

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

Submitted to Synod in May 2018

INDEX

Report of the Religion and Morals Committee.....	page 5
Sabbath Observance Committee’s Report	19
Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee’s Report.....	22
Ingwenya Mission Report	25
John Tallach High School Report	26
Zenka Mission Report.....	30
Nkayi Mission Report	31
Zvishavane Mission Report	32
Mbumba Mission Report	33
Mbumba Mission Hospital Report.....	33
Bulawayo Mission Report.....	43
Gweru Mission Report	44
Thembiso Children’s Home Report.....	45
Zimbabwe Mission Administrator’s Report.....	46
Overseas Committee’s Report.....	49
Australia, New Zealand and Singapore Report	51
Eastern Europe Mission Report	55
Report of Deputy to Canada – Rev. W. A. Weale.....	57
Report of Deputy to Odessa – Rev. D. A. Ross.....	58
Report of Deputy to Santa Fe, Texas – Rev. D. A. Ross	60
Training of the Ministry Committee’s Report	62
Welfare of Youth Committee’s Report.....	63
Ballifeary Residential Care Home Committee’s Report.....	64
Leverburgh Residential Care Home Committee’s Report	66
Outreach Committee’s Report.....	67
Publications and Bookroom Committee’s Report	69
Website Committee’s Report.....	71
Church Archives Committee’s Report	71

**REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND
MORALS COMMITTEE**

Convener: Mr. F. R. Daubney

1. INTRODUCTION

IN preparing this Religion and Morals Committee's Report, members of the Committee have, as usual, contributed items which look into some of the subjects which have dominated the media and our thoughts during the past year.

With regard to the work of the Committee, we have completed the Statement of Differences, which we hope to have approved for publication by this meeting of Synod. The paper on homosexuality was amended as required by the last meeting of Synod and has been published in the Free Presbyterian Magazine. Further to this, it is now on the Free Presbyterian website, and it is intended that it be sent to all the members of the Scottish Parliament and the Christian press.

It is good to note that the Scottish Government is still in disarray with regard to the proposed Named Person legislation. They have great difficulty in squaring its intended requirements with the human rights of parents and children. Although intransigence appears to be a Scottish National Party characteristic, it is hoped that they will accept legal and professional advice and quietly drop the matter. Another initiative of concern is "Time for Inclusive Education" (TIE), which will continue to be monitored by the Committee.

There is no section on Islamic terrorism in this year's report. Although ISIS has suffered severe set-backs in areas where it intended to set up its caliphate, Islamic fundamentalism and its associated terrorism is still a concern in this country and elsewhere in the world. We should be thankful to the Most High for the skill and diligence of our security agencies, but there is much cause for prayer for the safe keeping of our nation.

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

2. RELIGION

Popery (Roman Catholicism)

Popery presently boasts about 1.28 billion deluded devotees globally, of which there are 841,000 in Scotland. Pope Francis, a Jesuit, appears to be bent on establishing his evil organisation as the pre-eminent part of a one-world religion. However, it is currently plagued internally with several factions, the main two being the "liberals" (endeavouring to "reform" or modernise that organisation), and the "conservatives" (resisting any change). The Pope is the

head of the “liberals”, and seems to be concentrating on changing three main areas of dogma and practice: qualifications required to participate in the mass, extension of sodomite involvement in the activities of that organisation, and making public worship more inclusive of other religions. Cardinal Ronald Burke has emerged as the leader of the opposing “conservative” faction. He is the Prefect of the Apostolic Signature, the President of the Vatican’s Supreme Court and the most senior American Cardinal in Rome. He has been described as the “enemy of the Pope”, and has publicly questioned his stewardship, condemning it as rudderless. He is also thought to have the latent support and advice of the Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, as well as that of Cardinal George Mueller, former Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctors of the Faith (the Pope’s own doctrinal chief), and other cardinals. The “conservatives” therefore constitute a most formidable opposition for their opponents.

Pope Francis, in his contending, has equated the “conservatives” with fundamentalism, and has stated that “fundamentalism is a sickness that is in all religions”, and that “they believe in absolute truth, and go ahead dirtying the other with calumny, with disinformation, and doing evil. . . . We have to combat it. . . . Religious fundamentalism is not religious, it lacks God. It is idolatry, like the idolatry of money.” The main area of contention between them is whether or not the remarried may partake of the mass. The Pope and his faction support their partaking of it, arguing that it would merely be a legitimate “development of tradition”. His opponents counter by saying that such a proposal, if implemented, would “undermine fundamental Church teaching that the bond of marriage cannot be broken”. They regard such remarriage as adulterous, and that which debars such from the mass (they are strangely blind to the scriptural teaching that the innocent divorced are free to remarry, Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:15).

Also, Cardinal Mueller has declared, “We are called to help people little by little, to have a full relationship with God”, before adding, “but can’t give discounts”. This controversy concerning divorcees and the mass is not the only matter causing discord in the organisation. The Pope and his fellow “liberals” are also advocating other contentious changes to dogma and practice, such as an increase of involvement in the activities of papistry for sodomites, the admittance of married men into the so called priesthood, and the promotion of ever more inclusive inter-faith worship services. There are reports of a “great divide” in its midst, and many amongst its hierarchy saying “I am a Pope Francis Catholic” (“liberals”), or “I am a Pope Benedict XVI Catholic” (“conservatives”).

We pray that this internal schism will rapidly and greatly increase, and effect the fall of this soul-murdering institution; that any of God’s elect presently ensnared by it would be delivered from it, and that the Lord would pour out the Holy Ghost to the bringing in of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, with much saving power, and cause the dawning of the glorious Millennium, very soon. “And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a

seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:3); “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

The role of the Jesuits in Britain today

Those who imagine that Romanism is no longer an inveterate enemy to the true Church of Christ in our day are at best naïve. As has been observed, the cunning of the fox and the ferocity of the wolf are part of Rome’s unchanging nature, not least among the Jesuits. Much of Jesuitical influence is aimed at gaining the minds of the young, and even more subtly, in infiltrating important judicial, political and religious institutions.

A survey of their influence in Britain reveals that there are 11 Jesuit schools in Britain today, while worldwide there are 2,210 schools educating over 2 million students. They have 176 openly Jesuit members living in 19 communities in Britain, working as parish priests, chaplains, teachers, academics, writers, doctors and in other professions. In addition to the schools there are Jesuit colleges, refugee programmes, volunteer programmes and notably two university chaplaincies serving 15,000 Roman Catholic students at Oxford and Manchester University. In May 2007 they appointed a new head in Britain, a man trained in Chile who worked as a parish priest in South London, and who has a PhD in Islamic thought. All of this information is made public by the Jesuits themselves.

What is not so public is their secretive and undercover work. Through education and other means they seek to control the future leaders of society, particularly targeting the children of political leaders and other influential people in society. Information on their undercover operations is naturally hard to come by. It is not unlikely that their agents have infiltrated numerous Protestant churches. If this is true it may in part explain the Romeward movement in many mainstream Protestant churches. In many other areas of society thousands of Jesuit agents worldwide have gained influential posts in politics, armies, among magistrates, doctors and university professors, and Britain will not be immune to this influence.

With a Jesuit Pope in power, the influence of the order is on the increase. Affiliated societies such as Opus Dei appear to be growing in strength and number, promoting Rome’s own interests in a similar way to the Jesuits. Great is the need that the Lord’s praying people would plead for the promised downfall of Rome, that spiritual Babylon, which “the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

False charity to Romanists

True charity “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6). It seeks the true eternal spiritual good of souls by giving, not

withholding, the truth. In a generation where personal offence too often takes precedence over the voice of truth, temptations to compromise abound. True love to our neighbour will avoid causing them to stumble, that is, sin or harm their spiritual good. False charity on the other hand causes others to stumble by encouraging them in sin and error. This can also be done by not clearly and entirely pointing it out or by sinful silence. In 1989 one of the important points made by the Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in relation to the Lord Mackay case was the impact of confirming Roman Catholics in their idolatry and leading weaker brethren to be ensnared by the same example.

The Reformation anniversary was something of a litmus test for Protestants in relation to the gospel and how they ought to respond to Romanism. For those plagued with the disease of ecumenism it had to be carefully stage-managed. A merely lukewarm note of thanksgiving was accompanied with hand-wringing tones of regret. It was the language of false charity. Essentially they were ashamed of the gospel. Declarations were signed to confirm Rome in their soul-destroying errors and sell the birthright of Reformation truth.

Those such as the Evangelical Alliance sought to mark the importance of the Reformation and its doctrines whilst narrating attempts at evangelical ecumenism with Rome with apparent approval. It sought to balance points of “continuing divergence” with “convergence and co-operation”. One area of co-operation highlighted was in relation to evangelistic efforts. It is quite contradictory to say that Reformation truth is significant but one can still co-operate with Romanists in evangelism as though the same gospel is believed.

Still others simply passed over the event in a silence that seemed to indicate an embarrassment with the Reformation. No doubt there are wrong ways of marking such events but we ought not to ignore the mighty works of God as though they were inconvenient.

When those who claim to be evangelical and reformed call Romanists brothers in Christ and those who serve Christ, it is at best false charity. It believes that they are in error but does not give a clear warning against this. At worst it reveals deep confusion about both the gospel and salvation, especially when it is said that the Roman Catholic view of salvation is not as “full” as the Protestant one.

It was reported last year that Roman Catholics were now close to becoming the largest religious grouping in Scotland. One can anticipate that evangelical attempts to placate them will only increase as they seek their influence in areas of common concern. It is a statistic, however, that presents an implicit challenge to evangelise them. False charity would avoid this but a faithful love for the souls of the followers of Rome should not.

The Ancient Landmark

“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (Proverbs 22:28). The boundaries of a man’s property were not to be interfered with. That right to property ownership is still with us today. If that is so for things

that pertain to man, how much more ought that to be so concerning the Lord's cause! Yet many are today, with great zeal, removing or controverting the ancient landmark of the cause of Christ; and moreover are encouraged in that nefarious business by our rulers. Our godly forefathers, by a variety of means, including our constitution and other legislation, publications, teaching in church schools, and even by erecting physical statues and monuments, set public landmarks in the nation to try to safeguard the church from the encroachment of her enemies. These landmarks have been progressively attacked and removed, year after year, generation after generation.

One way in which this has been done is to allow them to be neglected – as it were overgrown – so that the populace knows not what they are. Authorities do not observe, schools do not teach, and the media do not report, that which would remind the nation of its glorious gospel heritage. The 500th anniversary of the Reformation passed last year with little in the way of public recognition; and yet, by any standards, it was one of the most significant events for the history of our nation. To only a small remnant is it perceived a matter of significance now. When children, and indeed many adults, know virtually nothing of the nation's true religious heritage, we cannot be surprised when they are so gullible, and easily led into the path of the wicked.

Our forefathers stressed the duty that rulers have to actively support the church and so help the gospel to flourish. This duty has now been cast off. The Scottish Government has recently removed a longstanding privilege from churches, by requiring those congregations which were not registered charities to pay full business water rates. So little water is used in most church buildings, that the practical effect was to impose a tax on church buildings. And by relegating churches to the same level as other charitable organisations, such as mosques, humanist organisations and sporting clubs, in its practical dealings the government today wholly disowns their duty in relation to the Establishment Principle. Their great zeal is for the modern, unbiblical, landmark of the “equality”, “diversity” and “inclusion” landscape. The “virtue-signallers” of the media, social or otherwise, can obtain the praise and approbation of their fellows by pointing out these landmarks, and particularly to identify and excoriate those who are nonconformists.

A mob of chanting students demanding conformity to the equality dogma brings fear to the governors of higher education institutions, and often swift accedence to their demands. For example, Yale University changed the name of the John C. Calhoun College because Calhoun, a 19th century Vice-President of the USA, although an outstanding senator in his day, was an advocate of slavery. However, Elihu Yale, who helped endow the university and whom it is called after, made his fortune as a slave trader! Alas it would be too expensive to change the name of the whole university, but sufficient “virtue-signalling” to appease the students had been accomplished. Britain is not immune to this craze, as the “Rhodes must fall” Oxford University statue campaign showed. The statue of John Knox has long since been moved out of

parliament square and the public gaze, for the supposed reason that it was a bronze statue and therefore should be out of the elements. Since then a bronze statue of the atheist philosopher David Hume has been installed outside the High Court building on the Royal Mile – sadly symbolic of the way the city and nation of Knox has fallen.

We have a duty not only to preserve the ancient landmark, but also to bring it to the attention of our fellow citizens as opportunity arises. In times past a Christian could make an effort to witness against ungodliness by writing a letter to a newspaper or magazine, even such publications as had a large readership. Today that particular opportunity of public witness has been blocked by an unwillingness to give a voice to biblical views. Nevertheless efforts are still being made to raise a voice. It is encouraging to hear of attempts to do so, however feeble they might seem. May the Lord bless that voice that is consistent with His Word.

The Scottish Church Census 2016

The Scottish Church Census was conducted in summer 2016, but the results came out too late for comment at the previous Synod. Not surprisingly, the figures for church attendance show a continued decline from the previous census, with 390,000 people regularly attending church (7.2% of the Scottish population), down from 570,000 in 2002 (10.6%), and from 854,000 (17%) in 1984. Around 40% of those attending church are over the age of 65. There are 3,700 congregations in Scotland which claim to be Christian and Trinitarian, of which 57% describe themselves as either evangelical or reformed.

The census highlights the weak and fragmented state of Scottish Christianity. Pentecostalism has doubled in size since 2002 (18,860 in 2016), but every other form of Christianity has declined. Notwithstanding the influx of Poles, the Roman Catholic attendance has dropped from 202,110 in 2002 to 135,600 in 2016. This latter figure is marginally less than that for the Church of Scotland (136,910 in 2016). The Church of Scotland attendance is dropping the fastest of all. Contrary to the claims of the liberals, their religion seems pointless to the world.

The real religious state of Scotland is, of course, far worse than these figures show, and many of those who are attending church manifestly do not have “the root of the matter” (Job 19:28). On the other hand, the downward trend is equally misleading, as far as predicting the future is concerned, because conversion is not merely a human “attitude” to religion but a sovereign work of God. He may revive His work at any moment, and will do so at His appointed time, irrespective of trends and statistics to the contrary.

Homosexuality and the National Churches

Church of England

In 1998 the 13th Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops passed a resolution that “homosexual acts” are “incompatible with Scripture”. This resolution

was not, however, legally binding and Anglican national churches in Brazil, South Africa, South India, New Zealand and Canada have taken steps towards approving and “celebrating” same-sex relationships. The Episcopal Church in the USA has gone a step further and allowed homosexual marriages since 2015. Many Church of England (CofE) clergy have shown support for homosexual marriage by rejecting a 2017 House of Bishops’ report that marriage should be between a man and a woman. A future meeting of the CofE’s General Synod is to discuss a motion, to be proposed by the Bishop of Hereford, Richard Frith, “to create a set of formal services and prayers to bless those who have had a same sex marriage or civil partnership”.

The CofE has allowed clergy to enter into same-sex civil partnerships since 2005 and, in 2009, the BBC reported that many clergy in the CofE “already bless same-sex couples on an unofficial basis”. The CofE requests that clergy in civil partnerships vow to remain sexually chaste, but the Church of Wales has no such restriction. And in 2016 the CofE consecrated Bishop Nicholas Chamberlain to be Bishop of Grantham, knowing he was homosexual and in a long-term same-sex relationship.

In November 2016 the Secretary General of the Archbishops’ Council confirmed the following: Clergy are permitted to enter into civil partnerships; they may offer prayers for people in same-sex relationships; they should welcome LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) people as they would anyone else; and that clergy and laity are entitled to argue for changes in teaching and practice. In 2017 Bishop Rachel Treweek presided over an “LGBT Eucharist” sponsored by the Inclusive Church (an organisation which advocates the full inclusion of all people in the Christian churches, regardless of ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation).

A letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent recently to all CofE schools saying: “A child may choose the tutu, princess’s tiara and heels and/or the fireman’s helmet, tool belt and superhero cloak without expectation or comment”; and “childhood has a sacred space for creative self imagining”. The Archbishop also advised schools that they must no longer separate uniforms into “boys” and “girls”, so as not to “create difficulty for trans pupils”. The Archbishop goes so far as to claim that to make children wear clothes that match their birth sex is “bullying”.

Reverend Kelvin Holdsworth of the Glasgow Episcopal Cathedral, who helped to secure same-sex marriage in the Scottish Episcopal Church in 2017, has said that prayers should be offered up that Prince George should be homosexual as this would be the “fastest way” for the CofE to allow homosexual people to marry.

The CofE has moved a very long way from its statement in 1998 that homosexual acts are incompatible with Scripture. The Anglican community is in turmoil and may yet suffer further break-up as a result of its disgraceful departure from the Word of God on this matter.

Church of Scotland

In 2000 the Church of Scotland (CofS) was divided over the repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. Section 28 was intended to stop local authorities from promoting homosexuality by the funding of books or any other materials that showed a homosexual relationship as normal. Despite strong opposition from the evangelical wing of the church, its Committee on Education supported the proposed repeal. This support was followed by the acceptance and normalisation of homosexuality in the CofS.

