Sabbath*
- *The Sabbath and Your Legal Rights*
- *I Love the Lord's Day* – R. M. McCheyne

The following tracts are being worked on:

- *What is a work of Necessity and Mercy?*
- *The Duty of Children to Keep the Sabbath*
- *The Duty of Employees*

Letters

The Committee has endeavoured to continue to widen the number of Sabbath-breaking activities addressed. This has often proved difficult, as the only point of contact in about a third of events is an email address.

The following letters were issued:

Festivals

- Edinburgh International Science Festival
No response
- Mendelssohn on Mull
No response
- Edinburgh International Magic Festival
No response
- East Neuk Festival
No response
- St. Magnus International Festival
No response
- Edinburgh International Film Festival
No response
- Leith Festival
No response
- Glasgow West End Festival
No response
- Bloody Scotland Festival
No response
- Glasgow Comedy Festival
No response
- Winter Words Festival
Acknowledgment
- Glasgow Film Festival
No response
- The House Folk Festival
No response

Highland Games

The Committee would express its appreciation to Mrs. Susan Wallace, who brought the matter of the number of Highland Games taking place on the Sabbath to the attention of the Committee.

- Blair Atholl Gathering & Highland Games
No response
- Blairgowrie Highland Games
No response
- Bridge of Allan Highland Games
No response
- City of Aberdeen Highland Games
No response
- Cortachy Highland Games
No response
- Crieff Highland Gathering
No response
- Gourock Highland Games
No response
- Kelburn Castle Highland Games
No response
- Kilmore & Kilbride Highland Games
No response
- Lochaber Highland Games
No response
- Mallaig & Morar Highland Games
Acknowledgment
- Marckinch Highland Games
No response
- Montrose Highland Games
No response
- Perth Highland Games
No response
- St. Andrews Highland Games
No response
- Stirling Highland Games
No response
- Strathmore Highland Games
No response

Sport

The only positive aspect to Sport and Sabbath Observance was the move of Scottish Premier League to play fewer games than usual on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, the Committee agreed to write to individual players of clubs playing on the Sabbath with the intention of bringing the importance of Sabbath observance before their conscience.

- World Championship of Ping Pong
No response

Marketing emails

Sabbath trading has reached such a level that we fear that only an outpouring of the Spirit of God in the nation can bring it to an end. However, the Committee feels that that does not prevent them seeking to witness against it. One aspect of Sabbath trading is the unnecessary sending out of marketing emails on the Sabbath. The Committee, therefore, began writing to some companies who participate in sending marketing emails on the Sabbath.

- Coopers of Stratford
No response
- John Lewis plc.
No response
- MacDonald Hotels
No response
- Simply Supplements
No response
- Suttons Seeds
No response
- The Works Stores Ltd.
Acknowledgment
- Waterstones
No response

In conclusion, the Committee would again ask local congregations for information concerning Sabbath issues in their own area.

JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod

OVER the year under review, the Committee has continued to attend to the duties laid upon it by the Synod. This has embraced the appointment of staff, both temporary and permanent, matters relating to the John Tallach High

School and the five primary schools which remain under mission control, the Mbumba Mission Hospital and the Thembiso Children's Home. It is, we hope, with thankfulness to the Most High, that we report to the Synod that these institutions have proved themselves to be useful "handmaids to the Gospel". The hospital now operates under a local Management Committee and the feasibility of forming similar committees to manage the John Tallach High School and the Thembiso Home, respectively, is being currently looked into. This year, as in the past, we have to acknowledge the financial help and support provided by the Mbumba Zending in Holland. Some members of the Board are expected to attend the meeting of Synod, but, sadly, on this occasion, its Chairman for many years – Ds. Tj. de Jong – will not be one of them as he is ill and confined to his home. Over the years Ds. de Jong proved himself to be a true friend of our Church and its mission work in Africa. We wish him well in every sense of the term.

Zimbabwe

We are thankful to report that all our ministers have been sustained in health over the year, the Rev. A. B. MacLean at Ingwenya, the Rev. S. Khumalo at Bulawayo and the Rev. M. Mloyi at Zenka. Early in December, the Rev. N. Sibanda was ordained and inducted to the Mbumba congregation. We wish him well in following in the footsteps of his predecessor there, namely, the Rev. Petros Mzamo, who was a faithful minister of Christ, one who has left a fragrant memory behind him. We shall have before us individual reports from these ministers which will indicate the measure of success or otherwise which attended their labours. Mashonaland has no settled minister and we hope and pray that the Lord will provide a labourer for that part of the harvest field now vacant since the lamented death of the Rev. Z. Mazvabo. Our brethren in Zimbabwe have much travelling to do in visiting and taking services at the various outstations under their charge and we pray that they may be preserved in doing so.

At **Ingwenya**, the John Tallach High School continues to flourish and on the list of schools (throughout the whole of Zimbabwe) drawn up in order of excellence it is rated number four. This is a remarkable achievement in view of the isolated location of the school and the nature of its catchment area. It is, no doubt, a tribute to the diligence, dedication and skill of the whole membership of the teaching staff, but more especially, we believe, to the zeal and devotion to duty of the Headmaster, Mr. B. Ncube and his Deputy, Miss N. B. MacLean. The Synod will wish to congratulate them on this achievement which is all the more noteworthy in view of the fact that pupils are instructed in the doctrines and practice of the Christian faith and to an extent that makes the John Tallach High School a rare institution, not only in Africa but in other lands also, as far as our knowledge goes.

At the Head Office in **Bulawayo**, we have the Mission Administrator, Mr. Melusi Mpofo, and his staff, attending to their duties in an exemplary manner. As a result of the changes being introduced at Mbumba Hospital, resulting in

the setting up of rural clinics, Mr. Mpofu's duties have been increased. He oversees their construction and attends to all the preparatory work necessary in order to get them up and running. Mr. Hugh MacKenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, visits Zimbabwe from time to time, as necessary, attending to the duties assigned to him and performing them in the competent and faithful manner to which we have now come to be so accustomed. He keeps a watchful eye on any construction work in progress, the expenditure involved, and plays the major part in the drawing up of the annual budget which is now every year submitted to the Mbuma Zending Board for their information.

At **Thembiso**, the children continue to be very well cared for by the Superintendent, Mr. Busiso Maphala, and his staff. The re-organisation of the Home into family units continues to work well. Children who have had a troubled start to their lives are now found in an environment where they are instructed in the Word of God and have the "godliness which is profitable unto all things" commended to them. We are grateful to Miss Margaret MacAskill for her continuing interest in staff-training.

The **Mbuma Hospital** has now been providing medical and nursing care for over fifty years and the passing of that milestone was celebrated by the assembling of a large gathering of people within the compound on the ninth day of January. This was arranged by the hospital staff and it is gratifying to know that not a few came from Scotland and Holland to be present on the occasion. The Committee was represented by the Rev. J. R. Tallach and an account of the commemoration, from his pen, printed in the March issue of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* is reproduced after the Mbuma Hospital report on pp. 54-56. As already mentioned, the hospital is now operating under a Management Committee and the implementing of the plan to set up rural clinics will, hopefully, reduce the burden of work borne by the doctor and her staff. All being well, the first of these clinics will be in full operation at Lutsha in the not too distant future. Meantime, as was true when last year's report was written, Dr. A. Snoek and the Nursing Sisters – W. Geurtsen and G. Wjingaarden – continue self-denyingly to work long hours, at times far beyond the call of duty.

Kenya

The Committee informed the Synod last year of its decision to close the mission in Kenya and the reasons why that decision was taken. The Synod decided to instruct the Zimbabwe Presbytery to submit to it proposals in regard to the future of the Sengera congregation and there the matter rests. The Committee requested the Rev. K. M. Watkins to write an account of the situation in Kenya (as it then was) for the guidance of the Zimbabwe Presbytery. Mr. Watkins continues to negotiate the possible transfer of church land to representatives of those who still continue to meet and, as far as is known, hold services following the pattern of worship established among them when the mission was extant.

Conclusion

The Committee, alas, is not able to report a revival of the Lord's work in Africa on a scale that might be regarded as heralding the coming of His kingdom. We are able to say that the Gospel is preached and that in carrying out the duties assigned us by the Synod, we endeavour to look to Him who is able to pour water upon the thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. We deeply appreciate the unstinting help of our Dutch friends and solicit the prayers of the Lord's people among them as well as in our own United Kingdom. We are encouraged to turn His promises into petitions. "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth, O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah."

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. A. B. MacLean

THE frequency of promises recurring to the mind is an encouragement to faith in the midst of unbelief. The promise quietens unbelief and brings a confidence in future blessings, however dark the day is. The nature of the promise also gives light on the present day. In a day of massive religiosity that will not survive death and the day of judgment, it is encouraging that, however difficult to discern, the true fruit will remain.

The expansion of Pentecostal churches continues relentlessly. Many are led by nationally prominent individuals who prefix to their names the office of prophet or apostle. The nation hangs on their every utterance. It is extremely disappointing to discover a person from an FP background claiming to be a prophet. The young are said to be captivated by such persons. The reason given for this is that they prefer the form of worship to what is in the mainstream churches. The form of worship is skilfully packaged to appeal to the natural man. It is entertainment. There is no reverence and godly fear. It is good to be able to say that young people in our church are not carried away with this dissimulation. It is regularly preached against.

The regular supply at Ingwenya and associated stations continued. Four communions were held during the year. At Ingwenya the communions are in March and September. The Cameron communion is held in July. The Nyati communion is held in November. This year an elderly lady was accepted as a communicant at Nyati.

My thanks are due to the elders for their continued assistance and support during the year. Thanks are also due to Rev. S. Khumalo and Rev. M. Mloyi for their assistance at the Ingwenya communions in March and September.

"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

JOHN TALLACH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

IN the Lord's kind providence, 2013 was a year of amazing success for John Tallach School, when the school reached the number 4 position nationally for ZIMSEC "O" Level results with a pass rate of 96.15%. The first "A" level results for the school were published, recording an overall pass rate of 100% in both the ZIMSEC and Cambridge examinations. Several pupils also achieved notable personal success: one boy and one girl were the top pupils in Zimbabwe for Combined Science and Literature in English respectively in the Cambridge "O" Level examinations in November 2013. Another boy has recently won first place in Zimbabwe for the Black History Month Essay Competition sponsored by Education USA. Three pupils have reached the final stage of selection for the African Leadership Academy scholarship. They are among 400 finalists from across the whole of Africa from whom 100 places will be awarded. Already one pupil from last year is studying with ALA under the scholarship programme. Another two pupils from last year's Form 6 group are in the final stages of the USAP scholarship selection process for University entrance in the USA, one of whom hopes to succeed in gaining entrance to Princeton University. One former pupil of the school is already at Princeton under the USAP scholarship programme. While it is undoubtedly gratifying to see the reward of the hard work which goes on day by day at the school, yet it is disappointing that, as far as we can see, "the one thing needful" is of no concern to most.

The children are very privileged to be thoroughly exposed to the Word of God during their time at school. The weekly prayer meeting is incorporated into the school timetable and so is attended by all pupils and teachers. On Sabbath Days, the pupils all attend the 2 main church services with the Ingwenya congregation and there is a Sabbath evening service especially for the boarding pupils. Sabbath School for all the pupils is held on Sabbath mornings. The Sabbath School programme has continued as in previous years, apart from separating the Form 6 groups from the Form 4 group: the combination was not suitable so Form 6 report for Sabbath School at an earlier time than the rest of the school. The Bible teaching programme remains unchanged with all pupils in the school receiving Bible instruction on 4 days out of 5 during the school week. Worship is held in the dining hall twice daily at the first and last meals of the day and all the children do the Scripture and Catechism exercises.

Staffing

One teacher left the school staff at the end of last year but she was replaced with a qualified teacher in time for the beginning of Term 1 this year. Four teachers were on leave during Term 1 and Mrs. Nyoni started her maternity leave in the middle of March. Temporary replacements were appointed for all

of these posts. The parents' committee is still enhancing the salaries of all the teachers so this helps to maintain the stability of the staffing.

Two new posts were added to the ancillary staff who are all paid from parents' funds. A full time librarian has been appointed so that the Form 6 pupils can have access to the Library during their study periods. We were delighted to appoint Mr. Charles Dube who was on the teaching staff for many years before leaving for other employment in 2008. A school bursar was also appointed to take over the accounting duties in the school office. This is a long overdue post made necessary by the reduced number of expatriate staff at the school.

Pupils

The school roll now stands at 615 pupils: 41 of whom are day pupils and 574 are boarders. There are 297 boys and 318 girls ranging in age from 12 to 18 years. The Resource Unit with the specialist teacher caters for 3 boys and 1 girl with varying degrees of visual impairment: one boy is completely blind. Sadly one boy who belonged to the Unit and who was in Form 2 last year passed away after years of poor health.

While most of the children are focussed on their studies and give few serious problems, there are always a few who are primarily interested in mischief and it was a disappointment this year to discover a group of Form 3 boys involved in a case of serious indiscipline: 4 of the boys are to be removed from the boarding school.

“O” Level Results

ZIMSEC (Zimbabwe Examinations Council)

2013's pass rate was 96.15%, taking the school to the number 4 position nationally, which is an astonishing achievement. The school was again number 1 in the Matabeleland “O” Level league table but this year the schools in the number 2, 3 and 4 positions all improved their percentage pass rates, which is a welcome development.

Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	86.66%	History	100.00%
Agriculture	76.92%	Integrated Science	86.92%
Bible Knowledge	87.59%	Literature in English	90.54%
Biology.....	100.00%	Mathematics.....	73.85%
English Language	98.45%	Ndebele.....	100.00%
Fashion & Fabrics.....	76.92%	Physical Science	90.63%
Geography.....	89.42%	Woodwork	92.31%

Five pupils scored 9 As and 5 had 8 As. A total of 32 pupils had 5 or more A passes and only 7 out of a total of 130 candidates did not manage to get a full certificate. Notably there were 107 As in Ndebele and 101 As in History.

CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)

Despite the high cost of the Cambridge Examinations, at \$80 per subject, there was an increase in enrolment in 2013 with 27 pupils registering. Pass rates were as follows:

Accounts	75.00%	Literature in English.....	100.00%
Bible Knowledge	88.50%	Mathematics.....	81.50%
English	96.30%	Science.....	100.00%
Geography.....	86.95%		

Across the group there were 27 A* (12 of which were for Bible Knowledge), 15 As, and 49 Bs. John Tallach School had the top candidate in Zimbabwe for Combined Science and also for Literature in English.

“A” Level Results

ZIMSEC

The first “A” Level results were very encouraging with a 100% overall pass rate. The individual subject percentages seem very impressive but it needs to be remembered that this was a very small group of 8 pupils so the percentages are not meaningful:

Biology.....	87.50%	Mathematics.....	87.50%
Chemistry.....	100.00%	Physics.....	100.00%

CIE

In the Cambridge examinations the overall pass rate was again 100% with each of the 4 subjects scoring a 100% pass.

Finance

The school operates a very tight budget which was put under stress in 2013 by the expense of running the Science Department, so every pupil now pays a Science Levy which will help with the cost of running the department. The parents’ Finance Committee continued to meet monthly to supervise the expenditure of the school: the parents’ annual budget for last year was over \$700,000 US which is entirely raised from school fees. From this they pay for all direct school expenditure as listed in last year’s report: tuition and boarding expenses, examination expenses, sports expenses, vehicle expenses, all ancillary staff, enhancement of teachers’ pay, all repairs and maintenance to school buildings and teachers’ cottages. As usual, monthly contributions were made to the Mission for use of the Mission security staff, for the use of the driver on a daily basis and for the use of the generator. The total amount remitted to the Mission by John Tallach School from school funds in 2013 was \$15,416.72.

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

Developments

There was a reduction in the number of projects during 2013 due to financial constraints.

The 16-bedroomed Form 6 dormitory blocks were completed from Mission funds during the year. These comfortably house all of the Form 6 Science pupils with a few spare rooms. It is hoped that more bedrooms can be added on to the existing buildings if funds permit in the future. The Form 6 Science project has been so successful that it would be good to be able to expand the Form 6 provision to include other options, Commercial being the preferred first area of expansion.

Several developments were possible using school fees and the levies raised by the Parents' Committee:

1. There were no public toilet facilities at Ingwenya, which posed a problem during school functions to which parents and others were invited; e.g., visiting days and prizegiving day. Typically over 500 people can arrive at the Mission on these occasions and the staff toilets were not sufficient. The FIM committee therefore financed the building of 2 very smart toilet blocks each with 4 cubicles.
2. In Term 2 of 2013 a big painting programme was embarked on to complete the painting of the interiors of all classrooms and teachers' cottages. Curtains were also replaced in all the teachers' cottages. In February this year, 7 small fridges were purchased for the teachers' cottages, which means that all cottages now have a fridge, for which the teachers are very thankful.
3. The proposal to sink a new borehole for the school did not come to fruition as the local council did not grant permission for it. Constantly following up the council over a 2-year period was very demoralising but ZINWA (Zimbabwe National Water Authority), which controls the dams in the country, came to the rescue by offering a directly pumped pipeline from the nearby Ingwenya Dam. This is a much more economical option than the sinking of a new borehole. The connection should be completed in time for Term 2 this year, by which time the dry season will have begun.
4. Currently the school dormitories have a total of 14 soakaways, which attract heavy penalties in licences from the Environmental Management Agency. Plans are in hand to merge these into 4 new soakaways so as to reduce the points of effluent discharge into the ground. It is also hoped to expand the water harvesting and water recycling projects already in place.
5. Communication links at the school have been very challenging since around 2004 with no landlines and poor cell phone networks. The Mission did have a satellite internet service but, being confined to the

Mission houses, this was not readily available to the school. So, school funds were used to acquire a wireless satellite connection which covers the school administration offices, the school library and computer laboratory, and all the houses. Although slow, it is a more reliable service than the previous Mission one.

6. Frequent ZESA cuts are interrupting the work of the school administration offices, the learning facilities in the computer lab and the internet facilities for research in the school library. Security at night is compromised during ZESA outages as there is no alternative power supply for the security lighting. The possibility of installing solar power at the offices and the computer lab is being investigated. A planned project is in place to install some solar-powered external security lighting.

Conclusion

We again wish to thank our donors – especially the Church in Scotland and Mbumba Zending – for their faithful and generous interest over the years and we wish to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Lord for all His kind providences to us throughout the year.

We urge all those who have an interest in the work of John Tallach School to remember the work at the Throne of Grace, praying especially for the prosperity of the Gospel among us. The school's motto is from Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Pray that it will be so for each of the children entrusted to our care in the Lord's holy providence.

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

IT'S wonderful how time is passing by. The year 2013 rose so bright, like the morning sun, and it has now set in the horizon. Wonderfully there is a Great One in control and ordering all things to take their course – Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth. All is for His glory, showing the sovereignty of His majesty.

The year had its constraints, as other years, but the Almighty God led us through by His powerful hand. So were the children of Israel in the wilderness: they had some enormous constraints but God led them through their afflictions and they finally reached the country they were destined to go to. He is not a failing God but mighty to save and a help in time of need. Blessed are they that trust in His name and for His help. Nahum, the prophet of God, says in 1:7: "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him."

This is the hope and the stronghold of the Lord's people as pilgrims in this wilderness of sin. They see no place of abode here but by faith they look for a better abode in Christ's bosom, as did poor Lazarus when he died and was comforted on Abraham's bosom – the heavenly mansions for the believers in Christ Jesus. To all who truly believe, this is a faithful promise from One whose lips speak no deceit. His testimonies are true and unchangeable and He is immutable in His decrees.

All places of worship were kept open for weekday prayer meetings and on Sabbath for services. I visited these places on a rotational basis with the help of ruling elders and deacons entrusted to carry out this great work of the Lord. I hope this year these places will be more often visited as I have the relief of no longer supplying Mbuma Stations as they have a resident Minister as a wonderful provision from the Lord. He has heard the prayers of His people: "Send forth labourers."

In June 2013 one of our ruling elders, Mr. Dame Sibanda, was accompanied by Levi Ndlovu to supply at Binga. The trip was successful and they managed to visit the three places of worship there when the turnout was good. The road to Nsenka is bad but by a four-wheel drive car it's better. As there is little care of this road, if not attended to soon, no car will be able to use the road. While I was the interim moderator for Mbuma I was alternating the stations to go to supply Binga. In March it was Mbuma, June Zenka and in September the Nkayi elders. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed twice at Zenka – February and August – as usual and baptism was dispensed at Zenka when one member asked baptism for her children.

Mabayi and Fudu congregations are working hard to erect structures for worship so that they will be independent from the classrooms. At Mabayi the structure is presently roofed but needs plastering, floors, beam filling and a roof to the porch. The Fudu structure is at slab level, but now it is time to continue where it was left. It is hoped that these structures might be finished by the end of the year, Lord willing.

At the time of writing this report the rains have been very good since 5th December last year to date. The crops are doing well but roads have been seriously damaged, making travelling difficult. Bridges have been swept away by heavy floods and some of pole and dug huts and other property destroyed. It is now very hard for me to access my home from Simbo to Zenka because of the eroded road.

One of my ruling elders, Mr. Douglas Ngwenya, is not well because of asthma. He cannot come out for worship or take usual duties because of ill health. We visit him at his home for worship and comfort. One deacon, Frank Dliwayo, lost his wife, having been very unwell for the past eight months. We pray for strengthening from the Lord to console the bereaved families.

The prayer of Moses, the man of God, in Psalm 90:7 is worth quoting: "For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled"; also verse 12: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Our prayer and desire is for the downpouring of the Holy Spirit on

our Land that our people will turn to God and believe in the Lord Jesus and that the Lord would open their hearts and increase, by grace, their giving towards the cause of Christ.

There are Bible lessons given to the congregation at Zenka after the prayer meeting. We are going through the *Confession of Faith* presently and beginning a study of Louis Berkhof's *A summary of Christian Doctrine*, with elders and deacons, in order to enrich them with sound doctrine and discuss sermon preparation, all God willing. The Mission Administrator is now in the roll of a ruling elder at Zenka and is useful on the Lord's Day, travelling in his car, when he has a duty at one of the stations.

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

"IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High" (Psalm 92:1).

The Lord has been good to lead us through the year in His kindness. We are unworthy of the least of God's mercies but He cares for His creatures. Thus the wonderfulness of God in ruling His creation.

In the providence of God the spiritual work has been carried on in the six Nkayi stations, weekday prayer meetings and services on the Lord's Day. These places have been visited regularly with the help of the ruling elders and deacons. We pray that those in these congregations would grow in the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper was dispensed twice at Nkayi congregation in January and June and once at Donsa Dam in May, as usual. Two men were ordained as deacons – Mr. Benjamin Tshabalala of Nkayi congregation and Mr. Miros Ncube of Nkuba congregation – while Mr. Leonard Nsimango of Donsa Dam congregation was ordained as an elder. Two women were baptized at Nkuba.

Nkuba congregation now has a place of worship independent from the school classroom. They have managed to source wood from the local timber company to make some benches – their own effort being commendable.

The Nkayi congregation is starting to build lodging houses separate from the classrooms for use during communion seasons. It's better to have one dwelling place rather than changing rooms each communion which inconveniences us. We pray for the strength and encouragement of this congregation that they may complete this project and members contribute their labour and cash towards it.

The Manomano congregation has started to mould cement blocks for the construction of the church building but the pace is very slow. Mr. Stanford Mpofu, the ruling elder at Nkayi, helps the Manomano elder to mobilize the congregation in the moulding of bricks, as Mr. Lwandle Ndlovu, the elder, is the only man in that congregation.

Mathetshaneni congregation is made up of elderly men and women. As they pass on, due to old age and ill health, the size of the congregation has gone down. There is now one active male member and three women and about nine adherents. Who knows but that the Lord may draw some to the fold in His own time. This congregation has a nice church building with a surrounding fence.

Mathendele is one of the smaller congregations, made up of young people – all adherents. Elders and deacons take turns to visit it fortnightly. They worship in one of the school classrooms. One young man has been baptized with his three children. We pray for a spiritual movement in this young congregation, if it pleases the Lord.

The old workhorse, Mr. James B. Mpofo, is physically fit but has dim eyesight. He can wonderfully preach when one reads the Bible for him and the Lord helps him to deliver the message to the listeners for their spiritual nourishment. He is still very sound and doctrinal at question meetings during the communion season.

We are starting to meet at Nkayi once a month to go through Louis Berkhof's *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* and also discuss sermon preparation. O that the Lord would guide us in this spiritual work. May His Name be exalted. As the apostle says in Ephesians 3:16: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man."

ZVISHAVANE MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

ANOTHER year has passed and the New Year has begun. We are very thankful to the Lord for His grace toward us. Zvishavane and its congregations are located in a drought-prone province of Zimbabwe but this year we had good rains, although they came a bit late. Those who did not despair, despite the fact that the early planted crops were a total failure, but replanted, will get a little or better harvest, of which we are thankful to the Most High. Also because of the heavy rains, the roads were damaged and are in a bad state.

Services continue to be held every Sabbath at all the stations, mainly conducted by elders and deacons. Six communions are held every year – two in Chiedza in May and November, one in New Canaan in January, one at the new church in Zvishavane town in August, Maware in April, and Munaka in September.

As the interim moderator, I try to visit the congregation at least once a month. I am very grateful to the elders and deacons who keep the doors open every Sabbath and on weekday prayer meetings. Three elders were elected and ordained to the office: Mr. A. Sibanda (Makovere), Mr. P. Mapuranga (Maware), and Mr. T. Mwedzi (Zvishavane urban). Also elected to the office

of deacon were Mr. S. Mazvabo, Mr. C. Matara, Mr. M. Matinhure and Mr. T. Dube. The ordination took place at the new church in Zvishavane town.

It is sad that Mr. A. Tasaranago, elder at Munaka, was struck by blindness and deafness. The burden is now on the two home missionaries, Mr. N. Siziba and Mr. J. Mashavakure, who now travel long distances to supply the Munaka congregation. We are thankful that the mission bought them motorbikes, which makes travelling a lot easier, although the state of the roads is so bad that it shortens their lifespan. The home missionaries also visit other congregations in the three districts, namely Zvishavane, Mberengwa and Masvingo.

The church building in Zvishavane town is now complete and electrified. We are very thankful to our overseas friends for their financial support, the field committee, and the Mission administration for implementation and supervision of this project. The first communion in the new church was held in August 2013. We are thankful that during the course of the year there were some added to the communion roll and the sacrament of baptism was also administered.

The voice of death did not spare us as a congregation. It shows how quickly we pass through this world. Here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come. Our prayer unto the Lord is for us to be strengthened by Him so as to hold fast the true doctrine which we have received, by His grace, according to His Word. "Therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

In conclusion, we would like to thank the church and friends overseas and our Dutch friends for their materials, financial support and, above all, their prayers for the prosperity of Zion.

"The harvest is truly 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

BY the will of God I am settled at Mbuma and was ordained and inducted in December 2013. The congregation had been without a settled minister since the retirement in 2006 of the late Rev. P. Mzamo. Rev. Mzamo had laboured in the Lord's vineyard for close on 50 years and Rev. M. Mloyi had been the interim moderator since the retirement of Rev. Mzamo.

There are fifteen preaching stations. I have so far managed to visit most of these for supply. Due to persistent rains I have not visited the stations beyond the Shangani River, due to flooding and the poor condition of the roads. I am indebted to the elders and other men who assisted with supply on Sabbath and weekly prayer meetings.

We were saddened by the passing of Mr. S. P. Ncube, who was one of the long-serving elders of the congregation. He attended the ordination and induction and seemed to be well but took ill the following day and was admitted to hospital. He did not recover and departed a few days later “to be with Christ, which is far better”.

