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The Spiritual and Moral State of the Nation

As we draw near to the end of another year, it might not be inappropriate for us to take stock and consider the low spiritual and moral state of our nation. This is a matter which cannot but be of serious concern to the people of God throughout our land. It is all too clear that the nation on its present course must inevitably come under the desolating judgments of God because of the abounding iniquity in the land. It is easy to recognise that things as they now stand are not as they once were in the nation. We may ask ourselves how things have come to this sorry pass and what, if anything, can be done to remedy matters.

As a nation the Lord in His kindness highly favoured us and at a very early period in the history of the Christian Church the gospel came to these islands. After the nations of Europe had lapsed into the Dark Ages under the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, the Lord was pleased again to revive His Cause in our land at the time of the Reformation, during which time John Knox was an honoured instrument in God's hand.

When the achievements of the Reformation were threatened, God in His mercy raised up other men, possessed of great zeal for the truth, who secured the maintenance of gospel privileges through the attainments of the Second Reformation. What subtle diplomacy had failed to do in the first century of the Reformation Church, the force of arms attempted to do during the twenty-eight years of persecution in Covenanting times. This was brought to an end only by a change of dynasty in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. As ever in the history of the Church during persecuting times, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the

Church, and the attempt to foist unscriptural episcopacy on the Church in Scotland was not to raise its ugly head again for almost three centuries. In the mid-19th Century at the time of the Disruption an attempt to dethrone Christ as King and Head over His Church was resisted and overthrown, but not without dividing the Church in two. When, again, the last half of the 19th Century, the very vitals of true religion were assaulted in a most virulent and subversive attack upon the Word of God and the standards of the Reformed Church, there were those, however few in number, who graciously and manfully resisted these inroads made on the Church of God. To these faithful men, Rev. Donald MacFarlane and Rev. Donald MacDonald, we owe much because they stood in the breach when all was ready to be lost. For these and other deliverances we have reason to say:

“To any nation never He
such favour did afford;
For they His judgments have not known,
O do ye praise the Lord.

Why, then, after all that the Lord has done for us in the past have we come so low? The answer must be that there has been a great forsaking of the Lord throughout the land. The higher critical movement of last century has borne fruit in causing the churches to apostatise from God and from His worship and service. Men and women, young and old have forsaken the courts of God's house. For many the reason for doing so was that the true Gospel of God's grace was no longer preached. The Church in Scotland must bear a large share of the responsibility for the present state of the nation when she turned her back on the Word of God. The process of spiritual decline has continued and is accelerating and the inevitable moral decline has followed in its train. Had the Church in Scotland held fast to the testimony of God's Word, we have no reason to think that the nation would ever have come to its present plight.

This brings us to the question of recovery from our present state. Moral renovation is not enough. The basis must be laid far deeper. Spiritual regeneration is what the nation needs. That means divine intervention and such intervention is a sovereign prerogative of the God of Heaven. He would be just in letting the nation sink to utter destruction in the mire of sin into which it has brought itself. To do otherwise would be an unspeakably gracious act on the part of God. The nation can have no plea in such a situation but a cry for mercy, acknowledging

its ill desert, yet seeking mercies of the God of heaven. Is this what the nation is engaged in at the present time? There is no evidence of it. Is this what the church is doing at the present time? There is little evidence of it. Is this what the true children of God are doing at the present time? No doubt there are some of whom this is true, who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land, but of too many it is not true. Many professing the Lord's name are not affected as they ought to be by the sin of the land. They have grown too acclimatised to and become tolerant of the prevailing errors and sins of the day. These things ought not so to be. It is here then, that reviving must start — in the hearts of the people of God — otherwise it is here at the house of God that judgments must begin, if they have not begun already. The call of Hosea to backsliding Israel is a suitable one for our own day: "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." Hos. 14: 1,2.

Sermon

by Rev. D. N. MacLeod, Ullapool.

(Preached on Friday night of the Communion at Ullapool 4th September, 1959)

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25: 34.

This is a great, precious and solemn chapter of God's Word from beginning to end. We should read it often if God would give us that wisdom, for a separation is made between men in this world: everyone that ever was and will be in the world. Such a separation made — that they will never be together again. Eternity separates them. They will know then what Abraham said to the rich man, "... and beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed . . ." The separation is made for eternity. Two parties are made, as they were together in the world. There were two parties — the righteous and the wicked, the sheep and the goats. The righteous are the sheep: the wicked are the goats. The Shepherd of the flock is making the separation, so that they will be eternally separated. It is a thing that will happen and will be done by the Lord Jesus Himself. We have in this verse a great invitation, not to everyone, but to some.

We will consider, Firstly, The One who issues the invitation,
Secondly, Those whom He invites,
Thirdly, The Invitation.

Firstly, The One who issues the invitation. You all know who that is — that He is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, God's Eternal Son. He is the God-man, that is, the Saviour. That is His name and He will never lose it. It is He who gives the invitation, but not in the world in the days of His humiliation. These words do not belong to the days of his humiliation, but to the state of His exaltation, crowned with glory and honour, as the Apostle Paul said: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." He speaks in the state of His exaltation — of glory. God said unto Him: "Sit at My right hand until I make thine enemies Thy footstool." He is set apart as the Judge of the quick and the dead — in the same state as He is to judge the world at the great Day of Judgment. Those whom He invites are those blessed of the Father. "Come ye blessed of my Father . . ." Perhaps we do not pay the attention that we should, when we read the New Testament, that Christ in all His days in the world always mentioned the Father. If the world ever needed that doctrine it needs it today. No one who seeks the salvation of his own soul can lay it aside. He was doing that for many reasons, but especially for this reason — to glorify the Father in heaven. We, who were created to glorify God forgot Him, but that was not the way with the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Along with saving His people, He was in this world that He would glorify the Father who sent Him. That was all His desire all His days. If anything is easy to see, that is. Therefore He could not be, and was not silent concerning the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him". He did the will of the Father, altogether perfect, and He did not teach anything but what He learned from the Father. He said in His great intercession, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." He glorified His Father from His birth to His death. He left His people that example. He was their Creator and Saviour. Everyone that is saved has reason to glorify the Lord.

