

# Free Church **Witness**



**FEBRUARY 2015 ISSUE**



## **Modesty in Dress**

*Rev Kenneth Macdonald*



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**Common Sins in the FCC . . . . . 3**

**Obituary - Rev M M Macleod . . . . . 5**

**Life & Sermons of McCheyne . . . . . 7**

**News Desk . . . . . 10**

**Book Reviews . . . . . 14**

**Modesty in Dress . . . . . 16**

**Remittances - December 2014 . . . . . 18**

**Visit to Sri Lanka . . . . . 18**

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## Common Sins in the Free Church (Continuing)

**R**ecently I was preaching in Partick at a Thursday night preparatory service of a communion weekend. Traditionally the Thursday has been set aside as a day of humiliation and prayer. The thought came to me that it would be profitable to list the sins of which we as members of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) are particularly guilty. As I worked on the list I felt that there were twelve sins of commission and twelve sins of omission of which we are particularly guilty. The idea was that having identified our sins this would help the congregation and myself to search our own hearts, confess, repent, seek the cleansing blood and the aid of the Holy Spirit to stop sinning. It was not difficult to draw up the list because sadly, to a greater or lesser extent, they are sins of which we are all guilty. God speaking through Isaiah says: 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins' (Is.58:1). We wonder why we see little blessing in our churches

but Isaiah adds: 'Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear' (Is.59:1-2). God is as able as ever to convert sinners and prosper His church but our sins form a barrier and keep Him from blessing us.

### Twelve Sins of Commission

1. Self-righteousness: We are very good at spotting the sins of other people. We can speak readily of the sins of society, the immorality, the undermining of marriage, the homosexual depravity, the abuse of drink and drugs, etc. We point to the barbarous cruelty of extreme Islam. We can point to the liberalism and sacramentalism of some churches, the man-centred worship and the superficial 'conversions' of others. Sadly, however, we are complacent about ourselves and the very act of condemning others has a tendency to make

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us self-righteous. We wouldn't do what they do and so we feel self-satisfied. God hates self-righteousness and Christ's strongest words, His curses, are reserved for such: 'Woe unto you Pharisees'. Sadly there is a bit of the Pharisee in all of us.

2. Idolatry: The commonest sin in the Old Testament is idolatry. The history of Israel is one of constant back-sliding and slipping into the worship of idols. Time and again God has to send other nations against them to oppress them, chastise them and bring them back to Himself. Human nature has not changed. The tendency to idolatry is still there, but the form of the idols has changed. We do not bow to golden calves but do we bow to gold? Has our spouse, our children, our job, our house, our garden, our car become our god? Are there not interests and pleasures that take far too large a place in our lives? What are your idols? Could it be golf, gardening, football, fishing, music, art, films, or literature? Could it be your looks, your reputation, your cooking, or your craftsmanship? Is it possible that your Church has become an idol? None of these things are wrong in themselves and can be good things which we enjoy from God. The problem is when they obtain too large a place in our lives, when they distract us from worship and intrude into our prayers, and so come in between us and God.

3. Worldliness: Worldliness is the antithesis of heavenliness. We are supposed to live as strangers and pilgrims on this earth, setting our affections on things above. We are supposed to be godly and spiritual and heavenly-minded but are we not often more like animals – earthly and sensual? Instead of seeking first, and going on seeking first, the kingdom of God, we become passionate about worldly things.

4. Hypocrisy: We all pretend to be good Christians. We do what is required and play the part. But are we not often going through the motions with little true love? We pray, read the Bible, listen to sermons, while our hearts are on other things, our idols. We draw near to God with our lips while our heart is far from Him (Mt. 15:8). How offensive this must be to God and what a breach of the third commandment!

5. Gossip: It is amazing how ready we are to speak unkindly about other people and tell uncomplimentary things we have heard. We seem to have a fascination in talking about others. We hear a story and then are longing to share it. Backbiting is strictly condemned in Scripture (Prov. 25:23, Rom. 1:30).