The General Assembly of 2013 agreed that people in same-sex partnerships should be allowed to serve as deacons and ministers. It was noted that the Church maintained the scriptural view of marriage as between a man and a woman, but would allow individual congregations to “opt out” if they wished to appoint a minister or deacon who was in a same-sex marriage or civil partnership.

In 2017 the Church’s Theological Forum Convener, the Very Reverend Iain Torrance, said when presenting his committee’s report, that he and his colleagues could see “no sufficient theological reason for the Church not to authorise specific ministers to officiate at same-sex weddings . . . if doing so does not prejudice the position of those who decline to do so for reason of conscience”. He went on to quote the work of theologian, Professor Robert Song, of Durham University, who said, “that rather than the old fraught polarisation of heterosexual versus homosexual, where the notion of homosexuality is demonised as disobedient to a creation expectation to procreate, it needs to be reframed”. Professor Torrance’s report was approved and accepted. To the credit of a number of the Assembly delegates the vote was strongly contested, but was carried by a large majority.

That same General Assembly approved an apology to homosexuals for the history of discrimination they had faced in the Church. Reverend John Nugent, St. Fergus Church in Wick, has claimed that the lack of LGBT inclusive education is a breach of children’s rights and that faith communities should be more accepting of LGBT people.

Following this theme of inclusivity, the CofS has actually produced a booklet called *Diverse Gender Identities and Pastoral Care*, which is a collection of stories by those who identify themselves as transgender people. It does not seek to give answers or to express any theological positions. Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. It is sometimes known as gender identity disorder, gender incongruence or transgenderism. While biological sex and gender identity are the same for most, it is not the case for an estimated 1% of people who claim to be transgender. It is lumped together with LBGT but is not the same as homosexuality.

The Church of Scotland is in as big a state of confusion as the Church of England with regard to homosexuality. Both of these churches are splitting themselves asunder by their determination to follow the current agenda and

fashion. In some cases whole congregations have left the denominations, and in others many individuals have left their congregations. The two main national churches of the United Kingdom have abandoned the Word of God and in supporting and promoting sodomy they run blindly to their own destruction. The blood of their parishioners will be required at their hands.

3. MORALS

Child abuse

Child abuse is not an edifying subject to think about or report on. However, it is a necessary subject to consider in light of the fact that society is becoming increasingly devoid of natural affection. Though the Bible does not specifically use the term child abuse, we are told that anyone who harms a child is inviting God's wrath upon themselves. The Word of God promotes child blessing and not child abuse: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:13-16).

Child abuse has been defined as "when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child". Child abuse takes several forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and child neglect, all of which are abhorrent to God.

Physical abuse is any action that injures a child, such as hitting, kicking, burning, biting, hair pulling, choking, throwing, shoving or whipping. It is abuse if the child is injured, even if the parent or caregiver did not intentionally mean to cause harm to the child.

The Word of God prohibits physical abuse in its warnings against improper anger. Physical abuse often takes the form of parents taking out their own anger and frustration on their children. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27) and "an angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22) – this is different from biblical chastisement which is considered below. There is no place for unrighteous or uncontrolled anger in the life of any Christian.

Sexual abuse is when an adult or an older or more powerful child uses a child for immoral purposes or involves a child in immoral acts. This would include inappropriate physical, verbal, or visual behaviour with or in the presence of children. Another aspect of this is the sharing of indecent images and texts. Contrary to general opinion most sexual abuse is not carried out by

“strangers”, but by family members, family friends or those in places of authority who have regular access to the victim, such as teachers.

The Word of God prohibits child abuse in its condemnation of immorality. To abuse a child in this way is evil. It is a clear violation of the seventh commandment and a sin of uncleanness aggravated to the highest degree, as it is perpetrated against the most vulnerable in society. Sexual abuse violates a child physically, psychologically and emotionally. The victims of such abuse are adversely affected for life and may never recover.

In connection with this is the continued desire of some to lower the age of consent. Since the 1970s there has been agitation to lower the age of consent in Britain to either 15 as it is in Sweden, or to 14 as it is in Germany and Italy. Attempts have been renewed in recent years by John Ashton of the UK Faculty of Public Health, focussing on the health and wellness of sexually active minors. He has used the argument that it would “take enormous pressures off children and young people” who presently feel their need to hide their sexual activity and cannot seek help when needed. A lowering of the age of consent would empower teachers and other supervising adults to provide access to contraception and sexual health advice for 14- and 15-year-olds. However, there is no emphasis placed on whether or not children as young as 14 or 15 are ready for the emotional aspects of such early sexual activity, which they are not. The clear immorality of such activity is completely disregarded.

Liz Dux, a lawyer who represented victims abused by the entertainer Jimmy Savile, has objected, stating that “predatory adults would be given legitimacy to focus their attentions on even younger teenagers, and there is a real risk that society would be sending out the message that sex between 14- to 15-year-olds is also acceptable”. To provide the means to do it legally seems to be a move towards it becoming an acceptable practice.

Emotional abuse is when a parent, caregiver or any other adult harms a child’s mental or social development or causes severe emotional harm to them. This may include rejecting or ignoring the child, shaming or humiliating them, terrorising them, isolating them and corrupting them.

The Word of God prohibits such abuse when it warns fathers: “Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Harsh, unloving verbal discipline and emotional manipulation alienate the child from their parents and make their instructions and corrections of little or no value. A child’s emotional frustration with a parent puts a wall between them which cuts off proper communication and respect. Exasperating the child keeps your child from obedience to you which is disobedience to God. “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:20). Parents can “provoke” their children by placing unreasonable requirements on them, belittling them, or constantly finding fault. This can cause deeper wounds than any physical blow. Both Matthew 18:1-6 and Mark 9:42 set before us the consequences of leading a child to disobedience: “and whosoever shall offend one of these little ones

that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea”.

Child neglect is when a parent or caregiver does not have an affection for or does not care for, supervise and support the child’s health, safety and well-being. This may involve physical neglect or inadequate supervision, emotional neglect, medical neglect and educational neglect. But what of the neglect of a child’s spiritual well-being?

The end of biblical parenting is, firstly, to raise children to love and follow God: “that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged” (Deuteronomy 6:2); and secondly, to come to know the Lord savingly: to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Spiritual abuse in leading the child away from God rather than to Him is the worst sort of possible abuse. Colossians 3:21, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged”, teaches us to encourage rather than discourage our children. This is confirmed by Ephesians 4:15-19: “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” We must speak the Word to them in truth, beseeching the Lord in prayer, and seek to build them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Christian parents should not say or do anything that would prejudice the tender hearts and minds of their children.

Proposed Bill on Smacking

At the end of 2017 the Scottish Government confirmed that smacking children is to be banned in Scotland. A bill lodged initially by John Finnie, MSP for the Greens, has received the support of the Government who promised that it would become law. Under the proposed Bill, children will receive the same legal protection as adults. The bill proposes to remove the defence of “justifiable assault” in Scots law, which allows parents to use physical punishment to admonish a child.

The proposal to ban smacking has been backed by the United Nations, academics and charities, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents and at least one local authority. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has called it “a welcome step on the road towards fairness and equality for children”, claiming it would be a “common

sense move". The physical punishment of children is already illegal in 52 countries.

The Scottish Government believes that "physical punishment can have negative effects on children which can last long after the physical pain has died away. We support positive parenting through, for example, funding for family support services." There are no bans proposed in England and Northern Ireland, where parents are allowed to use "reasonable chastisement", but can face criminal charges if a child is smacked so hard that it leaves a mark or causes bruising.

Scriptural doctrine

Some consider thoughtful, scripturally-based physical discipline to be a horribly violent act. But, while the Bible is protective of children, it is also realistic about what measures are necessary to develop their character and restrain them from following the natural inclination of a sinful nature.

Physical punishment is often the most effective way to lead a child to an understanding of right and wrong. God disciplines those He loves: "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:7); and "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). Sometimes that discipline is physical. We are to love our children (Titus 2:4), to treat them affectionately and kindly, and biblical chastisement is an essential part of that.

The Bible is clear that such punishment is for the benefit of the receiver and not to be an emotional release for the punisher or cause serious or lasting (permanent) physical damage. Christian parents must always teach in love and discipline with justice and not abuse their position.

Children should be corrected when necessary: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). This discipline should be administered in the right spirit and in the spirit of love without anger: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27) and "An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22).

Immigration

In a small country town in Scotland, some families have moved their children from the local school to a more rural school three miles away, because of the number of children belonging to foreign workers attending. These have little or no English, and the teachers had to spend an inordinate amount of time endeavouring to instruct them, so that the local children were largely ignored. Why are so many foreign workers needed? The authorities say it is because we have an ageing population and why is that? Is it because many are living longer? Many are, but the root of the matter is the 1967 Abortion Act. Tens of thousands of children have been murdered in the womb who would now have been in the workforce if they had been permitted to live.

Most of the immigrants have non-Christian religions, and there has been a great increase in the building of mosques and temples for their false gods. Many of these prove fertile ground for rearing up terrorists, with their bombing activities in our own country and abroad, fulfilling what the Rt. Hon. Enoch Powell MP forecast in his famous and controversial speech on “rivers of blood”. This has come about, with 4 suicide bombers causing the death of 64 people in a single day in London in 3 underground trains and a commuter bus. In the past year a suicide bomber struck at a concert in Manchester and many young people were killed. Also others have been murdered on London streets by running heavy vehicles into crowds of pedestrians. Quite a number of planned attacks have been thwarted by the vigilance of the security services. It is hoped that with Brexit, Britain will again be able to control its own borders and prevent thousands of illegal immigrants entering the country.

Transgender Confusion

Confusion might seem a mild word to describe the complete subversion that transgenderism creates. The word means not just mental bewilderment or lack of clarity, although this is certainly one aspect. It can also involve indiscriminate mixing of things so that it is difficult to distinguish the individual elements. Transgenderism involves obliterating the divinely created order. People using Facebook can choose from an array of 71 “genders” or none at all. The idea is that anyone may self-identify as whatever they like and then expect immediate recognition. Of course this creates potential safety risks and confusion in every area where the male-female distinction must be taken into consideration.

Over the past few years the number of children referred to gender clinics has exploded. There has been an almost 1,000% increase in children referred to the Tavistock clinic in London over the past 6 years. Nearly 70% of the figure are girls. This correlates with a steep rise in self-harm and other mental health issues among teenage girls. Adolescents frequently experience temporary difficulties as they adapt to their changing bodies. They are susceptible to brainwashing from online sources. Some parents report that they feel like their “trans” child has joined a cult. It is an escalating social experiment that will store up untold problems for the future of our society.

Gender dysphoria is a real problem that must be handled sensitively like other psychiatric illnesses. There is no reliable scientific basis for the diagnosis of transgender, nor long-term research on the outcome of treatments. James Caspian, a psychotherapist who has spent many years working with such people, says that “there is a groundswell of people de-transitioning . . . people who after five, seven, twelve, fifteen and even twenty years want to retransition back”. There is also a high suicide rate amongst those that change their bodies. As with other cases of self-harm, therapy should not be aimed at changing healthy bodies to match people’s feelings, but rather at helping people accept the body they were born with.

It is a movement that does not just contradict biological reality but almost every other dimension of reality as ordained by God. Transgenderism also subverts some of the key agendas of secularism, such as materialism, which would reduce everything to biological processes. It contradicts the feminist agenda, which is based on opposition between the sexes; therefore some feminists think that male transitioning to female is just another exercise of “male privilege”.

Within just a few years this movement is gaining the ground that the homosexual lobby obtained over decades. But no society can function with this type of entire breakdown of necessary and ordained order. We are destined for as much disorder as possible unless we will submit to God’s rule.

Time for Inclusive Education (TIE)

The campaign group, Time for Inclusive Education, say their research has found 90% of LGBT people experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia at school, and that 97% of these people believe that it would have helped if their school had been LGBT inclusive. The group’s aim is to eradicate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours among young people by adopting an educational approach, embedding LGBT topics and issues into school curricula and social teaching.

The “TIE Pledge”, which members of the public and MSPs are called on to sign online, proposes teacher training programmes for teachers who are currently serving and student trainee teachers; a requirement to embed LGBT materials into the curriculum; recording of bullying; new legislation to require an inclusive educational approach; and monitoring by local authorities and school inspectors of any steps taken.

The campaigners say, “We are aware of the vitally important role that teachers play in tackling these issues, and this is why the TIE campaign is focussed on giving teachers the confidence to address LGBT topics and issues directly, by guaranteeing that all teachers have access to the inclusive training programmes that are currently available. Furthermore, we are also campaigning for all trainee teachers to receive LGBT training as part of their required qualification.” This organisation already runs training events for teachers in the Primary, Secondary and Additional Support Needs sectors.

At their 2016 Spring conference the Scottish National Party moved a resolution to support the campaign. A majority of Members of the Scottish Parliament (70 out of 129) signed the pledge and committed to supporting their strategic proposals to advance LGBT inclusive education. The First Minister and some other leading Holyrood politicians give it their backing.

The stated aim is to prevent bullying through an inclusion of the LGBT agenda as a core subject in the education of our children. The argument is made that the sympathetic exposure, through teaching the “reality” and “normality” of these issues, should have the effect of reducing bullying and feelings of isolation. No one likes to hear of bullying in our schools, but programmes such as this create confusion in the minds of our children. They

are taught that a person can choose their own gender and expect that their choice be respected and accepted as normal, when it is clearly not. A tiny minority of the population do have issues which need to be addressed and, if they have genuine psychological difficulties with their identity, they should be treated with kindness as we would treat any other person. But to legislate to require us to conform, in our thoughts and our actions, with the sodomite and the humanist is wrong and unacceptable.

The irony and wickedness of such campaigns is that people speaking out against their beliefs are themselves being bullied and silenced, and children are being taught that that which is complete confusion is right and must not be questioned. To question the normalising of the LGBT agenda is becoming regarded as a hate crime. The hatred may well be in the hearts of the accusers. That which is sinful is hateful to God, whilst “speaking the truth in love” means we must question and oppose it, which is our resolved intention.

4. CONCLUSION

This year’s Religion and Morals Committee’s Report gives us a picture of a land going further and further away from what is required of us in the Word of God. To a large degree Scripture is ignored and sins which are condemned in the Word of God are openly indulged and even protected by law. We frequently hear of the legislators themselves being required to resign their positions in government and parliament after behaving in scandalous ways. Children are exposed to all manner of filth and pornography on social media, the perpetrators and publishers of which appear to be able to flout any measures designed and implemented to control them. Substance abuse and violence in the home continue to be areas of deep concern.

What need there is for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a return to the faithful preaching of the Gospel of Christ. God in His Word encourages His believing people to pray for a time when He shall “declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord” (Psalm 102:21-22).

SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. B. Jardine

THE work of the Committee continues as in previous years.

The decline of Sabbath observance in a community

Not very long ago there was a marked difference between a Sabbath in Lewis and Harris and one in the rest of Britain. However, decline in Sabbath

observance in the Western Isles has, over the last two decades, become very pronounced. A poll conducted in the year 2000 showed that just over 60% of the population of Lewis and Harris were in favour of planes and ferries being run on the Sabbath. Planes began to operate on the Sabbath in 2002 and the ferries shortly after, in 2006.

Although the vast majority of shops remain closed in Lewis and Harris on the Sabbath, there have been recent attempts to encourage more to open. It is feared that the increase in bus tours operating on the Sabbath in the Islands will make this inevitable. The success of the tourist industry has resulted in the decline of Sabbath observance, and the love of money has been proven again to be the root of all evil, with many selling their inheritance for a mess of pottage.

As the influence of the gospel has declined and Sabbath keeping in families has diminished, Sabbath observance has been replaced by frivolous entertainments and the continued desire to open the Golf Course, Sports Centre, Cinema, etc., on the Lord's Day.

A great benefit of living in some parts of Scotland is that Sabbath observance is part of the cultural heritage as well as being a Christian principle, thus making Sabbath observance in some respects easier. But where Sabbath observance has never truly been a part of the cultural heritage, it makes that observance harder and will eventually, humanly speaking, be lost as a widely kept Christian principle.

We should therefore, even in the face of adversity and, at times, with no outward encouragement, seek to maintain a witness as to how the Sabbath is meant to be spent. Retaining even a memory of the Sabbath in the minds of the nation will prove to be a blessing.

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

Agricultural Shows and Sales

Turriff Show	No response
New Deer Show	No response
Keith Show	No response
Scottish Ploughing Championships	Reply received
(This reply was rather blasphemous in its content.)	
Royal Horticultural Society	Reply received
("I am afraid that we will not reconsider our current position of holding RHS Shows on Sundays.")	