"Come ye blessed of my Father . . ." They belonged to the Father, and that is what He never hid, that the Eternal Father gave them to Him in the Eternal Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. He loved to talk of that in the days of His flesh. "My Father which gave them Me is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." "Blessed of My Father". They belong to the Father. The Father chose them as

He chose Him to be a Saviour for them. He found Him in His own bosom. He chose those whom He saves. You know that our day is away from that doctrine — the doctrine of election. One cannot mention it. Men think today that it is not an essential or suitable subject to speak of to men. They think that it would keep many out of heaven. As if sinful men could do that. Instead of that it is what will bring people to heaven. If we refuse to believe certain doctrines in God's Word, what would we believe? What of the great mystery that there are Three Persons in the God-head. Men are living on this earth and they cannot reach the depth of this, how this is true, that there are three Persons in the God-head. There are many other doctrines. We would have to part with all if we would refuse to believe some.

"Come ye blessed of My Father . . ." They are those who have the Father's blessing. They are in possession of it now in this world, the blessing of the Eternal Father. And indeed as it is written, they are "blessed and shall be blessed". There is implied in "Blessed of My Father" what cannot be put into words. Perhaps the mind can go out a little with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but it is only a little that it can enter into. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". This is for those who have the blessing. They were once as others under the curse and as cursed as anyone. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." There is nothing of that curse with them now. They are entirely separated from it. They are saved from the fear of it although they feel they fear. They will never again be children of wrath as others are. They are now children of mercy, and as they are a blessed people, they are a happy people. As we are by nature we seek our happiness in this world in the company of one another. The world cannot give us happiness. We seek of it what it cannot give. Moses showed that in the choice he made. He chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He showed that there was no good for him in seeking happiness in Egypt. The kind of happiness it would give was only for a while. As we are by nature we seek the happiness of the world. This people are happy, as Moses said, "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee. O people saved by the Lord . . ." They are all saved. They needed salvation. It was in bondage that the Father gave them to the Son — prisoners of the devil and of the world, without any good in them or desire to do good. They desired to do evil. Now they were saved from being heirs of wrath, heirs of hell.

“Because Thy mercy toward me
In greatness doth excel:
And Thou delivered hast my soul,
Out from the lowest hell.”

Psalm 86: 13.

That was done for this people, therefore they are happy. They have a blessing that will not, and cannot change. The true believer will never lose the blessing of the Lord, which he received in the twinkling of an eye. He will never lose it in eternity. They are a blessed people whatever is true of them in this world. Whatever chastisements they receive they are going to eternal happiness. They will leave all tears behind. “. . . And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.” They are certainly blessed — “Blessed of My Father”. How sweet and comforting are these words which Christ spoke. He speaks of them, that their being a blessed people of the Father went above their being a blessed people of His own. That is, those whom He invites.

“Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” “Inherit the kingdom.” They are a people who have a kingdom. Lazarus had that kingdom at the rich man’s gate. That was where he went when he entered glory. As it is written, “heirs with God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ”. He made them kings and priests. How high He exalted and honoured them. How rich He made them. They are those who have a kingdom — an eternal kingdom, as the Apostle Peter put it. “To an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” Nothing that defileth shall enter in. It is a kingdom that cannot pass away. They are all heirs of that kingdom. It is theirs, and He tells them to come and inherit it. “A kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world”, before the world was created. The Apostle Paul in writing to the Ephesians says, “According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world . . .” It is prepared before the foundation of the world. This kingdom is from eternity to eternity. It will never pass away. Prepared from the foundation of the world. When the mother of Zebedee’s children desired of Jesus that her sons would sit, one on His right hand and another on the left, in His kingdom, He said, “Ye know not what ye ask . . . but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father”. It belongs to those for whom the Father prepared it. They will get that honour. It was what the Father prepared. Christ Himself, as you know, went home to His kingdom saying that He was going to prepare a

place for His people whom He got from the Father. Going to prepare a place for them. Oh, friends! Christ is not idle in heaven. He was given a great work to do in this world, and also in heaven, and as He finished the one, He will finish the other. "I will receive you unto myself . . ." We are to remember His death until He come again. He wants that we would look for His coming. He will not come as He came the first time. "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Now, friends, "inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . ." We must remember that it belongs to his people individually — all those who will be saved. Your portion is there. You will not lose it.

Trust in the Lord for Ever

Doth God give suitable strength to His people in all exigencies? Let none abuse this doctrine, by giving up the use of the means that God has appointed, and neglecting to use their own endeavours. Though believers have Christ to lean to all their way in their journey to Heaven, yet none must expect to be carried thither on His shoulders without setting down a foot. We may warrantably look to Him for strength for every duty; yet it is in using the means that this strength is conveyed.

Beware of leaning to yourselves, and neglecting to look for this promised strength. 1. Lean not to your own purposes; for your goodness is like the morning dew. 2. Lean not to your gracious habits; for these are but ready to die. 3. Lean not to your duties and performances; for they are defiled. 4. Lean not to your frames, for they are fleeting and inconstant. And besides it is highly dangerous and provoking to God, for to trust in any of these; remember the fearful curse, that is pronounced against him "that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" Jer. 17: 5, 6. Who then shall we trust? Read Isaiah 26: 4. "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Let all believers bless God for this excellent method of salvation through Jesus Christ. The new covenant is far better than the old. Now, our stock is not in our hand but in Christ's and He manages it for us, which is our great happiness. When God brought Israel out of Egypt with a high hand, he did not set them down on the other side of the Red sea, and then bid them shift their way to Canaan — "No, He led them on their way; yea He bare them all the way they went" so when God in a day of His power brings an elect soul out of spiritual Egypt He doth not set

him in the way with a stock of strength in his hand, and then leave him to march through the wilderness alone. No, He leads him all the way, for the whole country rises on him in his march, and if left to go alone, without special and renewed aid he would never get to Canaan.

What course must the Christian take to get these seasonable supplies of strength from God, to continue safely through the wilderness without fainting and failing?

Answer — Take these directions:-

1. Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your impotence and insufficiency that you may be weak in your own sense and feeling. The way to be strong, is to be weak according to the apostle's experience "When I am weak, then am I strong" 2 Cor. 12: 10. Hence also it is said of these worthies Heb. 11: 34, "Out of weakness they were made strong" i.e. out of weakness felt and apprehended.
2. Humbly represent and bemoan your impotence before God like Ephraim "I was a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke" Jer. 31: 18. He felt his own impotence and aversion to what was good and then he groans and looks up to God for power — "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God". And in the next verse we see how readily the Lord gave him pity and help. Thus also did Jehoshaphat find help, 2 Chron. 20: 12 "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee," as if he had said "Though we be weak, yet we know Thou art infinitely powerful, and full of compassion."
3. Use well any small power you have, and it will increase. The right arm is more strong and vigorous than the left, because it is more exercised. So grace, the more it is exercised the more it grows. Math. 13: 12. Prov. 10: 29.
4. Wait on the Lord in the diligent use of means, for it is promised, Is. 40: 31 "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength" and in Ps. 27: 14 "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, wait I say on the Lord". We must not trust to the means but to God in the use of them.
5. Walk tenderly, and guard against every known sin; for sin lets out the soul's strength.
6. Be often looking in a believing way to the Mediator Christ, your treasurer and head of influences, and derive all your supplies of strength from and through Him alone.
7. Carefully entertain the Spirit's notions and fall in with them. Grieve

not the Spirit sent to strengthen you; otherwise you will, in so doing, cast away your strength from you.