The Mission employs three catechists who conduct worship for mission staff and visitors every day in the morning and evening. Worship is also held with patients and relatives in the hospital wards. Reading of the Holy Word and discussions are held with the various groups of mission staff. The catechists also teach Sabbath schools at some of the stations. They are an integral part of the hospital outreach teams. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season . . .” (2 Timothy 4:2).

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

THE year 2013 has passed – another year of which we will have to give account to the Lord.

Sad and joyous events followed each other. Very sad were the losses of lives among the patients – humanly speaking, often avoidable deaths. Avoidable, because diagnosis and treatment were available but patients did not want to come for them or avoidable, because as hospital staff we diagnosed certain conditions too late.

Thankfully, on the other hand, there were many occasions when we were enabled to deliver good services. The commitment and team spirit which prevails under the staff is something to be very grateful for.

Encouraging were the meetings which were held with the Lutsha community in preparation of the new clinic, under the guidance of Mr. M. Mpofu, the Mission Administrator. The enthusiasm of the community members is promising.

During the second half of the year we started making preparations for the 50-year celebration which was held on 9th January 2014. As a present to the staff we offered trips to Great Zimbabwe and Victoria Falls, where we had very joyous times.

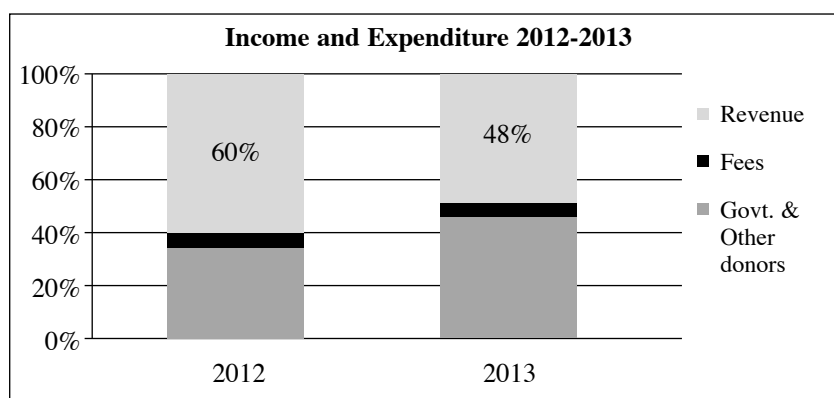
Administration and finance

One of the goals, concluded from the Options Appraisal in 2012, was to reduce the overall running cost by transferring care from 2nd line to 1st line.

For the time being, however, as long as the new clinics are being constructed and not yet operational, the trend is still that running costs are increasing. Nevertheless, thanks to the Ministry of Health (who launched the

Results Based Finance programme in 2012) and other donors, we managed to reduce the dependence on the Mission financial contribution from \$404,552 in 2012 to \$392,783 in 2013.

The percentage of Mission contribution to the overall expenditure was reduced from 60% to 48%. This reduction was mainly due to the transfer of Mission-paid staff to the Government payroll, the Results Based Finance (RBF) fund and donations received from other donors.



The Health Centre Committee (HCC), under the guidance of Mr. M. Mpofu, met 7 times in the course of 2013. Useful comments to improve the quality of services were received from the community and, in collaboration with the HCC members, the US \$52,080.55 of RBF subsidies were allocated to the needed areas.

The following other donations were received in the course of the year:

Dutch Embassy	US \$31,500	Electrification of Hospital, School and Church for connection to ZESA
World Vision		Large amount of hospital consumables, cupboards, electric autoclave and fridge for EPI
UNDPA	US \$21,000	Extension of OI-Clinic Pharmacy

Maintenance and capital projects

No Mission money was allocated for Capital projects in 2013. However, two projects were executed with the help of donors:

1. The Dutch Embassy funded the Re-electrification of the Hospital, School and all other buildings on the Mission in preparation for the connection to ZESA. The project was greatly under-budgeted, which we solved by using maintenance money and RBF funds. Quite excited we were, when in September 2013, the Mission was connected to the grid. The

excitement, however, very soon changed into irritation, when it was discovered that our entire water system was disrupted by ZESA, which resulted in many shorter or longer episodes of water shortages during the subsequent months. Besides this, the ZESA electricity supply soon turned out to be very unreliable. Besides this, our own generator was not reliable anymore but in December we received a new 30kVa generator from Mission funds.

2. The UNDP (a branch of the United Nations) funded and constructed the extension of our OI-Clinic Pharmacy, which created a very spacious and useful back store.

Smaller projects were done using general maintenance and RBF funds:

- Re-roofing and re-thatching for 6 huts in New Makhaya, while 5 other huts were partly re-thatched.
- All luggage areas behind the hospital wards were provided with burglar bar doors to increase the security of patients' property.
- Construction of a toilet block and an extra room in Blue Cottage, an outside kitchen at Old Isolation and a barrier door between the wash house and Theatre.

General upgrading and painting was done for the major part of the hospital, the manse, one of the teachers' cottages and one of the staff houses.

The borehole with the mechanical pump which collapsed in 2012 has not been fixed yet.

The general condition of our vehicle fleet (lorry, three cars and tractor) has been good throughout the year, except for the three motorbikes. Two of them were written off because they were beyond repair.

Service of the X-ray machine and a number of IT and other problems were attended to by Johan Verhaar, who visited Mboma in June 2013.

Staffing

The vacant post of Catechist, after Mr. N. Mpofu's death, was filled in June 2014 by Mr. J. Magunya from the Ingwenya congregation.

Mr. M. Ncube, the Administrator at Mboma, was unable to continue with his job and left Mboma in March 2013. His tasks were temporarily taken over by other Management members and the Office clerks.

Due to a freeze of Nurses' posts in the Ministry of Health during the past year, it was not possible to get the much-needed qualified staff unless the Mission would pay their salaries. With the Mission policy of reducing the salary bill in place this, however, was not an option.

When the freeze for posts in government institutions was lifted in the beginning of 2013, we were therefore very pleased to get a share of this: 7 newly qualified RGNs started in May 2013. In July one of them returned to Nkayi because of disciplinary issues.

We were very sad when we lost Zwelibanzi Ndlovu, one of our Nurse Aides, on 22nd September 2013. His sudden death shocked the entire community.

In the course of the year Mrs. G. Gumpo and Mr. S. Mpofu retired. Mrs. Gumpo had been working with the Mission as a General Hand for 23 years. Mr. Mpofu was employed as a Nurse Aide, but his vast experience in the medical field made him able to perform at the level of a qualified nurse. We are grateful for the work which they have done during their years in Mbuma.

Two PCNs and two Mission gatemmen transferred to be able to stay with their families: PCN S. Sinyele and Mr. D. Ncube left Mbuma for Zenka and PCN M. Ncube and Mr. M. Mloyi came from Zenka to Mbuma.

Dr. A. Snoek, Sr. W. Geurtsen and Sr. G. van Wijngaarden went on furlough in March, August and October respectively.

All effort to transfer staff members from the Mission payroll to the Government payroll, resulted in a change of 6%.

	Government payroll	Mission payroll
2012	54 (59%)	38 (41%)
2013	61 (65%)	33 (35%)

The overview of staff at the end of 2013 was as follows:

	Government paid (Mbuma establishment)	Government paid (deployed from other institutions)	Mission paid	Total
Catechist	–	–	3	3
GMO	1	–	–	1
RGN/SCN	2	8	2	12
EHT	–	1	–	1
PCN	7	12	–	19
Counsellor	3	–	1	4
Microscopist	2	–	–	2
Office Clerk	1	–	1	2
Clerk	2	–	2	4
Field Orderly	1	–	3	4
Nurse Aide	9	–	3	12
Foreman	1	–	–	1
Storekeeper	1	–	–	1
Driver	–	–	2	2
Gatemen	3	–	3	6
General Hand	7	–	13	20
Total	40	21	33	94

Besides the above mentioned, we received locum services from 2 RGNs and 3 PCNs.

Training of staff was continued. In-house refresher courses were given on Non-Communicable diseases, Eye conditions, Shock, MDR-TB and Family Planning, besides the weekly Case-presentations.

23 staff members attended 12 workshops and training sessions, organised by the Ministry of Health, ZACH or other donors.

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

2 Nurse Aides graduated for their Counsellor Training and 1 Nurse Aide continued with the Human Resources Training.

2 General Hands obtained a driver license. 1 General Hand and 1 Care taker from the Mbumba Primary School went to the Electricity training at West Gate and obtained a certificate.

The following visitors stayed with us for a longer or shorter period and made themselves very useful: Petra Beukers, Harriet Kinderman, Magda van Lagen, Robert Ross, Ali Buijert, Mr. & Mrs. and Huib van de Beek, Teus and Albert de Koning.

Hospital services

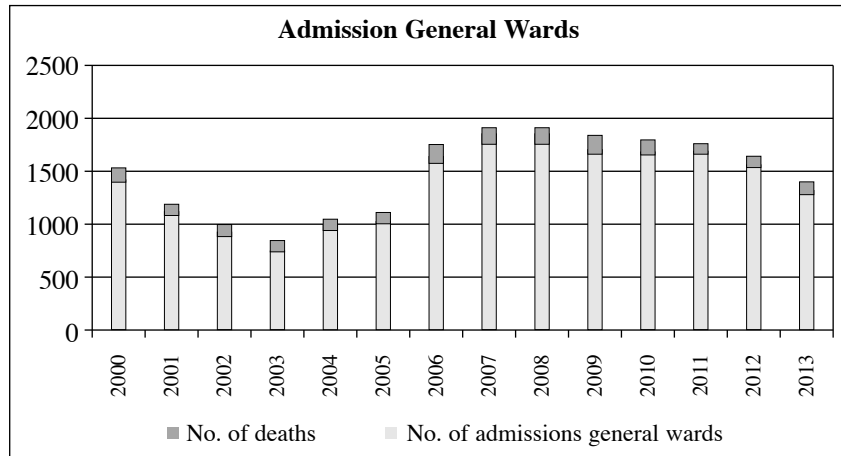
	2012	2013
Admissions	2,348	2,190
General	987	884
Paediatrics	436	384
Maternity	861	837
Neonatal	64	85

Bed occupancy rate		
General	61.7%	60.4%
Paediatrics	80.6%	52.9%
Maternity	64.0%	76.4%

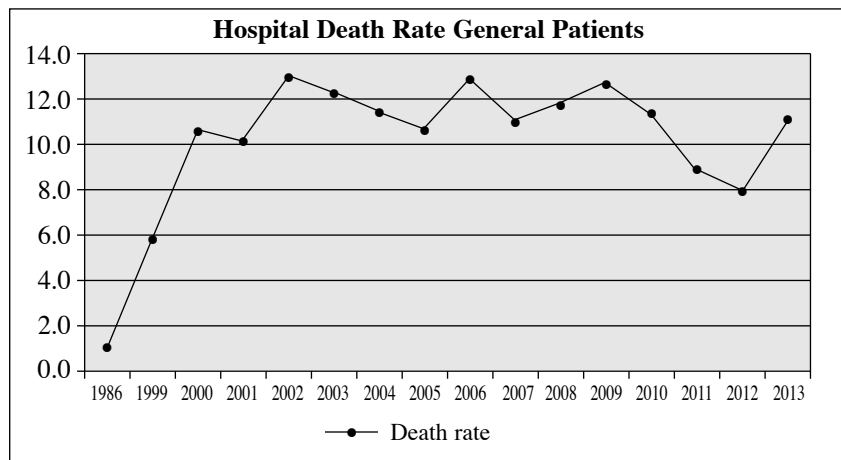
Deaths	131	153
General	96	120
Paediatrics	24	20
Early/Late Neonatal	11	10
Maternity	0	3

The number of patients with HIV, who are started on treatment as soon as they are eligible, is still increasing. This causes that the morbidity in the

community is going down, which gradually reduces the number of admissions, as shown in the graph below.



However, the number of deaths among the admitted patients did not reduce in 2013, which caused an increase in the death rate: from 7.9% in 2012 to 11% in 2013.



The majority of the hospital deaths is still in the age group 20-59 years (63%). Out of these deaths, 89% were HIV related. The majority of these patients are late-presenters:

Patients who have been denying their HIV status and present to the hospital only when already very ill, or

Patients who have been started on ART less than 3 months ago, but without being treated properly for opportunistic infections. They present at the hospital with full-blown TB or other disseminated diseases.

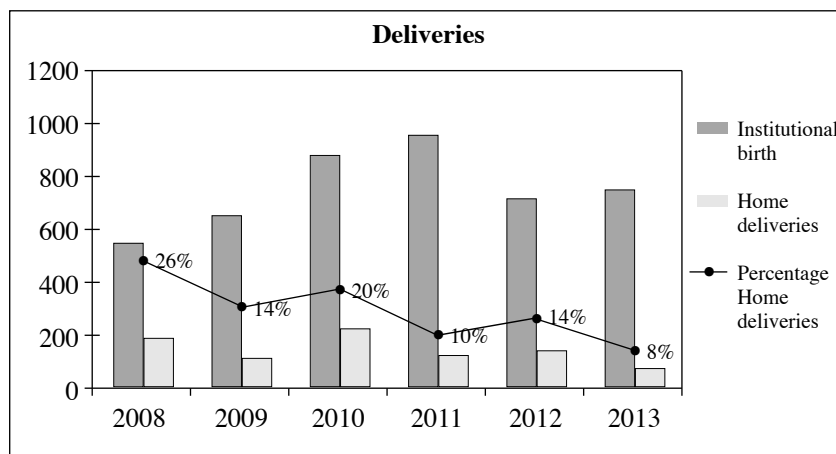
Births	2012	2013
Live births	762	767
Still births	7	6

2013	Hospital deliveries			Home deliveries			Total in catchment area
	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	TBA ¹	Other	Total	
	49	718	767	8	56	64	831

2013	Still births			Early Neonatal deaths			Maternal deaths		
	Fresh	Macerated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
	1	5	6	4	6	10	3	1	4

The number of institutional deliveries remained the same, while the number of home deliveries reduced by 6%.