6. Lust: Occasionally true Christians are involved in immorality and so physically defile the temple of God. But what is much more common is unclean thoughts, desires, day-dreams and fantasies and our Saviour tells us that in the sight of God this is adultery (Mt. 5:28). Would you be ashamed if your neighbour were to see into your heart? Yet all this is open before

God.

7. Hatred: We all have tempers. Sometimes it takes very little to stir them, and anger and desire for revenge arises in our hearts. Yet Scripture tells us that we are never to take revenge as it is God's prerogative alone: 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Rom. 12:19). Again Jesus warns: 'Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire' (Mt. 5:21-22).

8. Gluttony: We as a church tend to be very critical of drunkenness but not of gluttony and yet both are strictly condemned in Scripture. A good example would be the statement regarding the rebellious son who should be stoned to death: 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard' (Deut. 21:20). We should only eat the food that we need to sustain our bodies and enable us to perform our work. Over-eating, constant nibbling, so called 'comfort eating', lead to a person putting on excess weight which is unhealthy for the body and a bad witness for any Christian.

9. Covetousness: We all need money yet the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10). Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Do we desire the house, the car, the possessions, the money others have? Do we covet the spouse or family others have?

10. Time-wasting: Time in Scripture is regarded as very precious. We are told to redeem the time because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16). We are often warned of the brevity of time and the coming judgment day. We are exhorted to use our time to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. How much time is wasted watching rubbishy television programmes, endlessly watching news shows or Youtube on the internet, reading newspapers, magazines and trashy books which are sometimes sensually provocative and are generally unedifying and unprofitable.

11. Lies: God is the God of truth of whom it is said that He cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). The Bible says 'All liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death' (Rev. 21:8). Do we take this seriously? How ready are we to tell a so called 'white lie' to escape an embarrassing situation? In God's eyes no lies are white but all are black.

12. Pride: One of the most difficult sins to overcome is pride. It remains with us in one way or another till we die. We think of ourselves as gifted, or clever, or wise, or kind, or sensitive, or prayerful, or good-

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living, or humble. We compare ourselves favourably with others. God hates pride. What do we have but what we received from Him, apart from our sin?

## Twelve Sins of Omission

1. Failure to trust in God: Anxiety, panic, doubt and despair come from a failure to trust. If only we would trust God and cast all our burdens on Him, how different things would be?

2. Failure to pray: We all say our prayers but do we pray? Do we really pray? Do we pour out our hearts to God? Do we plead for ourselves, our families, our Church and our nation?

3. Failure to witness: We are to be the light of the world. We have a duty to share the gospel with perishing sinners. We are to warn them of their danger and compel them to come in. Sadly, too often we keep quiet and let the opportunity pass. We are afraid of offending.

4. Failure to give thanks: God is so good to us, blessing us with food, clothes, homes, families, money, health and strength, churches, the Bible and salvation. We should in everything be giving thanks.

5. Failure to lovingly care for others: We ought to be loving our neighbours as ourselves and loving fellow Christians more than that, as Christ loved the church. Too often our care is for our own ease and comfort.

6. Failure to value the means of grace: We appear in church at the stated times of worship with little forethought and preparation. Is our church-going a habit and a duty rather than a privilege and a feast?

7. Failure to mortify sin: We are told to mortify and crucify sin. We are to search our hearts, confess our sins and plead the blood of Christ. Our duty is actively and with the help of the Spirit to put it to death. How far short we come!

8. Failure to prefer others: We ought to see the good points in others. We are, or should be, more aware of our own sin and the wickedness of our own hearts, than that of others. That should humble us into thinking that every other Christian is better than we are, but in our pride and self-righteousness we compare ourselves favourably with others.

9. Failure to read good books: Never were there more excellent Christian books available and never did Christians read less. There are books of theology, exposition, biography, sermons and much more available but we read little and our souls are starving.

10. Failure to have deep Christian fellowship: When we meet up with other Christians we talk about everything and nothing. We ought to be teaching each other, challenging, encouraging, rebuking and provoking one another to love and good works but we often waste our time together.

