

IX.
REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HOME & FOREIGN MISSIONS

1 Introduction

The past year of activity within the Home & Foreign Missions Committee has been in many ways one of encouragement and thankfulness. The Committee have become increasingly aware of a sense of help and support from our Sovereign Lord to enable us as a small denomination to be engaged in a significant Missionary endeavour, both at home and abroad.

To have our eyes lifted and to see before us the fields white unto harvest impresses on us not only the Governance of Christ, but his generosity to allow us to have a part to play in the ingathering of his blood-bought people.

Not only does our missionary scope take in a wide geographical spectrum, but we also have Missions at many different stages of development. At one end we have those that are well established and rightly entrenched in the prayers of our people, like Covenant College, Zambia, the work in Canada and the United States, and the labours of our beloved Home Mission Worker. Next to these, we have the developing Mission of Sri Lanka with Rev. Partheepan Nixon Shanmugam, and our customary support of Jewish Mission with a contribution to Christian Witness to Israel. However, the Committee are continuing to seek out new opportunities to serve Christ, and have authorised a significant opportunity in China. They are also interested in seeking out additional ways to expand existing works, such as Home Mission and Jewish Mission, as can be seen from the rest of this Report.

The Committee recognise the hearty support given in many different ways to our Missionary interests from those in our Congregations and praise God for it.

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2 Home Missions

As ever we are thankful for the ongoing work of Mr Donald John Morrison, our Home Mission Worker. Over the last year he has supported many Congregations in their efforts to reach out to their own neighbourhoods. Considerable work has been undertaken, at very little expense to the Denomination, on the Old Edinburgh Road property, in which Mr Morrison and his family reside.

A combined total of around 32,000 (21,000 in 2011) gospel tracts was distributed, in addition to 7668 (7,011) booklets and magazines, 107 (51) Bibles, 2,000 TBS calendars, along with a large quantity of literature in various foreign languages. This shows us not only his own increased labours, but the solid support from volunteers across many of the Congregations visited, as well as from our Divinity Students as part of their evangelistic module.

The special evangelistic issue of the *Good News* magazine, containing inspirational gospel stories, testimonies, and arguments in defence of Biblical truths, continues to be freely given out in large quantities. The Committee are grateful to Mr Morrison for the regular issue of his Newsletter and Report which he continues to print and distribute throughout the Church twice a year. The Committee continue to monitor, with deep interest, Mr Morrison's active missionary interest and labours in Moldova and followed him in our prayers when he officially opened the new church there at a special service in September 2012.

Across Scotland Mr Morrison was active in: Shettleston, Knightswood, Partick (all districts of Glasgow), Leith in Edinburgh, Galashiels, Stornoway, Ardelve/Broadford and various districts in Inverness. He also

organised and engaged in mission outreach at the Black Isle Show, Hebridean Festival, Dalai Lama Religious Festival, Lanntair Book Festival, Rockness Music Festival and at the large Army Base in Fort George.

At the Book Festival in Stornoway, held under the theme of “Belief,” Mr Morrison gave out creation materials to counter the disbelieving, even antagonising mindset of those who came along to hear the militant atheist, Richard Dawkins. Along with many tracts, some 80 copies of the evangelistic booklet *Dealing with Dawkins* were given out, while Mr Morrison also had opportunity to speak directly to Mr Dawkins at the end of the evening, confronting him with the truth of salvation and his need of Christ.

With the support of the Bible Spreading Union, Mr Morrison helped a Christian soldier, based at Fort George, send a box of Bibles to his church in Fiji on the other side of the world. A number of English-Hebrew Bibles were also sent to Israel and distributed amongst eager recipients in Jerusalem. Our hope and prayer is that the eyes of many Jews and Gentiles will be opened through this distribution, near and far, and that God’s Word will make many “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:15)

The special evangelistic issue of the *Good News* magazine, with hearty gospel stories, testimonies, and robust points in defence of Biblical truths, continues to be freely given out in large quantities. This magazine is an extremely effective witnessing tool when confronting people with the ‘good news’ of salvation. They continue to be given out in bulk to friends in Northern Ireland, Dublin and throughout England. Another evangelistic booklet, given out by Mr Morrison (*Can We Know God?* by Rev Maurice Roberts) deals with such questions as: How good must we be? Are we not all God’s children? Who can give us righteousness? Is there life after death? How can we be sure of what to believe? Can we be sure that we are saved? These questions are fully answered in the booklet, which is given out in large quantities.