The Still Birth and Early Neonatal mortality rate thankfully remained low, compared with the country rate. However, we had a very sad year concerning Maternal mortality: we lost 4 mothers. The causes of death for the 3 patients who died in the hospital were CVA² in HIV, Ruptured Ectopic pregnancy and Uterus Rupture. The patient in the community died because of Post Partum Haemorrhage in a retained placenta.



¹ TBA=Traditional Birth Attendant

² CVA=CerebroVascular Accident

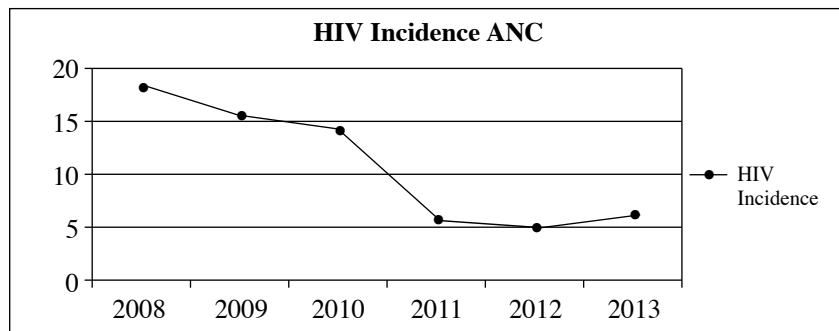
The Caesarean section rate was 4.5%. When the assisted deliveries are included, the figure reaches 13.2%, which is within the 5-15% range which applies to a Rural Hospital.

Theatre/Labour ward	2012	2013
Caesarean section	31	35
Assisted deliveries (Vacuum extractions and Symphysiotomies)	27	67

The Mother and Child Health department (MCH) continued to deliver its services in the hospital and community.

	2012	2013
ANC+PNC (Antenatal/Postnatal Clinic) attendances	4,108	2,958
CWC (Child Welfare Clinic) attendances	6,679	6,952

All pregnant ladies are tested for HIV and started on treatment when needed. This HIV incidence in pregnant ladies is regarded as a reliable indicator for the extent of the HIV epidemic. It is therefore very encouraging to see a decrease from 18.4% in 2008 to 6.1% in 2013 has taken place in our catchment area, most likely due to ART³ in combination with an extensive Behaviour Change Programme.



The digital X-ray machine, which was installed in 2012, continued to perform very well. 782 patients were served with much comfort and quality photos.

³ ART= AntiRetroviral Treatment

Radiology services	2012	2013
Number of X-rays taken	1,267	1,742
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	5,282	5,807
Number of HIV tests (excluding ANC)	1,697	2,147
Positivity rate	13%	11%

Besides the 5,807 laboratory test which were done in Mbumba, 167 sputums for sensitivity and 185 samples for PCR-HIV test were sent to St. Luke's Hospital and Harare respectively.

Out of the 167 sputum samples sent, 3 patients were found to be having Multi-Drug Resistant TB, an emerging challenge of the TB programme, whereby patients do not respond to normal TB drugs anymore, but need an extensive course of more than 20 months of treatment.

Environmental Health Department	2012	2013
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	341	264
Number of sputum +ve	32	45
Number of sputum -ve	226	147
Number of sputum not done	2	-
Extra pulmonary TB	34	29
Relapse	4	5
Re-treatment	41	38
Multi-Drug Resistant TB	-	3
Number of TB patients who are HIV positive	91%	78%
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	7	11
Water and sanitation hygiene programme – Number of toilets built	39	-

The yearly Indoor Residual Spraying was performed in Nkayi District, which proved to be successful. We only had 11 cases with confirmed malaria in 2013. Two of them passed away; the first patient due to a delay in being diagnosed at the local clinic and the second patient due to a delay in reaching the hospital.

The number of OPD visits for 2013 was 8,561, a 2% increase compared with 2012. The top 5 of acute and chronic diseases remained nearly the same and was as follows:

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

The OI-Clinic continued to deliver its services in the form of testing for HIV, screening of opportunistic infections, treatment with ART, besides teaching in the Behaviour Change Programme.

Out of the 2,549 patients started on ART, 312 patients died whilst on ART, giving a survival rate of 87.8%, which is above the expected 85%.

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2011	2012
Number of OIC visits	11,705	12,002
Number of patients started on ARTs till date	1,959	2,549
Number of patients who died while on ARTs till date	220	312
Number of patients transferred out	130	792
Number of patients continuing on treatment till date	1,651	1,445

The Home Based Care department continued with 167 Community workers and 14 newly trained who work as assistants.

For the first time the yearly Refresher Course was not conducted in the hospital, but in the community, whereby school premises were used during the holiday in August. Participation was good in all points and the trainees showed much interest in all lessons. Food was organised and prepared by other community members.

36 Community & Ward Health Team meetings and 12 Kraal head meetings were held in 2013 with good attendance at all 4 points. There was active participation from Kraal heads as compared to past years.

A one-day training was given on bike-riding to 90 CHBCWs, who had been active for over 5 years. They all passed the test and received a bike for use in visiting the patients at home

In the aim to reduce the workload of the Hospital HBC team a training of trainers (TOT) was done in the month of May, whereby 14 Community Home Based Care Workers were taught how to train and appraise other community workers.

Although our Ward Health Teams were revived in 2012, participation and performance was moderate. A training therefore was given to all 6 Ward Health Teams, where all different stakeholders were informed about their roles and responsibilities.

The contribution of the community to the hospital in the form of firewood and incentives for the CHBCWs continued as in previous years.

Our Community Based Care Programme forms the umbrella for the different activities in OI-Clinic, Home Based Care Department, Orphans Care programme and a major part of the work of the Catechists. It was set up in 2008 in co-operation with the community and aimed at the decrease of the morbidity and mortality of people living with HIV & AIDS, the improvement of the quality of life for vulnerable children & orphans and the increase of Bible knowledge in the community.

After 5 years, at the end of 2013, an evaluation was carried out.

Using 19 indicators, it was concluded that 68.4% of the set goals were reached. Although the impact of the Behaviour Change Programme and the Biblical teaching is difficult to assess, obvious changes have taken place as shown in the above mentioned decrease in “HIV incidence in ANC”.

Following the evaluation, recommendations were made and a new 5-year plan was drafted with special attention for male involvement.

The Library continued to be an important source of information for Hospital staff, children and Church attendants. We received a donation of 108 story and religious books for the hospital library, besides 306 Bible story books for the libraries at focal points. Several functional medical books were received from World Vision, of which every staff member got one. 14 educational books were bought locally and several publications were received from workshops. The computer lessons to interested staff members were continued once a week.

The different classes of the Sabbath school in Mbumba were well attended. The Sabbath schools in Simbo and Singwangombe were revived with the aid of Catechists, OI-Clinic staff and local church members.

Where much of the above concentrates on temporal matters and bodily needs, the Catechists continued to deliver the so-needed biblical edification, exhortation and comfort to patients, staff and community.

Looking back on 2013 it may fill us with humbleness that despite our many shortcomings the Lord enabled us to continue with the work in our different spheres. To Him be all glory. We would like to convey our sincere thanks for the support we received from the JFMC, Mbumba Zending and others in whatever form, and we would like to ask for the continuation of remembrance in prayers.

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL ANNIVERSARY VISIT

Rev. J. R. Tallach

ON Monday 6th January my wife Mairi and I left Scotland for Zimbabwe. The main reason for the journey was to represent the Foreign Missions Committee at the 50th anniversary of Mbumba Mission Hospital, though it had also been arranged that I would assist Rev. S. Khumalo, Bulawayo, at New Canaan communion.

On 9th January 2014, after months of planning by Dr. Snoek and her staff, around 400 gathered in a marquee pitched beside the Mbuma Church for the 50th anniversary of the Hospital. The usual 8.00 a.m. worship had been replaced by a worship which I took at 10.00 a.m., forming the beginning of proceedings. The passage read was from John 4 and I recalled that the late Rev. J. Fraser had chosen Mbuma as the place for a Mission because there was a good supply of water there. This served to highlight the fundamental nature of the Gospel in the running of these “handmaids” of the Gospel – medicine and education. Without the water of life there was no good news for lost sinners.

The Mission Administrator, Mr. M. A. Mpofu, introduced the guests from Zimbabwe, Holland and Scotland, welcoming all to the meeting. I then gave a brief history of the Hospital, emphasising especially the foundational work done by Mr. J. van Woerden, who had patients in various Mission buildings even before the hospital was built. I also acknowledged the generous support of the Dutch churches over the years, both in finance and personnel. Mr. Marange, on behalf of the Zimbabwean Ministry of Health, spoke warmly of the amount and quality of the work done at Mbuma and encouraged the staff to continue the good work. He recognised that the Government hospital at Nkayi was learning from Mbuma Hospital.

A letter was read by Mr. Barth, of the Mbuma Zending Committee, from Rev. de Jong, Chair of the Committee, in which he sent encouragement based on Psalm 41.4: “Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul.” This was followed by messages of greeting and exhortation from the Moderator of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church, Rev. N. M. Ross, and from Rev. J. MacLeod, Convener of the Foreign Missions Committee. Dutch friends and relatives sang Psalm 121:7-8 in Dutch to the company:

“The Lord shall keep thy soul; He shall
Preserve thee from all ill.
Henceforth thy going out and in
God keep for ever will.”

A tour of the Hospital followed, after which the meeting reconvened and Dr. Snoek, Medical Officer at Mbuma, spoke of a change of direction in their work in that local clinics would be set up throughout the area served by the Hospital. These clinics would come under the medical supervision of Mbuma. Arrangements for the first of these were already underway at Lutsha, a village 30 kms. from Mbuma. Rev. Mloyi, Zenka, gave a vote of thanks to all involved, quoting Psalm 127:1: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” The Rev. N. Sibanda, Mbuma, brought matters to a conclusion with prayer. Food was provided for all before dispersal.

Over the following Sabbath I took a service at Mbuma and Simbo and attended a Bible study at the Hospital in the afternoon, taken by Mr. Makhunya, one of the Hospital catechists.

On Monday, Mairi and I left the kindness and care of Dr. Snoek and the Mbuma staff and travelled to Ingwenya, where we were made equally

welcome by Miss Norma MacLean and Rev. Alasdair MacLean. On Thursday I travelled down to Zvishavane with Rev. S. Khumalo for the New Canaan communion while Mairi stayed at Ingwenya and helped with the Sabbath school. New Canaan is one of 9 stations in Mashonaland which were pastored by the late Rev. Z. Mazwabo. About 60 were in attendance at Zvishavane during the week, with well over 100 at the services on Sabbath and the singing was memorable. After the 8.00 a.m. service on Monday we returned to Bulawayo and so to Ingwenya for the night. The next day, Tuesday 21st January, after warm farewells at Bulawayo airport, we left for home and arrived safely the next day.

We would acknowledge the Lord's kindness and care over us and trust that the Dutch psalm has a wider and more enduring significance, "Henceforth thy going out and in God keep for ever will."

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

THE One that created all things by the Word of His power and to whom all things are possible has manifested Himself that He is God that ruleth the whole earth and all that is therein.

I write this report taking my memory back to the past year and its events. The talk of many people was on how things were going to be in the course of the year and the following one. It was a gloomy picture ahead as the city's supply dams were drying up, some having been de-commissioned. The future of Bulawayo was uncertain. After water restrictions were introduced it became a scarce commodity. When one went out to the countryside it was an eyesore because of the bareness that prevailed. Those that are spiritually minded were made to think of the spiritual barrenness which prevails in our generation. But the great God has made a great change this season. What I have been writing about cannot be traced today. The talk now is the beauty of creation. No more de-commissioning of dams, no more water restrictions – it is now the expectation of a good harvest this season.

All this change was from God's goodness in giving us rains that pounded upon the dry ground that the earth brought out this good. May our minds be taken beyond what we see because that is not all we need, but the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for spiritual prosperity, that as the Psalmist says: "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen" (Psalm 72:19).

Having said these few things on my observations, I come to my report on the Bulawayo congregation. There is a good reason for us to be thankful to the Most High that in His providence He has kept us in time of mercy to see yet another year in time, having piloted us through all the difficulties we encountered. As we journeyed through the year, the voice of death did not

spare us in the congregation. It was very loud when some, whom we sat together with under the preaching of the Word of God, are no more. The places they used to sit in are vacant. Our comfort with those that die in the Lord is in what Christ said in His Word that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is sad for those who, having heard of Christ and His saving grace, die without the saving knowledge of Him.

We are thankful that the gospel continues to be proclaimed in all our pulpits in the city of Bulawayo and wherever opportunity arises. Services in all our preaching stations are fairly well attended, although we are affected by a migration of some of our young people to other cities and neighbouring countries where our church is not represented. We pray that the Word heard will be kept in their hearts.

Bulawayo has four preaching stations, namely: Lobengula, Nkulumane, Mahatshula and Mguza. Lobengula is the main station where communions are held and the manse is located. Weekday prayer meetings are also held in the mentioned places of worship, including Thembiso Children's Home. Communions were held as usual in June and December, when large crowds gathered to hear the Word of God, including many young people – which is encouraging. We pray that the Lord would bless them with a sense of their sins and that they would seek Christ the Redeemer, whom they will find ready and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

It was a pleasure to us in Bulawayo to have visitors joining us for worship from Scotland and the Netherlands, some of whom being well known to the congregation as former missionaries. We appreciated this very much. I was pleased to have Rev. J. R. Tallach assisting me at the New Canaan Communion.

Finally, the Bulawayo congregation is engaged in various projects, including that at the Mahatshula church, and the painting of Lobengula and Nkulumane churches. In all these, the members of the congregations are participating by contributing cash, materials and labour. We thank the JFMC, Dutch friends and all other friends scattered around the globe for their generous giving to the worthy cause of furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1).