11. Failure to keep the Sabbath day holy: The Catechism tells us we should spend the whole day in the public and private exercises of worship. How much of the day is spent in cooking, sleeping, talking about the world and thinking about the things of the past week or the coming week?

12. Failure to delight in God: We should be constantly taken up with God, thinking about Him, praising and glorifying Him, worshipping and adoring Him, but we fail. We should love God, and enjoy God and be satisfied with Him. Are we setting our hearts on heavenly things every day?

We are all sinners. What are we to do? Hold up our hands and say I can't help it? No! God demands repentance. There is a promise, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1Jn. 1:9). We are to seek the help of the Spirit to mortify sin. God demands holiness.

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## Obituary

### Rev M. MacAulay MacLeod

**R**ev Murdo MacAulay MacLeod, Senior Minister of Barvas Free Church, passed to his eternal rest on 27th June 2014, aged 86. Brought up in Stornoway, he served with the Durham Light Infantry in Germany at the close of WW2 before becoming a docker in his home town. For some years he was involved in whaling in the South Atlantic. During that time he shared a cabin

and began a life-long friendship with a fellow Lewisman, Daniel MacKinnon, who, like him in later years, exchanged fishing for whales for fishing for men. By the time of his leaving for his last trip to South Georgia the Lord had begun a work of grace in his life and now he delighted in hearing the gospel wherever it was preached, whether in a church building or in the open air – it not only did

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his soul good, but at one Open Air Meeting it led to his meeting the woman who was later to become his wife. Upon completion of studies at the Free Church College he was called in 1967 to be Minister of Lairg Free Church, Sutherland. Here he laboured faithfully and fruitfully, remaining for around seven years and thereafter Lairg always held a deep place in his affections. It was also during this time that his lifelong friendship with Willie Munro, one of the Lairg elders, was forged, and in later years they often spent time together, enjoying fellowship and speaking of the things of Christ. He was translated to Portree in 1974 and later served in Barvas, Lewis, from 1980 until his retirement in 1994.

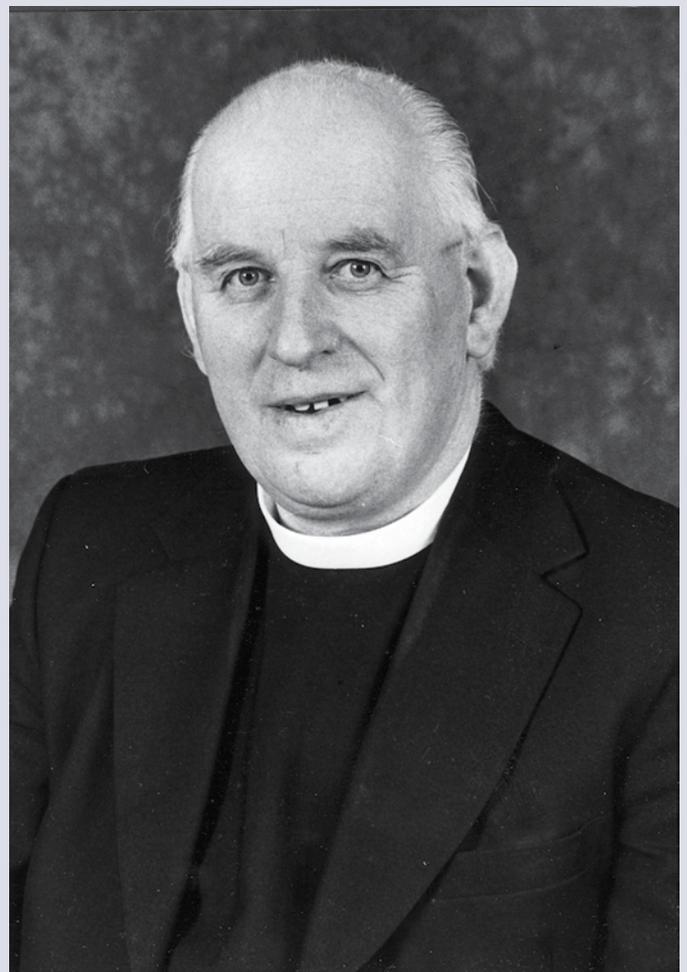
Possessed with a good memory, he was full of anecdotes of his days in Stornoway and Lairg. Conscious of the changes coming over Christian life in the Highlands and Islands, he often spoke affectionately of the old days and the old ways and sought to call them to remembrance, that the Lord's people might be stirred up and seek those things which had strengthened the church in better times. Speaking of the brotherly love evident where grace is strong, he referred to an incident he had heard of, which took place during the days of Rev Gustavus Aird, Creich. At a Question Meeting, Dr Aird was struggling to expound the text given to him. He leaned over the pulpit to one of his elders, the grandfather of Professor John Murray, calling on him for help. This was duly given, and after a few minutes Dr Aird, interrupting, expressed his thanks for the assistance rendered, and then proceeded himself to continue the opening of the Question. Afterwards there was no criticism about the actions of the Minister, such was the love amongst the brethren in those days.