Highland Shows

Royal Highland Show	No response
Mallaig and Morar Highland	No response
The Atholl Gathering and Highland Games	No response
Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games.....	No response
Crieff Highland Gathering	No response

Cortachy Highland Games (Kirriemuir)..... No response
 Perth Highland Games No response
 Kelburn Castle Highland Games and Country Fair... No response
 Montrose Highland Games and Heavy Horse Show.. No response
 Bridge of Allan Highland Games No response
 Markinch Highland Games..... Acknowledgment received
 Lochaber Highland Games No response
 Stirling Highland Games No response
 Kilmore and Kilbride Highland Games..... No response
 City of Aberdeen Highland Games..... No response
 Gourock Highland Games No response
 Roseneath Peninsula Highland Games No response
 Gordon Castle Highland Games No response
 Carmunnock Highland Games..... No response
 Strathmore Highland Games..... No response
 Lorne Highland Games..... No response
 Stonehaven Highland Games..... No response
 St. Andrews Highland Games..... No response

Festivals

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival..... No response
 Piping Live..... No response
 Party at the Palace..... No response
 BOWfest No response
 Inverness Christmas Lights..... Acknowledgment received

Sport

Scottish Hockey No response
 Goodwood Festival of Speed..... No response
 England Netball No response
 Matchroom Pool No response
 Women’s Lawn Tennis..... No response
 Baxters Loch Ness Marathon No response

Entertainment

An Lanntair, Stornoway..... No response

Business

BT Openreach No response
 (Letters were sent in relation to Sabbath work in Lewis, Harris and Wester Ross.)

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

JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. MacLeod

General

In presenting this Report the same pattern has been followed as in previous years. The aim is to give the Synod a broader, overall account of mission activities over another year of the Church's endeavours to extend the bounds of Christ's kingdom, especially in Zimbabwe but, also, to a much lesser extent, among the Jews. In view of the fact that their ingathering is predicted to be such an important event in the history of the Church, and, indeed, of the world, we feel it to be our duty to do what we can. Reports from those labouring on the ground will, as usual, provide us with more detailed information of what has transpired over the year in their particular areas, and, hopefully, tell us that the good seed of the kingdom has not been sown and watered by them in vain – fruit-bearing coming to be evident. We hope that we are able to say with due humility that hitherto the Lord has helped us. Our friends in Holland continue to provide much-appreciated and very generous financial support to the work in Africa. The expenses incurred in regard to the work in Israel are met solely from the Church's own resources.

Zimbabwe

In recent years we were pleased to report that all our ministers in Zimbabwe were sustained in health and attending to their duties in every congregation except that of Mashonaland which has been vacant since the lamented death of the Reverend Zororai Mazvabo. It is with sadness that we record the death of Mr. Edward Zikhali, who, for many years, filled the post of Mission Administrator and was an elder in our Bulawayo congregation. Our condolences are extended to his widow and family. This year, Ingwenya is now vacant as a result of the resignation, occasioned by ill-health, of the Reverend Alasdair B. MacLean, an ordained missionary, who indefatigably laboured there since his induction in 2007. Happily, however, we have to report that as a result of successful surgery and medical treatment as well as the devoted home nursing of his mother and sister Norma (granted compassionate leave by the Committee), he is now well on the way to full recovery. Although he will not be returning to his Ingwenya charge – where his presence is much missed – we hope that he will be long spared to serve the Church in another charge in this country. The other ministers, Rev. S. Khumalo, Rev. M. Mloyi and Rev. N. Sibanda, we are glad to report, are in good health, continuing, we trust, to preach the word instant in season, out of season; reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine.

As the Synod already knows, Boards were set up to handle the administrative work involved in running the John Tallach High School, the Thembiso Home and the Mbumba Hospital. We have now appointed a Head Office Committee to help the Administrator – Mr. Melusi Mpofu – as well as

being responsible for the accurate and effective transaction of all the business handled there. Mr. Hugh Mackenzie, the Mission Co-ordinator, is a member of each board and his experience, gained in time past as a civil servant, is now a great and useful asset in the fulfilling of the multifarious duties of his particular post. Since he visits the Mission several times in the year, he is in a position to provide additional first-hand information of what is happening at each particular location. This will become evident further on in this report.

At *Ingwenya*, the John Tallach High School still retains its distinction as being one of the foremost schools in the country, providing a standard of education that makes it attractive as an institution where many parents, some from far afield, desire to have their children obtain a place. Here they are content to have their children exposed to the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God from the pulpit, family worship morning and evening, and the inculcation of Christian doctrine and practice even in the classroom. The dedication of the Headmaster, Mr. B. Ncube, and his Deputy, Miss N. B. MacLean, continues to be much appreciated.

At *Thembisio* Children's Home, Mr. H. Mackenzie reports that "the house staff have all received specialist training followed by a refresher course in 2017 which will be completed in 2018 when the tutors from overseas are able to be released from home and work commitments. An addition to the course has been the development and delivery of a module dedicated to the Fourth Commandment. It is planned, resources permitting, to develop similar modules for all the other Commandments. These could be delivered Mission wide in Schools, Sabbath Schools and Bible Study programmes. Due to financial and organisational constraints it has become necessary to review the manner in which the Church provides child-care facilities at Thembisio Children's Home. At the time of writing the review is in progress."

At *Mbuma*, Dr. A. Snoek and the Matron, Willie Geurtsen, and the staff there, maintain the high standard of medical and nursing care that the Hospital provides. Additionally, there is now the supervision of the Rural Health Centres already in place at Lutsha and Vova. Mr. Mackenzie again: "The major event at the Mbuma Mission this year was the opening of the Vova Rural Health Clinic (RHC) which has already been widely reported on. An extension of the project has been the construction of an access bridge across a water course which, when in flood, incurs an extended detour to get to and from the clinic. Having visited the site recently, it was clear from the work already completed, that the community and the local authority have made a massive contribution to the construction which is on schedule to be completed before the rains begin. The clinic is the second of four RHCs to be established in the Mbuma catchment area as part of the devolved medical provision, set out in the Options Appraisal of the hospital services in 2012. The third Rural Health Clinic will be built at Sagonda. The most pleasing aspect in the building of these clinics has been the substantial and enthusiastic input from the community at all levels." Despite significant budgetary constraints, we have made savings in other areas so that these projects can go ahead. An evaluation

report on the multiple benefits of the programme will be produced in the course of time and experience.

“Work on the solar project has stalled due to donations falling below expectations. Phase 1 at Ingwenya has been successfully completed but contributions have dropped off to the extent that it was not possible to take Phase 2 at Mbumba forward in 2017. However, the Mbumba Zending Board have generously agreed to fund the project in 2018.”

It is encouraging – however dark our day may be – that Mr. Mackenzie is able to tell us that “nevertheless the Word continues to be preached on Sabbaths and week-days across the whole Mission. Here and there, sinners are being called out of darkness into the glorious light of the Gospel. The Lord has protected the Cause in our midst despite the acute difficulties facing the people of Zimbabwe, where many false prophets are abroad expounding ‘prosperity preaching’, ancestral worship and various superstitions which deceive the vulnerable who are seeking an answer to their dire circumstances. The Mission is actively involved in reaching out to the young through the schools for which the Church is the responsible authority. The introduction of a Bible Knowledge syllabus is now taught across all grades at each of the five primary schools with an enrolment of approximately 3,000 children. It is the prayerful hope that the seed sown among the young will bear fruit in the rising generation through a prosperous outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

“In 2018 the translation of the Shona Bible will be completed and ready for the Trinitarian Bible Society to print, publish and distribute. The translation team will be disbanded at the end of the project having produced what is seen as the most accurate translation of the Scriptures into Union Shona. It is estimated that there are about 10 million Shona-speaking people in Zimbabwe, many of whom have little or no access to sound Christian literature.”

Israel

The Reverend John L. Goldby continues to be our official representative to Israel and the Committee, in recognition of the work that he is engaged in doing, awards him a monthly allowance. His work entails a maximum of six visits per annum to Israel, of no more than four weeks’ duration, and from his home in Laide, he is expected to devote the equivalent of three days per week to the work assigned him. He continues to contribute to the Trinitarian Bible Society’s revision of the Delitzsch Greek New Testament and, in addition to keeping services, he is in contact continually with Jewish citizens willing to engage in conversation. The translation of the Westminster Confession into Hebrew having been completed, it now remains to raise its profile. Two new projects are on his agenda for this year – the translation into Hebrew of the Shorter Catechism and a sound recording of the Hebrew Confession of Faith.

Conclusion

Our church has maintained an interest in missionary work almost since our separation from the Declaratory Act Free Church took place in 1893. We urge all who desire the coming of Christ's kingdom to pray that our contribution towards that end, small as it may be, will be blessed by Him and receive the recognition of what was done for Him by the words, "she hath done what she could".

INGWENYA MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

THE year has come and gone, and we have been enabled by God's providence to see another year.

As the last year began, Rev. MacLean had gone home on furlough. While at home, he fell ill. The burden of looking after the Ingwenya congregation was upon me as the Interim Moderator. The prayer of the congregation was for his quick recovery and hope for his return to preach unto them, but God's overruling providence was otherwise. Mr. MacLean tendered his resignation due to illness and this was accepted by the Zimbabwe Presbytery. We continue to remember him at the throne of mercy.

Ingwenya has four stations under it and four communions in a year, two at Ingwenya in March and September, one at Cameron in July and the other one at Inyathi in November. In all the stations, services are held every Sabbath. During the Ingwenya communion in March, Rev. N. Sibanda was invited. One young man was accepted for the sacrament of baptism. In September, Rev. M. Mloyi was invited and one lady was accepted as a member in full communion and another lady for baptism.

In August, an elder from Gadadi, Mr. D. Khumalo, was removed from us by death. It was a great loss to the Gadadi congregation as he was the only male member, and also a loss to his family and church at large.

The challenge I have is in visiting all the stations frequently, but I am thankful to the elders who are keeping supply every Sabbath and at weekday prayer meetings. During the Inyathi communion, there was a difficulty in going to Ingwenya through the farm road due to its bad state. I had to travel to Inyathi from Bulawayo. I was also grateful that some members of the Bulawayo congregation joined me, and the small congregation at Inyathi was encouraged and strengthened. One old lady was accepted as a member during the communion.

The shortage of professing men is very much felt in some stations. Mr. P. Mzamo looks after Cameron and Gadadi. He is helped at Gadadi by Mr. S. Ncube from Ingwenya. I am also grateful to Mr. B. Ncube, the Headmaster of John Tallach High School, who is of great help at Ingwenya in the supply on Sabbath during the day and evening services. Mr. P. Moyo, an elder at

Ingwenya, though now quite old still takes services at Ingwenya when his strength and health permit. Like in all congregations, cash shortages affect the monetary offerings. We pray and hope that these economic difficulties will be overcome (DV).

In conclusion, I would like to give thanks for the support we receive from the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, Mbumba Zending and friends overseas for their financial, material support and above all, the prayers of the Lord's people wherever they are.

As the Lord said unto His disciples, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers unto His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

JOHN TALLACH HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Miss Norma B. MacLean

IN January 1958, John Tallach School opened with Miss I. MacCuish leading it as Headteacher. The pupils, teachers, classrooms and facilities were naturally few in number but there is no doubt that the staff and pupils at the time began their duties with a sense of excitement and hope for the future. Subsequently, with Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald as Superintendent, Miss M. M. Graham and then Mr. B. Ncube as Headteachers, each year has brought its own developments until sixty years later in 2018 the school has grown to a large institution with diverse programmes. It is still true, however, that with each new beginning such as the annual enrolment of the new Form 1s and 5s, staff and pupils retain a sense of excitement and hope for the future. Among those who have a care for souls, it is the eternal future of the children and the staff which is of most concern. Miss Graham once commented that the structure of the school day had been developed by Mr. MacDonald and such was the suitability and efficiency of that structure, there had been no need to change it. Amazingly, after so many years and so many other changes, that has remained true. Each day begins and ends with worship in the school dining hall, reading and singing in course. Grace is said before and after every meal with boy prefects taking turns using the Grace before meat and the Grace after meat published with the Shorter Catechism. Each class has regular Bible Knowledge lessons during the week. Sabbath school is held for one hour every Sabbath with the emphasis on memory work: the Shorter Catechism is learned over the course of Forms 1 to 4 and is then revised during the 2 years of 6th Form. Each form learns a selection of metrical Psalms and Scripture texts each term. There is a voluntary weekly Bible study programme, the Junior and Senior Timothy groups. The whole school, staff and pupils, attend the weekly prayer meeting as part of the official school timetable and pupils and all resident staff attend all three church services on Sabbath days. At the time of

writing this report, the March Communion season is approaching: during the days of the Communion season, the school timetable is adjusted so that pupils and staff are able to attend all the services, including the morning and evening prayer meetings. So every effort is still made to ensure that the children in particular are exposed as much as possible to the Word of God.

Rev. A. B. MacLean’s resignation from the Ingwenya charge on account of his medical needs has resulted in a great loss to the school. Mr. MacLean engaged warmly with the pupils and staff. While he was a familiar presence in the school area, Mr. MacLean’s practice of leaving the day-to-day running of the school to the school administration was very much appreciated. Also appreciated was his willingness to interact with the pupils: he regularly participated in the Senior Timothy programme and the Bible Quizzes which he organised were much enjoyed by all. The greatest loss of course is not having an ordained minister to declare the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God on Sabbath and weekdays. Several pupils have commented on how the eternal Sonship of Christ was regularly emphasised during church services and it is to be hoped that, by God’s grace, many pupils will yet come to faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Difficulties with the implementation of the new curriculum mentioned in the previous report, have continued but the new Government administration currently has this curriculum under review so we await the outcome of the consultative exercises.

Enrolment

In Term 1 – 2018 a total of 671 pupils were enrolled, 330 girls and 341 boys. There are 42 day pupils and 629 boarders on the roll. This year 4 pupils are registered in the Resource Unit for visual impairment: one boy in Form 3, a girl in Form 2 who suffers from albinism, and 2 boys in Form 1 all with varying degrees of low vision.

“O” Level Results

Although the “O” Level results for 2017 were still above 90% with an overall pass rate of 92%, it was a disappointing drop from 2016. Especially disappointing was the fact that the school lost its long-term number 1 position in the Province, dropping to 3rd place. A 25% drop in the Integrated Science pass rate was the main contributing factor. National league tables are no longer published.

ZIMSEC (Zimbabwe Examinations Council)

Individual subject results were as follows:

Accounts	100.00%	Business Studies	100.00%
Agriculture	100.00%	Chemistry	100.00%
Bible Knowledge	88.80%	Computers	60.00%
Biology	100.00%	English Language	88.80%

Fashion and Fabrics	100.00%	Mathematics	79.20%
Geography	98.40%	Ndebele	98.40%
History	84.00%	Physics	96.67%
Integrated Science	73.60%	Statistics	100.00%
Literature in English	96.08%	Woodwork	100.00%

There was a significant drop in “A” passes in several subjects. However, in spite of this, the quality of results was still higher than the school which won the No. 1 position. Out of 125 candidates:

11 x “A” passes	– 1 pupil
10 x “A” passes	– 5 pupils
9 x “A” passes	– 4 pupils
% with 5 or more “A” passes	– 37.60% (47 pupils)

CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)

The Cambridge examinations continue to be very popular with pupils: 53 registered for the Cambridge “O” Level examinations in November 2017. Incompatibility with the ZIMSEC syllabi in some subjects had an adverse effect on these pass rates.

Biology	100.00%	IsiZulu	93.54%
Business Studies	75.00%	Mathematics	86.79%
Chemistry	100.00%	Physics	100.00%
English Language	92.45%	Principles of Accounts	100.00%
Geography	60.00%	Religious Studies	50.00%

“A” Level Results

ZIMSEC

For the 5th year in a row, the overall pass rate for the ZIMSEC “A” Level examinations was 100%: this means that all pupils passed at least 2 subjects, although 2 recorded a very disappointing performance.

Accounting	100.00%	Economics	93.33%
Biology	100.00%	Further Mathematics	100.00%
Business Studies	100.00%	Mathematics	96.55%
Chemistry	100.00%	Physics	100.00%

Of the 37 candidates, 15 were awarded between 15 and 20 points which was an extremely good result:

4 passed with 20 points	– 4 “A”s
1 passed with 19 points	– 3 “A”s, 1 “B”
4 passed with 18 points	
1 passed with 17 points	
2 passed with 16 points	
3 passed with 15 points	

CIE

There was an increase in the number of candidates registering for Cambridge “A” Levels in November 2017: 21 pupils sat the examinations.

Twenty of the 21 candidates passed all their subjects with one A* in Business Studies and one in Physics.

Finance

2017 was a difficult year financially due to rising prices. The school account recorded a deficit of \$7,893.79 at the end of 2017. This was mainly due to increases in the costs of foodstuffs, particularly over the second half of the year. Price rises are continuing across most products so it is likely that an increase in school fees will be necessary for 2019.

Developments

1. Final phase of building Form 6 boys’ dormitory

The work on this project is nearing completion after delays caused by shortage of materials.

2. Renovations to Forms 2 and 3 boys’ dormitory bathrooms

This completion of this project was also delayed by shortage of materials, notably tiles. The work is now almost complete and the newly extended bathrooms look lovely.

3 New teachers’ cottage

Building on this cottage began at the end of 2017 and good progress is being made.