ZIMBABWE PRESBYTERY SHONA BIBLE TRANSLATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

T. Benschop

THE Shona Bible is being translated under the supervision of the Publications Committee of the Zimbabwe Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The daily translation work is being done by the following three persons:

1. Mr. Trycot Mwedzi, main translator. He has gained a good knowledge of Hebrew and BibleWorks. He makes a draft translation, progressing chapter by chapter.
2. Mrs. Kerin Mapiye, assistant translator. She reads over the draft translation, and compares it with the English.
3. Mr. Teus Benschop, translation manager. He compares the draft translation with Hebrew, and makes notes about questions he has.

The notes are discussed and resolved chapter by chapter. Remaining questions are sent to the Trinitarian Bible Society for clarification, or are saved to be discussed by a panel meeting consisting of able Shona Church members and members of the Publications Committee.

The members of the translation team check each other's changes on a daily basis.

There are daily meetings for discussing the work.

A monthly planning is being created and adhered to.

On 16th August 2013 a Shona New Testament panel meeting was held. It was attended by Rev. S. Khumalo, Rev. N. Sibanda, Mr. N. Siziba, Mr. B. Mziya, Mr. S. Zhou, Mr. T. Benschop, Mr. T. Mwedzi, Mrs. K. Mapiye, Mr. E. Sibanda, Mrs. B. Mazvabo, and Mrs. T. Mwedzi. The meeting came to agreement on all the items on the agenda to be discussed. In the weeks following the meeting, the translation team implemented all the recommendations of the panel meeting, sent the updated texts to all members for their approval, by which procedure the united panel agreed on the text to be sent to the Trinitarian Bible Society for publication. The Trinitarian Bible Society tasked one of their employees with assessing the quality of the Shona New Testament manuscript. His findings were that "the translation appears to have been carried out to quite a high standard". The manuscript was approved for publication, has been typeset, and is now awaiting publication by the Society. The TBS advises that publication of the Shona New Testament will largely be dependent on when they receive funding for the project from Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting (Reformed Bible Society). God willing, they would like to publish the New Testament before the end of 2014, but they cannot be certain of the exact date.

In addition to the work involved in finalizing the Shona New Testament, the translation team carried on working on the Shona Old Testament. During the past year the second half of Genesis has been translated, plus the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

The Trinitarian Bible Society indicated a need for a second impression of the Ndebele Bible as their stock is running low. The Zimbabwe Publications Committee decided that it is now too early to have changes in the Ndebele Bible, and wishes to postpone any changes and corrections for several years. The TBS Editorial Department has identified the following necessary corrections in the Ndebele Bible: The pagination of the NT to be corrected in

the table of contents, and 2 USamuweli page number should be 387, not 378. The row of dots (spacing) on contents page to be consistent between the Old and New Testaments. Pages 1073, 1420, 1459, 1460, 1461: Fix the drop cap on the first line of text. These are one-chapter books. Verse numeral 1 to be removed and the first letter of the first word drop-capped.

Prayers are asked for the successful publication and distribution of the Shona New Testament, and for good progress in the Shona Old Testament, so that eventually there will be a reliable translation of the Word of God in the Shona language, that people may confess their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus, confess His name, bear fruits in the service of God, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

THEMBISO CHILDREN'S HOME REPORT

Mr. B. Maphala, Home Superintendent

Introduction

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the loving kindness of the Lord and His enduring mercies. We have been kept in the land of the living and have been enabled to undertake our duties without any disruption. Hence we may say, "Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 107:1). The home children and workers in this vineyard have been kept together through the mercies of the Lord. Surely we are really grateful and thankful for that.

The Home

The home is committed to the creating and maintaining a caring and protective environment for the children. Its core value is the teaching and propagation of the Word of God. It is the cornerstone of the institution. The resident minister, Rev. S. Khumalo, constantly assists in this regard on Tuesdays and at times on Friday mornings. The Home Superintendent conducts prayers with family units daily. He alternates units throughout the week. Workers too start with the Word of God every day at 7.30 a.m. before they begin work.

We believe and trust that the Lord might make them aware too, as the Psalmist puts it in Psalm 34:8: "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him." In their day-to-day discharge of their duties, as they are constantly in touch with children, the workers' knowledge of the Word of God will help in moulding and raising up God-fearing children.

Children

The current crop of children we have exhibit high moral standards. Since the inception of the family units the performance of our children even at school has improved significantly. This is attributed to the one-on-one biblical

teaching they are given in their individual family units from their caring, loving and God-fearing mothers. Both junior and senior children answer monthly Scripture questions contained in the *Cheering Words* magazine from overseas. It is pleasing to note that some of our children are counted amongst the best in schools they are in. Take, for instance, Siphso Zama. He passed "O" Level last year (2013) with flying colours, and is currently doing lower sixth at Inyathi High School. Thandazani Dube is doing Form 3 at John Tallach Secondary. His school report tells us a bright future lies ahead of him, DV. Our duty is to fill the water pots with water and leave everything to the Lord.

Staff

We have an efficient staff complement of 23, including house mothers and management. Six of our house mothers have undergone a counselling course with a reputable local college.

The course included HIV and AIDS counselling and stress management, which is in line with their day-to-day duties in relation to the upkeep of children at their disposal. One of the assistant house mothers retired at the end of December 2013 and has since been replaced with one of the relievers.

Child protection and development policy

This document was formulated by Mr. H. Mackenzie with the assistance of the Home Superintendent. It was approved and ratified by the Field Committee in Zimbabwe. The document has been read and signed by all members of staff at Thembeiso who are in contact with the children.

Fowl run and carpentry workshop

The two above-mentioned projects are helping a lot in arming and equipping the children with some survival skills for future use.

Donations

Local companies, individuals and churches have come on board in assisting the institution in kind. This complements our revenue budget which makes us break even with our current monthly expenditure. We do appreciate and value all their efforts and contributions, notably Z.B. bank and ZIMRA in particular.

NUST library

The National University of Science and Technology has set up a separate library from ours to help our pupils develop a reading culture. They brought good reading material for young and older children. They have also pledged to help our children in mathematics. One of our pupils is already a beneficiary; i.e., Nozihlobo Bhebhe.

Conclusions

We are heavily indebted to the JFMC and donors for keeping the institution afloat. As Paul puts it in Philippians 2:13: "For it is God which worketh in you

both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Therefore we shall always endeavour to teach the Word of God in the Home as long as the Lord gives us the strength to do so.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Mr. M. A. Mpofu

Introduction

The Lord God, Creator of Heaven and Earth and Giver and Sustainer of Life in His providence has spared us on the ground of mercy to see another year come to a close, when others have been ushered to eternity, some sadly without Christ.

Field and Sub Committees

The two Committees held their scheduled quarterly and monthly meetings. All issues on the running of the Mission were dealt with in a professional and Christian manner. One can point out that the Sub Committee deals with the operational business of the Mission and is answerable to the Field Committee. Ministers take turns to sit on the Sub Committee.

Mr. H Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, is a member of both Committees and he joins meetings through Skype whenever he is in Scotland. As Mission Administrator I greatly value the role he plays in the administration of the Zimbabwe Mission – my gratitude to him is better felt that can be expressed.

In December 2013 Rev. N. Sibanda joined the Field Committee for the first time after his ordination and induction at Mbumba Mission.

Staffing

Our staffing levels did not change much during the year under review.

Expatriate.....	5
Widows.....	3
Non-graded staff.....	21
Graded staff.....	75
Deaths.....	1
Retirements.....	3
Discharges.....	2

The policy adopted by the Field Committee that all graded staff that retire or pass on be not replaced has seen our staff complement going down, though not significantly.

Visitors

During the year under review, Rev. J. Tallach, Clerk of the JFMC and the first medical doctor to work at Mbumba Mission Hospital, led a large group of former Mission workers and friends who visited the hospital to take part in the 50th anniversary celebrations.

Expatriate staff also did welcome family members and friends who visited them during the course of the year.

Finance and capital projects

The Mission continued to receive the regular monthly remittances from the General Treasurer. It is pleasing to note that these funds are remitted timeously at the beginning of each calendar month.

60% of the remittance goes towards the wage bill and this is not likely to go down in the foreseeable future because Trade Unions are always pressing for higher wages without even thinking of the source of funds or the non-performance of the economy in general. It is sad to note that some of our professing people become foes of the Mission whenever it comes to monetary issues. One prays that one day they will realize their mistake.

Sustentation Fund

The following amounts were received by Head Office as congregational contributions towards the Sustentation Fund:

Ingwenya	\$1,215.00
Zenka	\$287.00
Mbumba.....	–
Nkayi	\$87.00
Zvishavane.....	\$65.00
Bulawayo.....	\$1,202.00
Total.....	<u>\$2,856.00</u>

Communication systems

Our communication systems continued to serve their purpose, although sometimes, when there are breakdowns in transmission, Mbumba becomes isolated and very difficult to communicate with. There is no doubt that as technology advances the systems will need an upgrade.

Bookroom

The Bookroom is still operational, although it is now very evident that it is a Mission subsidy on the workers’ wages which is keeping the doors of the shop open. The cash realized from the sales is spent on the ever-rising rentals and utility bills.

It is worth highlighting that sales of religious literature, except Bibles are very low. Investigations point to the fact that many people now make

purchases through the internet. The Field Committee has requested that a cost-benefit analysis be carried out so that a decision can be made on the way forward.

Primary schools

The Church continues to run the five primary schools that are under its authority.

The five schools are running well but sometimes it is very difficult to find suitable teachers who are either Church members or adherents. The table below gives some statistics from the schools:

School	Enrolment	Staffing	Grade 7 Results	2013
Zenka	914	24	50.00%	49.00%
Mbuma	680	17	22.00%	30.00%
Ingwenya	311	9	36.84%	15.00%
Thembiso	440	16	67.00%	49.00%
Lutsha	544	16	6.35%	8.00%

Scripture is taught in all our schools, with teachers following a teaching scheme that was drawn up by the Church.

A Bible Quiz Competition is organized each year and all schools participate. In the year under review the meeting was at Zenka and the host school came first to lift a floating trophy that was provided by the Field Committee.

Three schools – Mpakama, Mthoniselwa and Simbo – which are not run by the Church took part in the Bible Quiz Competition and they did very well and one of them that went into the finals actually beat one of the Mission schools.

The PSDC (Primary Schools Development Committee), chaired by the Administrator, meets at least once every school term to deal with matters related to the running of the schools. Our ministers take turns to sit on this Committee.

Transport

Towards the end of the year the JFMC, after realizing that the costs of servicing and repairing motor vehicles were becoming unsustainable, asked the Mission Co-ordinator for a cost-comparison exercise on alternative methods of managing the Mission vehicles. After consultations with the Field Committee, the Mission Co-ordinator made a recommendation on a new vehicle management policy which was subsequently approved by the JFMC.

The new policy proposed that all vehicles over five years old be transferred to users at no cost to them, since these vehicles are already written off as assets as far as the tax office was concerned.

All owners of these vehicles, excluding ministers, would be paid a mileage rate according to the engine size. The rate is fixed by the government approved Automobile Association. All repairs, maintenance, insurance and road tax are the responsibility of the owner.

Ministers would get a salary enhancement so that they would be able to maintain their vehicles and they would also get a fuel allowance so that they are able to carry out their pastoral and other Mission duties. The congregations would also continue giving their ministers fuel.

General vehicles such as lorries, ambulances and tractors remain under the responsibility of the Mission.

The new policy was approved by the JFMC and was put into effect on 1st January 2014.

The first two months show that the new policy might be the solution to a lot of problems that were experienced in the past.

The adoption of the new vehicle policy and the diminished number of capital projects meant that the post of Transport and Building Projects Manager became redundant. Consequently the holder of the post, Mr. P. Mzamo, accepted a redundancy package and retired.

Conclusion

While we on the Mission Field, amid a myriad of challenges and in weakness, labour at our required assignments – on the one hand, to conform to government regulations, while on the other, assigning to each subject its true value and place in our work – we trust that all our friends continue to remember us individually and as a Mission in their prayers, that we may be granted strength and grace to efficiently perform our tasks.

DOMINIONS AND OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: D. A. Ross

“THE visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.” While language differences and national boundaries prevent fellowship with many who “profess the true religion”, and while differences in doctrine, worship and practice existing within the Protestant church make it impossible for us as a reformed church to enjoy a fullness of fellowship with some, we are blessed in having fellowship with many brethren in Australia, Africa, America, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, and the Ukraine. In those countries we have

been able in the Divine providence to unite with people like-minded with us in the Reformation principles dear to our fathers and to us, and who continue to maintain, and speak well of, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland witness. Our unity and friendship with them has grown and continues to be enjoyed. May this encouraging situation endure and go from strength to strength.

We are indebted to the Rev. Donald Macdonald for spending five weeks in New Zealand, Australia and Singapore as a Church deputy. He reports that he took services in Singapore, Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, and Gisborne, where a communion season was observed. After returning to Auckland, he proceeded to Grafton and Sydney and back to Singapore, then finally returned to his own congregation in North Uist. In New Zealand he was at the happy event of the marriage of his son John to Miss Christa Van Kralingen. From other reports we see that Mr. MacDonald's visits to these congregations were much appreciated. The Committee thanks him for his work. He undoubtedly had a busy schedule but all labour in the gospel is the privilege of attending to the business of the King who commands, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

We thank the Rev. Neil Ross for visiting our Santa Fe congregation in Texas for almost three weeks, prior to which he conducted the marriage of Mr. Nathanael Smith to Miss Esther Hicklin in San Antonio. In the congregation he preached six times as well as administering the sacrament of baptism to two infants. We are sorry that there was no deputy available to visit our congregation in Canada. However, although it is not within the remit of this committee, we note that the interim moderators of the Kirk Sessions of these congregations in Canada and America have obtained supply help for them from home church ministers, including the Rev. Barry Whear, who supplied Chesley for about three weeks last year. We note also that our Chesley congregation has asked the Rev. John Goldby to consider accepting the pastoral charge there, while our congregation in Grafton, Australia, has called the Rev. George Hutton to be their pastor, the outcome of which is awaited at the time of writing this report.