Being one who loved the Biblical principles of the Free Church, it was a grief to him to see compromise and unfaithfulness overwhelming her. Although not to the fore in public contending for adherence to the Constitution and standards of the Church, there was no doubt as to where his loyalty stood, and it was little surprise to find him associated with the Free Church (Continuing) in 2000. Thereafter he rendered much valuable service in giving supply in the various congregations of the Islands and this continued until 2011 when his domestic situation precluded his ability to help.

In 1959 he married Margaret MacLeod who was brought up in Stornoway, although her family roots were in the Uig district of Lewis. She proved to be a true helpmeet to him as he prepared for and entered upon the work of the ministry. Having come to faith in Christ early in life, she served the Lord for some time as a lady missionary with the Church of Scotland in both Edinburgh and Lewis. This work had involved her visiting needy homes and offering practical advice and support as well as pressing on souls the claims of Christ. One winter whilst visiting a friend in the Lewis Hospital, she, as was

her custom, spoke to the various women in the ward commending Christ to them. She gained the confidence of one of the travelling people and offered to hold a Sabbath School where she stayed. Despite the snow, each Sabbath after church she walked the considerable distance to where the woman lived, and read the Bible not only to the children but to the extended family who gathered to listen. Like her husband she was always waiting for the Lord to provide openings to speak to people of their eternal needs. Although they had no children themselves, only the great day will reveal how many they have, humanly speaking, begotten again in the Gospel. A discreet, dignified, intelligent Christian, she was given to much prayer and was a great source of strength and encouragement to her husband. Her passing, two years before his own, was a very great blow to him. They are now re-united before the throne, adoring and serving the Lord in heaven, as they did these many years together on earth. We offer our sympathy to the sorrowing family who are left with fond memories of a loving uncle and of faithful service to the Lord. 'Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever'.

*Rev Graeme Craig*



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## Life and Sermons of Robert Murray McCheyne (Part III)

**Rev Alasdair J Macleod**

*Last month Mr Macleod considered the Sermons of McCheyne.*



### III. The Preaching of McCheyne: The Lessons from a Preacher

I intend to bring eight short but important lessons, both positive and negative, from the life of McCheyne. I trust I need scarcely add that as the youngest of preachers I apply these first of all to myself, and have much to do yet to put them into practice.

1. He Challenges You to Positivity regarding the Young McCheyne lived and died a young man. In terms of the Free Church Continuing, at 29 he could still have been a regular at the Arbroath Youth Weekend. And yet see the depth of understanding, the spiritual maturity, the seasoned understanding of the crests and troughs of Christian experience revealed throughout these sermons. When you remember that some messages are dated as early as 1836, when he was just 23, these books are a real challenge to those of you whose instinctive prescription to any young man wrestling with a call to devote his life to preaching the Gospel is to 'get more life experience'. If McCheyne had followed that counsel, he might never have preached at all. Equally, they are a rebuke to you whose expectations of young people are little more than that they keep quiet and listen. Certainly let all of us be teachable, the young above all, but equally let pastors especially cherish high expectations of their young members, that they will advance rapidly in godliness, will develop and demonstrate an earnest and intelligent commitment to the principles of Scripture and of Reformed theology, and will edify in turn the rest of the congregation.