Lastly, acquaint yourselves with the Word of God, and its gracious promises of strength. Lay them up in store and plead them humbly with God, for prayer grounded upon a promise is likely to prevail. David's argument was Ps. 119: 28 "Strengthen Thou me according to Thy Word." And in Ps. 138: 3 he had the experience "In the day when I cried Thou answered me and strengthened me, with strength in my soul." I conclude with the apostle's words, 1 Pet. 5: 10, 11 "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that he have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

"To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

— From an old divine.

Christmas: Pagan? Romanist? Protestant?

by Rev. Malcolm MacInnes, M.A., Toronto.

Christmas has become so much a part of the church calendar generally, and is so socially acceptable that it might seem pointless to ask any questions which would perhaps tend to disturb the "goodwill and merriment of the season." The festival has been accepted across the board in the religious world — Roman Catholics and Protestants alike, even among evangelicals and fundamentalists. You might conclude that it is a settled issue. However, expressions like "THE FIRST CHRISTMAS" and "THE CHRIST WHO CAME AT CHRISTMAS WILL COME AGAIN" are so interesting that they warrant some consideration. Did Christ come at Christmas? When was the FIRST CHRISTMAS?

Some of the "Christmas time" activities make it easy for us to understand why the irreligious world observes Christmas. It is a time of great materialism, a time for parties with plenty — too much — eating and drinking. It is time for much merriment, so we hear it said: "MERRY CHRISTMAS". You are entitled to ask "Where is Christ in all of this?" The unbelieving world does not know Him, so what is happening at Christmas time? Has there been a change of heart? Much of what makes up the "Merry Christmas" of society has no place in the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Every serious student of the Bible knows that the discipleship to which Christ calls His followers cannot accommodate the lifestyle of the unbelieving world. It is obvious that for the unbeliev-

ing world Christmas is a **social celebration** to which has been attached the name of Christ. Jesus Christ is not in it.

What about "religious people"? The name CHRISTMAS seems to indicate that it might have some connection with Christianity. What is distinctive about Christianity? It is this, that Christian beliefs and practices are based on the Bible. Christians find in the Scriptures the convictions to which they hold. From it they believe in the divine Person of Jesus Christ, the Person of the Holy Spirit, man's need of regeneration, justification by faith alone, and the certainty of the great Judgment Day. From the Bible, according to Christ's appointment, Christians remember His death in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What about **CHRISTMAS**? The Bible clearly gives an account of Christ's birth in the Gospels. You cannot be a Christian unless you believe in the supernatural conception and virgin birth of the Saviour. The Incarnation is a great mystery, but a matter of divine revelation and consequently of faith. Does "THE FIRST CHRISTMAS" refer to the birth of Christ as recorded in the Gospels? If you look at the word "CHRISTMAS", you will see that it cannot. It is impossible that it should. The obvious derivation of the word is "CHRIST" and "MASS". The word "mass" refers to the Roman Catholic sacrament in which the sacrifice of Christ is supposedly offered again to God. Whatever your theological convictions are with regard to the "mass", you will appreciate that it is supposed to have its authority from the Last Supper, at which Jesus took the bread and the wine. That was before he died, NOT when He was born. How absurd to associate with His birth the sacrament which He identified with His death. To say the least, we might say "The timing is all wrong". The name is most inappropriate, and it ought to be distasteful to all Protestants who understand something of what the "mass" is claimed to be. The name betrays the origin of CHRISTMAS. MASS is obviously Roman Catholic, and history shows that Christmas has come in through the Church of Rome taking over a festival from paganism. The Toronto Star, a secular newspaper, on 24th December 1977, explained the development of Christmas in this way:

"Take, for example, the date itself. Nothing in the bible indicates Christ was born December 25th. In pagan Rome, that day was given over the worship of the sun-god. But when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the church appropriated many of the pagan festivals, and the one that honoured the sun was dedicated to Christ instead."

The biblical accounts show that the birth of Christ could not have been at that time of the year — with shepherds outside at night, and a national tax collection which involved much travel being taken. Extra-biblical evidence shows that Christmas does not have its origin in the Bible at all. The Bible is silent on the date, and there is no indication that the birth of Christ was celebrated in the apostolic church. It was the Church of Rome that adopted the pagan service into her ritual. Listen to what Williston Walker says in his "History of the Christian Church":

"About the same time, the early fourth century, there developed in the West a distinctive nativity festival on December 25th. The date was partly determined by the idea that the birth of the world occurred on the vernal equinox (March 25th), and correspondingly its new birth in the Saviour would have been at the same moment. This was understood as the conception by the Virgin, and hence the actual birth would be nine months later, December 25th. But perhaps even more the date was influenced by the fact that December 25th was a great pagan festival, that of Sol Invictus, which celebrated the victory of light over darkness and the lengthening of the sun's rays at the winter solstice. The assimilation of Christ to the Sun god as Sun of Righteousness, was widespread in the fourth century and was furthered by Constantine's legislation. In any case, these two celebrations of Epiphany and Christmas arose independently of each other in the early 4th century."

To refer, therefore, to the birth of Christ as THE FIRST CHRISTMAS is wrong, and although it may appeal to people who place more value on sentiment than on fact, it is misleading. Equally so is it false to assert that THE CHRIST WHO CAME AT CHRISTMAS WILL COME AGAIN, because the evidence is that He did not come at Christmas. Why not tell the truth? The Gospels give account of His birth, but after that there is no account of celebrating the birthday of the Saviour. Christmas was started in the early 4th century by the Church of Rome. It is easy to understand that Roman Catholics would wish to observe Christmas — the name of their sacrament is in it, and they do not look for a Biblical warrant for their religion. However, it is extremely difficult to understand why Protestants, whose religion is based on "Scripture only" — Sola Scriptura — should follow the Roman Catholic Church into Christmas. **ARE PROTESTANTS LOSING THEIR PROTEST?** When Jesus sent out the preachers on the Gospel with the Great

Commission in Matthew 28, He instructed them to teach people to observe "**whatsoever I have commanded you**". Where did Christ command us to remember His birthday? Nowhere! He gave us a sacrament in the Lord's Supper, commanding us to remember His death.