It is heartening that these overseas congregations have been loyal congregations of the Free Presbyterian Church for many years. Some of them are not only numerically stronger than a number of congregations in Britain but also have even grown. Regrettably, in Britain we have ageing and diminishing congregations but that ought to make us plead all the more earnestly with the God of all grace to pour His blessed Holy Spirit upon us.

While our two ministers in Australia and New Zealand in their reports to Synod rightly bemoan the low state of the nation and the Churches in those countries, it is a matter for much thankfulness that their own congregations, by the grace of God, have a considerable number of young families attending and the not infrequent administration of baptism. The duties of these ministers include caring for vacant congregations in their Presbytery far beyond their own. They are therefore thankful to those elders who so willingly help in

conducting services, some of them for most Sabbaths in the year. While our Church is indebted to elders for persevering in this most necessary work, we are to be praying fervently that the Lord would raise up pastors to preach the everlasting gospel. Two of our young ministers have had their lot cast overseas in recent years, and that will probably be the case with at least one of our present divinity students should he complete his studies successfully. However, we do not grudge these young men to our overseas congregations since we are one and the same church and of the “one body under Christ”.

We were saddened by the death of the Rev. Johannes van Dorp, who laboured faithfully and diligently for 38 years as minister of the Gisborne congregation. We extend our sympathy to his sorrowing widow and family and to the congregations which were under his pastoral care. While the Rev. Edward Rayner has retired from his charge in Grafton he is kept busy giving pulpit supply and assisting at communions in various congregations.

With regard to our congregation and mission centre in Odessa, we are deeply aware of, and concerned about, the political turmoil in the Ukraine – and not without being conscious of the message given by the “watchers” to proud Nebuchadnezzar regarding his dominion, “that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17). May the Lord keep His eye upon our congregation there to preserve the work which He Himself has begun – and that He would do for them what He did for Ezra and the elders when their work was hindered by their enemies: “But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they [their enemies] could not cause them to cease” (Ezra 5:5).

AUSTRALIAN AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Rev. G. B. Macdonald

AS I write this report, towards the close of 2013, the summer heat is upon us here in Australia. The mercury has risen above 30 degrees once more. The promise given to Noah and his posterity still applies: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22). The Lord has been faithful to that promise, as He will be to all of His promises.

In Australia, one major change has been the change of government at a federal level. The Liberal-National coalition won power with a sizeable majority in the House of Representatives. The new Prime Minister is Mr. Tony Abbott who is a conservative and who has so far personally voiced a consistent support for marriage. Sad to say, here, as in so many Western nations, sodomite marriage is sought by some. We were grateful when the Supreme Court struck down an iniquitous law in the Australia Capital Territory, which purported to legalise so-called gay marriage in that territory.

In Singapore, the theme is one of constant change, as buildings are demolished and others raised here and there. The population is now well over 5 million and the population density is remarkably, around 7,500 per sq km. The city is considered very safe and one usually feels quite safe out and about at any time day or night. It was therefore a major shock when a riot broke out this year, when a man was knocked down and killed on the Sabbath day. A number of arrests were made. As in so many incidents the world over, excessive drinking may have contributed to the aggressive behaviour of some of those involved.

Sydney

In my own congregation, here in Sydney, approximately 40 souls gather for the Sabbath services. The congregation is occasionally augmented by visitors from our Grafton congregation and from overseas, all of whom we are delighted to see. In 2013 two new members were added to the communion roll at our March communion. There are two communions a year, and we were pleased to have Rev. Edward Rayner assist at the March communion season and Rev. Jett Smith at the September communion season. The sacrament of baptism was administered to two infants during 2013. While we do not often get many visitors from the local area, one elderly man has now come for two Sabbath evening services. He moved to Australia from Hungary and was naturalised in the early 1950s. He still has the Authorised Version of the Bible he was given when he received his citizenship.

The congregational website continues to be well received and is a useful witness by way of outreach. Through this means, some have learned of the distinctive reformed witness of our church before coming to worship with us. The website also continues to be accessed by overseas visitors. In 2013 we were saddened to see a family leave us to worship elsewhere, but heartened with the arrival of two families a few months later.

Grafton

Grafton is located in Northern New South Wales and is some 7-8 hours' drive time from Sydney. It sits either side of the Clarence River and is a busy market place for the Clarence Valley. The congregation are thankful that Rev. Edward Rayner is still able to take most of the services of public worship in his retirement. I am indebted to him and the elders of the congregation for their maintaining the means of grace in the congregation. Any visitor to the congregation can see that it is in great need of a pastor, there being a number of young people, families and some older people. Around 60-70 souls gather each Sabbath. During 2013, there were three people added to the communion roll.

In November 2013 the congregation and the Presbytery were saddened by the death of Rev. Johannes van Dorp who had helped to keep services during his retirement. Mr. van Dorp had some treatment earlier in the year but deteriorated around July and August. He was lovingly cared for by his

wife and family, to whom we extend our condolences. Mr. van Dorp was spared to pass the 40-year mark in August of his time in the ordained ministry.

Singapore

The cosmopolitan city-state of Singapore has a remarkable history. It has sprung up from a marshland purchased by the British to be one of the most prosperous cities of the modern world. Naturally, as with Corinth and other cities of the time of the Apostle Paul, Singapore, being a place of commerce, it is also a place where there is worldliness and various temptations to seek the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. It is therefore gratifying to consider that the Singapore congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has been maintained in existence for another year. It is now some 14 years since they were accepted by the Synod as a congregation of our church, and those who continue to gather are deeply grateful for their position as a congregation within this Church.

The congregation appreciated the welcome ministry of Rev. David Campbell and Rev. Donald Macdonald who were both with us as Synod Deputies at different times. I thank them both for their labours. At the communion season in December, one new member, Shang Yu Yong, was added to the Communion Roll. Some 13-15 souls gather on a regular basis for public worship.

I am grateful to Bernard Yong, who continues to faithfully oversee the congregation in Singapore as elder of the congregation. Many visitors to Singapore can testify to the hospitality received from himself and his wife Lai Yee. I must also record my thanks to Dick Vermeulen who, in his mid-eighties, travelled the long distance to assist at the communion as an assessor elder. His presence and fellowship were a wonderful encouragement to the congregation at that solemn season.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we must raise our Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us". We have had our disappointments, but also, and much more so, our encouragements. The need for the distinct witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in these parts remains and the Synod can be assured that people are grateful that they remain part of this Presbyterian fellowship. "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25).

NEW ZEALAND REPORT

Rev. J. D. Smith

OUR congregations in New Zealand have much to be thankful for as we know that the great Head of the Church has promised to build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. No matter how small we feel ourselves

to be, we must not despise the day of small things. “A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time” (Isaiah 60:22).

Auckland

The Auckland congregation has suffered the loss of two office-bearers. Mr. Arie Sterk, a long-serving deacon in the congregation, passed away on the 13th July 2013. He was known for tending carefully to the property of the Church and being punctual in opening the church doors. We are thankful for his many years of faithful service to the congregation. As in the case of our late deacon, so we mourn over the passing away of our elder, Mr. Ken Van Kralingen, who died on the Monday of the Wellington communion, 18th November 2013. Mr. Van Kralingen was a highly esteemed and much loved elder of the congregation for the past 47 years. He was instrumental in setting up the congregation in the late 1950s and was one of the foundation elders to be ordained in the Auckland congregation. We are reminded of the words in Psalm 12:1: “Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.” Yet the Lord has not left Himself without witness (Acts 14:17) and in the same year in the Auckland congregation there were two baptisms. The congregation numbers about 60.

Gisborne

The Gisborne congregation continues much the same. Though it does not have a large number of people, the services are regularly conducted by the elders and the Sabbath school continues. In October, the Rev. Donald Macdonald came as a Church deputy and officiated during the communion season. He was able to preach the Gospel in all our congregations and we would express our heartfelt gratitude for his services in New Zealand.

Tauranga

Tauranga is another small congregation but the people are very eager to hear the Word of God, which is partly seen in their regular attendance upon the means of grace. The communion occurs annually, and we are grateful that the Rev. E. Rayner of Australia was able to officiate at the communion in December. On this occasion two young people came forward and were accepted as communicant members. In this evil and adulterous generation it is encouraging to see some who are willing to stand on the Lord’s side and confess Christ before men.

Wellington

The Wellington congregation has seen larger numbers in the past but those who remain are unabated in their desire to maintain the Free Presbyterian witness. The decision was made by the Presbytery to move the congregation from its present location to another part of the Wellington region. The new location will be closer to the families of those who at present continue to attend

the worship of God in the congregation. It is prayerfully hoped that, with the Lord's blessing, there may be some people at the new location who will be drawn to our place of worship and to the witness of Christ in the church.

Conclusion

We should not neglect to give thanks to the Lord for preserving His people and maintaining His cause among us. We live in a day in which the moral decline is palpably felt. Yet we believe there is a desire to be obedient to the call, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

On a more solemn note, the deaths of our office-bearers mentioned earlier were both unexpected. It is a reminder to us of the need for immediate preparation for eternity. Whether older or younger, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). How we should give earnest attention to the inspired words of Paul: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

The Church in New Zealand has doubtless seen greater spiritual prosperity in the past, and the numbers today continue to fluctuate. But if we are to walk by faith and not by sight, it is the fulfilment of the promise of even better days in the future that we would pray for, seeking above all that Christ will have the pre-eminence in all things. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9-10).

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. A. Ross

THE *Westminster Confession of Faith* states, "God the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence. . . ." This fact appears more vividly in some instances than in others, and this was so with the Levytsky family who had, unbeknown to themselves, overstayed their time in the UK, when Mr. Levytsky was engaged in his 2013-14 session of divinity studies.

When they realized that their visas had been wrongly backdated by one month, they were already a number of days past the required departure time, so they had to make a hasty exit from this country on 4th February. However, had they left when originally planned, that is at the end of February, there would have been little hope of them getting to Odessa. They would have arrived in Kiev during the political crisis when the airport was closed and blockades were on all the roads surrounding the city. Consequently, travel to

Odessa would have been impossible and they would have been stranded in Kiev for several days. So they were greatly relieved to get back to Odessa before the uprising had begun.

At the time of writing, the situation there is very worrying. Already, people are fleeing from Crimea and going west to the city of Liviv, and it is expected that should there be an escalation of the trouble, many fleeing people will arrive in Odessa and may well ask for refuge in the church rooms at our mission centre – which would be granted of course. As can be imagined, the whole saga lies heavily on the minds of our Church people in Odessa and therefore they decided on one Sabbath to have prayer meetings instead of preaching services in the church.

Despite these uncertainties the work of the gospel continues in Odessa. With regard to the beginning of our work there, in the providence of God in 1995, a lady from the city of Simferopol, Crimea (the present area of confrontation between Russia and the Ukraine), sent our address to Mr. Zadorozhniyy, Odessa, then a Baptist, advising him that he could obtain free Bibles from our Church for his Bible distribution work. We sent him the Bibles he requested plus the *Shorter Catechism* and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

This was the first full exposure to reformed doctrine which the Zadorozhniyy and Levytsky families had. They had already gleaned a little knowledge about Presbyterianism and the Reformation in Europe, mostly from Communist encyclopedias with their atheistic bias. Some in those families did have difficulty in the first instance with, for example, the doctrines of baptism and election but it was not long before they began to appreciate all the teaching of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. So this providential contact between someone in Crimea and someone in Odessa has led not only to the establishing of our small congregation in Odessa but also the raising up of a divinity student whom we hope will yet be preaching the gospel in the Ukraine. And who can tell what blessings have come to others worldwide through the distribution of sound Christian literature.

Sadly in the Ukraine there are many in the so-called Protestant churches who do not speak well of the Reformed Faith. For example, several years ago, there was so little interest in reformed literature that the publisher of a large history of the Reformation by Alasdair McGrath (translated into Russian) had to bin 700 copies of the book. Happily, they were obtained by Mr. Zadorozhnyy and contributed to his knowing more about the Reformation. They have also proved useful to people in other churches to which copies were sent.

With regard to the present literature distribution work done by Mr. Zadorozhnyy, we give the following information from his report to the committee. He begins by mentioning the tragic scene in Kiev which is affecting the whole of the Ukraine and of great concern to other nations. Despite this turmoil he continues to receive requests for Bibles and literature. Distribution is not only in the Ukraine but also in Russia and some Eastern Europe countries, and recipients include congregations of various denominations as well as private persons.

He gives the following distribution list for 2013: 267 Bibles (Ukrainian, big format); 94 Russian Bibles; 90 copies of *Sermons* by Rev. D. MacFarlane; 362 copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* in Russian; 46 copies of the *WCF* (Ukrainian); 3,300 TBS Calendars 2014 (Ukrainian and Russian); 3,000 TBS *Golden Thoughts* Calendars 2014; 82 copies of *An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, by Robert Shaw; and 562 copies of *Line upon Line*, by F. L. Mortimer. In all, he sent out 631 parcels and 149 separate letters. Many recipients have sent donations to cover postage; these amounted to £592.70 from Ukrainian addresses and £40.99 from addresses in Russia.

Mr. Zadorozhnyy says: “Along with distribution of literature by post, we are actively distributing Reformed theology (as it is expressed in the *Confession*) over the Internet. We post on our websites theological articles about the form of worship, doctrines and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as well as answering many questions that Russian-speaking visitors of our websites ask about the heritage of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. In Ukraine, many Christians of different denominations know almost nothing about Presbyterianism, while others have never even heard of it. Therefore they are asking many questions. In order to make easier the promoting of the doctrine and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Mission has translated into Russian the *Catechism of the History and Principles of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland*.”

In concluding this overview of our mission work in Eastern Europe, we gratefully acknowledge the help given by staff in our Church Office and Bookroom in sending literature to Eastern Europe. The volume sent is small in comparison to what we used to send because Christian literature is now more readily available in these former Communist countries.