4 FIM (Parents’ Board) funded projects

The Parents’ Board (FIM) continues to take more responsibility for development projects at the school. In 2017 a new mini abattoir was built. FIM funds have also been used to meet the needs of the new curriculum, so each teacher was supplied with a laptop and printers were purchased for each department. Ongoing developments are concentrating on the needs of the Agriculture Department as the new curriculum requires that this department be productive: a large pig sty and a fowl run are currently under construction. Extensive landscaping has been done with improvements to the road system on the Mission and cementing of pathways both in the main school courtyard and at the girls’ dormitory area. Work is starting on a vehicle shade for the school’s fleet of vehicles. In April, it is hoped to begin construction of a small recycled water system for the school toilets. The Parents’ Board is also looking into ways of improving the stability of the school’s energy supply.

Conclusion

The generous financial support received by the school from the JFMC and Mbuma Zending is much appreciated. If this extra support was not

forthcoming, it would not be possible to provide the services we do. Above all prayerful support is absolutely essential for the blessing of the Lord on the work, particularly for His blessing on all attempts to extend His Kingdom. In church services the verses at the end of Psalm 72 have often been given out for singing, may they yet be true of us at Ingwenya:

“His name for ever shall endure;
Last like the sun it shall:
Men shall be blessed in him, and bless'd
All nations shall him call.”

ZENKA MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

THE Lord is marvellous in His doings, being in control of our lives. His people desire more protection always, as they have such a trust in the Lord. The Psalmist says: “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me upon a rock” (Psalm 27:4-5).

We should be thankful for the gracious hand of God caring for such poor sinners like us. Some were hastened to eternity. Faithful believers are now in a better place with their Lord, but the unconverted are in the place of torment because they did not seek the Lord and Saviour for salvation.

Doors were kept open in all preaching stations throughout the year on weekday Prayer Meetings and Sabbath. Supply to all stations is now better. The two motorbikes supplied help a lot, especially the elders who are able to use them. They are very handy, lessening the burden on my car which is now old and affected by wear and tear due to bad roads. Thankfully I manage to visit Zenka and Nkayi stations with it.

Sacraments were dispensed as usual; in February when Rev. S. Khumalo assisted, and in August when Rev. N. Sibanda assisted. Two men from our outreach (Farms) were baptised. We pray for men to help in the vineyard, if it pleases the Lord to call them to this great work to sow the good seed of the Kingdom of God. There are still a lot of heathen customs being practised in our Lands, and communal leaders are hard on those who break their customs. How we wish for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to rain upon our land, and that the cloud of darkness would drift away and the bright and morning star shine before them.

The planting season started well but in the third week of December rains stopped and there was a dry spell till 28th January. Some crops suffered much stress due to a lack of moisture and failed. Thankfully rains have started but

there will be little harvest this year. The Lord reigneth, so let it be. "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5).

NKAYI MISSION REPORT

Rev. M. Mloyi

THE year 2018 has dawned and 2017 has passed away with all its difficulties and good things. It is the great and holy God who is in control of the life deliberations of day to day. It is therefore worth noting the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 103 verse 1, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name".

The work of the Lord has been carried on right through the year and despite constraints here and there we are thankful the doors were kept open for services, weekday prayers, and Sabbath. In my absence the elders are a great help indeed in feeding the flock. I commend them for this great work and pray that the Lord will bless their labours as the soldiers of Christ in the battlefield.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed twice as usual in January and June. Rev. N. Sibanda of Mbuma assisted on this occasion. At Donsa Dam congregation, the sacrament was dispensed also in May. There were two occasions of baptism at Nkayi congregation, a lady and girl; and at Donsa an old man.

At Manomano, the local Rural District Council has allocated the church a Stand to construct a church building and toilet. Ground has been cleared and a collection of local material is being brought to the site. We hope work will progress little by little. This congregation has only women. Mr. Lwandle Ndlovu and Mr. Stanford Mpofu (Nkayi) supply there. Mr. Ndlovu presently is not well, so the Kirk Session has engaged Mr. Mpofu to help this congregation.

Our prayer is that the Lord will send labourers into His vineyard to feed the hungry souls with the good seed so that they might grow in the saving knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We are encouraged by the words in Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

In the event that the Nkayi congregation would like to call a minister there is no manse so it is our great desire that Nkayi have a manse like all the other five Missions. It is prudent that this structure be put up now. At communions it would be very good to accommodate ministers in a comfortable place. It is our plea that the Mission help the Deacons' Court to fulfil its desire.

ZVISHAVANE MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

ZVISHAVANE and its surrounding districts lies in an area where there is little rainfall. The last year, however, was good in terms of rainfall and the harvest was fairly good. It was a great relief to many people after many years of successive droughts that affected the country over the years. We have reason to be thankful to the Most High.

The cash shortages in the country remained a thorn in the flesh for all congregations in Zimbabwe, as it is affecting the way people give to the cause of Christ. However, congregations do continue to give. It is encouraging that despite these challenges, the people have understood this responsibility and the effort is notable.

Preaching continues in the nine stations scattered in the districts of Zvishavane, Chivi and Mberengwa. The two home Missionaries, Mr. J. Mashavakure and Mr. N. Siziba, the elders and other professing men, help in the supply and in keeping the doors open every Sabbath day and at the weekday prayer meetings.

There are six Communion services: New Canaan in January, Maware in April, Chiedza in May and November, Zvishavane in August and Mnaka in September. Due to the shortage of ministers, Maware and Chivi are to alternate. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in all the stations where communions were held last year. A young lady was accepted for baptism in Maware. At Mnaka, a deacon became ill during the communion in September and has been unwell up to now. This has stretched Mr. N. Siziba and Mr. Mashavakure to supply there every Sabbath.

At Chiedza, we are very thankful to Mrs. Mazvabo and her family, who have continued to accommodate ministers and visitors at their home during communions. There are disappointments, where some have fallen by the wayside, but I am also encouraged that others have remained steadfast, faithful and holding fast to their profession and love for the cause of Christ.

Some members are now old and have difficulties in walking long distances to places of worship, especially in New Canaan. Our congregations have not been spared from death also as it thunders and brings us to think of our death and eternity.

Finally, I would like to thank all here and abroad who have continued to remember us in prayer, the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee and our friends in Holland, who continue to give material and financial support for the work of the gospel in Zimbabwe.

“Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me” (John 15:4).

MBUMA MISSION REPORT

Rev. N. Sibanda

“SO teach us to number our days” (Psalm 90:12). This was Rev. J. R. Tallach’s text when he preached at our prayer meeting in June. This was held during his visit to Zimbabwe for the official opening of the Vova Clinic. This indeed was a word preached in season to dying creatures. I know of some who heard this sermon who have since passed to eternity.

After the opening of the Vova Clinic, the Kirk Session introduced services there. This move was most welcome by our people at Vova Village, where the clinic is located. Before this arrangement, they were walking several miles to attend services at either Mpakama or Mbuma. Those attending are the clinic staff, expectant mothers waiting to deliver and, of course, our own people. There are some villagers who are showing some interest by attending the services. “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice” (John 10:16) At the moment we are meeting in a patients’ waiting shed. The opening of this clinic has opened another gospel opportunity. We pray for the outpouring of the Spirit.

Five adults and three children were baptised. The usual communions were held throughout the year at Mbuma and Somakantana. We thank Rev. S. Khumalo and Rev. M. Mloyi for their assistance at the Mbuma communions. The communion roll currently stands at 133. “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence” (Isaiah 64:1).

MBUMA MISSION HOSPITAL REPORT

Dr. A. Snoek

LOOKING back on 2017, there is much reason to give thanks to the Most High. Further developments of the area happened, care for the ill and needy continued and the Word of God was sown in season and out of season.

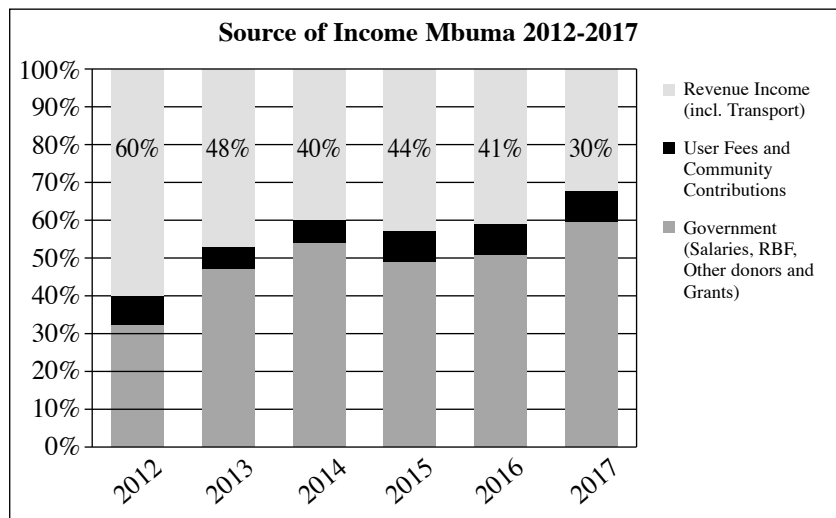
The major event of the year was the opening and commencement of the second clinic, Vova Rural Health Centre. On 1st May 2017 the clinic was ready to open its doors. Since the opening, every Sabbath morning a service has been held in the clinic. On the first Sabbath Rev. Sibanda preached from Ezekiel 34:12: “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” Such a promise is precious.

The official opening on 15th June 2017 was done by Honourable C. Mathema, Minister of Provincial Affairs. Present were the Rev. J. R. Tallach and his wife, representing the JFMC, Chief Sikobokobo and local leadership,

Provincial and District Health Executive teams, Church ministers and elders, representatives from District Administration Offices and Council, Political parties, other Clinics and Schools, Non-Governmental Organisations and staff from Mbuma, besides the community members of Ward 25. Rev. Tallach addressed the gathering with the words from Psalm 23: “I shall not want.” Despite the usual hiccups, like shortage of water and delays in the arrival of the guests, the event went very well, thanks to the guidance of Mr. M. A. Mpofu, Mission Administrator, together with the help of Hospital and Clinic staff and the Community.

Administration

In 2017 we reaped the fruits from the received Government paid posts, resulting in a further drop in Mission paid salaries. The savings of the budget were so much that from the excess money the third Rural Health Centre (RHC), which is planned for 2018, can be funded. The user fees and community contributions remained the same, due to the fact that the Community Insurance scheme so far is not very successful. Deliberations are in progress to give it a new impulse.



Despite the remoteness and underdevelopment of large parts of Mataberland North, most of the outcomes and results in the medical field are the highest in the country. To show its appreciation for the work done, the Provincial Medical Directorate developed Awards. Mbuma Mission Hospital received the shield for “Best Clinical Quality Improvement”.

Lutsha RHC continued to be known for its care for the community. It got Results Based Financing quality scores of 83-85% throughout the year and received quarterly allowances of over 1600 dollars, which is one of the highest

in the District. This is remarkable since the other 14 clinics in the District are earning quite some income from the supply of Family Planning methods, which in Lutsha is not done.

Also Vova RHC is well appreciated by its community, delivering primary health care to approximately 20% of Mbuma's original catchment population. It has not yet been registered under RBF, wherefore so far no quality scores are available.

Maintenance and Capital Projects

Buildings

Since patients are still allowed to pay in kind for the hospital services, the flock of goats remains quite large. To avoid them entering the hospital premises, a large paddock has been constructed, mainly using existing fences and natural barriers within the mission compound.

During winter one of the staff houses in New Makhaya caught fire due to an unknown cause. Thankfully nobody was injured. Since the walls of the house were spared, it was possible to refurbish and repaint it.

In order to increase the hygiene in the operating theatre, the floors were tiled. The corridor to the washhouse was broadened to allow easy access with trolleys full of bedlinen.

Besides the above the usual maintenance of the hospital buildings and staff houses in Mbuma, Zenka and Lutsha continued.

Equipment

In December a large container full of secondhand, but still good and useful hospital equipment, beds and bedding was received from Holland. A new Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) was included as well, which had been donated by the firm J. Konijn.

Transport

Serious challenges were faced in the course of 2017 related to transport. Members of the Mbuma Board felt that the fleet at Mbuma was in a moderate or poor condition, not only because of the bad terrain and heavy use, but because of lack of carefulness among its drivers. A new Vehicle policy was therefore drafted, which would shift the pooled responsibility to personal responsibility. Part of the policy was implemented, whereby the Toyota Twincab was handed over to Dr. A. Snoek and Sr. W. Geurtsen. However, during its last service before handing over, certain tubes were wrongly connected, which damaged the injector pump. The car has been off the road since then, awaiting new parts from South Africa. Other components of the Vehicle policy were not implemented, due to lack of suitable candidates for taking over the usage and maintenance of Ambulance and Lorry.

Adding to the challenging situation was the accident which happened with the new Ford Ambulance in August, whereby the driver hit and killed 4 cows, which were crossing the road. The car sustained serious damage of the front

and motor block. Although the car was professionally repaired and panel beaten, after two months it started to have breakdowns due to unnoticed, but damaged parts.

The Lorry is still in reasonable condition, but poorly functioning garages and the unavailability of necessary parts are not contributing to its state. It is currently awaiting parts from South Africa as well.

To relieve the shortage of reliable cars, it would have helped if the planned and budgeted-for Toyota Land Cruiser had been purchased in the course of 2017, but this was delayed due to the high prices and long delivery time in the country. The car was therefore purchased via a South African supplier and is expected in 2018.

Two new motorbikes were received by the Environmental Health Department, one at Mbuma and one at Lutsha.

Electricity and generators

During the dry season of the year, the electricity supply from ZESA has been very good, greatly easing the day-to-day running of the hospital. Once the rainy season started the electricity supply became unreliable, but thanks to the well-functioning generator this has so far not caused a major interruption of services.

Lutsha Rural Health Centre

The borehole in Lutsha Primary School continued to produce unpalatable reddish coloured water, which was thought to be caused by an iron-containing layer deep down. Water samples were taken and professional advice sought. After much deliberation, finally a water filter system was received from a South African donor. Together with the installation of the filter, a new solar driven pump was installed, a donation which had been received from Dutch students. Great was the surprise when the water cleared after installing the new pipes, even without the filter. Rusty pipes must have been the cause of the trouble, rather than anything else. One can imagine that the staff from Lutsha Primary School and Clinic were very thankful for the received developments.

Vova Rural Health Centre

In September, after the last buildings were finished and painted in Vova Clinic, a start was made with the construction of a bridge to allow access through the Gwampa valley during the rainy season. Under the supervision of Mr. Mkwanzani, District Council Engineer, with great bulldozers the shape of a new road was laid out. After that, under the guidance of Mr. M. Ndlovu and with the help of a District Council builder, the community cemented thousands of locally gathered stones into a new bridge. It awaits the top layer and the gravelling of the road.

Staffing

The following staff changes took place in the course of 2017.

4 Nurses (Registered General Nurse) posts were added to the hospital complement, besides 1 RGN and 4 Primary Care Nurse posts to the clinics. All posts were filled.

1 Nurse who filled a post as Health Information Clerk regraded to a RGN post.

1 Primary Care Nurse exchanged with a PCN from a clinic in Lupane District.

3 staff members retired; one of the longest employed workers was Mr. J. Dube, who worked for nearly 40 years in the Mission, first as General Hand in Mbumba and after that as Gateman in Zenka. Mrs. R. Mpofo was employed as General Hand since 2002 and Mr. J. B. Moyo worked as driver in Mbumba for 11 years. We are grateful for their contribution to the work in and outside the hospital during all these years.

The diverse needs of the different departments in the hospital and the increased administrative requirements, require proper supervision. Therefore, for several years already, we have been allocating competent nurses to the post of Sister-in-charge (SIC) of a certain department. These posts however were not recognised by the Government. In 2017 we received a Matron post and 1 official Sister-in-charge post. The Matron post we lost again, because no suitable candidate was found in time. The SIC post was filled by one of our own Sister-in-charges.

Dr. A. Snoek returned from leave on the 1st of February and Sr. W. Geurtsen went on leave from 21 February until 11 April 2017.

We continued to receive voluntary services from Red Cross nurses, Domestic workers and Community Security in Mbumba as well as in Lutsha and Vova, which were greatly appreciated.

Visitors

During 2017 we enjoyed the companionship and help from several visitors again. In February Beppie Geurtsen visited us for two weeks.

During the time of the opening of Vova RHC in June, Rev. and Mrs. J. R. Tallach, Mr. and Mrs. and Helena Snoek stayed with us.

During the last two weeks of June, when Dr. A. Snoek was on holiday, Dr. J. L. Bezemer volunteered to come over and cover the hospital, for which we are most grateful.

Two ladies from Chesley (Canada), Martha Bouman and Audrey Zekveld, visited us for a week at the end of April.

Ali Fidder, Truns Lodder and Annelies Koster stayed with us for a weekend in May.

In August Anja Voogd and Annemarie Visser, two teachers from Holland, trained the Sabbath School teachers of Mbumba again. After this, together with Mr. S Ncube, Catechist, and the Sabbath School teachers, so called "Bible days" were organised at the outstations of Mbumba, which were attended by

approximately 1,000 children. Along with them came Arien van de Mass, a medical student-to-be.