It has been argued that this celebration gives opportunity to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Preach the Gospel whenever possible, but why present it under the guise of a pagan festival taken over by the Church of Rome and with such an obviously Roman Catholic label on it? C. H. Spurgeon, highly respected and often referred to as a great preacher of the Gospel, made these comments on Psalm 81: 4 (Treasury of David):

"When it can be proved that the observance of Christmas, Whitsuntide and other popish festivals were ever instituted by a divine statute, we also will attend to them, but not till then. It is as much our duty to reject the traditions of men as to observe the ordinances of the Lord."

The Church of Rome is quickly gaining ground, and in many quarters the Pope is quoted as the spokesman for Christianity. The work of Protestant Reformers is being eroded as Protestants adopt the festivals of the Church of Rome. CHRIST-MASS speaks its own message as to its origin, and it is time for Protestants to dissociate themselves from this Roman Catholic celebration. Consider these things seriously. What has the exchanging of gifts at Christmas time to do with the birthday of Christ? If it was His birthday would He not be the One to whom the gift would be given? What have a Christmas tree, a nativity play, a Christmas church concert, and the other Christmas trimmings to do with the birthday of the Saviour? These are not part of **Biblical Christianity**. May God give you discernment that they will not be part of **yours**.

"Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain." (Jeremiah 10).

Deputy's Report on Visit to East Central Africa

by Rev. Alexander Murray, M.A.

At its meeting of 6th May 1986, the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee asked the Rev. D. A. Ross and myself, along with the Rev. A. B. Ndebele from Zimbabwe, to visit Malawi and, possibly, Kenya, for some weeks in the summer and to report to the October Meeting of Committee. The Synod confirmed the extension of the visit to include Kenya

and gave powers to register the F.P. Church of Scotland in that country if this should be deemed advantageous. The visit was to be proceeded by a short courtesy visit to Zimbabwe by the members from Scotland.

ZIMBABWE. Delay in setting off on the 9½ hours flight from Gatwick, London to Harare, with consequent failure to catch the connection for Bulawayo, gave the opportunity to see Harare with its tree-lined streets, beautiful parks and impressive modern buildings on 8th July. That Tuesday evening, on arrival at Bulawayo, a typical "mission" welcome was provided by Miss M. Graham and Messrs Taylor and Hicklin with a visit later at Robertson Street from Rev. A. Mpofo, daughter and Elder.

Wednesday as a "rest day" after the 7,000 miles journey provided the opportunity to discuss business and, in particular, the current difficult transport situation with the dearth of new vehicles coming into Zimbabwe, and how replacements might be obtained and within a reasonable time-scale. That the Mission is funded from moneys external to Zimbabwe is an advantage in this rather acute difficulty. Also during that day a service was held by each of the deputies in different parts of the Bulawayo Congregation and a visit was made to the site earmarked for a new church building in one of the suburban townships.

Thursday, 10th July, took us on the 45 minutes journey eastwards by air, courtesy of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship and its 6-seater Cessna 206 with pilot, "John", from Oregon, U.S.A., to Zvishavane. This is the more recent part of the Zimbabwe Mission and is significant as being in Shonaland and "carved out" there by a Shona-man, Rev. Z. Mazvabo. We both preached, one at New Canaan and the other in the town. The Minister is currently moving house from rented accommodation to a suitable property in its own grounds lately purchased. Water is ever a problem of major proportions in Zimbabwe and at New Canaan there exists plans for a new bore-hole. D. Nlovu demonstrated the use of a twig to indicate the presence of water beneath and it appeared to work when I myself tried out the device. That evening after returning by air to Bulawayo we transferred to Ingwenya and the welcome of Miss Graham's home.

Friday, 11th till Monday, 14th saw us at Cameron Communion, 20 minutes by rough track to the East, to which we commuted daily from Ingwenya. "Cameron" is so named after the Rev. Neil Cameron who was active in organising the mission work in these parts in the early days. Nearby we have Bembesi where, tragically, the Rev. J. B. Radasi was killed as he awaited the arrival of Rev. John Tallach. These days of the

Communion provided the opportunity to see the ordinary work of the mission — the schools — John Tallach Secondary 430 pupils with 18 teachers including the Misses Graham and MacLennan; and Primary, 300 pupils and 8 teachers, as well as the worship in the church. Also, as Rev. Ndebele had on two previous occasions paid visits to Malawi, here was the opportunity to discuss at length with him prospects for the ensuing trip to that country. This proved helpful and reassuring as I must confess to a measure of apprehension in view of the journey upon which I found myself where much of an unknown complexion awaited. At Ingwenya with new and refurbished school buildings and the considerable extension to the Church, the place had an air of prosperity about it as compared with when I had last been there in 1979. Mr Hicklin's repair activities is a further useful development.

Next day, Tuesday, in the company of Miss Jessie Coote and Mrs Neil Murray who had been present at the Cameron Communion, Rev. Ross and myself took off from Bulawayo Airport at 7 a.m. and 35 minutes later John touched down the Cessna on the grass airstrip near the Mbumba Mission. Six hundred children lining the field, each with a small branch waving in the wind, provided a right royal welcome to these parts due north of Bulawayo and 120 miles by road. It was good to meet again with Mr and Mrs Mzamo, Miss van Saane, Mr Neil Murray and other friends as L. Nlovu later on. I preached in an overflowing Church at Mbumba and in the afternoon at Lutsha under a large tree. It was interesting to be shown round the well-equipped mission hospital and to see another example of David Nlovu's handiwork in the well-appointed rebuilt manse. Sadly, the presence of Army and Police contingents, and armed escorts from the latter of our journeys to Lutsha and then Zenka next day, reminded one that, as in so many parts of the African Continent, political maturity is a goal still some way off.