We thank those who continue to support the spread of the gospel in Eastern Europe by their donations. It need hardly be said that very little of this work could be done were it not for the large-heartedness of our Church people and other generous supporters. “Then the people rejoiced, for they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord” (1 Chronicles 29:9).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SINGAPORE

Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

ON 30th September 2013, I left Scotland as a Church deputy, sent by the Dominions and Overseas Committee to the congregations in the Australian and New Zealand Presbytery for six weeks. I was accompanied by my wife and we attended our son John’s wedding to Christa van Kralingen on 11th October (we wish them God’s blessing in their married life).

On Wednesday, 2nd October, we stopped for two nights at Singapore, the half-way point of our outward journey. I held the prayer meeting there on Thursday 3rd, when there were 10 present. Next day, I travelled to New Zealand, arriving in the early afternoon of Saturday 5th, thankful for the Lord's care over us.

I took the service in Auckland on the evening of Sabbath 6th, Rev. Jett Smith having taken the morning service. There were 60 people present at both services, including a good number of young people and children.

After the wedding ceremony on Friday 11th, I travelled by car with my family to Tauranga. I conducted worship on the Lord's Day, the second Sabbath of the month, when there were a dozen people present. This at present is a vacant congregation and we are grateful to Mr. Dick Vermeulen for his labour in, and care of, this part of the vineyard. On the Wednesday after returning to Auckland, I took the prayer meeting where there were around 30 people gathered to worship the Lord.

On the third Sabbath of October I took the services in Wellington. We stayed with Hank and Cathie Optland in Carterton, an hour's drive from Wellington, to which they travel for the services each Sabbath. There are just the two families in the congregation (plus two other people who attend from time to time) – which is discouraging for those who seek to maintain our Church services in the capital city of New Zealand. However, my own view is that there is potential there, and we hope and pray that the cause of the Lord connected with us will yet flourish in this city.

We proceeded to Gisborne, where I assisted Rev. Jett Smith, interim moderator, at the communion season in our congregation there. It was very good to meet old friends and to see that some visitors gathered from Auckland, Carterton and Tauranga. The Gisborne congregation is an ageing one; there are few young people in it at present but around 20 people gather on a regular basis on the Lord's Day. It was here that Rev. J. van Dorp laboured for 35 years, before retiring with Mrs. van Dorp to Grafton about 2 years ago.

After the communion season in Gisborne we drove back to Auckland, where I took the prayer meeting on Wednesday 30th, when there were around 30 souls gathered.

On Friday, November 1st, we left New Zealand on a three-hour flight to Sydney, Australia, and then a further two hours in the air to Grafton. We spent the first weekend of November with Richard and Connie van Dorp and family and I supplied the Grafton pulpit on the Lord's Day, the congregation being vacant following Rev. E. Rayner's recent retirement. There were about 70 people gathered on Sabbath morning, and more than 60 in the evening, and on Monday, when I took the prayer meeting, there were around 40 present. There is an encouraging number of young families in this congregation. Rev. George Hutton was expected to preach in Grafton on the following three Sabbaths.

I visited Rev. J. van Dorp in hospital on two occasions with his son Richard; he was very ill and nearing eternity. He passed away, we believe to his

everlasting rest, on Saturday, 9th November, by which time I had left. We extend our sincere sympathies to his sorrowing widow and family.

After arriving back in Sydney, we stayed with Rev. George Macdonald and his wife and two children, and I took the prayer meeting on Wednesday 6th, when there were about 20 people gathered.

On Thursday, we flew to Singapore where I supplied our congregation on Sabbath, when 16 souls were present. On Monday 11th we flew home to Scotland, arriving in North Uist on Wednesday and thankful to have arrived home safely to my congregation.

After arriving in Scotland we learned of the sudden passing away of Mr. Ken van Kralingen, elder in the Auckland congregation. We extend our sincere sympathies to his widow and family and also to the congregation.

We enjoyed visiting again our congregations in the Southern Hemisphere and meeting up with old friends and new ones, and were thankful for their fellowship in the gospel. We express our gratitude to all those who entertained us in their homes and showed us much kindness.

We hope and pray that the gospel will flourish and the Church be extended in those parts of the world; that our two young ministers settled in the Presbytery will have much success and blessing; and that the two vacant congregations will soon be filled and the smaller ones granted an increase. We do not forget that in those countries the distances that have to be travelled by ministers and others between congregations are far greater than in Scotland; however, there is much to be thankful for that the means of grace are being maintained there. May that continue. "The whole earth let His glory fill" (Psalm 72:19).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO TEXAS

Rev. N. M. Ross

THE promise of the Divine Head of the church is that He will build His church – and so it shall be. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This implies that His church will also be preserved – and so it shall be. "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Such promises are sustaining to those who strive to further the cause of Christ among us, whether at home or abroad, and often in the face of trying difficulties.

I was encouraged when, accompanied by my wife, I visited the Santa Fe congregation last October and found them, office-bearers and people, in good heart, and the means of grace on Sabbath and weekday being steadfastly maintained among them by the elders under the interim moderatorship of Rev. J. MacLeod, London.

Before arriving in Santa Fe, I went to San Antonio for the very pleasant duty of conducting the marriage of Mr. Nathanael Smith, a communicant of the congregation, to Miss Esther Hicklin from New Zealand.

Afterward, on our arrival at Houston, we were warmly welcomed by Mr. Joseph Smith, elder, who conveyed us to the Santa Fe Manse which was beautifully prepared for our very comfortable accommodation. Next evening I met with the elders for a Kirk Session meeting to dispose of congregational business.

On Sabbath there were 45 plus present at the services and, as on former occasions, it was a pleasant sight to see that about half of them were children and young people. On the following Sabbath I administered the sacrament of Baptism, when two baby boys were formally received into the visible church. It is very significant that the promise of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit is to children as well as others in the church. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). May all the children there be made members of the invisible church by Divine grace. The prayer meetings were well attended also, considering that some of the men have heavy work commitments.

I thank the people there for their warm kindness to us, some by having us in their homes and others by kindly visiting us in the manse, and also by providing transport for us. May the Lord continue to sustain them as a people, bless His own Word among them, and in due time send them a pastor "after His own heart".

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

THE training of our students for the work of the ministry of God's Word is no small or unimportant task and as we mark the passing of another year's work in the life of this committee we have to acknowledge the good hand of the Lord in ruling and overruling.

The three students of the Church, Mr. C. J. Hembd, Mr. D. Levytsky, and Mr. I. D. MacDonald, have now successfully completed the three years of study assigned them by the Church.

The two students with families were assisted financially so as to have their families with them while studying in Ness. This assistance was given without setting a precedent for future students who may have families. While this was appreciated by those directly involved, it raises questions as to where financial responsibility lies if a member of the family becomes sick while in Scotland.

The final year of the students' three-year course was spent in Ness under Rev. A. W. MacColl. As well as this being his first year of tutoring, Mr. MacColl had to contend with difficulties in accommodation and having to communicate with two of the students by Skype and across different time zones for the latter part of their course. The Committee are indebted to Mr. MacColl for his work, particularly in those circumstances.

It is a matter of great concern that no applications have been made to any of our presbyteries at home or abroad over the past year.

“I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:4).

THEOLOGICAL TUTOR’S REPORT

Rev. A. W. MacColl

New Testament Greek and cognate subjects

The classes began on Thursday, 5th September 2013 in the manse in Swainbost with three third-year divinity students in attendance, Messrs. Caleb Hembd, Dmytro Levytsky, and Iain MacDonald. The class ordinarily met four days a week from 9.30 a.m. until 1.40 p.m. From February onwards the classes were conducted in the afternoon through the medium of internet telephone to allow the overseas students to continue to participate as fully as possible. Our pattern of studies was intended to follow closely the course which previous tutors of New Testament Greek and cognate subjects in the Church have taught. Through the good offices of Rev. K. M. Watkins I received virtually all of the late Rev. H. M. Cartwright’s course material in electronic format and this has proved an invaluable aid.

We have tried to keep a particular emphasis on three crucial areas during all of our studies this session. The first of these is the need for students and ministers to be well grounded in knowledge of the Bible. To this end we spent some time memorising a number of important Scripture passages which were tested both in class and in the Bible examination and we also paid close attention to many of the proof-texts appended to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

A second area of emphasis is the need to develop a sound exegetical approach to expounding the Word of God. To help the students gain practice in exegesis we dealt with one book every week from which one of the students in turn had to prepare an exegetical exercise. A full opportunity was given to discuss each other’s papers in class. In this way we have had exercises on nearly every book in the New Testament. The exercises consisted in a historical and literary introduction to the particular book being dealt with and a sermon outline based on a translated text, paying particular attention to context, doctrine, arrangement and application. In addition, each student was required to present one full-scale exegetical paper, with more extensive critical notes, early in the second semester.

Thirdly, we have tried, where possible, to focus on classic Scottish Presbyterian theology, both in the main texts covered and in the wider supplementary material we consulted from time to time. We therefore changed the textbook used for the course in Catechetics, replacing A. A. Hodge’s

Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith with Robert Shaw's *Exposition of the Confession of Faith*. In Church Law and Polity we studied excerpts from James Durham's *Treatise on Scandal*, George Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, William Cunningham's *Historical Theology* and James Bannerman's *The Church of Christ*. In Catechetics we also referred occasionally to David Dickson's *Truth's Victory Over Error*.

We covered a number of passages in our translation work for New Testament Greek. Drawing from all four Gospels we looked at the birth, ministry, death, resurrection and second coming of Jesus Christ. To help our understanding and further our discussions we consulted a number of commentaries, including those of Calvin and Hendriksen but especially that of David Brown. We examined chapters 3-8 of Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the whole of the Epistle to the Philippians and also dealt with some parts of the Book of Revelation. The main commentary consulted while translating in Romans was W. G. T. Shedd's excellent *Critical and Doctrinal Commentary*. We supplemented this with other standard authors such as C. Hodge, D. Brown and J. Murray. For Philippians we mainly referred to J. Eadie and J. B. Lightfoot. A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* and Robert Hanna's *Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* were also found to be useful. In our consideration of New Testament Greek language and grammar we covered the second half of J. Duff, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* for morphology and then attempted to tackle syntax at a more detailed level by going through D. A. Black, *It's Still Greek to Me, An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek*. B. M. Metzger's well-known vocabulary builder, *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*, was also studied. A small number of portions from the Septuagint were also read in class.

In the wide field of New Testament theology we looked at the various departments of Introduction, Hermeneutics, Textual Criticism, Canon and Inspiration. For Introduction our basic text was J. Gresham Machen's *Introduction to the New Testament*, which we supplemented by reference to works by such as D. Guthrie, M. Tenney and R. Reymond. For Hermeneutics we discussed parts of L. Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, and D. A. Black, *Using New Testament Greek in Ministry*, supplemented by reference to P. Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual*. We hope to examine the New Testament sections in G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, before the end of the session. In looking at the vital area of Textual Criticism we subjected H. Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* to much criticism and greatly preferred the approach taken by E. F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended* and W. Pickering in his study of *The Identity of the New Testament Text*. Our consideration of Canon and Inspiration centred on B. B. Warfield's definitive statements on the subject found in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. We linked this with a detailed analysis of the first chapter of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Chapters in F. F. Bruce's work, *The Books and the Parchments*, were read for the historical and literary background to the New Testament.

It might be thought advantageous in the future to have some limited introduction to Patristics included in the course, DV, as it is a subject that lies cognate with New Testament studies and was a field that the divines of the past did not overlook; for this session we intend to look at a summary paper produced by Mr. Cartwright dealing with the Apostolic Fathers.

In Catechetics, as previously mentioned, our focus was on the detailed study of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* but we also considered the *Apostle's Creed* and the *Scots Confession* of 1560. Our discussion was based on R. Shaw, *Exposition of the Confession of Faith*, supplemented by occasional reference to works of P. Schaff, D. Dickson and A. A. Hodge.

For Church Law and Polity we covered the *Manual of the Practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland* and especially the "Form of Process" contained in it, along with the Westminster Assembly's "Form of Church Government" and "Form of Ordination". Supplementary lecture notes on these documents, prepared by Mr. Cartwright, were also distributed and discussed in class. We initially began our study of Church Law and Polity by considering the doctrine of the Church from the perspective of historical theology. Again, Mr. Cartwright's comprehensive lecture notes on this topic we found to be enlightening and stimulating as they emphasise how precious the Church is to Christ in both its visible and invisible aspects. Also covered in class were T. Witherow, *The Apostolic Church*, and selected portions from Durham's *Treatise on Scandal*. The class were very grateful to have had a seminar led by Rev. J. R. Tallach, the Assistant Clerk of Synod, in which various aspects of Church law and practice were discussed, particularly procedures concerning the Synod and also regarding the principles which underlie Church discipline.

The portion of Scripture set for Bible examinations was the entire New Testament. The students' private study was intended to complement the treatment of individual books in New Testament Introduction and the students' own Exegetical Exercises. As already noted, certain selected passages were prescribed for memorisation. One essay, related to the importance of language study in the work of the ministry, was set in addition to the class and exit examinations in each subject at the end of the first and second semesters respectively. The subject of the essay was "the significance of grammatical studies for Scripture interpretation and preaching".

The students supplied various pulpits during the session and I am grateful for their help in supplying my own pulpit on more than one occasion when I was temporarily indisposed. I took opportunity to listen to their conducting of public worship and tried to make constructive comments. The practice this year has been to try to restrict students' preaching activities during term time in order to give them more time to attend to their studies, consistent as much as possible with the needs of vacant congregations. I would like to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord in bringing us through the work of the session in a measure of health and strength.

All three students have worked with commendable diligence throughout our time together and we hope they will fare well in the exit examinations which

are scheduled for the end of April. No matter how hard we may try to fashion the earthen vessels it is only the Lord who can give pastors after His own heart with treasure from Heaven to proclaim to fallen mankind. We hope He will be with these three men wherever He may direct their paths in providence.

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

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

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

In our liberal and godless society, Christian foundations are constantly under attack and are being eroded. Further erosion happened in the past year in the redefining of marriage law and, as it is now on the statute book of this nation, will have devastating consequences for Society. Apart from the huge moral question involved, which is the main issue, there will also be potentially an erosion of our civil liberties. This will affect schools, hospitals, the workplace, and other institutions. Our young will potentially be exposed to trial and maybe hardships. The Most high has permitted this; there is no doubt that we are being given over as a nation to judgement, because of our sins and the grievous departures from His Word. May the God of all grace preserve and keep our young people.