2. He Challenges You to Diligence in Pulpit Preparation These manuscripts were not composed for publication; rather they are merely standard preparation for regular pulpit duties from week to week. How thoroughly and carefully McCheyne prepared to preach the Word of God! What wonder if these full, thoughtful, meticulous manuscripts laid a foundation for preaching that thrilled

and excited congregations? What wonder if scrappy notes, key words that just rely on the inspiration of the moment for the language to clarify and explain, familiar and well-worn lines of application, tend to elicit more yawns than active response from congregations? And remember that when he came to the pulpit, there was no manuscript needed at all, just an open Bible and the eyes of his hearers.

3. He Challenges You to Prepare Exclusively Evangelistic Sermons

It is easy to fall into the trap of imagining that the really great sermons are those that delve into the profoundest depths of Christian doctrine, or that brim with clever insights into obscure passages of Scripture. But remember Lloyd-Jones' observation, that the hardest preaching of all is preaching to win the lost to Christ. Here is McCheyne, the finest of preachers, and yet easily half his sermons are addressed specifically to the unbelieving, with the simple purpose of urgently pressing upon them the way of salvation in Jesus. In exhibiting that task done, continually, faithfully, and yet always with freshness and vigour, McCheyne exhibits for us the true Christian preacher. Never let yourself get sidetracked from the regular work of the Kingdom by anything else, however worthy. Be as Paul, reasoning 'of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come'. If we are known for nothing else as preachers, let us strive to be known as those who continually, earnestly, lovingly, set forth salvation in Christ Jesus, and press men towards it.

4. He Challenges You to Passion in Preaching Eternal Realities

McCheyne could not be casual in setting forth the danger of remaining outside Christ. He spoke with unmistakable, at times even uncomfortable boldness and frankness of the horrors of eternal wrath against sin: 'In heaven, we shall see the wrath of God poured out upon the Christless; we shall see their pale, dismal faces,

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we shall hear their sad cries and the gnashing of their teeth; we shall see the smoke of their torment ascending up before God forever. Oh, how shall we praise God for His electing love that chose us to salvation! How all believers shall praise Christ for His redeeming love, for enduring such pains in our stead!

Such a subject was real to McCheyne, and thus was made real in the preaching to his hearers, to an extent tragically rare in our day. Equally, the joys of Heaven, the glory of Christ, and the eternal love of God were all profoundly real in his handling. Perhaps if you and I preached these truths with more conviction, more passion, we would see more fruit.

#### 5. He Challenges You to Preach from Experience of Christ

Perhaps this lesson must stand above all. McCheyne's sermons are thoroughly experimental, grounded in real experience, and especially in experience of knowing Christ as Saviour and Lord. This does not require continual reference to 'me, myself and I'; rather, it calls for preaching that has felt that of which it speaks. Hear these words and consider if they could come with any conviction without a foundation in experience, on union with Christ: 'Oh! What infinite honour that the Son of God should leave the bosom of the Father and propose so close, so mysterious, so blessed a union as this, with base and sinful worms, "whose cottages are of clay, and who are crushed before the moth". Oh! If there is one thing more wonderful in the whole world than this, it is that any one of us, base-born worms of a day, should refuse a union of such unspeakable grace'. See how the certainty that can only arise from real personal experience gives weight and point to the message.

#### 6. He Challenges You to a Sensible Biblical Balance in Preaching

McCheyne had some singular views. He was fascinated by eschatology, and held like the Bonars to a form of premillennialism influenced by Edward Irving. He was passionately concerned for the evangelism of the Jews, was fiercely opposed to Moderatism in all its guises, and held strongly to the Establishment Principle. Yet it is striking how little that is controversial finds a place in his preaching. His primary concern is emphatically with dealing with the souls of men, and all else is secondary. His preaching portions show a reasonable balance throughout Scripture, if anything tending to avoid apocalyptic books like Daniel and Revelation, except for his famous series on the Seven Churches of Asia. You all know that there are preachers with a tendency to have bees in the bonnet, pet subjects always good for a few minutes of filler when the sermon is not flowing. Romanism is all too often used in this way, a safe subject for a good rant, and such preachers find Jesuits and Illuminati lurking behind the most innocuous of texts.