Two ladies from Holland, Gerda Bronkhorst and Marina de Jong, stayed with us for over two weeks in August.

In the first week of October we were greatly helped by the visit from South African volunteers. Willem Nap, his daughter Arinda, Harm van de Kamp and Cornelis Jonker repaired the seriously damaged ambulance, installed a water purification system and attended to other (electrical) faults in and around the hospital.

Hospital services

Thankfully the AIDS epidemic is diminishing. It is likely to be the major cause of the reducing number of admissions, although the shift of care from the hospital to the clinics and the countrywide decrease in pregnancies must be of influence as well.

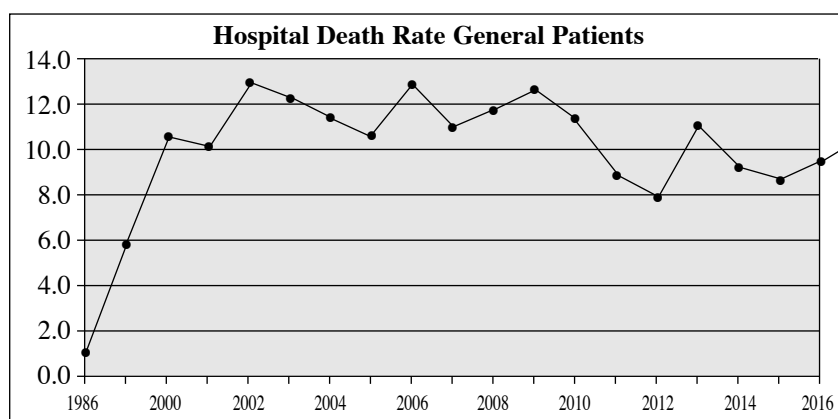
Due to the fact that the hospital was covered by one doctor instead of two, it however did not look as if it was less busy than previous years.

	2015	2016	2017
Admissions	2,294	2,055	1,753
General	992	906	755
Paediatrics	337	277	257
Maternity	899	806	681
Neonatal	66	66	60
Bed occupancy rate			
General	57.3%	59.1%	54.0%
Paediatrics	64.0%	60.2%	56.9%
Maternity	85.8%	77.1%	71.5%
Neonatal	48.6%	36.6%	36.9%
Deaths	133	120	109
General	115	104	100
Paediatrics	7	9	4
Maternity	–	1	–
Early/Late Neonatal	11	7	5

That the clinics are contributing to easy and early access to care and very likely thereby reducing the need for hospital admission, is demonstrated by the overall increased number of OPD consultations. Based on the assumption that every community member visits a Health Facility at least once a year, the percentage of the community which accessed care is in Lutsha 66%, in Vova 56%, but in Mbumba only 35%, due to distance and money barriers.

Out Patients Department	2016 All	2017 Mbuma	2017 Lutsha	2017 Vova	2017 All
New Clients	6,248	2,898	2,648	1,226	6,772
Repeat visit/Chronic Clients	3,072	2,464	329	238	3,031
Total	9,320	5,362	2,977	1,464	9,803

Among the fewer admitted patients, the number of HIV patients with serious co-morbidities like Hepatic or Renal failure, Diabetes and Cardiovascular diseases is still increasing. Although the actual number of hospital deaths went down, the percentage did not, limitations in diagnostic and treatment options contributing to this.



Thankfully we did not have any maternal deaths during 2017.

The countrywide reduction in pregnancies is said to be caused by the increased uptake of Contraceptives. Although the hospital and clinics are not distributing Hormonal Contraceptives, the number of pregnancies is obviously going down.

Total Births	2016 Mbuma	2016 Lutsha	2017 Mbuma	2017 Lutsha	2017 Vova
Live births	783	32	652	58	21
Still births	12	–	12	–	–

Since 2015 we are experiencing a high number of approximately 10 Macerated Stillbirths per year. Despite some research, no understandable reason has been found so far. The cause is likely related to certain practices or way of living in our area, since the neighbouring hospitals (Nkayi District Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital) are not having this problem.

2017	Still births			Early Neonatal Death (ENND)			Maternal Death		
	Fresh (FSB)	Mace-rated	Total	<2.5kg	>2.5kg	Total	Hospital	Home	Total
Hospital	2	10	12	5	1	6	–	–	–
Clinics	–	–	–	1	1	2	–	–	–

The Caesarean Section rate went up to 16.6%, due to the fact that more uncomplicated deliveries are now happening in the clinics and no longer in the hospital. The percentage of admitted patients who got an operation increased from 11% to 15%, the majority of the cases coming from outside the catchment area.

Theatre/Labour ward	2016	2017
Caesarean section	112	110
Other major operations	131	124
Assisted deliveries (Vacuum extractions and Symphysiotomies)	128	129

While the number of Ante and Post Natal clinic visits is going down, as explained above, the number of Child Clinic attendances is increasing. This is not so much caused by an increased number of children, but rather by the increased number of encounters per child, aiming for healthy and well-nourished children.

Preventive services	2016 All	2017 Mbuma	2017 Lutsha	2017 Vova	2017 All
Antenatal/Postnatal Clinic attendances	3,883	2,013	918	366	3,297
Child Welfare Clinic attendances	7,630	6,969	2,267	1,738	10,974

The digital X-ray machine is still a much appreciated diagnostic tool.

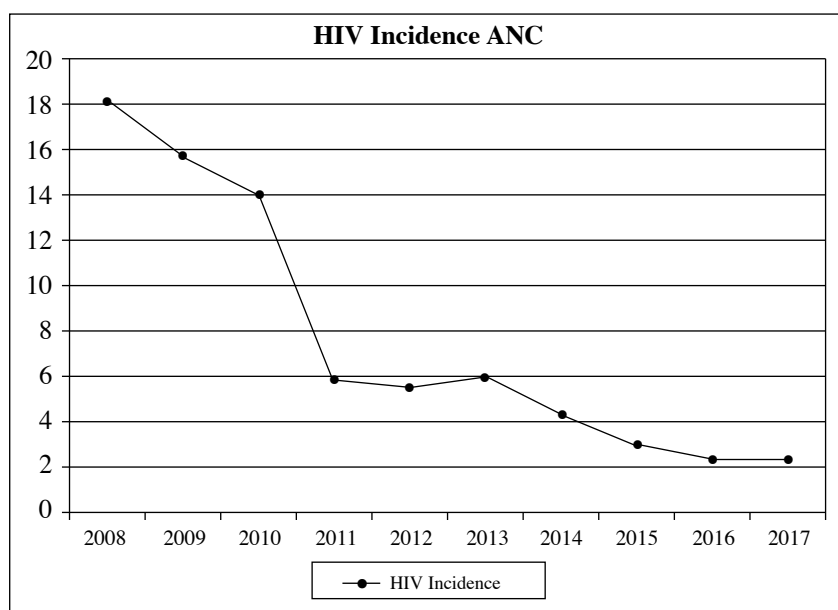
The number of HIV tests done increased again with 59% in order to reach the so called “1st 90”. The UNAIDS 90-90-90 target is an ambitious goal to help AIDS end.*

Besides giving support and supervision, the Zimbabwe Association of Church-related Hospitals deployed two extra nurse-counsellors and we managed to surpass the first and second “90”, while 77% of the 3rd target has been reached.

* The aim is that by 2020 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy. 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

	2016	2017
Radiology services		
Number of X-rays taken	2,761	2,614
Number of Ultrasound Scans taken	767	571
Laboratory services		
Number of lab tests	10,788	10,162
Number of HIV tests (excluding ANC)	2,481	4,238
Number of HIV tests in ANC	363	277
HIV incidence in ANC	2.5%	2.5%
Vertical transmission rate for HIV infection (= % of children who get HIV)	1.5%	6.2%

The promising progress however did not prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child in 4 cases, resulting in the unexpected high vertical transmission rate of 6.2%, social barriers for the mother to disclose her HIV status being the most important cause.



Whereas Mbuma still caters for 85% of the chronic patients with Hypertension, Diabetes and Psychiatric conditions from the original catchment area, 45% of the chronic patients with HIV have been transferred to Lutsha and Vova. The whole package of AIDS care, including treatment and follow-up, is delivered in the clinics.

OIC (Opportunistic Infections Clinic = AIDS Clinic)	2017 Mbumba	2017 Lutsha	2017 Vova
No. of OIC visits	4,636	1,476	1,024
No. of patients continuing on treatment till date	951	417	358

With the help of the donor Africaid, 4 young adults were selected out of our group of Peer Educators for HIV positive adolescents and further trained. They now assist the AIDS clinic team in giving social and adherence support and home visits. The number of orphans enrolled in the Orphans Care project reduced to 35: 7 were helped to attend Primary School, 27 pupils at Secondary Schools and 1 student at University. 2 girls and 2 boys who in the past benefited from the OCP are currently working as community volunteers in Mbumba, enhancing their careers. Since AIDS and TB are twins, it was expected that the number of TB cases would go down. It however might be that the real cause of the decrease is the increased effort from neighbouring hospitals to detect TB. For years Mbumba has been advocating a high suspicion rate at all levels and it looks like finally it is starting to bear fruit. Our cure rate remains below the expected 90%, due to a high death rate.

Environmental Health Department	2016	2017
Number of newly diagnosed TB cases	421	309
Number of sputum +ve	53	63
Number of sputum -ve	366	246
Cure rate	77%	83.2%
Multi-Drug Resistant TB cases	2	12
TB patients who are HIV positive	64%	67%
Number of malaria cases (test positive)	1	4
Number of malaria deaths	-	-

The water and sanitation situation remains a concern. Cases of severe Gastroenteritis, Dysentery and Typhoid presented at our hospital, although the infected water source for both Dysentery and Typhoid was outside our catchment area. The Dysentery cases came from Lupane District. A whole family developed Dysentery after drinking contaminated Shangani river water. The contamination took place after the seasonal opening of a dam in Midlands. Sadly a 2-year-old child died before it reached the hospital.

The source of infection for the Typhoid case was one of the high-density suburbs of Harare. The patient developed a bowel perforation, but thankfully recovered. The building of the toilets in the community continued, but at a much slower pace than the previous year. Some toilets which were built last

year collapsed, due to the fact that people did not follow the proper instructions, resulting in a lower coverage in Wards 13 and 14.

Water, sanitation and hygiene programme	2016	2017
Number of toilets built	438	133

	Households	Households with toilets	% coverage	
			2016	2017
Ward 13	431	254	62	59
Ward 14	1,013	577	59	57
Ward 24	952	659	64	69
Ward 25	945	246	18	26

The hand of the Lord has been good over us during the year 2017, despite our manifold transgressions.

Worth telling is the story of an elderly patient who was admitted during the course of 2017. The man, a traditional believer, had been suffering from depression and hearing awful voices for quite some time and finally attempted suicide. He survived and was brought to the hospital, where he had an operation. After he recovered, on the day of his discharge, he said that since he had entered the hospital, he had not been troubled anymore. Referring to these evil spirits, he felt and stated: “they cannot come here”. By one of the Catechists he once more was pointed to the great Physician, who has all power in heaven and on earth. He agreed that his ways had been evil and that he would not walk in them anymore, but seek the Lord. To date he is reading the Word of God eagerly and attending church every Sabbath.

May the prayers of many be multiplied for the coming of the kingdom of the Lord.

BULAWAYO MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

ONCE more I write this report with a sense of thankfulness to the Lord for preserving and enabling us to see another year in time. It was a very busy year as I was occupied in my pastoral duties within an expanded field. I am the Interim Moderator of Ingwenya and Zvishavane congregations. I am thankful for the measure of strength given by the Lord.

It is true of our time, as the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, that: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come . . .” (2 Timothy 3:1-9). Verses 10 to the end prescribe various remedies to them. The exhortations given in the Scriptures are a strong and unmovable foundation for the faith of the people of God.

We are going through dark days with false teachers and prophets and their teachings sweeping across the country. We therefore have a reason to be thankful to the Most High that we still have the truth of the gospel, where Christ and Him crucified is preached to poor dying sinners as commanded by the great Saviour and Head of the Church.

In obedience to this commission, services are held in all our preaching stations in Bulawayo every Sabbath and weekday prayer meetings at Thembiso, Lobengula and Umguza. There are two communion seasons in a year, namely in June and December, which are usually well attended.

We were very pleased to have Rev. and Mrs. Tallach at our June Communion and we were very thankful to Rev. Tallach for assisting during the communion. In that communion, two adults were received for full membership and one young man for the sacrament of baptism.

In the December communion Rev. Sibanda was invited and the communion was well attended even by our church members who live and work outside the country and had come home. It was pleasing to note that some have not forgotten the church they were brought up in. During the same communion season, two people were received for the sacrament of baptism and one for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

We were saddened that just two months after the June Communion in August, one of our elders, Mr. E. B. Zikhali, was removed from amongst us through death. It was a great loss to the congregation, his family and the church at large. We pray that the Lord would raise others to fill the void.

In these past two years, December has been a very busy time for me as many church people get married during this period. As a marriage officer, I officiated at these marriages in our congregations in Bulawayo, Ingwenya and Zvishavane. We are thankful to the Lord that marriage in this country is between a man and a woman, in accordance with the Word of God.

I am thankful to the elders who are a great help in keeping the supply when I am not present. Finally on behalf of the Bulawayo congregation, I would like to thank the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, Mbumba Zending and all those who desire the prosperity of the work of the gospel and whose prayer is: "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen" (Psalm 72:19).

GWERU MISSION REPORT

Rev. S. Khumalo

DURING the past year, there was a great improvement in the supply in Gweru. One young man, Keith Mpata, a member from the Bulawayo congregation, was studying at the University in Gweru. With the help of Mrs. Watkins, who at my request took upon herself to send printed sermons of ministers, these

were read in church every Sabbath. This brought joy to the congregation in Gweru who gathered every Sabbath for the nourishment of their souls.

Now that he has finished his studies, we have requested Mr. C. Matara from the Maware congregation to supply Gweru periodically, which I hope will continue as long as funds permit and God willing. I am very thankful to Mrs. Watkins for diligently sending the printed sermons.

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over unto Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9).

THEMBISO CHILDREN’S HOME REPORT

B. Maphala, Home Superintendent

Introduction

IT is with great joy and pleasure that I find myself sharing information with you on matters concerning this secluded institution once again. I thank the Lord for giving me that strength and also for sparing me in the land of the living, to see yet another year alive. The Psalmist had this to say, in Psalm 85:1: “Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob”. The Lord has been favourable to me, and to Thembiso Children’s Home as a whole. The home is still intact and operating quite well, though under very stringent conditions.

The Home

Over the years, the home has been the light and torch bearer of the Lord for the surrounding community and other homes at large. It still continues to be so under the stewardship of Rev. S. Khumalo and the Superintendent, Mr. B. Maphala. Morning Sabbath lessons are done week in and week out from 8 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. Children are grouped according to age groups and taught by assigned house mothers on duty on a rotational basis. They follow a set syllabus drafted by the Home Superintendent in liaison with Rev. S. Khumalo. Evening and morning prayers are conducted according to the Thembiso Children’s Home schedule. This is going on well. We hope to continue along those lines, God willing, as it is written in Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” We hope and trust in the Lord, that the fruit of His Word will one day manifest itself in these young ones.

Children

There are 38 children in total currently at Thembiso. Of the total, we have 25 boys and 13 girls. Most of them attend formal education except for two small boys not yet mature enough for schooling. Nine are at secondary school,

twenty-seven at primary and one at University. It is pleasing to note that quite a number are striving hard to do well in their studies. However, lack of resources to complement the new curriculum currently pursued in our local schools impacts negatively on our children, especially those at secondary level. The new curriculum requires them to research quite a lot, hence the need to have laptops. As an institution, we cannot afford that luxury.

Staff

We have a staff complement of nine care givers, six security guards, two groundsmen, a driver and a clerk. From the six security guards, two are based at Lobengula manse. These are hardworking, devoted men and women, who attend the means of grace every Sabbath regardless of their duty roster.

Refresher Course

We are grateful for the two ladies, namely Sister Margaret Macaskill and Sister Petra Beukers, who came and conducted a refresher course for our house mothers/care givers. They did a splendid job; we pray that they may complete their syllabus this current year 2018, God willing.

Downsizing of the Institution

The home is currently embarked on an intensive re-unification programme for children who have either reached maturity or the stipulated age limit, which is 16 years. This was necessitated by financial constraints the institution is facing. We are no longer recruiting new children into the home at the moment, nor new staff or replacements for retirees. At the moment the home has four family units in operation from the original five. It is hoped that this will reduce our expenditure.

Conclusion

We pray that the Lord will shower the institution with His blessings from above. The apostle Paul had this say to the Ephesians, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). We shall soldier on, putting on the whole armour of God.

ZIMBABWE MISSION ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Mr. M. A. Mpofu

Introduction

TIME passes very quickly from one report to another; before one realises where one stands, another report has to be submitted. We have much to be grateful to the Most High for His providential care over us during the past year.

Boards of Governors

Since their introduction in 2014 the administration of the Mission institutions has seen a paradigm shift from committees. Issues are now dealt with more efficiently and professionally. The Head Office Committee has continued to have an oversight over the Mission Head Office affairs.