Zenka, 73 kilometres distant along the new 'Fighting Road', straight but gravel and tiresome with the now-familiar "corrugations" in many places, was our next stop on 16th July. It is along this road that seriously ill patients have to be removed by ambulance from Mbumba, as Neil Murray who was accompanying us back to Bulawayo explained, and the discomfort and dangers of such a journey underline the urgency in providing the services of a doctor at the mission hospital. "Overflowing" is the correct adjective to describe the size of the congregation in the Zenka Church — incidentally, the largest on the mission — where I preached to my greatest congregation of the whole tour, probably around 1,000 souls comprised of the primary school pupils and the congregation together

with pupils from a nearby secondary school who had requested and obtained permission to be present at the service. Again it was good to meet with Mr and Mrs Dube, the Elders and teaching staff, although so soon we had to part with them. Mr D. Nlovu who had been our companion in Bulawayo, Shonaland, Cameron and Mbuma also took his leave of us and in so doing remarked that he was sorry he was not accompanying us to Malawi and Kenya. I mention this last matter as symptomatic of the interest that the new venture has aroused in Zimbabwe.

There remained for us the long journey, now without Police Escort, to Ingwenya via Inyati where, by the way, Mr Ndebele has a new section of his congregation with 60 persons and where a building for worship is planned. Next morning, after taking the 8 a.m. "prayer-meeting" service with all the pupils, staff and workmen etc. present in the Ingwenya Church, farewells were the order of the day. We returned to Robertson Street to talk more business, particularly with regard to the future administration of the mission, with our most useful interim-Administrator/Treasurer, retired headmaster, Mr James Taylor, and to prepare for departure on the morrow.

MALAWI. Although Bulawayo and Blantyre, Malawi are only two hours 35 minutes flying time distant on the route via Harare and Lilongwe, the journey, owing mainly to delay in the connection at Lilongwe for Blantyre, took over nine hours and arrival at Chileka Airport, Blantyre was around 6 p.m. on Friday, 18th July. We were welcomed by Rev. J. B. Gonakumoto and several of the men who took us to the hotel accommodation booked for us in Blantyre, as the Macdougalls, hosts to our deputies on previous visits, were on vacation in Scotland.

In Malawi the Government exercises strict control with regard to all societies which operate within its borders and, for example, "Jehovah's Witnesses" are not acceptable. Also rules of dress are maintained as women may not wear trouser-suits and men may not have long (as "lies heavily on the collar") hair. Thus the legality of holding religious meetings is a question which immediately arises and to which our friends in Malawi are fully alive. At present, therefore, where, as yet, there is no church building meetings are held in private ground enclosed by a grass stockade. The presence of this group and the fact that they hold regular meetings for worship is, however, known to the civil authorities, and in the rural areas the "Chief(s)" were invariably present at the meetings held by your deputies, as was on occasions also the "party member". Obviously, the need to regularise the position by obtaining registration is urgent.

Within the group of which Rev. Gonakumoto is the undoubted leader as he was our interpreter on every occasion, there are two other ordained ministers, six "home missionaries" and a number of "elders", all who keep services in their respective districts at different times. Numbers in the several places are considerable. My diary records 80 at the prayer meeting and over 100 on the Sabbath near Blantyre, but goes on to speak of "largest congregation yet" near Phalombe and the same phrase required to be used once more at Lombe, Chikwawa. Representatives from Mozambique, where there are said to be a number of preaching stations, were present at several of the services and there are other places in Malawi itself — one in the Central Region — which time and distance precluded a visit by the deputies. It would seem that the estimate of over 2,000 is realistic. Again, children were much in evidence wherever one went and it may be wondered what kind of future they have while many enjoy no formal education in the absence of ability on the part of parents to pay school fees. A general point evident in Malawi and again in Kenya owing to the explosion of population is the continuing development of new human habitation so that, even as it was in the day of the Apostle, there exist these "region beyond" (cf. Rom. 14: 20, 21), which today await evangelisation by the Christian Church. It would appear, therefore, that for our church there is available to us a very large and, may I say, encouraging, opportunity for labours in these parts. Also, in Malawi it was noticeable that several of the congregations are located in remote areas, miles along mere tracks and at considerable distances from the main road, so that they are literally on the periphery, and, in fact, in a number of locations just a few kilometres from the border with Mozambique.

The visits that were undertaken from 22nd to 28th July involved return journeys plus numerous side-tracking of some 400 kms north-eastwards to Kwende, 350 kms to beyond Phalombe, generally in an easterly direction, and then south through the hot flood plain of the Shire River to Chikwawa and Nsanje, another return journey of circa 400 kms. The main roads were generally good and the side roads quite the reverse. A general conference at our place of residence at Blantyre was held on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 29th July.

KENYA. Transfer to Kenya was, time-wise, a repeat of the Zimbabwe-Malawi journey in that, although flying time Blantyre to Nairobi via Lilongwe is a mere three and a half hours the actual journey took from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. At Nairobi there was a welcoming party of five men whom Mr Ndebele had met on his previous visit who took us to

accommodation they had reserved for our use in the city. The arrangement was to stay over in Nairobi (population similar to Glasgow) on the 31st July mainly to obtain information for registration of the church in Kenya but also to seek out Psalms in Metre in Swahili. In both endeavours some success may be recorded. Hymn books obtained from local religious bookshops (especially, "Keswick") yielded a number of Psalms. On the registration front I was, in company with P and R Magaru, most courteously received by an official of the Registrar-General's office and she explained what had to be done. Again, I had a useful meeting with the Secretary-General of the "All African Council of Bible Believing Churches" whose office was next door to where we happened to be staying, and from whom the information was gleaned: a) that in 1978, when there were already 800 religious societies registered in Kenya, the President decreed, "No more"; b) this had not in the event meant a complete ban, although registration was difficult and that of his own organisation had been granted only on 21st July after application made in January. It was obvious that there was no question of registration being secured by your Deputies on their present visit as allowed for by the Synod, and, whatever their expectations, our Kenya friends now fully appreciated this.

Difficulties with our hired car, on setting out as also en route, made the journey to Ogembo, Kisii in Nyanja Province of Western Kenya tiresome and feel very long indeed. At 9 p.m. on 1st August we arrived at the hospitable home of Mr and Mrs Richard Mecheo Magaru where we were to be most considerately cared for during the remainder of our stay in East Africa. Contrast of climate from one part of Africa to another was noticeable in the Kisii District which because of its proximity to Lake Victoria — Africa's largest — has abundant rainfall. From August until early October they have their "Short Rains" and, after the heat of the equatorial day, rainstorms develop on a fairly regular basis at 4 p.m. In that favoured situation two harvests are obtained annually. For our own purposes the evening rain required that we organise our travelling to be home by 4 p.m. One experience of getting badly stuck on a dirt road, turned by the heavy rain into a quagmire, proved salutary in this regard!

