

IX. REPORT

OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOME & FOREIGN MISSIONS

1 Introduction

The last year in the work of Foreign Missions has been marked by doors closing and doors opening. As will be clear from this Report, one door in Australia has closed but another door in Sri Lanka has opened. At home, the Scottish Government's consultation on same sex marriage, while causing God's people great sorrow, also provided us with a platform to speak the Word of the Lord to the nation. We are reminded in all these things that God is sovereign and the work we are engaged in is his.

Paul spoke of an open door when writing to the Church in Corinth. *'For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries'* 1Cor 16:9. A great opportunity to minister the Gospel in Ephesus had been given to him. He was conscious that this open door was from the Lord as it was opened to him and not by him. There appeared to be some evidence of the Lord working with him, effectually blessing the word that he preached to the hearts of men, yet he was also aware of many who sought this door to be closed and no doubt in recording all this for the Church in Corinth he was soliciting their prayers that the preaching of the Cross would prevail.

Another text that speaks of open doors is found in Christ's word to the Church in Philadelphia in Rev 3:7. He comforts them with a confirmation of his sovereignty in connection with their service *'And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 'I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name'* Rev 3:7. We would identify with the Church in Philadelphia in feeling our *'little strength.'* We should long to maintain the same testimony *'and has kept my word and has not denied my name.'* Likewise, in all our labour we ought to keep this Christ before us who alone ultimately opens and closes doors of service to his Church.

However spiritually bleak the day at home, Christ has set before us an open door in Scotland and it will only be shut if he shuts it. It is not in the power of men, devils or governments to close that door to us. Where he closes doors, may we humbly submit. Where they are already open to us let us labour and at the same time pray our key-holding Saviour to open other doors to us at home and abroad. When he does so, then let us be spiritually sensitive enough like Paul to recognise his hand and trust in him to give strength and provision for the work.

2 Home Missions

We are deeply grateful for the faithful labours of our Home Mission Worker, Mr Donald John Morrison. Once again in 2012 he distributed a mountain of evangelistic and reformed literature throughout Scotland. He assisted in planned gospel outreach endeavours in Knightswood, Partick (all districts of Glasgow), Leith in Edinburgh, Stornoway and Ayr. Other mission campaigns included the Black Isle Show, Hebridean Celtic Festival, Monster Science Festival, Jesus Christ Superstar: Rock Opera, Rockness and the Army Base at Fort George, where 500 soldiers are stationed. Mr Morrison also provided support and literature towards the Black Watch Appeal and the 480 gift packages which were despatched to soldiers currently deployed on military action in Afghanistan. Based in Inverness, the Home Mission Worker labours extensively across the Highland's capital where he ministers in personal evangelism in a door-to-door work with literature regularly given out from his table ministry on the High Street.

A combined total of around 21,000 gospel tracts was distributed, in addition to 7,011 booklets and magazines, 51 Bibles, along with a large quantity of literature in various foreign languages. 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 rejoice that the new House of Prayer project has been successfully completed. Mr Morrison has agreed to officially open the new church, and preside at a special service, when he visits the country in September 2012.

In 2010 Mr Morrison was extensively engaged in organising Christian witness in connection with the Pope's visit to Scotland. In 2011 another door of opportunity opened to speak to the nation. He was able to co-ordinate a successful Christian rally in Edinburgh in opposition to the proposals of the Scottish Government to introduce same sex marriage. The event was supported by around 65 members belonging to various churches, including the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Zion Baptist Church and the Protestant Truth Society in addition to representatives from other churches in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland. The *United Christian Witness against Same-sex Marriage* hope to be involved in other similar events in due course. Mr Morrison also made contact with all 129 MSPs at the Scottish Parliament, asking them to seriously consider the inevitable, and devastating, consequences that the proposals will have on Scottish society and to oppose any form of proposal to introduce 'same sex marriage' in Scotland. His correspondence was accompanied by various items of literature namely: *The Reformation 1560: The Greatest Year in Scotland's History*, *Why Broken Britain Needs Strong Families*, *Same-sex Marriage – Is it really the same?*, *Same Sex Marriage – Facing the Question, How Should Christians Respond to "Gay" Marriage?*, *I Was 'Gay' ... – The Testimony of Stephen Bennett*.

3. Jewish Missions

The Committee continued to support the work of Christian Witness to Israel in 2011 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.