Staffing

During the year under review there were no major changes in the staffing establishment. The policy adopted a few years ago that staff who leave employment are not replaced has been maintained. This policy has kept our staffing numbers generally stable. It is only in the department such as security that replacements are recruited. A good number of workers on the Mbumba payroll have been taken over by Government, thus reducing our Mbumba wage bill considerably.

During the course of the year Rev. A. B. Maclean (Ingwenya) was diagnosed with cancer and his health condition resulted in his subsequent resignation from the Mission. Rev. Maclean is greatly missed by all in the Zimbabwe Mission. It is our prayer to the Most High that he recovers from his illness.

Miss N. B. Maclean, who had taken compassionate leave to help her sick brother, has now returned to her post at Ingwenya.

Finances

The Mission continued to receive the monthly remittances from the General Treasurer. Funds are now remitted directly to the different Board bank accounts. This is a great relief to Head Office staff because they no longer have to handle huge sums of money.

The Zimbabwe economy is still under severe stress and cash is not easily available from the banks. People spend long hours in bank queues to get a few dollars or nothing at all. Government is now encouraging people to use “plastic” money. But some organisations do not favour this method of payment for services; they always insist on cash which is a challenge to get.

There has been a delay of the audited finances for 2016 but these have finally been completed and distributed. It is hoped the 2017 finances will be finalised on time.

Sustentation Fund

There has been a slight improvement in the sustentation fund contributions from congregations. Mission employees now have monthly contributions deducted directly from the payroll. The shortage of cash affects the sustentation contributions.

Primary Schools

The Bible Knowledge teachers introduced in the five Church schools are doing a very good job. Teachers follow the Bible syllabus that was developed

by the Church. Teachers also assist pupils to do the Scripture and Catechism Exercises and they also mark these exercises. The teaching of Bible Knowledge is no longer a priority in Zimbabwean Schools. So we are thankful that the Home Church has allowed us to recruit these special teachers. It is a pity that today we have too many men of science and too few men of God. Man has grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.

School Statistics

School	Enrolment	Staffing	Grade 7 Results 2017	2016
Themviso	460	15	93%	92%
Ingwenya	338	8	60%	64%
Zenka	856	20	62%	44%
Mbuma	700	17	27%	44%
Lutsha	538	10	15%	13%

The low Grade 7 results posted by Mbuma and Lutsha Schools are really a cause of great concern. The two headmasters have been asked by the Board to explain these poor results.

Rural Health Centres (Clinics)

The Vova Clinic in Ward 25, seven kilometres south of Mbuma, was officially opened by the Minister of State for Matebeleland Province in June. Rev. J. Tallach and Mrs. Tallach from Scotland and the parents of Dr. A. Snoek and one of her sisters attended the great event. The Mission provided the basic building materials while the villagers contributed by providing the necessary labour for the actual putting up of the clinic buildings. Worship was conducted each day before the start of work and at the end of the day’s duties, Church elders took turns to conduct worship.

Work on the third clinic will commence as soon as all the stakeholders agree on the site of the proposed clinic. The bulk of the building and fencing materials have been purchased and are now stored at Mbuma.

Conclusion

In concluding we would ask all our brethren to pray that the Lord would give us a true love for the souls of the sinners in Zimbabwe. May we all be united together in that most noble work, the building up of the walls of Zion. As we read in Nehemiah 4:6: “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work”.

OVERSEAS COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

PART of the remit of the Overseas Committee from the Synod is not only to assist overseas presbyteries with pulpit supply should the need arise, but also to send ministerial deputies to visit overseas congregations. Deputies then report to Synod. We, as a committee, do seriously endeavour to obtain deputies and are happy if even one minister agrees to help. There are times when the lengthy period of overseas visitation can be too long for a deputy. However, interim moderators of overseas Kirk Sessions, in the process of arranging overseas communions, request ministers in the home church to assist. For example, Rev. W. Weale was requested to assist at the Chesley communion and to visit the Vancouver congregation and went as a deputy. Mr. Weale has provided a very interesting report of his visit. I myself was asked by the interim moderator of the Santa Fe Kirk Session to assist at the communion there, and the Overseas Committee agreed it would be appropriate that I write a report for the Synod and our people. Also I was appointed by the Overseas Committee to go as a deputy to Odessa and had the privilege of assisting at the Odessa communion. While I have written a report of my visit to Odessa, Rev. D. Levytskyi has submitted his own report of congregational and mission activity there over the past year. Ministers in the Asia Pacific Presbytery similarly report to Synod about their own congregations.

The Overseas Committee reports, by giving information about overseas congregations to our people, contribute to the raising of funds for the work of the gospel overseas. More than that, these reports have a more beneficial influence, that is, the spiritual one of strengthening the gospel bond between our congregations so far apart in the hemispheres, and between them and the congregations in the United Kingdom. It was a great wonder and comfort to the disciples after the ascension of Christ to see His church grow beyond the boundaries of Israel. It continues to some extent to be so to believers in our Church as they witness our Church established in certain parts of the world, with a measure of growth and, despite our failings, being at one in the principles of doctrine, worship and practice revealed in the Word of God. Our endeavour and prayer as a committee is for the embracing and establishing of these Bible principles in many more places. Those who appear to be disinterested in this larger picture of the Free Presbyterian Church seem to us to have a rather narrow outlook. Christ intended His church to be worldwide. Of course, it is not inconsistent with our aiming for that to keep separate from what offends the Saviour and is not according to His Word. Our prayerful desire then is that the scriptural doctrine, worship and practice, which by divine grace was defended and revived by our fathers in 1893, would continue to be valued not only in our existing congregations but also be spread further and further afield.

We have several reports for Synod. These are from the four ministers who serve in the Asia Pacific Presbytery and have been compiled by the Clerk of

Presbytery, Rev. G. Macdonald. The other reports are mentioned or alluded to above. In conveying these reports to Synod we do not forget the incessant care and work for congregations in Canada and America by interim moderators, Rev. R. MacLeod and Rev. D. Campbell. We know their labours are deeply appreciated by these congregations.

The overall picture of gospel work in overseas congregations is one of encouragement as far as being able to preach the gospel without hindrance is concerned. Also encouraging is the fact that in these congregations there have been baptisms and a number of persons coming to profess Christ for the first time. All these congregations seem to be prospering. As with the Church in Britain, some congregations overseas are large, others small, but they are united in their desire to advance the gospel. They undoubtedly continue to preach and spread the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus and are under no illusion as to the low state of true religion in those parts of the world, and that the gospel is the only answer to bring light to these spiritually dark places.

It ought to be a wonder to us that, apart from the Toronto and Winnipeg congregations, all those congregations, begun so many years ago, continue to exist and that other congregations have been added to them. What some thought was perhaps the complete end of the longstanding congregation in Vancouver has been reversed by the establishing of a small group of worshippers under the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It was my privilege to meet some of them when I was present at the Santa Fe communion.

In connection with the Odessa Mission, the Committee receive not only Rev. D. Levytskyi's Eastern Europe report to Synod but also all the Field Committee minutes and financial statements. Although Mr. Levytskyi's commitments in past years to studying, preparing for exit exams and getting ready for licensing resulted in delays in producing the financial statements, these will be at hand shortly. All expenditure has the approval of the Committee, which is responsible for the collecting and use of the Eastern Europe Fund, which in turn is separate from the Overseas Fund. The Committee is fully apprised of all activities in the Mission, and any needed advice is given. Odessa congregational matters are under the supervision of the Western Presbytery, which examines the records of the Kirk Session and Deacons' Court as well as the congregation's financial statements, and any needed direction is given by the Presbytery.

It is gratifying to note the great pleasure expressed in our overseas congregations when they have visitors from Scotland and other parts of the Church – and of course we in the home church are gladdened and encouraged by having visitors from our overseas congregations.

The reports to Synod from abroad give a fuller picture than we can give, but our hope and prayer is that the reports will have a unifying influence in the hearts of our people so that together they would plead more earnestly for the blessing of the Lord on the work of the gospel in those places. May the Lord speedily answer this petition which we hear in our congregations from

time to time: “Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen” (Psalm 72:19).

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SINGAPORE REPORT

Rev. G. B. Macdonald

Introduction

THE Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has seven congregations in this region of the world. At the last meeting of Synod, approval was granted for a change of name to the Asia Pacific Presbytery. This name reflects the inclusion of our Singapore congregation.

One theme in this report would be the encouragement our congregations receive from those who visit from time to time. There are those on holiday from Scotland, some on business and some from other churches who attend on occasion, perhaps seeking to know more about our Reformed witness. In some of our congregations there can be even around 100 visitors who attend over the course of a year. All are made welcome and we hope that even among such the Word may be blessed.

Sadly, the percentage of people attending any church appears to be declining every year. In 2017, Australia became the twenty-sixth country to legalise so-called same-sex marriage by a large majority in Parliament. The widespread approval of this policy in the nation was itself a frightening indicator of the low moral state of the land.

In New Zealand, the essential Christian character of the Parliamentary prayer has been removed, with the removal of such prayer being explicitly offered in and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Both in Australia and New Zealand steps either have been taken or are being taken to legalise euthanasia. As the Christian influence seems to wane, so regard for the sanctity of life itself seems to wane. Thus, like Scotland, there is but little in our national life to encourage us. Even among professedly Christian churches one fears there is a lamentable lack of reverence and instead a contentment with a social “Christian” gathering instead of a preaching and hearing the true gospel of Christ.

I am grateful to my brethren in the Presbytery for their help in supplying information for the completion of this report.

Grafton

Rev. G. Hutton continues to labour in Grafton, New South Wales. In the past year four new members were received into communion, while death removed two communicants and one adherent. One child was born into the

congregation. The Rev. E. A. Rayner continues to be a great support to Mr. Hutton, though in 2017 he became increasingly frail due to ill health.

The congregation's website has become a significant aspect of its witness, reaching families and individuals in Grafton and also in remote and spiritually desolate situations. Mr. Hutton hears from time to time of some, for whom these recorded sermons are important spiritual food, they having no sound church near them in the vast land of Australia. One lady who depends on the sermons, listening every Lord's Day in her own home with a few friends, has opined to Rev. Hutton, "Australia is not Scotland, Mr. Hutton, it is a heathen mission field". Sadly, one fears that even in the professing church there is ignorance of biblical truths. In this context, Rev. Hutton comments: "We trust, that as a congregation, God has sovereignly brought us to the kingdom for such a time as this." He also notes, "While the local Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Pentecostals, Baptists and Romanists continue to co-operate in religious events, and united services, the Free Presbyterian Church endeavours to maintain a distinctive Reformed witness on the side of truth. For this reason, we are sometimes referred to as a sect, unable, or unwilling, to associate with other Christians in the community. The fact is they do not want to associate with us."

We hope that as the congregation grows, some in Grafton and the Clarence Valley will appreciate the great blessing of a sound witness in its midst. This holds true for all our congregations.

Sydney

The Sydney congregation continues to meet in the suburb of Riverstone twice on Sabbath and once on Wednesday for the mid week prayer meeting. The elders, Mr. Jake van Praag and Mr. Calvin MacKenzie, continue to enjoy good health as they seek to uphold the hands of the minister. There are two deacons in the congregation – Mr. Finlay Campbell and Mr. Luke Bowler.

In August 2017 Mr. John Steel, who was a much-loved member in full communion, passed we believe, to that better country where the Lord's people are "... made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity". John was a very well read man who had a rich love for the Reformed faith. He was a great support to his family and to his minister, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Psalm 37:37).

The congregation is blessed to have a number of professing men who can be called upon to pray. In 2017, the Tshuma family from Zimbabwe joined the congregation. Mrs. Tshuma is a daughter of Rev. S. Khumalo of Bulawayo. They have settled in well to life in Sydney, and whilst they live some distance from the church, attend when they can. There may well be others, who like Mr. and Mrs. Tshuma attended the John Tallach Secondary School who now live in Sydney or indeed Auckland or Singapore. We hope that such might yet seek out one of our congregations, with whose form of worship they would be familiar.

In 2017 two children were born to families in the congregation and one couple were married. A monthly manse night is held for the benefit of the

young people and currently the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is the source for the study. Interestingly, towards the end of 2017 and into 2018 three young men from other Presbyterian congregations began attending, having expressed an interest in the Confession of Faith and reformed principles.

Auckland

Our Auckland congregation continues to meet faithfully under the pastoral oversight of Rev. Jett Smith and the ruling elders Mr. Cornell van Kralingen and Mr. Alasdair Campbell. There is one deacon, Mr. Paul de Bruin. The congregation also receive a number of occasional visitors year by year. In the Lord's providence towards the end of 2017 a family of five started to attend the congregation. Five children were born in 2017 and three children were baptised in July.

A number of Korean students attend and those who attend most regularly sometimes bring friends also from that nation. South Korea has some of the largest Presbyterian congregations in the world, so we hope that others might become aware of the form of worship, doctrine and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Gisborne

In Gisborne, the Rev. C. J. Hembd continues to labour in the gospel. Over the course of 2017 the congregation were encouraged by the presence of a number of visitors, including such as were on holidays, and others visiting family or in Gisborne for work. The congregation were very sorry to see an elder, Mr. U. Haringa, depart to live in Rotorua; he had been a great support to Mr. Hembd and the congregation and his presence and support is greatly missed. He now attends the Tauranga congregation. Two families have come and gone in recent years. One of these, the Schuit family from Canada, have relocated to the Carterton area and attend our congregation in that town. The elderly in the congregation are frail and cannot now always attend. The few in Hastings continue to be a part of the congregation and support it generously. Some work was undertaken at the manse to convert a garage into a study for the minister.

In October 2017 the Presbytery visited the congregation for the support, advice and encouragement of the minister, elders and congregation. The Rev. G. Hutton preached a very suitable sermon from Matthew 16:15-18 on Christ the Head of the Church and His assurance that He will build His Church. We trust this visit was an encouragement to the minister, office bearers and people of the congregation who often feel their small and isolated position. The Presbytery would ideally like to visit all the congregations within its bounds over time for their help, support and encouragement. Given the distances involved between congregations this may prove challenging, but such visits are a physical reminder to those within our scattered congregations of the very real care of the Presbytery for each of its congregations.

The congregation were surprised and encouraged to be included in an unexpected legacy left by a local of whom they had never heard before. She

left a number of legacies to various churches in Gisborne and our own congregation was included. Rev. Hembd took this to be a token for good that the Lord has not forsaken our brethren in Gisborne.

Wellington (Carterton)

The Wellington congregation meets in the town of Carterton, which is located in a fertile valley in a part of the wider Wellington region, which is good for farming. In 2017 the conversion of a former bank building to the present church building was completed and the first service was held in the building on 14th July 2017 when Rev. J. D. Smith preached from Isaiah 55:1-3. Mr. Hank Optland, the local elder, oversaw this complex project. The new church building is a most suitable place of worship and is prominently located on the main road through the town.

In recent years, a number of families have joined the congregation having moved to the area. This should encourage any small congregation, as there was a point in recent years when the congregation numbered only four or five souls.

Members of Synod will perhaps have heard that Mrs. Lydia van Kralingen (widow of the late Ken van Kralingen, a long-time elder in Auckland) passed away in May 2017. Latterly she had been staying in Carterton with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Optland. She was a godly praying woman and is sorely missed, “. . . the memory of the just is blessed” (Proverbs 10:7).

Tauranga

In December 2017 I was privileged to assist Rev. J. D. Smith at the communion. It was good to be back with the congregation, having not visited for a few years. The resident elder, Mr. Dick Vermeulen, is quite frail but was able to be at the services. They meet in a local community hall. Interestingly, the hall is located in a part of the city which was once the location of an Anglican mission. The Rev. A. N. Brown, who ministered here from 1840-42, was reputed to have been a sound evangelical, a Calvinist and true Protestant. His journal reveals a man who laboured with great diligence among the cannibalistic Maori tribes, evidently with some blessing. In 2017 Mrs. Barbara Crawford passed away; she was a communicant member in the congregation. Barbara was one of the large Beaton family, who were early associated with the Free Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.

Singapore

In Singapore Mr. Bernard Yong continues to shoulder the heavy burden of responsibility for the keeping of services year by year. Mr. Yong Shang Yu was ordained to the office of deacon in 2017; this is a great help as it means the Singapore Deacons' Court can meet without the need of a special visit of the Interim Moderator of Session. The congregation naturally hope for others of like-mind to join with them.

In November 2017 I was grateful that Rev. C. J. Hembd could conduct the communion services and that Mr. J. van Praag (Sydney) could attend in his role as an assessor elder for the Kirk Session. Their fellowship in the gospel was deeply appreciated by the congregation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Free Presbyterian congregations in the Asia Pacific Presbytery feel at times their isolation, but remain thankful to be a part of the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It is very encouraging to see the occasional person from outwith the denomination showing a keen interest in our testimony on the side of truth. In many ways we have the same trials as our brethren in Scotland, due to the sad apathy to the gospel among many in our societies. One comfort we have is that the Lord has promised to bless His own Word as He sees fit.