On each of the two Sabbaths of our stay we held two services at Sengera, in a grass enclosure with awning of the same material, at the home of Patrick Onchamba Magaru. During the week some of the outstations were visited although, due to further difficulty with our vehicle coupled to the extreme distance, Kitale on the Uganda border could not be reached. As in Malawi a day had been set aside for conference

with the men. On our final Saturday an attempt was made to show our appreciation of their unfailing kindness to us with a visit along with our hosts and family to Lake Victoria.

In my final speech — and these speeches were very much the order of the day on both sides at all the places visited in Africa — I confessed to having left a part of my heart in Malawi and that I was now about to do the same in Kenya. As one of the Elders in Kwende, Malawi had remarked it was because of Christ that ourselves and themselves from such distant corners of the earth were united, so in Kenya we enjoyed the affection of a people who may be so naturally inclined, but who, in our situation were so exercised, as I judge, in respect of bonds of fellowship in Jesus Christ.

I wish to express thankfulness for the “leading” which seemed to be available to us in all parts of this long journey, and for the good health enjoyed by all the deputies with but minor exceptions. The deputation appears to have worked well as regards the task apportioned to it. I would like to pay tribute to the energy and zeal of my two companions. “Three” was an ideal number and that one of the three was African was a decided advantage. I count the visit as memorable among my experiences in life, and I heartily thank the Committee for the opportunity.

Two portions of Scripture have been much in mind — “The field is the world” and “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God”. With reference to the latter portion, it is note-worthy, I believe, that the initiative stems from Africa and not vice versa. that it should come at the same time from, not one, but two quite independent quarters should mark this event as no coincidence — cf. “The testimony of two men is true.” The finding of your Deputies on their return from these parts must, therefore, be to the effect that a call from Africa to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to come over and help them is being made at the present time.

The Church in their House

The Rev. Angus Morrison was able to visit Fornaci di Barga in April of this year, but the folk there were still happy to have another visit from a minister in September. I was glad to be able to give a message from the Convener of the Dominions and Overseas Committee: “It is good that you are able to go out to see the friends there, and though we have not

had the privilege of meeting them (except of course Lilian and Laura, who were in London when we were there) please convey to them all the greetings of the Church in Scotland and assure them of our continued interest in them. We trust that the Lord will continue to uphold and bless them."

Both of those ladies whose names are mentioned above were at the Sabbath services held during my visit, as has been their habit for the last good number of years. They cannot reasonably attend the meetings held during the week because they have a small shop which is open virtually from five in the morning till 11 at night. Their father is now 81.

Emelia's **mother** has failed a lot since I saw her in May of 1985. She has had two strokes and spends most of her time in bed. However, her mind is crystal clear. She was downstairs at only two of the meetings, so I usually went upstairs after the meetings to speak and to pray with her.

One day she had a weak turn and that evening she was thinking, as she often does, about death. She said that sometimes she was afraid, but that at other times she would gladly go. She expressed agreement, during one of the prayers, when it was said that outside of Christ there is no peace; and again when it was said that we do not know how to pray as we ought. On other occasions she responded warmly to the words, "Thy love is better than life," and also "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want". We had been thinking about Jacob one evening. I told her that when he said on his death bed "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" he was looking to receive more of that salvation in death than he had experienced at Bethel or at Peniel. She said that that was good for him. She cannot read her Bible now, but her memory of Scripture verses is good. The Bible which she used to read has marks here and there on it. The first two verses of Psalm 143 are circled, and the words are written beside them, *For me*.

Simonetta and Nicoletta. Simonetta was six when I first met her. Now she is twenty, and for years she has shown a deep interest in the Scriptures. One evening she had a particularly thoughtful expression on her face and I asked her what she was thinking about. She said that she had been thinking about our discussion of Psalm 23, and of the peace which is indicated in verse 2 of the Psalm. Then, speaking of the Scriptures generally she said, "It calms you. It is the only thing which calms you." During another meeting I was emphasising the point that we cannot trust in our prayers for salvation. Simonetta, however, said that we can give thanks to God for a prayer because we are thankful to have been helped to express what was in our hearts.

Nicoletta is now four and a half. She is a very lively little girl, a fact of which one is made all the more aware because of the cramped premises. She does listen to quite a lot though, and we pray that the Bible will come to mean as much to her as it does to her sister.

Renzo, Dario, Claudio and Ermete: It is distressing for Emelia that her two sons Renzo and Dario, do not show any vital interest in the gospel, although Dario was at one of the Sabbath morning meetings. Dario, who is about twenty-three, is friendly with a girl from Florence. Her parents are strongly Roman Catholic, and when they and their daughter were visiting Fornaci recently they had Dario with them at the R.C. service. Dario had not been there for years.

Emelia's husband Claudio, attended eight of the nine meetings we had during this visit. Ermete is Emelia's older brother. In July 1985, he and his wife lost a 17-year-old daughter through leukaemia. I remember Ermete sitting in Emelia's house years ago with Anna, then a little girl, on his knee. Both Ermete and his wife, Zitta, were at the last Sabbath evening meeting. Poor Ermete still goes practically every day to the cemetery where his daughter lies buried. Although this has been so hard for them, what a wonderful blessing if God would use it to bring them to Him as the God of all grace.

Georgina, Arturo and Miriana: Georgina and Arturo Mazzei used to attend the meetings quite frequently. At that time they lived close to Emelia's house. Now they have moved across the River Serchio and stay in a village called Bollognana. I made contact with them one evening. Georgina said that they would come to Emelia's house as before, but they did not come. Arturo is markedly older looking since I last saw him.

Miriana is a close friend of Emelia's, and lives nearby. Miriana's mother lives just beside Emelia's house. One evening Miriana was approaching Emelia's house when her mother called out to her, "Watch that you don't get taken in!" At one of the two meetings which Miriana attended Emelia said that the gospel was not presented among them as it had been explained that morning and Miriana agreed. She said that she had a Bible and that she read it sometimes, but that she finds it difficult to understand. Please pray that God will open her heart so that she will understand the Scriptures.

Emelia: Some of the difficulties in Emelia's situation have been mentioned before. She suffers from thyroid trouble, and this no doubt compounds a natural introspectiveness and sensitivity. She worries a lot, too, about her mother. She finds it difficult to look after her mother, and at the same time she is distressed to see her mother grow weaker. She leans

on her mother's more decisive personality, and dreads the day when the end will come. Years ago, when Simonetta was only one-year-old, Emelia had a dream in which her mother died. Still in the dream, Emelia wrote to some of her relatives about it, including a sister of her mother's in America. She was seeking some comfort in her loss, but they gave her none. So she turned to the Lord and said, "Sei tu solo, O Signore, che puoi consolarmi" (*Thou alone, O Lord, art able to comfort me*). When she awoke from that dream she was so frightened that she had almost lost her voice. Another source of concern that has been going on for some time is the fact that a troublesome neighbour has been pressing a claim against Emelia's family for some trivial reason. The case failed at a lower court, but the neighbour has appealed to a higher court in Lucca.