In 2012, Mr Morrison also compiled a new gospel tract about the Titanic, to coincide with the tragedy that took place 100 years ago in 1912, and is hoping to prepare some more tracts in due course. The tract called ‘The Titanic - An Unimaginable Tragedy’ and published by PrintMyTract.com, is now available from their official website.

On a related matter the Committee are seeking permission of the Assembly to consider the need for a second Home Mission Worker, to consult with Scottish Presbyteries, and to bring a report and any proposals to next year’s General Assembly.

3. Jewish Missions

The Committee continued to support the work of Christian Witness to Israel in 2012 with a gift of £600. The Secretary of CWI, Mr Mike Moore, is expected to give an update on the work of CWI on the missions evening at the General Assembly.

The Committee have also been considering the question of our biblical responsibility towards mission to the Jews. In 1841 the Church of Scotland sent a letter to all known Jewish communities throughout the world, published in English, Hebrew, many languages of Europe as well as some Oriental languages. Here is a quote from the beginning of this historic document:

*To the Children of Israel
in all the Lands of their Dispersion
the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*

Sendeth Peace

..... Within the ample bosom of [the Abrahamic] covenant, the glorious charter of all blessings which, as a nation, you have ever possessed, or yet hope to receive, we, sinners of the Gentiles, as well as you, the men

of Israel, find ourselves embraced; for so it is written, Genesis 28:14, "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Of this promise we, in this distant land of the sea, and after the lapse of almost 4000 years, can attest the truth. In Abraham and his seed we have been blessed. In him who was to be the Desire of all nations, Haggai 2:7, our souls have found a secure refuge...

Men and brethren, having thus obtained mercy ourselves, how can we but be deeply moved by the unhappy condition of those from whose stock has sprung that Branch of The Lord, beautiful and glorious? How can we but desire that they too, might come and find rest from their weary wanderings under the shelter of that wonderful name, Jehovah, our Righteousness? Jeremiah 23:6. How can we but seek the good of that people, by whose means, at first, our fathers turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and from whom we have received those oracles of truth which everywhere testify of his Anointed?

We have asked whether making our annual donation to CWI is really enough to discharge our duty to the Jew? As a result the Committee are requesting of the Assembly to give us a specific mandate to investigate what the Scriptures require of Gentile believers with regard to the evangelisation of Jews, and to bring their report along with any proposals to the next General Assembly.

4. Overseas Missions

1. Zambia

The work in Zambia comes under the Covenant College Zambia Trust.

As is known, the Trust has three main aspects to its work: the College, the Farm and the Christian Education Fund. Whilst the latter two parts of the work have had commendable consistency of personnel, with Mr Phil Bailey and Miss Marjanne Hendriksen respectively, the work of the College has endured more changes in staffing than would have been desirable. Nevertheless the God of all grace has provided in every situation, and we are thankful to be able to report that the College at present has two full-time lecturers, as well as a part-time Principal.

In April 2013 Rev. Andrew Allan attended the annual Trust meeting at Covenant College, and the Committee will have before them a full report from Mr Allan at their next meeting. We are grateful to Mr Allan for taking up this appointment, and commend his visits over the coming years (D.V.) to the prayerful interest of the wider church. It is expected to have a verbal account from Mr Allan at the Assembly.

Continuing support for the work of the College, Schools and Farm has been maintained by many of our Congregations. We would like to bring to the attention of the Church that the total amount spent supporting the work in Zambia by the FCC has increased considerably with the funding of a full-time missionary once again, a cost which we are most glad to have! However it has meant that funding contributed by the FCC to CCZT has dipped, in particular the maintenance grant given to students, and this may be a point worth noting in our Congregations for their interest.

It was a delight to welcome the Lachman family to Scotland once more at the turn of the year, where Mr Lachman was busy both preaching and deputising to raise awareness of the ongoing work in Zambia. Based in Leverburgh the Lachmans were able to visit many of our Congregations in the Outer Hebrides Presbytery Congregations, and enjoyed time spent with friends old and new.

Of great support to the College last year were the visits of Rev. and Mrs H. Woods (teaching Practical Theology and Homiletics) and Rev. and Mrs J. Macleod (Duthil-Dores, Rtd, teaching Old Testament introduction). Both couples were able to spend a good amount of time in Zambia, and came back with a warm report of their time, of the work being done, and the welcome they received. Coupled with this, and not directly connected with the Committee, were other visits undertaken by friends who were able to help with many different aspects of missionary life.