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

EASTERN EUROPE MISSION REPORT

Rev. D. Levytskyi

DURING 2017 the Lord has been gracious to us in enabling us to continue the work of the Eastern Europe Mission of our Church, that is, the preaching of the gospel in Odessa and our gospel work in Ukraine as a whole, as doors are opened.

The Lord granted the Odessa Congregation the opportunity to have a communion season last October. Mr. Edward Ross, Lochcarron, one of our assessor elders, accompanied Rev. Donald Ross, who along with myself and the resident elder, Mr. Igor Zadoroshney, made up our Kirk Session. The Kirk Session has decided that a communion season be held in the Odessa Congregation on a permanent basis on the third Sabbath of October, DV. This decision was very much appreciated by the Congregation.

The Church attendance at the communion services was as usual and the congregation was grateful to the Most High to be under the preaching of the Word and to have the opportunity to remember the death of the Lord Jesus Christ again. There were no new members received.

Our Eastern Europe Mission work still continues and we were able to have useful Field Committee meetings while our brethren from Scotland were with us. We have a new translation project, namely the translation of the

Confessional Documents into the Ukrainian language, because in Ukraine, since the military invasion of the Donbas area and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the people on the whole are slowly moving away from using Russian in their day-to-day business and are using more of the Ukrainian language. The translation is being done by Mrs. Hopkins since her expertise in the Ukrainian language means that the work will be done professionally and faithfully. In the past we issued an existing Ukrainian translation of the Confessional Documents, translated by Mr. Fesenko from Canada. But it is necessary to make our own translation since Mr. Fesenko did not include in his translation the original 23rd chapter of the Confession, (which we had to translate and insert in that issue). There are other titles that are still on their way to be reprinted, such as the *Mother's Catechism* (we call it the *Children's Catechism* in Ukraine), and the Catechism of our Church's *History and Principles*.

The past year was somewhat unusual for Ukrainians in that President Poroshenko signed an edict, "The Anniversary of 500 years of Reformation", according to which conferences and seminars about the Reformation took place in our country, as well as an official ceremonial evening dedicated to the anniversary of the Reformation.

Because of these activities, many Christians in Ukraine became interested in Reformed literature. Pastors of various Christian congregations asked us to send them the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *An Exposition of the Confession* by Robert Shaw, *The Shorter Catechism*, and *Line upon Line* by F. L. Mortimer. These items soon will be out of stock again. Teachers of Sabbath schools as well as ordinary state schools are still enquiring about the possibility of receiving the *Mother's Catechism* for their teaching of children.

Not all our contacts are satisfactory. There was the case of a man, Alexander, of fifty years of age who came to worship with us and after the service he stayed for a while and told us that he was excommunicated from the Baptist Church for his religious views. These we found to be very erroneous and we told him that he had to leave them and repent of what he adheres to. He showed no regret for his false beliefs nor desire to submit to the teaching of the Bible and then left us.

Recently, we had another visitor, an army officer Mr. Alexander Kotiy, who is a helicopter pilot and a believer. He is engaged in taking wounded soldiers to hospitals in the Odessa and Dnipro districts. The mission presented to him and his colleagues copies of the TBS "Words of Life" Calendars for 2018, for which he was grateful – and we also are very thankful to the Trinitarian Bible Society for sending them to the Mission.

Since last June one young man of 25 years of age, Mr. Artem Shkreba, started coming to worship with us. He is a veteran of the Anti Terrorist Operation (ATO). He started distribution of our literature among fellow veterans. We also furnished him with literature for the few shelves in the library of the rest room for veterans in the Central Bus Station which is nearby.

During 2017, Ukrainian military actions were continued in the east of Ukraine against regular army forces of the Russian Federation and local collaborators. Ukrainian soldiers perish every day and others are wounded.

In our mailbox we often find letters of thanks. Here is one such letter from a man who lives in the Donbas area in the city Mirgorod, whose name is Igor Tunik. "I thank you for the excellent book 'Sermons' by D. MacFarlane. We are reading this book among our whole group in the Rehabilitation Centre for recovering alcohol and drug addicts."

For the past year the Mission sent Christian literature by post to Ukrainian people living mainly in rural areas, to soldiers and officers of the Ukrainian Army, and to ministers of the gospel of different denominations. The distribution figures are as follows: Table Bible in Ukrainian Language – 164 copies, Table Bible in Russian Language – 259 copies, *Sermons* by D. MacFarlane – 34 copies, *Westminster Confession of Faith* Russian version – 463 copies, *Westminster Confession of Faith* Ukrainian version – 78 copies, Calendars "Words of Life" in Russian and Ukrainian languages – 1,908 copies, Calendars "Golden Thoughts" – 3,000 copies, *An Exposition of The Westminster Confession of Faith* by Robert Shaw – 91 copies, *Line upon Line* by F. L. Mortimer – 314 copies. Altogether, 239 parcels and 60 letters were sent out by post.

We continue to receive donations towards expenses from correspondents in Ukraine and Russia. In 2017 these amounted to £122.29, which was sufficient to pay for post office charges and some other running expenses for literature distribution.

We are thankful to the people in the Church in Scotland for their free and generous giving to the cause of Christ in Ukraine.

In conclusion we ask you to continue to pray for peace in Ukraine and the cessation of war in the East of our country, and above everything that the glorious gospel of Christ be preached and blessed to perishing sinners in this country.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO CANADA

Rev. W. A. Weale

ON Friday 25th August 2017 I left Halkirk to spend two Sabbaths in Canada. After the flight from Inverness to London I went, a few hours later, on the long flight to Vancouver. On arriving there I was met by Alex Macarie who took me to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Spratt who, although they were attending a family wedding at that time in Ontario, very kindly gave the use of their home with an abundance of prepared meals, to Alex and myself for those days.

On the Sabbath I was taken to the most suitable building, which the congregation has the use of. Six people gathered in the morning and five in the evening. Despite the numbers being small I felt the congregation was in good heart and optimistic about future growth. This is indeed what our desire and prayer is, that “a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation” (Isaiah 60:22).

After a restful day on Monday, during which I was taken round the beautiful city of Vancouver, I left the next morning for Toronto, where I was glad to meet up with Rev. R. Macleod, interim moderator of the Canadian congregations, and his wife, who had come over from Glasgow for the communion season in Chesley. On being picked up and taken to Chesley, we were most kindly received in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rick Bouman and family before being taken to the manse.

It was a great pleasure to be back among the friends in Chesley who showed us much kindness and hospitality as we visited them over the following days in their several homes. The services of the communion season were well attended with the number reaching 65 on the Sabbath when the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was duly dispensed. There were several visitors which augmented the numbers, but it was most encouraging to see so many of the Chesley folk themselves and much credit is owed to the elders, Mr. David Kuiper and Mr. Gilbert Zekveld, for their diligence there in the absence of a settled minister.

On Monday 4th September, Mr. and Mrs. Spratt kindly took me to the Toronto Airport for the flight back to the UK and by the goodness of the Lord I was back in Caithness the following evening.

Canada is a vast country containing many precious souls, and our prayer is that a minister would yet be provided for the people in the congregations there and that the Spirit of God would be poured forth so that much growth both numerical and spiritual would follow.

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO ODESSA

Rev. D. A. Ross

DUE to the war situation in Ukraine there was a period when it was not wise to enter that country and certainly not to go anywhere near the war zone. A great number of people have fled from there to elsewhere in the country or to other countries. Thankfully that has not happened among the few who worship in the Free Presbyterian Church in Odessa. Yet there are difficult side effects of the war, not least the roaming from church to church by some who are not well intentioned, and also eruptions of trouble in the city among those who are fiercely patriotic to Russia or to Ukraine – sadly resulting sometimes in murder.

However, when Mr. Edward Ross and I visited Odessa last year, the city was peaceful, just as it was in the previous year when Mr. E. Ross, as assessor elder, was present at the communion in the congregation (at which Rev. D. Levytskyi himself officiated).

We left Scotland on 5th October and arrived in Odessa that day. We actually left home shortly after 4 a.m., met Rev. Neil Ross in Dingwall, and were driven by him to Inverness Airport to catch the early flight, which allowed us to arrive in Odessa in the late evening. At Odessa Airport we were met by Rev. D. Levytskyi, Mr. Igor Zadorozhnyi, and Mr. Artem Shkreba, a young man from the congregation. About an hour later we arrived safely at the mission manse. It was a great pleasure to meet again with those friends in the gospel after such a long absence. More than that, it is much cause for thankfulness that, despite the war and all its effects, the main families which make up the congregation are still worshipping in the church and continue to be enthusiastic for the good of Sion.

With the Odessa communion season only a week away, we got busy with Field Committee meetings, the main business being the reprinting of books and other material to be added to the Eastern Europe Mission stock of Christian literature. The production of some new material (previously decided on as suitable for printing and publishing), has been delayed for various reasons, but will be completed we trust in the near future. Because of the increasing use of the Ukrainian language in the country for social and political communication it was decided to publish all our material in Ukrainian. This is no small task, but thankfully we have an able translator in England, Mrs. P. Hopkins, a Ukrainian national, who has previously done Russian translation work for the Mission. Although Mr. Levytskyi and Mr. Zadorozhnyi are able to edit material produced for the Mission, it is intended to have a third person, skilled in English and Ukraine, to assist in that work.

Another thing attended to was the redesigning of the church entrance so that it is directly from the street and more accessible to the public. The present entrance to the church is first by a gate into the compound, then through a door leading to the manse entrance and then through another door into the church itself. Another problem with this arrangement is that strangers coming to the service are at times very curious and bothersome regarding the living quarters of the Levytskyi family. This is somewhat nerve-racking because there are always clever thieves on the prowl to get knowledge of buildings to facilitate breaking in. In fact when the property was built, an alarm system with camera was installed as a deterrent.

However, not long ago, a thief was seen on camera, calmly scaling the seven foot perimeter wall, taking away the bicycle from the compound, lifting it over the wall to his accomplice, and disappearing in seconds. It would be a very unwise man who would approach them since they are known to be murderous characters. After this experience it was deemed wise to have guard dogs, but even guard dogs have received wounds from thieves. So the entrance being directly from the street into the church should give a further degree of security as well as being more inviting to the public.

The Thursday of the communion arrived, and how soon the communion season passed. All the services were conducted in the same way as in all our other congregations, but there was no fellowship meeting, chiefly because of language difficulties. There were no new communicants. A few not normally present at the Sabbath services were present on the communion Sabbath, but the number of hearers was only over 10, whereas it was over 20 when I was last there. Thankfully all was done decently and in order and the people spoke often of receiving spiritual good which was the result, we believe, of the Lord being graciously present to make good His Word to this little flock.

We gratefully record again that in God's goodness we actually have a congregation in Odessa, which is a wonder when we are not worthy of the least of His mercy and truth. There was a day when Presbyterianism was strong in parts of Ukraine but communism has a murderous history of eliminating Christians and churches. The Lord knows it all. In His governing of nations He permits persecution of His church according to His Word, "In this world ye shall have tribulation" – a dreadful trial to the believer, who can only hold fast by divine grace.

We returned to Scotland on Tuesday 17th October. We said our goodbyes the night before and rose at 3.30 a.m. However, some of the friends appeared shortly after that, joined us in worship, and bid us goodbye again. Mr. Levytskyi and Artem took us to the airport. While Artem stood guard over the car, Mr. Levytskyi saw us through the airport. Rev. N. Ross met us at Inverness airport, took us to Dingwall, and thereafter we made our way to our respective homes. Thanks be to God for His care of us.

We trust that the Lord will mercifully bless the Church's gospel activities in Odessa and beyond. He has promised that His Word will not return to Him "void", and so we are encouraged to go on sowing. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters . . ." (Isaiah 32:20).

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO SANTE FE, TEXAS

Rev. D. A. Ross

I WAS asked by the interim moderator of the Santa Fe Congregation Kirk Session, Rev. David Campbell, to assist at the communion there in December. Due to flight delays I arrived 18 hours late, on Wednesday 13th, and was met at Houston airport by Mr. Carl Smith, an elder of the congregation. About an hour later we arrived in Sante Fe and were greeted by Rev. David Campbell, Mr. Alasdair MacPherson, the assessor elder, and Mrs. Anna Smith who had a meal prepared for us in the manse, where we also stayed for the duration of our visit.

On the following day, the communion season began and in all the services the form of worship was, of course, as in all our congregations. The people of

the congregation were certainly most welcoming and the congregation itself is one of those in our Church where the majority are young couples with families. It is cheering to see the happy gathering together of young people and little children – a joyful sight in any congregation since children are the future of any Church when in the mercy of God they come to have a saving interest in Christ. There were over 70 in attendance on the Sabbath. There was one new communicant, a young man.

There were quite a number of visitors present, including Mr. Joseph Smith, Session Clerk, and his family who now live in Wisconsin; friends from the Canadian congregations, some of whom I had the privilege of meeting for the first time; and Mr. and Mrs. Budgen from our Glasgow congregation. As it is in our other overseas congregations, so it is in Santa Fe – that visitors are much appreciated and warmly welcomed.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. MacPherson left immediately after the thanksgiving service on Monday, having spent two Sabbaths in Santa Fe. I stayed on for an additional Sabbath. During the week, I had the happy duty of performing the marriage of Benjamin van Kuren and Sharon Dawkins, at which most of the congregation were present.

The children of the congregation are being home schooled, some of them also attending the private school which is held in the vacant manse attached to the church. They are ably taught by Mrs. Sharon van Kuren.

We were treated with much kindness in the homes of the congregation. We appreciated their generous hospitality in giving us meals in their homes and in a restaurant. Meals were also brought to the Manse. We were well catered for indeed.

We certainly feel for the congregation in their pastorless state and how that came about. However, by the grace of God there is harmony among them and they diligently carry on with the work of the gospel, the burden of services falling on the shoulders of the resident elders, Mr. Carl Smith and Mr. Jeshurun Hembd, who discharge their duties willingly and cheerfully. The congregation also obtains preaching supply from time to time.

It is quite some time since I last visited the Santa Fe congregation and since then some of those who were worshippers with us have moved to other churches. It is a fact also that some persons of the congregation, in their providence, have had to move to other places where our Church has a congregation and so are useful to the Cause of Christ. One case of a removal to another part of the States has resulted in the commencement of church services there, which we hope will develop and prove to be permanent.

Our church and manse in Santa Fe are well designed and comfortable. However, both buildings, which are joined together, suffered severe and extensive flood damage from exceedingly heavy rain storms during Hurricane Harvey but the congregation, by the goodness of the Lord, rallied and made the large and necessary repairs. Their concern was that the building would be ready for the communion. which in the good providence of God was the case,

apart from the laying of carpeting. Some in the congregation think the acoustics are better without the carpet.

In the USA, because Hurricane Harvey caused many deaths and much suffering among the people, as well as vast damage to an immense range of property, President Trump signed a proclamation for a National Day of Prayer on 2nd September 2017 – an example our leaders would do well to follow.

As I left for Scotland on the 25th December, I could not but be thankful to the Lord that in Santa Fe there is a gathering of people worshipping the Lord according to the mind of Christ. That is not a small thing. And part of the reason for giving reports about our overseas congregations is to show them and others throughout our Church that they are not alone in their desire to worship God according to the mind of the Spirit, and that they would be encouraged. Elijah thought he was alone, but God showed him that there were 7,000 who did not bow the knee to Baal. The same applies to ourselves. If we were hearing of our congregations overseas being depleted or closing down (as happens in Scotland), that surely would be deeply depressing for those who care for the cause of Christ. Therefore, it is beneficial to have reports placed before our people, so that they would not only support our Church overseas materially and by prayer but, like Paul, would also take courage. “And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage” (Acts 28:15).

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. J. R. Tallach

NO tuition in the Theology Course took place in the past year but tutors were engaged in assisting the students, John Campbell, Trycot Mwedzi and John Morrison, prepare for the Greek and Hebrew elements of the entrance exam to be sat this Autumn, DV. Mr. Mwedzi, in Zimbabwe, is undertaking an Open University Course in English Language. Mr. Roy Bartle expects to begin the Theology Course in 2019.

The Committee is seeking to re-register with the British Accreditation Council with a view to satisfying the regulations in order to bring Mr. Mwedzi from Zimbabwe to join his fellow students in the Theology class in September, DV.

A report on the 2017 Theology Conference has already been published in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* but for completeness of the Committee’s records the subjects covered were as follows:

Luther and Erasmus: the Debate over	
Divine Grace	Rev. A. W. MacColl
The Early Reformation	Mr. M. Vogan
Bannerman on the Church of Christ	Rev. A. W. MacColl
The Doctrine of Justification in Scotland	
Before the Reformation	Rev. D. W. B. Somerset
Ulrich Zwingli	Mr. F. R. Daubney

We are grateful to Rev. A. W. MacColl for providing a second paper when Rev. J. B. Jardine was unable to present his paper.