4. Overseas Missions

1 Zambia

The work in Zambia comes under the Covenant College Zambian Trust. The three ministries of the Trust are Covenant College, the Farm and the Christian Education Fund. The Committee were thankful to the work of Rev. Greg Macdonald for his work as representing the Free Church (Continuing) on Covenant College Trust for the last three years. His period of service has now come to an end and the Committee were glad to appoint Rev. Andrew Allan to take on this rôle for the next three years. Due to Rev. Andrew Allan being unable to attend the Trust meeting in Zambia April 2012, Mr Cammy Macleay, who has many years experience of Covenant College, was asked to attend in his place. The Committee are thankful for his willingness to go and his contribution at the Trust meeting.

In the past year the Heritage Netherlands Reformed Church withdrew their financial support of the College in conjunction with the removal of their missionary Rev. Cees Molenaar to Malawi. This has left the Free Church (Continuing) as the only source of large contributions to the work and without our support the College would soon enter into serious financial difficulties. Last year donations from the FCC came close to covering the operative costs of the College and in the year to come our support appears more vital than ever.

Covenant College

The Home & Foreign Missions Committee were happy to report in May 2011 that the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) had met the need in the College for an additional lecturer by sending Rev. David Lachman with his

family to labour in Zambia. It was a great encouragement to the denomination that for the first time since 2004 when Rev. David Fraser returned home, we had a full time missionary in Zambia.

Mr Lachman's appointment had come at a time when it had been announced that the Principal, Rev. Cees Molenaar, was leaving the College to take up a new work. Since then Mr Molenaar has moved on and we are thankful to him for all the work he did in the College from 2006. Upon his departure Rev. Heinrich Zwemstra took over as Principal and he and his wife were a great help to the Lachmans when settling into life and service in Zambia. Later in 2011 Mr Zwemstra received a call to pastor a church in his native South Africa and felt the call of the Lord to take up that position. This left the College in a difficult position and the Lachmans under a great deal of pressure and added workload. Mr Lachman had been trying to do the work that was previously shared between three people and the increase in Mrs Lachman's responsibilities was considerable. We are thankful that the Lord has given them wisdom and strength to bear this load but the Committee felt a great burden to assist our missionaries and the College in whatever practical way they could.

Due to the financial position of our own denomination it was not possible for us to send another full time missionary to Zambia. Instead the Committee agreed to send one lecturer to teach a module in each semester. This would help the college to function in 2012 while giving the Covenant College Trust time to search for a new lecturer(s) for the 2013 Academic year. We are thankful that Rev. John Macleod (Duthil-Dores, Rtd) and Rev. Harry Woods agreed to answer this call to help in Zambia. Mr Macleod together with his wife visited for four weeks from the end of March 2012 and taught a course in Old Testament Introduction. His teaching experience mixed with years in the pastoral ministry made him well suited to the College work and his labours proved a great success in communicating the truth of God to the students. The College was very thankful that the Lord guided the FCC to send him. Mr Woods and his wife are set to visit Zambia in the summer months when he will teach a course in Practical Theology & Homiletics.

When Covenant College Trust met in March 2012 they were able to appoint Rev. Charles Zulu to lecture in the College on a 6 month probationary contract. This will be a great help to Mr Lachman and is greatly significant and encouraging as Mr Zulu is the first indigenous pastor to be appointed in this capacity in Covenant College. Mr Zulu is in his 60's, was trained in South Africa, has spent many years pastoring in Zambia and is a member of a Psalm singing Dutch Reformed Church. The trust also appointed Mr Lovemore Banda who has been part of the College from its outset, to act as Principal. This is expected to take a lot of administrative responsibility off Mr Lachman and will free him to fulfil his rôle as lecturer. It is our prayerful desire that the Lord would raise up another full time lecturer from one of our sister Reformed Churches to labour in the College in years to come.

Despite the upheavals that the last year has brought, the Lachmans have settled into their work in Zambia well and begun studying the local language to try and become more useful in the local community. After the College graduation in October 2011 they were able to return to Scotland and also visit America and engage in extensive deputation meetings, reporting their work. From north to south we have benefited from the perspective they have given the denomination on Covenant College. Finally, in the midst of their busy schedule in 2011-12 God kindly blessed them with their second child. We rejoiced with them in the birth of a daughter, Ketzia and we commit her with Elijah, Katie and David to the Lord for another year's service in Zambia.