When one speaks of the blessings of the gospel, Emelia tends to feel acutely aware of how little the fulness of the gospel possesses her heart or flows over into her life. When I was making use of an illustration I heard, about a man who had a house with ten rooms, the point of which was that we should give all the rooms in our heart to Christ, Emelia took hold of the fact that, if Christ had at least taken possession of one room, He would yet possess all. This, on the basis of the words, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Whatever worries she has, the gospel is everything to Emelia.

One evening, we were together in her mother's room. There was some kind of special occasion being celebrated nearby. Chairs were set out in the open square, Food was being served, there was music and people were dancing. The whole situation affected Emelia quite deeply. She felt the contrast between the crowd outside, who appeared to have everything, and the few people in the room who were gathered around God's word. "And yet," she said, "the church is here, because He promised that where two or three are met together in His name, He will be there."

The church that is in their house. (1 Cor. 16: 19).

J. T.

Obituaries

Matthew Geuze

Matthew Geuze was born on 28th October, 1954. He was baptized by Rev. Finlay MacLeod when visiting New Zealand and Australia as deputy in 1955. Matthew grew up in the midst of a generation that increasingly went astray from the word of God. In spite of the abounding evils with which he was surrounded at school and at university, he proved

himself a sensitive and obedient son to his parents. He never caused his parents even the least amount of grief. He was attentive at the means of grace, including the prayer meetings and the Bible Class. Following the completion of his secondary education in Gisborne, he went to Auckland to pursue a course of studies at Auckland University. There he had the advantage of being under the ministry of the late Rev. D. M. MacLeod. After his university course he commenced work as an orchardist. In March 1978 he applied to the Gisborne Kirk Session and was received as a member in full communion. The experience he related clearly indicated Matthew did not rely on any works of his own for his acceptance with God. It is evident that a work of grace had shown him the evil of his heart so that he stood in need of a divine Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost. The portion of truth that had been blessed to him in the preaching of the gospel was Ruth 1: 16 "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Matthew was of a humble and meek disposition. As a lover of the gates of Sion he hungered and thirsted after righteousness. His sensitive soul abhorred the evil that is so prevalent in this generation. This became very evident when, only a few weeks before his sudden and lamented death, he expressed to his mother the desire to be taken from this world on account of the wickedness he could see everywhere. "But what about Corrie and the children?" asked his mother. He answered: "I have a promise that the Lord will care for them." Although Matthew was reluctant to speak about his experiences, these remarks indicate that he had attained to a good measure of assurance. In this connection it is interesting to note what John Calvin said about the assurance of salvation. "The papists say that we must doubt it and that we can come to God only with a hope that he will receive us; but to assure ourselves of it — that we ought not to do, for that would be too great a presumption. But when we pray to God, we must call him Father, at least if we are the scholars of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has taught us to do so. Now, is it at a venture that we call him Father, or are we sure of it in ourselves that he is our Father? If not, then there would be nothing but hypocrisy in our prayers, and the first word that we utter would be a lie. The papists then never know what it is to pray to God, seeing that they cannot be assured of their salvation." (2nd sermon on Ephesians, chapter 1). It is well that Matthew did not put off seeking salvation till his old age as so many do. His end came suddenly and unexpectedly, when he was still quite young. On 10th January 1985 he drowned whilst taking part in a

fishing excursion. We had hoped that many years of usefulness were in store for him. However, man proposes but God disposes. His departure from this earthly scene according to his desires, leaves a great blank in his home and in the congregation. We pray that his sorrowing widow, children, parents, brothers and sisters may know of the comfort which only can come from the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

Peter van Dorp

Peter van Dorp was born on 20th February 1927 in Maarssen in the Netherlands. Through his home influence he became familiar with the truth from an early age. Whilst there was no evidence of saving grace in his formative years, he was not without an appreciation of the doctrines of grace with which he was brought up. At times the truth made such an impression on him that he felt urged as a young boy to read the Bible instead of going out to play. Such moments however were only of a passing nature and left no permanent change. That did not occur until many years later when he had taken up permanent residence in New Zealand. He did not make a public profession of faith until March 1975 when he appeared before the Kirk Session as he felt compelled to come forward in view of the Saviour's commandment: "Do this in remembrance of me." As his life, walk and conversation had been thoroughly in accordance with the gospel, the Session did not hesitate to give him the right hand of fellowship. He was obviously one who hungered and thirsted after righteousness and who is therefore declared blessed not of man but of the Lord. It is interesting to notice that the compilers of THE LITURGY OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS (17th century) envisaged a public profession of faith only in conjunction with participation in the Lord's Supper, as the following translated quotation indicates. "CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER. All those who apply to the congregation and desire to be admitted to the Lord's Supper must first have been taught the articles of the Christian faith from the word of God . . ." Evidently the framers of the liturgy did not intend or anticipate the admission to full church membership of any that professed a mere historical faith but only those who in the judgment of charity, had passed from death to life and who wished to give expression to their desire to obey Christ's dying command: "Do this in remembrance of me." Peter was heartily in agreement with this as well as other practices of the church, i.e. the sole use of the psalmody and the non-use of instrumental music in the public worship of God. He was deeply grieved about the worldwide decline of true religion and ardently desired the

coming of better days. This is another area in which he appreciated the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church. All who knew anything about the ministry of the late Rev. William MacLean know that he did not harp on one string but sought to preach the whole counsel of God: i.e. man's spiritual death by nature, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, etc., etc. There was no aspect of the truth that was regarded as insignificant and so Peter became thoroughly aware of the dangers of Arminianism and familiar with the principles of Calvinism as well as the bright prospect of the church in its millennial glory. It was obviously his desire that "the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2: 14). When he was asked to speak to the question in the fellowship meetings, he had the quaint but edifying habit of ending his comments almost invariably with the prayer of Ps. 72: 19 "The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen, so let it be." His mind was increasingly taken up with spiritual things during the last 13 months of his life. In November 1983 he very much enjoyed a sermon he heard preached in Rotorua by Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald on the words: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14: 2). A few weeks later he suffered a severe heart attack from which he recovered. In September 1984 he wrote me when I was convalescing in a Sydney hospital: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot; yea I have a goodly heritage. Whether it be the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours." We believe that he felt these things with regard to his own soul and that when the end came a few months later, he found these things true. Whilst we sympathise with his bereaved family, we sorrow not as others which have no hope (1 Thes. 4: 13). We believe that when he passed from the church militant on Sabbath 27th January 1985, it was to join the church in triumphant in the eternal Sabbath that remains to the people of God.