The proposed subjects for the 2018 Theology Conference are:

Robert Findlater	Rev. K. D. Macleod
The Temple	Rev. J. B. Jardine
Man’s Eternal State	Rev. J. R. Tallach
Sanctification	Rev. R. MacLeod
The Restoration of the Jews	Rev. J. L. Goldby

The Committee trust that these conferences are not only of value to those who prepare and listen to the papers but also to those who read them subsequently in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

The Committee is also conscious of the fundamental importance of the work of preparing men to minister the Word and craves the prayer of our people.

“I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock” (Ezekiel 36:37).

WELFARE OF YOUTH COMMITTEE’S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

SINCE last year’s report, the Welfare of Youth Committee has to report there are no changes for the better in our society for our young, not just our teenagers but our very young. We are constantly seeing our legislators interfering with God’s law, calling sweet bitter and bitter sweet, and the flood continues to come in upon us. As we have highlighted in previous reports, our liberal society and Christian foundations are constantly under attack and are being eroded. The biblical view of marriage is now redefined in law, and homosexual marriage is now permitted in law and entertained both in church and state contrary to the Word of God. The issues around transgender are now receiving a public platform, which will and is having 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 religious and civil liberties. This is already having an effect on schools and hospitals along

with other institutions. We need to cry to heaven that the Lord will have mercy upon us and our children. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).

A major part of the Committee's work is the organisation of the Youth Conference, to obtain a suitable venue and arrange for speakers and papers. This year the Youth Conference was held at Carronvale House, Larbert, The conference fees were increased this year: up from £40 to £50 for those in full time employment, and £25 for others. The lower age limit for those attending continues to be 16.

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

The Life of David: The Sweet Psalmist of Israel.....	Dr. R. Dickie
The Reformation in Europe: God Bringing Light into the Darkness.....	Rev. K. D. Macleod
Public Worship: Why We Go to Church.....	Rev. D. W. B. Somerset
Historical Tour around Perth.....	Rev. D. W. B. Somerset and Rev. D. Campbell
The Jews: Their Restoration and Spiritual Recovery	Rev. J. L. Goldby
The Spirit of Adoption: Adoption in Romans Chapter 8.....	Rev. D. Campbell

In our rural districts our congregations are largely, although not entirely, without young families. Most of our young are in our town and city congregations. Attendances at our Youth Conferences are declining; the numbers attempting the Scripture and Catechism Exercises are decreasing. We would encourage parents to encourage their children and to help them if necessary to do the exercises. The markers and the Committee are at present engaged in a review of the exercises. We would thank all those who set and mark the exercises for their dedication and hard work.

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.

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

ANOTHER year has passed in the life of Ballifeary Care Home and we have to record the Lord's kindness and care in all areas of this work.

We record with sadness the following deaths of residents over the past year. Mrs. Margaret Sutherland on 15th February, Mrs. Ishbel MacRae on 1st May, Mrs. Catherine Campbell on 5th July, Mr. Ronald MacDonald on 2nd August, Mrs. Alice MacGregor on 12th August, Miss Elizabeth MacRae on 13th September, Mrs. Christina MacDougall on 19th September, Mr. John Angus Fraser on 28th October, Mr. Alexander Cormack on 29th October and Mrs. Catherine MacKenzie on 28th December.

The following were admitted during the year: Mrs. Catherine MacKenzie on 29th March, Mrs. Annabelle MacLeod on 19th May, Mr. Roderick MacKinnon on 21st June, Mr. Alexander Cormack on 9th August, Mrs. Christina MacDougall on 4th September, Mr. Iain MacInnes on 8th September, Mr. John Angus Fraser on 21st September, Mrs. Murdina Campbell on 26th October, Miss Flora MacLeod on 16th October, Mrs. Rebecca Patience on 17th October and Mrs. Catherine Fuller on 20th November.

The following residents were in Ballifeary for respite: Mrs. Margaret Hulks in June, Mrs. Murdina Campbell in October and Mrs. Catherine Fuller in September and October.

A full complement of staff was maintained throughout the year with individual members completing training courses, including Moving and Handling, First Aid, Loss and Bereavement, End of Life Care, and Meaningful Activities.

An annual Fire Risk assessment was conducted and no action was recommended as the inspectors were satisfied with the systems in place.

Under Repairs and Maintenance the ground floor corridor was decorated, and two of the residents' rooms were decorated and carpeted.

The Highland Council auditor from the department of Contracts and Monitoring examined the Home records and was satisfied with the systems in place.

The Home had a two-day Care Inspectorate inspection on 20th/21st April and the two areas inspected of Care and Support and Management and Leadership were graded excellent.

The Committee are indebted to the Inverness congregation and other adjacent congregations for the maintenance of regular family worship in the Home and the kindly interest taken in residents by frequent visits. Done in the right spirit these kindnesses bring their own reward: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

LEVERBURGH RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. K. Macdonald

IN presenting another report on behalf of the Committee, we once again acknowledge that the Home has continued to function successfully over another year and has been provided for.

Leverburgh Care Home first opened its doors on 1st February 1988, catering then for 12 residents. This increased over the years and we are now registered for 17 beds. Over the years, the needs of the residents have changed dramatically. When the Home opened in 1988, residents who chose to come into the Home at that time were on the whole self-caring. Changes since then have meant staffing requirements have increased over the years, and also qualifications and training needs have continued to expand.

The Home having been in operation for thirty years, the staff provided an open day to the community on 12th February with an Afternoon Tea which was very well attended by the residents, families and the wider community.

Our Care Inspection was carried out last October and we have retained our Very Good grades, which we are very thankful for as it has been a challenging year with a lot of senior experienced staff either retiring or leaving through ill health. Recruiting staff is becoming a problem due to our small pool of workers on Harris, but thankfully we are able to carry on at present, in no small part due to the dedication and hard work of our Carers and all other ancillary staff.

We have had 8 deaths through this past year: Una Macleod (Geocrab), Chrissie Macleod (Ballalan), Katie Mary Morrison (Scalpay), Marion Macleod (Scalpay), Finlay MacLeod (Scalpay), Bellann MacKenzie (Back), Kenna Morrison (Leverburgh), Donald John MacLennan (Scalpay).

The respite bed continues to be well used. The Western Isles Council have been very fair with us with our fee negotiations and these continue to go up every year. We have been most thankful to have had all our beds continually in use. We have quite a few Lewis people that are placed with ourselves; and when it comes to the time of shifting to a nearer Care Home in Lewis, some do not want to move but are appreciative of the care that they receive both physically and spiritually in Leverburgh.

The Committee are grateful for the support of the local services in their support of the Home and also the local community as whole. The Christian ethos of the Home continues to be maintained; we are thankful for those who come in to hold family worship.

The Committee are grateful to the Matron and her staff for their dedication and hard work; may they obtain a blessing in the work that they do.

Once again we must acknowledge that truly the Lord has hitherto helped us.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE's REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. A. Ross

WHEN there are such dreadful departures in Church and State from the rule of the Word of God, it is a wonder to us that we can still go out with the Bible to public places. We read reports of people who, in endeavouring to spread the Word of God, have been arrested by the police for doing so on the complaints of passers-by. We are thankful for the Christian Institute which uses its skills in law courts to prove the innocence of such people. Our Synod gives large donations to the Christian Institute to be used for the defence of those who are under false charges. These donations are in themselves a form of outreach by the Church and are much appreciated by those who benefit from them.

Those in authority appear to care little about our hard-won freedom to spread the Scriptures, and indeed in a number of instances have shown a profound distaste for anything in any way related to the Bible. It is therefore with a deep degree of thankfulness to the Most High that we note that we are not as yet banned from public places with our outreach work. While we have this freedom, it is a pity that we are not in a position to do more.

The Committee thought it appropriate that we continue to do what we can to spread the Word of God in countries other than Britain. For some time, we have had in stock a great variety of tracts and booklets given by the late Mr. Jim Reynolds with the specific request that these be sent to African countries. A Mr. Nedson Banda who lives in Malawi (who has had theological training in our Church, completing the course), gladly accepts quantities of this sound literature. He reports that these tracts and our Church Magazines find numerous ready recipients, and that some of these items end up in the possession of prison inmates.

Sadly, we cannot say that in Scotland people generally are as ready to receive free Christian literature. However, some do so and others are glad to see us set up our book stands each year at agricultural shows. Mr. Edward Ross and Mr. Chris Lamont with the help of others continue to do this essential work. Mr. Lamont reports that at some agricultural shows there was a greater response than on other occasions and more expressions of appreciation. However, he goes on to say that of the many people passing by our book stall, the majority show no interest.

Last year we benefited from a grant of "Words of Life" Calendars from the Trinitarian Bible Society. No doubt because the calendars have an attractive format they are readily received, but at the same time we endeavour to direct the recipients to the Scripture texts on the calendar. They are the Word of God and not the word of man, of which it is promised that it will not return to the Lord fruitless. This is a most useful addition to the other literature we distribute. We continue to plead the promises appropriate to our outreach work and that the Lord would open the minds and hearts of the people to His truth.

The book van has served us well, but age takes its toll and a huge amount of work had to be done to pass an MOT. It was costly work but it was cause

for much thanksgiving to the good Lord when the cost was taken care of by an anonymous donor. We took this as yet another sign in God's providence to encourage us to keep plying our gospel wares to a lost world despite the discouragements. We are restricted at times by the lack of manpower and indeed had to cancel one book stand arrangement for that very reason. It would be a step in the right direction if we obtained permission from town councils to park our book van at open air markets, which is a matter being looked into, though we do not expect great success. Such outreach is an undoubted witness to the Gospel and a handmaid to carrying out the heavenly commission of Christ, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature".

Our gospel tracts are moving well. These of course are used by tract distributors throughout the UK. Some tracts move faster than others – those, for example, with a simple gospel message generally go more readily. There is a request for tracts dealing with particular subjects, such as Easter, Russelites, etc., and the Committee intend, DV, to have these ready in the near future. We read stories of tracts being used by God the Holy Spirit to bring certain sinners to a serious frame of mind about the salvation of their souls. As we distribute our literature in various ways, we accompany this work with our petitions to heaven.

The booklets we have produced are also in steady use, and we are in the process of adding to these the well-known title, *The Highland Kitchen Maid*. Also, the free Bibles we advertise on the Church website keep attracting interest, and a quantity of these have been distributed through the labours of Rev. J. B. Jardine.

What a dreadful turmoil this sin-laden world is in. Although Satan's chain is long, the Lord is in total control, but oh how we fear for this poor nation of ours when it has thrust God aside and every man does what is right in his own eyes – and alas is fast asleep to the dreadful powers of darkness. Unless the Lord will open the eyes of sinners to see their danger, our nation for sure will be visited with greater judgements. It is only the gospel which can answer the needs of the people. This compels us, as we have the opportunity, to continue to do what we can. It is little we do at best, but it is only the Word of God that will reverse the fearful downward trend towards inevitable destruction. May the Lord be pleased to bless our small attempts to turn sinners to the Word of God and the glorious Saviour. "A sower went forth to sow. . . ." There were many disappointments, yet there was fruit. May the Lord so bless our endeavours.

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKROOM COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. D. Macleod

THE format of the report is the same as in previous years and focuses on the three areas of the Committee's activities.

Magazines

Both the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine* have continued to be issued each month. The Committee appreciate the help given over the past year by all those who have contributed articles and reviews or have suggested material that might be reprinted. October 2017 marked the five-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg church and the commencement of the European Reformation. Accordingly, each month during 2017 abridged extracts were printed from *The History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century* written by J. H. Merle d'Aubigne. The *Free Presbyterian Magazine* has continued to publish, for a wider audience, papers given at the Theological Conference. Among those published during was a paper by the Rev. Allan W. MacColl on the Free Offer of the Gospel and one on Prayer by the Rev. Donald Macdonald. As in previous years the Editor is very appreciative of the contributions provided by members of the Editorial Board of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. The Editor, the Editorial Board, and the Committee seek, by God's grace, to maintain the standard set by previous editors with respect to the spiritual character and thoughtful content of the Church's Magazines. This is especially important in a day when a number of similar magazines that claim to be Reformed appear to be lowering their standards both in content and presentation. The Committee is pleased to report that they have been able to keep the cover price of the Magazines at the same level for 2018.

The *Gaelic Supplement*, edited by the Rev. A. W. MacColl, continues to be issued quarterly and is sent free of charge on request and as we indicated last year is now available online at the Church's website in a similar way to the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and the *Young People's Magazine*. All the issues of the *Gaelic Supplement* from 2016 are online.

Publications

The new publication that the Committee has issued during the year is a volume written by Jared B. Waterbury and titled *Advice to a Young Christian*. It was serialised in the *Young People's Magazine* between August 1999 and September 2004. Waterbury was trained at Princeton Theological Seminary under Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller. It is the hope of the Committee that this valuable book will be both a guide and a blessing in the twenty-first century, as it was in the past, specifically to young adults who have made a profession of saving faith. The book is, however, of value to believers of all

ages as it deals with the crucially important topics of private prayer, the careful study of the Bible and the need for self-examination.

Volumes 14 and 15 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* are currently at Tentmaker Publications for reprinting during the coming year. These are the next two volumes in the Committee's programme of re-issuing the early volumes of the Magazine in order that the rising generation in particular may have access to this valuable and historic material, much of which is written by the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church. A further volume that is with Tentmaker Publications with the intention that it will be available during the coming year is the *Memorials of the Life and Ministry of Charles Calder Mackintosh*. These volumes will very probably be among the final ones produced for the Committee by Tentmaker Publications. Philip Roberts, a Minister in Stoke-on-Trent who began Tentmaker Publications as a means of additional support whilst he was a missionary in the Irish Republic, is now quite unwell and unable to continue. The Committee are taking the opportunity presented by this report of expressing publically its appreciation of the work that Mr. Roberts has undertaken for them over many years. It will be difficult for the Committee to find another source of producing hardback books in small quantities to the quality and competitive price that he has been able to achieve.

Bookroom

Christian Bookshops continue to close, one of the latest being the Free Church Bookshop in Edinburgh which closed in January 2018. The Free Presbyterian Bookroom is one of the very few Christian Bookshops in the United Kingdom still operating that is devoted entirely to distributing the Authorised Version of the Bible and Reformed and Calvinistic literature to various parts of the world. It, therefore, deserves the support of Free Presbyterians.

Though the annual deficit was reduced in 2015 to slightly less than £400 from just below £16,000 in 2014, it increased in 2016 to almost £6,400 and has, sadly, increased again in 2017 to almost £14,000. Though almost £3,400 is due to the Bookroom's share of the roof repair costs at St. Jude's and its share of Organisation Fund Costs, the increase is still a matter of concern. During the year the Bookroom Manager, in order to promote sales, has continued to send out by email lists of secondhand books for sale and listings of new books that are available.

The Website Committee are assisting the Publications Committee in the design of a Bookroom website which will enable the purchasing of books online. In December 2017 the two committees set up a small Working Group to finalise the choice of a web developer and oversee the design of the site. Following a considerable amount of preparatory work in updating the Bookroom facilities the Working Group recommended to the Publications and Bookroom Committee a company of web designers. Their recommendation was approved and the designers are working on a website specifically for the Free Presbyterian Bookroom which should become operative during 2018.

The Committee would urge prayer to the Lord for His blessing on every part of the Committee's work, the production of Magazines month by month and the publication and distribution of Christian literature. In the history of the Church, since the Reformation, books and magazines have played a significant part in the building up of Christ's Kingdom and it is our continued desire that the Lord would use these means for the good of never-dying souls and advance the cause of His Church in the world.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. K. M. Watkins

THE increased usage of the website reported last year has continued. During 2018 so far, average daily page viewings per day are up to 824 (a 7.5% increase on 2017). Sometimes visitors raise queries and questions.

Again, both of the Church's magazines have been uploaded to the site, one month after their printed publication. The Bookroom's monthly offers have been uploaded as well. Sermons from some congregations and communion seasons are uploaded when they become available, along with some historic recordings. Articles are posted too, sometimes original and sometimes from previous magazines. A number of obituaries have been added to the History section of the site.

A joint working group has been formed, with representatives from the Website Committee and the Publications and Bookroom Committee, to produce a commercial website for the FP Bookroom. Six meetings have been held so far and a website design company has been engaged. At the time of writing, the working group has just seen the first draft of the proposed design, and will be interacting with the company until the site is fully operational.

The project of converting part of the website into Chinese is in progress. A major part of the translation work has been completed, and the next step is to find a suitable hosting provider.

CHURCH ARCHIVES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Convener: Rev. D. W. B. Somerset

The remit of the Committee is to oversee the preservation of the Church's archives. There has been some progress on the inventory of home and overseas records presently in the possession of the Church, including Synod, Presbytery, Kirk Session, Deacons' Court, and Committee records, but this inventory is still not up-to-date. All the volumes of the Northern Presbytery

have now been scanned except the current one. We are grateful to Mr. Maarten Schouten for this work. The first volume of the Stornoway Kirk Session records covering the period 1893-1930 has also been photocopied. Several congregations have bought or given thought to the purchase of fire-proof safes, and the Committee would strongly encourage this. Small fire-proof safes cost only a few hundred pounds, are able to survive ordinary fires, and provide a convenient storage place for non-current congregational records, thus obviating the danger of the loss of these records when there is a change of clerk.