Covenant College Farm

The Farm forms part of CCZT ministries. Mr Phil Bailey and his team continue to manage the farm to provide for the needs of the College and other ministries. In addition, instruction is given to the students and to subsistence farmers in the Petauke region in Farming God's Way. A work-for-food programme also runs throughout the months from November to April when many of the local people suffer food shortages. To help Mr Bailey with his responsibilities in teaching Farming God's Way, Mr Jackson Kasalo was appointed as a new Agricultural Missionary. Mr Kasalo has entered into his labour and quickly become an integral member of the

team. We thank the Lord for providing him. Mr Bailey is hopeful that Jackson will take over many of his duties in the next few years.

The Christian Education Ministries (CEM)

The Christian Education Fund also forms part of CCTZ ministries. It works to give basic material support to Christian Community Schools with dedicated teachers and teacher training. The emphasis of the ministry is on Religious Education and the general Christian character of education. The work continues in the capable hands of Miss Marjanne Hendriksen. Earlier this year Miss Hendriksen was bitten by a snake and at that time was kept much in prayer throughout our Congregations. We are thankful that she has fully recovered and the bite has left no lingering side effects, however the incident is a reminder to us at home of the dangers our brethren face in Zambia in serving the Lord.

Women and Children Ministry

After the departure of the Molenaars, Marjanne Hendriksen has taken charge of the Children's Ministry and has made some improvements. It is running smoothly. Katie Lachman, together with Miss Hendriksen have taken over the Women's Ministry. They continue where it left off but as this work was funded by Heritage Reformed Congregations, it is quickly running out of funding and unless new funding is found it will prove difficult to continue to run the ministry as it has been in the past.

2 Presbytery of the United States

The Presbytery of the United States have cause for thankfulness to the Lord for another year in serving in His vineyard. The Congregation in Atlanta, having suffered a number of discouragements in 2010 are thankful for a year of stability in which they have seen the addition of some new members. After the resignation of Rev. Sherman Isbell from the Washington Congregation due to ill health, the small group of families who had remained there had been receiving pulpit supply. In the last year the Presbytery had to move to suspend services in the Congregation. The two preaching stations in Missouri – St Louis and Columbia – remain stable and are steadily growing. The Presbytery are thankful to Mr Jonathan Matull for his work in these congregations and it is hoped that they can move toward the ordination of Mr Matull later in 2012.

The Greenville Congregation is the largest in the Presbytery and having moved into new premises last year in downtown Greenville have continued to see further numerical growth in the last year with new people joining the Church and children being born into it. The Congregation were thankful to have nine baptisms in the last year. They hold two services each Sabbath, a midweek prayer meeting and open-air preaching downtown every Friday at noon.

Another door of opportunity has opened to the Presbytery in the last year in North Carolina. A group of around six families in the town of Mebane appealed to come under the care of the Presbytery and a preaching station has been opened where the prospects appear very promising. With such opportunities the Presbytery is in a state of real encouragement. Their biggest challenge and need is for more ministers, elders, deacons and students and their prayer is to the Lord of the harvest to provide.

The Presbytery's Family Conference last August was again well attended. The speakers were Rev. Harry Woods, Rev. Warren Gardner and Rev. Rob McCurley. About half of those who attend were from outside the denomination, giving a welcome opportunity to spread the principles for which we stand. This year the Presbytery have invited two guest speakers from Scotland, Rev. James Gracie and Rev. Gavin Beers. The Spring 2012 Colloquium (conference for office-bearers and students) was hosted in Greenville and was well attended. The addresses together with the times of concentrated prayer and fellowship were some of the best the Presbytery have enjoyed since they began meeting in this fashion.

Sadly in Rev. Sean Humby, formerly Church planter in Detroit, was deposed from the ministry in December 2011. Mr Humby now lives and worships in Greenville.

3 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.

4 Australia - Adelaide

The Committee regrettably had to report to the 2011 General Assembly regarding various matters in the Congregation of Adelaide. The majority of the Congregation had purportedly dissociated from the Free Church (Continuing), and the Minister, Rev. James Frew, had been found guilty of contumacy and various other charges, and subsequently deposed from the Office of the Ministry by the Special Commission on 24th March 2011.

These sad events left only a few people associated with the Free Church (Continuing) Congregation in Adelaide. The situation was compounded by the fact that these people were scattered throughout different parts of Australia with only one family resident in the Adelaide area. For this reason the Kirk Session, in consultation with the Committee, came to the conclusion that at present the FCC could have no meaningful future in Australia and are requesting the General Assembly that the Congregation in Adelaide now be dissolved. Those who were in association with the Congregation will receive their disjunction certificates as members in good standing with the Free Church (Continuing). The Committee are deeply saddened that events in Australia have come to this and commit our brethren there to the Lord for the future and pray they find another Church where they can worship and fellowship.