In addition to this and coinciding with the tenth Graduation Ceremony, Rev. David Fraser the first Principal of Covenant College, with his wife, Marion, was able to visit once more in October of 2012. They started the College in 2000 and it was lovely for them to have the opportunity to revisit and see the changes since their own period of service. Mr Fraser had the vision of a College with the three ministries of Pastor, Teacher and Farm Training.

The College is continuing to seek a third lecturer, and it remains the prayerful desire of the Committee that the Lord would raise up another full-time lecturer to labour in the College in years to come.

The Lachman family hope to return to Scotland once more at the end of the year, this time a little earlier than usual, as Mrs Lachman is expecting their third child, for which we give thanks to the Saviour God, and seek that his hand would guide and guard the family as they make arrangements for the birth.

CCZT was beset by deaths during the year, first with the death in August of their part-time local lecturer, Pastor Joshua Kondowe, who was killed in a horrific accident. He was on a bicycle with one of the students, Webyson Phiri, and they were struck from behind by a speeding Toyota Hilux. This sadness was followed with the death of the Farm Manager, Bilison Mwanza, in September 2012. Whether in Zambia or Scotland, death is never far away, and the Lord will take his own home, in his own time.

2. Presbytery of the United States of America

The Committee have little directly to report from the United States. The Presbytery occasionally seek advice from the Committee. Rev. John W. Keddie visited the Presbytery for a number of weeks and supplied Columbia preaching station as well as visiting other Congregations.

The Committee are pleased to note that the Moderator-Designate, Rev. Warren Gardner, hails from this Presbytery, and trust that this may be of great use in further binding together the hearts of the people in Scotland with those of our brethren in North America.

Rev. Jonathan Mattull was ordained on Friday, 24th August 2012 in St Louis, Missouri, which has proven to be a tremendous support and comfort to the work in the US.

The 2012 annual family conference run by Presbytery was both well attended and much appreciated, and provided a great focal point for Presbytery fellowship. Speakers last year were Rev. James I. Gracie (Edinburgh) and Rev. Gavin Beers (Ayr). This year's conference is due to take place in August. Expected speakers are Rev. Kenneth M. Macdonald (Scalpay) and Rev. David Silversides, (Reformed Presbyterian, Loughbrickland, Northern Ireland).

3. India

In late March and April Rev. Robert McCurley and Mr Randy Taylor (a member in St. Louis) had the opportunity of going to India to help train pastors. They also had the opportunity of going on from there to spend a week with Partheepan in Sri Lanka. The visit was for a total of three weeks, and we hope to have a record of this reported in the *Free Church Witness* magazine before long.

4. Canada – Smiths Falls

The work in Smiths Falls continues on an even course. Rev. Bert Pohl exercises a tentmaking ministry there and expects to be present at the General Assembly. The Committee have been considering what ways they can best support the work of Smiths Falls, as they act as the overseeing Church Court in relation to this Congregation. Mr Pohl was given the additional responsibility of preparing the new Denominational website, which launched in April. A further happy responsibility added was the birth of Amos, their first child, in December 2012, for which we give praise to the Saviour!

5. Sri Lanka

The establishment of a mission in Sri Lanka has been a major encouragement to the Committee. Rev. Partheepan Nixon Shanmugam has shown himself to be an earnest and upright labourer for the Lord in his homeland. Having now moved to Vavuniya, and with his wife, Dinogee, able to join him, we have been encouraged by the steps being put in place to plant a Congregation here. In engaging local charismatic believers, Partheepan was setting forth the doctrines of grace; however, they concluded that he was a heretic! Yet despite this, they have invited him to give some lectures to their students!

One highlight of the FCC Youth Camp near Aviemore last year was a Skype call to Sri Lanka, where the campers sang Psalm 23 over the internet and then Partheepan led us in prayer. How good to plant an interest in missions in the hearts of the young people of our Church too!

Still our God is giving us more encouragement for the work, as by a wonderful providence we have been brought into contact, fellowship and partnership with a Dutch-based missions support group called Ceylon Christian Care (CCC). Through a contact in Asia, CCC representatives heard of the work in Sri Lanka and visited our missionary. Having already supported a mission work in Sri Lanka, CCC were well-versed in the needs of the land. Unfortunately their previous encounter had resulted in a painful disbanding of their support due to the misuse of funds by the missionary.