A major part of the Committee's work is the organization of the conference, to obtain a suitable venue and the organization of speakers and papers.

This year, as last year, the Youth Conference was held at Gartmore House, Gartmore, Stirlingshire. The conference fees were the same as last year: £40 for those in full time employment and £20 for others. The lower age limit for those attending continues to be 16.

The following papers were given:

- 1. Heaven and Hell: A Scriptural View**
Rev. B. J. Jardine
- 2. Zimbabwe Mission: Slide Show and Lecture**
Mr. H. Mackenzie.
- 3. Life of Robert M. M'Cheyne: Jehovah Tsidkenu; All things to me**
Mr. F. Daubney

4. The Fifth Commandment: Our duty to Man

Rev. D Macdonald

5. Regeneration and Conversion: Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good

Rev. K. M. Watkins.

6. Jewish Mission – Revision of the Hebrew New Testament

Rev. J. Goldby

The Committee would thank those who are to give papers, and the house mothers for all their help and hard work. We thank Gartmore House and their staff for housing our conference and the use of their facilities.

We as a Committee also thank all those who set and correct the Scripture and Catechism Exercises for the *Young Peoples' Magazine*, both at home and overseas. This they do willingly and we are grateful for their prayerful interest in our young people.

**BALLIFEARY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME
COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

ANOTHER year has passed and we have again to acknowledge the overruling care of the Lord during the past year.

A full complement of staff was maintained throughout the year. Margaret Ross, Night Carer, was presented with a watch to mark the Home's appreciation of her 25 years' service.

Some of the staff completed courses, which included Dementia Awareness and Palliative Care. This was done through James Watt College by distance learning. Those involved are to be congratulated on their results as the quality of care will be improved by their success.

With sorrow we have to report the passing away of Mrs. Dolina Coghill on 10th January, Mrs. Dolina MacLeod on 11th February, Mrs. Iona MacKay on 15th April, Mrs. Rhoda MacDonald on 9th May, Mrs. Rodina MacLennan on 6th June and Mrs. Margaret Wilson on 23rd August.

The following residents were admitted; Mrs. Mary MacDonald on 24th January, Miss Jessie MacLeod on 1st April, Miss Katie Graham on 13th May, Miss Rhoda MacDougall on 4th July, Mr. William Cormack on 1st August and Mrs. Mary Ross on 19th August.

Four people were given respite care during the year.

The Home lift was renewed and a stair lift installed.

The Home had one Care Inspectorate inspection in April and received the following grades:

Care and Support – Statement 1	Excellent
Statement 2	Very good
Environment.....	Excellent
Staffing	Very good
Management and Leadership	Excellent

The Committee are very aware of how indebted they are to the management and staff at the Home for the skill and faithfulness in the discharge of their duties which make the running of the Home possible. We are very grateful to the volunteers who come in to either take worship or to keep touch with the residents in many different ways and we know that this is very much appreciated by the residents themselves.

“O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 118:1).

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

THE Work of the Committee has continued as usual over another year. The management of the Home is carried on by the Manager and her staff in a professional manner. The Committee are grateful to them for their dedication and commitment to the care of the elderly. The Home has a good name and reputation in the local community; may the Home long have the Lord’s blessing.

Since last year there is no new information to give, except that the Home hopes to proceed with a new extension. This is for increased storage space, as there is now much more equipment in comparison to earlier days, and also to provide an extra room for respite care. There appears to be some demand for this in the local community. The Committee intends to proceed with this project this year, DV. We are grateful to the Finance Committee for offering financial support.

Again there have been bereavements in the Home over the past year; the following residents have passed away: Christina Macleod, Scalpay; Donald Macleod, Carrageich; Margaret Morrison, Tarbert; Murdo Mackay, Kershader, Lochs; Mary F. Macdonald, Ness; Catherine Maclellan, Seilebost. The Committee sends their sincere sympathies to all the families in their loss.

As I write this report there are no vacancies in the Home, as has been the case for a considerable period.

The inspection reports by the Care Inspectorate continue to be very good, with all four categories being looked at and receiving grades 5 and 6 with an overall grade of 5. Again the Committee would remind the Synod that although the Home status is Residential, the need for nursing care is as great

as ever. This places a heavy burden upon the staff. The Committee would again thank the medical services for their continuing support of the Home along with the local community.

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

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

HOW is the Word of God made effectual to salvation? The *Larger Catechism* answer is, "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ. . . ." For this to take place it is necessary that sinners come in contact with the Word of God and that they be reminded of its teachings time and time again. Bearing this in mind, the Outreach Committee earnestly endeavours to bring sinners into contact with the truth. Although our contribution is small and we would wish to attain to more, we know there is no other way to dispel the spiritual darkness in our land than by dissemination of the truth of Scripture – the great business of the Church of God. Our prayer, and that of others interested in and supporting our work, is that sinners would indeed be enlightened and drawn to Christ.

We are much indebted to Mr. Alan Boyd for his voluntary work of distributing Christian literature. He reports:

"For the 2013 season, a start was made at the beginning of April in Kyle of Lochalsh where a tract was presented to every household in the village over a period of three days. Thanks are due to Rev. Barry Whear who assisted on two of the three days. Sadly, no interest was shown in our display of books and literature in our book van, but four copies of the *Windsor Edition* of the Authorised Version were presented free to different homes. As in other places, we would sometimes be asked if we were "Jehovah's Witnesses", a sad reflection of the times.

"A total of £70.10 was brought in by sales of Bibles and literature on Saturday, 20th July 2013, at the Sutherland Agricultural Show in Dornoch, where we had beautiful weather.

"Our work at the Black Isle Show in Muir of Ord, held on 31st July and 1st August 2013, was not so successful as only a total of £27.64 was taken over the two days – less than a third of sales made at the previous year's Show. Some literature was given out free, including tracts and Matthew Henry's recently republished booklet, *Rome and the Threat to our Protestant Faith*. Although interesting conversations took place round our tented display, only two individuals made any purchases, both having connections with our Church. It may be added that the weather was quite inclement.

“The agricultural show in Portree was cancelled for August 2013, but the later show at Daviot was attended by Rev. Donald Ross and Mr. Edward Ross, where sales brought in the encouraging sum of about £180.

“We thank Mr. Iain Boyd for having assisted at the Dornoch Show and Mr. Edward Ross for having helped out on both days at Muir of Ord. They loaded and unloaded the van, erected and dismantled the tents and did a host of other tasks. Without their willing assistance, we could not have maintained our stall at either show.

“Again, thanks are due to Mr. Norman Fraser of the Free Presbyterian Bookroom and to the Campbell family in Ullapool for their prompt and efficient work in my receiving of literature timeously for the book van.”

The one day at the Daviot Vintage Agricultural Show was one of our more heartening visits, not only because our sales were good but also because time was spent speaking with a considerable number of people about the Word of God. Several were pleased to see our book display and promotion of the Scriptures. This show of bygone agriculture methods reminded us of the agricultural scenes which the Saviour so often referred to in His preaching to illustrate the great matters of eternity to the people.

We have decided to no longer use tents for book displays and distribution at shows or elsewhere but instead to use the book van itself together with an awning attached to it. To fix an awning to the van is somewhat costly (which is the reason we did not do it earlier) but it will cut out the enormous amount of work involved in erecting and stocking tents and will be a more durable system. Good as the tents were for the purpose, we did have trouble with them during wet and stormy weather, but we were glad to have had them and are grateful to the person who generously donated them to us.

We continue to distribute tracts at home and abroad and we thank our Bookroom manager for his help in this and other work of the committee. We have also produced a number of booklets, among them *Encouragement to Pray for the Conversion of the Jews* and *Why Psalms Only?*, and all these will be available from both our Bookroom in Glasgow and the book van. The information leaflet about the Church and its congregations is now distributed, and we hope congregations will find it useful to place in tourist centres and church entrances. The translation of tracts into Chinese goes on slowly. We are beginning to think of having the *Westminster Confession of Faith* translated into the same language.

The Church website was managed by the Outreach Committee until May last year, when the Synod appointed the new Website Committee to manage it. Although the internet is sadly put to many evil uses, it is only right that we use this lawful means for spreading the truth and our Church's Reformed witness to the ends of the earth. For example, we have sent copies of that unsurpassable summary of the teachings of Scripture, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, to many who have contacted us through our website. Some expressed their hearty thanks for having received it. The website cannot, however, take the place of work done on the ground when we present the gospel to

people face to face, few of whom would take the trouble to look up Christian websites.

In concluding this report we are sorry that we are not in a position to do more than we have done. Truly the labourers are few and the work to be done is massive. We trust, however, that despite the fact that the good seed of the Kingdom appears for the most part to fall on hard and stony ground, it will yet fall on good ground. By our efforts, and unbeknown to us, this may well be so already. In any case, there is the implied promise of fruit in the parable; we should, therefore, never give up spreading the Word. “And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred” (Mark 4:20).

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

Magazines

Both the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People’s Magazine* continue to be issued each month. An attempt is being made to provide, in its pages, material for our readers on the same basis as in previous years. The *Gaelic Supplement* comes out every three months, under the editorship of Rev. A. W. MacColl.

Following the price increase for 2013, the cover price of the Magazines has remained the same for 2014. The cost of printing decreased slightly, but that was because fewer copies now need to be printed, which reflects a decline in circulation. Postage costs were lower last year because two years’ worth of basic-rate stamps were bought in advance at the time of the last increase in the price of stamps, but the last of these will be used up this year – bringing these costs to a higher level again.

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

Publications

The translation from Gaelic of the sermons of Archibald Cook is now at the printers and is to be published under the title *Eternal Reality*. The original translation was done by Miss Marjory Dunbar of Tomatin; subsequent editorial work was begun by Mr. Alasdair Gillies and continued by Rev. D. J. MacDonald and Mr. Alan Boyd.

Volumes 12 and 13 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* have been published and, before the Synod meets, we expect the following titles previously published will, DV, again be available: the *Works of Ebenezer Erskine*

(3 volumes), the *Works of Ralph Erskine* (6 volumes), *Christ in the Old Testament* (4 volumes) and the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, volume 3.

Bookroom

The Bookroom continues its work of sending out Bibles and other Christian literature to various parts of the world. The financial outcome for 2013 was somewhat better than for the previous year. The Committee has continued to consider the performance of the Bookroom at length at recent meetings, and has decided to update the equipment in the Bookroom and also the Bookroom website, at an appropriate time. We do believe that the Bookroom has a useful function to play in spreading sound Christian literature at a time when the religious outlook is decidedly darker than it was even a few years ago.

We would express our gratitude to all who have helped in the work of the Bookroom, in particular those who have kept the Bookroom open on Saturday mornings and during the Manager's holidays.

The Committee would call for prayer to the Lord for His blessing on every part of the Committee's work – the production of the Magazines and the publication and circulation of Christian literature. Our desire is that the Lord would use these means for the good of souls and, even in a small way, for the furtherance of His Kingdom in this world.

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. The first step towards this has been the compiling of an inventory of the home archives presently in the possession of the Church, including Synod, Presbytery, Kirk Session, deacons' Court, and Committee records, and this work has continued in the last year. It is hoped now to extend this inventory to the records of overseas congregations.

The second step has been the digitizing of archives. Of the eight volumes of Synod minutes covering the period 1896-2008, five had been scanned up to last year (Vol. 1, 1896-1904 and Vols. 5-8, 1947-2008), and Vol. 4 (1937-1946) has now been added to this. It is hoped to scan the remaining two volumes in the forthcoming year (DV). In addition, the minutes of the single Presbytery which preceded the formation of the Synod (1893-1896) have been scanned. This Presbytery met 71 times in the course of the three years while the structure of the Church was being set up; and the Committee would like to propose that these minutes be typed up and published by the Church with suitable explanatory notes. Another valuable item that has been scanned is the Shieldaig Kirk Session minutes (1879-1893).

The third step has been to consider the permanent preservation of records, both paper and electronic. The Committee would reiterate its urgent recom-

mentation 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. It has been suggested (though this suggestion is not finalized at the time of writing) that the new Church website should have a secure area (intranet) where electronic copies of Church records can safely be stored.

In the last year, the Committee was informed of an archive of about 450 letters addressed to the Free Presbyterian General Treasurer, Mr. Alexander Gillivray, dating from 1915 to 1924, which were for sale at an auction in England. It seems that the letters had been left in an attic after Mr. Gillivray's death. Strictly, the letters belonged to the FP Church, but we did not wish the possessor, who himself had purchased them in a previous auction, to be out of pocket, so a private sale was successfully negotiated with him. The letters are now in the process of being indexed and scanned. The letters are not confidential – they relate mainly to Magazine subscriptions – but they are of interest as representing the worldwide support that the FP Church had at that period. The Committee would like to propose that once the scanning is complete (DV), the letters be deposited on open access in the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness.

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

WEBSITE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. M. Watkins

FOLLOWING its appointment by the Synod in May 2013, the Website Committee has met on a number of occasions. Meetings have been by way of Skype, to accommodate the international membership. The main and ongoing business before the Committee has been the overhaul and redesign of the website. Looking at the purposes that the website should fulfil, the Committee prepared a comprehensive and detailed brief of what the redesign should involve. Four website design companies were asked to prepare proposals for the work. The Committee chose a company in the USA called Five More Talents, which has worked already on a number of sites, mainly in the context of North American Presbyterianism. The process is scheduled to complete in the summer of 2014. It is hoped that the Bookroom site will also be overhauled and restored to full functionality. Currently the funding of the website is from the Outreach Fund, as agreed with both the Finance and Outreach Committees. The initial basic cost of the website overhaul is estimated to be about £6,700 and the hosting charges will be a little over £30 per month.

The Committee is united in believing that by divine blessing the church's website can be a great instrument for furthering the kingdom of Christ.