And so the congregation settle back for a familiar tirade against papists, sodomites, abortionists, textual critics, and other groups notable chiefly for their absence from the gathered congregation. In the light of McCheyne's example, such stuff should be seen for what it is, a pointless abuse of precious pulpit time. Address what is relevant to the subject, and address it when you have something worthwhile to say.

Now for the negative lessons:

7. He Challenges You to Preach as You are Gifted by God  
McCheyne's sermons are not consistent in their quality. His sermons proper are good, sometimes truly wonderful; but his expository lectures are overall quite average in their content. Though full of solid Christian teaching, they are without real sparkle, vigour or striking insight. Indeed the change in NT Sermons from the textual sermons of the first half, to the long series of lectures on I Peter is a startling change of pace and of quality. The explanation is patently obvious: McCheyne had no real proficiency in consecutive exposition. He is a Spurgeon rather than a Lloyd-Jones, a discursive rather than an expository preacher, a devotee of the telescope rather than the microscope. Going through I Peter, he treats every chosen portion as a distinct unit, conveys no sense of ongoing themes, or of a developing argument, and consequently is very hit-and-miss. On some passages, as on 2:9, he gains real traction, and preaches powerfully; but others are quite ordinary messages, such as any competent preacher might produce. Some of the loveliest passages have no relevance to I Peter, and merely use the text as a springboard from which to discuss some aspect of the whole field of Scripture, such as on 2:3, 'if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious', where he heads straight into showing that Scripture compares the exercise of faith to each of the five senses in turn, which he uses as divisions. That is not wrong, but neither is it conducive to a consistent quality of consecutive exposition. The lectures on Hebrews are better, but I suspect only because the subject matter so passionately interested McCheyne, so that many portions inspire good individual messages. Play to your own strengths as a preacher, and do not fall into the trap of boring your congregation by trying to preach long expository series if God equipped you rather to be a good textual preacher.

8. He Challenges You to Safeguard Your Own Health  
McCheyne worked himself into an early grave. Even in 1843, fit young men of 29 without any chronic illness did not routinely expire. From his earliest days of ministry, he made it his practice never to refuse an invitation to preach. Even Bonar, the gentlest of biographers, acknowledges that McCheyne was far too ready to leave his congregation to fulfil an engagement, and in the last year of his life we see him twice visiting

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England (then a long, wearing journey by horse-drawn carriage) on preaching tours, and visiting parishes all over rural Aberdeenshire to prepare congregations for the coming Disruption. He reportedly preached six times in two days, or on another occasion twenty-seven times in twenty-four days. By the last year of his life his musical, melodious voice was hoarse and cracked, his natural colour was gone, his frame shrunken, his energy dissipated. What might McCheyne have achieved had he lived a normal span? He could well have been a Scottish Spurgeon, preaching with freshness and vigour year after year, decade after decade, winning multitudes to Christ. He could have been one who discipled a whole generation of young believers in holiness of living and purity of doctrine. It is startling to remember that McCheyne's personal friend Rev William Aitken of Carlops was one of the Free Church of Scotland ministers who stood bravely outside the Union of 1900, and lived on into the age of motor car and telephone, dying eventually in 1925. Never imagine that it is a waste of your time to give thought to healthy eating, regular exercise, and periodic holidays.