CCC are committed to the Reformed faith, adhere to a Sabbatarian position and the Christian businessmen involved have great experience in supporting mission work in various parts of the world. Their commitment is to provide practical support, and not to interfere with the spiritual oversight provided exclusively by the FCC. The Committee are working through the details of such a partnership, which has been brought about without solicitation of any kind, by the providence of God.

One shared vision is to seek to establish a training college for the ministry in Sri Lanka. This clearly is a longer-term aim, but the Committee and CCC have been investigating what steps are required to turn this into an achievable goal.

Work has begun on the translation of a metrical version of the Psalms into Tamil. Progress is slow but steady and much prayer is requested for ability to accomplish such a specialised task.

6. China

A new area of opportunity opening up to the Committee has been to support the training of pastors for the underground Church in China. Hudson Taylor Ministries has been the facilitating agent here, seeking to bring together this fledgling seminary with solid Reformed and Presbyterian teaching.

Rev. William Macleod first visited China and met with those organising the training and brought back a positive and practical report to the Committee. Rev Murdo A.N. Macleod has recently returned from a short visit, which involved him delivering a week's worth of lectures, through an interpreter.

It is hoped that the FCC will be able to provide guidance and advice on lecture material, as well as visiting lecturers on a regular basis, with travel costs being borne by Hudson Taylor Ministries. The seminary could become a mission affiliated with the FCC. It is founded on the Westminster Standards, and committed to Presbyterian Church Government. This exciting development could allow our denomination to have a great influence for good amongst a section of the burgeoning underground Chinese Church.

GREG MACDONALD *Convener*
MURDO A.N. MACLEOD *Vice-convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and the Clerk;
2. The General Assembly thank the Home Mission Worker, Mr Donald John Morrison, for all his diligent labours in outreach and evangelism during the year; they commend Mr Morrison, his wife, and family to the prayers of our people;
3. The General Assembly instruct the Committee to investigate, in consultation with Scottish Presbyteries, whether there exists a need and opportunity for a second Home Mission worker;
4. The General Assembly approve the support given to the Christian Witness to Israel and commend the cause of Jewish evangelism to the Church;
5. The General Assembly instruct the Committee to give detailed consideration to what Scripture requires of Gentile believers with regard to the evangelisation of Jews, and to report any proposals thereon to the next General Assembly;
6. The General Assembly thank Rev. David Lachman for his continued labours at Covenant College, and his helpful presentations on the work of Covenant College Zambia Trust to many Congregations over his period of furlough; they commend Mr & Mrs Lachman and family to the prayers of the Church;
7. The General Assembly give thanks for the service of Rev. Henry J.T. Woods in lecturing in Covenant College, and Rev. David S. Fraser for attending the 10th graduation Ceremony;
8. The General Assembly give thanks for the continued work of Miss Marjanne Hendriksen and Mr Phil Bailey and commend the Christian Education Ministry as well as the Farm Ministry to the Church;
9. The General Assembly thank Rev. Andrew Allan for his diligence as the Church's representative Trustee on Covenant College Zambia Trust and pray God's blessing on him in his ongoing responsibilities as the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) representative Trustee;
10. The General Assembly note the ongoing work in the Congregations of the Presbytery of the United States of America and pray for the strengthening of the work there;
11. The General Assembly give thanks for the continuance of the ministry of Rev. Bert Pohl in Smiths Falls and commend him and the Congregation to the prayers of the Church;
12. The General Assembly note with thankfulness the development of the mission work in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka under the care of Rev. Partheepan Nixon Shanmugam;
13. The General Assembly note the interest of Ceylon Christian Care in supporting the mission work in Sri Lanka in practical ways whilst leaving all spiritual care to the offices of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), express their thankfulness to God for this mutually encouraging arrangement, and instruct the Committee to take steps towards reaching the long-term goal of an indigenous seminary in Sri Lanka;
14. The General Assembly note with pleasure the arising opportunities to support pastor training in China; they thank Rev. William Macleod and Rev. Murdo A.N. Macleod for their diligence in establishing links to this work over the past year, note the supporting rôle played by Hudson Taylor Ministries and thank the Saviour for providing such invaluable practical and financial support. Further, the General Assembly instruct the Committee to continue to support and assist in this venture;

15. The General Assembly encourage Kirk Sessions to be active in the work of outreach and to be supportive of mission at home and overseas.