Notes and Comments

Religious Leaders' Day of Prayer for Peace

Religious leaders from all over the world, led by the Pope, held a day of prayer for world peace at Assisi in Italy. Included in the gathering were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, a Greek Orthodox Archbishop and the Dalai Lama. As well Buddhists, Shintoists, Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems and Jews were all there. What a motley gathering it must have been! How empty it all was

seeing that no place was given to the Prince of Peace so far as many if not all who gathered were concerned. What need there is of a day of God's power, with the Spirit poured out from on High so that men will seek peace where alone it is to be found, that is, in Christ.

Nation Exposed to Great Threat

Warning is being given from leading figures in the nation of the dangerous threat posed to the nation from crime, drugs and promiscuous living. Dr Rhodes Boyson said that permissiveness had created a nightmare society. Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice warned that a huge wave of crime is threatening to swamp the country. Mr Hewitt, Assistant Metropolitan Police Commissioner told a Conference of drug experts that the illicit drug market has continued to expand. President Reagan in the U.S.A. called for a concerted fight against drug abuse. The disease AIDS, which has arisen through promiscuous and unnatural conduct, now threatens to destroy many lives. Our nation and other nations are now reaping as they have sown. Only a return to the Word of God and to the standards of God's Word will deliver us as a nation from the calamities that are threatening to overwhelm us.

Since the above was written the Government, alarmed at the increase in the numbers contracting the incurable disease of AIDS, has appointed a Committee of Government Ministers to advise in connection with this outbreak. Some statements by Government Ministers make it appear as if they are unwilling to face up to the real issue — which is a moral one. The rise of the disease is a direct consequence of men refusing to give heed to the warnings of Scripture regarding promiscuous and unnatural conduct. Let the Government Committee call for a return by the people of the land to the standards required by the Moral Law. If this were heeded the disease of AIDS would be quickly eliminated.

Helicopter Tragedy

Early in November a helicopter flying oil rig workers to Shetland crashed into the sea. Forty-five of the 47 men aboard perished in the tragedy. Those who were lost came from different parts of the country so that the consequent sorrow over these deaths was widely spread, though a good number came from the Aberdeen area. This sad accident is a reminder of the dangers connected with the production of oil and gas from below the sea. It is also a warning as to the suddenness of death in some instances and of the need men have of preparation for that solemn event.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 13th January 1987 at 11 a.m.

Australia and New Zealand: At Auckland on 23rd January 1987 at 2.30 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 10th February, 1987 at 11 a.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 17th February, 1987 at 6 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 3rd March, 1987 at 2 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 10th March, 1987 at 2 p.m.

List of Communions

The list of Communions on the inside front cover of the Magazine has been corrected for 1987. Would ministers kindly indicate any other corrections that may be necessary.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

Rev. R. R. Sinclair moved — “The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Glasgow on Wednesday 21st May, 1986, to appoint a day of prayer throughout the Church at Home and abroad.

That the Lord’s people confess their own sins and wherein they have come short in devotion to Christ, the Head of the Church.

That God be implored in the Name of His Son, to exercise His power spiritually and in providence, to the turning back of multitudes of young and old, from heinous iniquity, transgression and sin throughout the Nation.

Britain being a backsliding Nation, prayer is called for, that the Most High, in mercy, turn from the evidences of His anger, to heal our backslidings and to love us freely, by means of the gospel in power. Let prayer be made for Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family; and for our Prime Minister and members of the Government; that they be guided to support the Christian witness of God’s people.

This Resolution is for guidance, for the people of the Church.

That this day of prayer be 10th December 1986.

This was seconded by Rev. D. Nicolson and agreed to.

Tutor for Africa

At its meeting held in Dingwall on 28th October the Foreign Mission’s Committee obtained the services of Rev. D. B. Macleod, Dingwall to proceed (D.V.) to Ingwenya, Zimbabwe to hold a class for young men from Malawi and Kenya in the basic principles of the Christian Faith and the distinctive features of our Church’s witness. The Committee are most

grateful to Mr Macleod for undertaking this work, as also to his family, congregation and presbytery, and it is their prayerful desire that this work will prove to be a useful step in the establishing of the kingdom of the Lord and Saviour in these parts of Africa.

ALEX MURRAY, Clerk to the Committee

Staff for Zimbabwean Mission

As has been reported in the pages of the Magazine Mr Donald Macdonald of Perth had been engaged to fill the post of Treasurer. In the event it has not been possible to obtain for him a Work Permit to enter Zimbabwe. Mr James Taylor of Edinburgh has been doing the work on an interim basis since March and is presently still working in Bulawayo. Mr W. M. Campbell has agreed to return to his former post and hopes to return to the Mission Field in early December, always providing that immigration requirements can be met. The Misses Macaulay and Macaskill expect to return to their posts as teacher and nurse in November and December respectively. Dr Jeannette Hak from Holland will in due course, it is hoped, occupy the post of doctor at Mbumba. Thus some of the positions advertised in the Magazine have been filled, but I would draw readers attention to the fact that vacancies still remain for the posts of a fully qualified nurse/midwife at Mbumba Hospital and for teachers of various subjects at John Tallach Secondary School at Ingwenya.

Enquiries to Rev. A. Murray, Lairg, Sutherland IV27 4EH. Tel: 0549-2176.

Price of Magazine

Owing to the increased cost of printing the Magazines, the Magazine Committee found it necessary to raise the price of the F.P. Magazine to 50p per copy.

It was decided that the Y.P. Magazine should remain at 20p per copy. The subscription rates are as follows: F.P. Magazine £8.70; Y.P. Magazine £4; Combined £11.70.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow, G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: Anon., £50.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £40; Friend, Leicestershire, £100; "In loving memory of the late Rev. D. A. MacFarlane" Song 4: 7, £20.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Anon., £10.

Ingwenya Mission: A Friend, Raasay, £300 for Bulawayo Church; Anon., Skye, £10 for blind pupils; both per Rev. J. R. T.; Lakenheath Strict Baptist Sabbath School, £25 for blind pupils.

The Treasurers of the following congregations desire to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations.

Barnoldswick: Anon., Inverness Postmark, £25 for Congregation Funds.

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