5 Sri Lanka

Another door that opened to the Free Church (Continuing) in 2011 was the opportunity to serve the Lord in Sri Lanka. Rev. Partheepan Nixon Shanmugam who had been a student in our Seminary, became convinced of the testimony of our Church and applied for licence and ordination in our denomination. The Southern Presbytery took him on trials for licence and he was ordained and inducted to the work as Missionary to Sri Lanka, in Knightwood Church, Glasgow on 30th September. Partheepan returned to Sri Lanka in October to commence his work.

We rejoiced with him when in December he was married to Dinogee who is proving an excellent encouragement and support to him in the work. They lived for the first months of their married life in Jaffna in the north of the Island and while there they sought the Lord's guidance for the work he had called them to. In February a way opened up for them to move to Vavuniya in North Central Sri Lanka. The town is quite under developed and in the surrounding villages there are very few churches and the people live in poverty and without much education. In Vavuniya itself there is no Reformed or conservative evangelical Church and the plan is to move into the area and rent a house with a lounge large enough to use for worship services. Partheepan had known some people in Vavuniya and they have welcomed him into the area and encouraged him to start a new work. He hopes to move into the area as soon as possible and start an evening worship service at his house. This will hopefully be followed by a programme to facilitate education for the children of the villages with the hope to establish Sabbath Schools from this work and then Bible Studies in the villages.

Work has also 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.

In the Lord's providence, at the same time the Committee were considering sending a missionary to Sri Lanka, a legacy to the sum of £18000 was left to the Church for the work of foreign missions and this money was able to be channelled to support the work in Sri Lanka for the next three years. The Committee are also setting up a specific Sri Lanka Mission Fund to which donations can be given which will enable the work to be supported in the years after the funds from the legacy are used up.

The Committee are thankful that the Rev. William Macleod was able to visit Sri Lanka in December 2011. While there, he conducted the marriage of Partheepan and Dinogee and many opportunities were open to him in the short period of his two week stay. He was invited to give a series of lectures on 'The Family & Christian Service' in Logos College, Vavuniya, to a group of ministers and church leaders. In addition to this he preached in Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church in Columbo and took Communion services in the town of Hatton. It is hoped that Mr Macleod will address the Assembly and give further details of his visit.

GAVIN BEERS *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 and especially his public witness in defence of Biblical marriage; they commend Mr Morrison, his wife, Heidi and children to the prayers of our people;
3. The General Assembly approve the support given to the Christian Witness to Israel and commend the cause of Jewish evangelism to the Church;
4. The General Assembly commend Rev. David Lachman and Mrs Lachman and family to the prayers of the Church;
5. The General Assembly give thanks for the dedicated service of the Rev. Cees Molenaar and Rev. Heinrich Zwemstra in Covenant College and send prayerful good wishes to both men and their families in their new spheres of service;
6. The General Assembly give thanks for the service of the Rev. John Macleod (Duthil-Dores, Rtd.) in lecturing in Covenant College, and the appointment of Rev. C. Zulu and Mr Lovemore Banda to their respective rôles of lecturer and acting Principal;
7. The General Assembly give thanks for the continued work of Miss Marjanne Hendriksen and commend the Christian Education Ministry to our Church;
8. The General Assembly thank Rev. Greg Macdonald for his diligence as the Church's representative Trustee on Covenant College Zambia Trust; and pray God's blessing on Rev. Andrew Allan in his responsibilities as he replaces Mr Macdonald;
9. The General Assembly note with sadness the deposition of Rev. Sean Humby from the Ministry and commit him to the prayers of the Church;
10. The General Assembly note the recent changes in the Congregations of the Presbytery of the United States of America and pray for the future 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 sadness the recent changes that have affected the Congregation at Adelaide and hereby declare the Charge to be dissolved; they commit the former members who were left there after these recent changes to the prayers of the Church;

13. The General Assembly note with thankfulness the appointment of Rev. Partheepan Nixon Shanmugam to missionary work in Sri Lanka and commend him and his new wife to the prayers of the Church;
14. The General Assembly thank Rev. William Macleod for his visit to Sri Lanka in December 2011;
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.