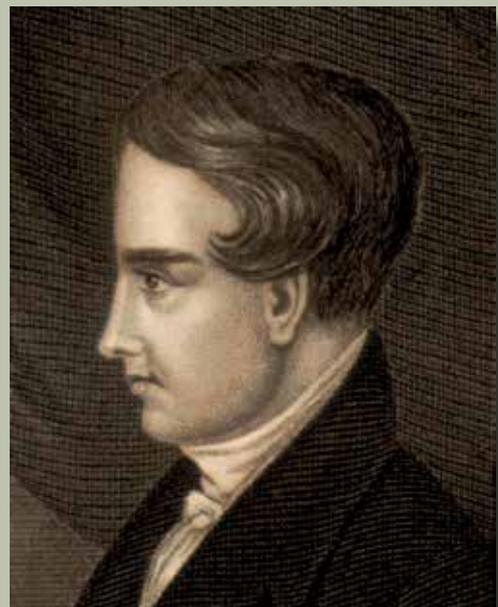
### **Conclusion: McCheyne and the Literature**

The one essential biography of McCheyne is the Memoir by Andrew Bonar, an Evangelical classic, and stirring, heart-warming reading. If you are not challenged by the passion and drive for holiness of the young divinity student as seen in his diary extracts, if you are not

thrilled as the weary pastor returns from the Holy Land, to find the Spirit rained down in revival power upon his congregation, if you are not moved as the bereft congregation gathers to weep together in their church building on a Saturday evening, mourning the passing of their young shepherd, you must be very hard. The best modern biography is Leen Van Valen's *Constrained by His Love*, which has been translated from the Dutch. It is very detailed and lengthy, but is fully in sympathy with McCheyne's evangelical passion. David Robertson's *Awakening* is opinionated, but is a good concise account for all that, drawing out some useful challenges for our own day from McCheyne's example. There is a thesis by David Yeaworth (Edinburgh University, 1957), which is freely available online, and contains useful material.

Of the three volumes of recently published sermons, all are worthy, but I particularly recommend *New Testament Sermons* to purchase and to read, as it contains some of McCheyne's preaching at his absolute best, as well as a good representative sampling of his expository lecturing on I Peter. For the keen reader, I would further recommend *From the Preacher's Heart*, which was originally published in the nineteenth century under the rather grim title, *Additional Remains of R M McCheyne*. It contains a large selection of representative sermons, including some real gems. But the full volume of *Memoir and Remains* contains a very full sample of all McCheyne's different writing: poetry, tracts, letters, lectures, sermons and the famous Bible Reading Plan. This is the place to begin experiencing McCheyne!

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# News



## Bracadale and Duirinish Induction

*Rev Richard Ross*

A crowd of well over 150 joined the Presbytery of Skye and Lochcarron on Friday 7th November for the ordination and induction of Rev Calum Smith to Bracadale and Duirinish.

Rev A J MacInnes (Lochalsh and Strath) presided and preached from Joshua 1:1-2. He showed from the passage: 1. Cold facts of the challenge; 2. Common fear in service; 3. Complete obedience required; 4.

Called by the commander in chief. After the Clerk had read the narrative, Rev Calum Smith answered the questions and signed the formula. He was then ordained and inducted to the pastoral charge of Bracadale and Duirinish with prayer and the laying on of hands by the Presbytery, along with Rev G Craig, Rev J Clark, Rev HJT Woods, Rev G MacDonald, Rev J Gracie and Rev D Blunt who were associated with the Presbytery

for the evening.

Rev M A Macleod (Snizort) then addressed the new minister from Proverbs 27:23, reminding him of: 1. His responsibility towards the flock of God; 2. His assurance of God's sufficient help.

Then Rev R Ross (Portree) addressed the congregation from 1 Corinthians 12: 14-26 on: 1. The need for unity; 2. The danger of division; 3 The care for one another required.

The service of worship was concluded with the singing of Psalm 126, and the Benediction.

The crowd then retired to Portree Community Centre, where the ladies of the Presbytery had prepared a sumptuous feast. After Mr Murdo Smith (Stornoway) had given thanks for the food, the reception began.

Presentations were made to the new minister; his wife and family by some of the congregation. Mr Smith then made a presentation to Mr Donald Robertson, and thanked Mrs Pat MacDonald and her group of ladies, who helped to prepare and serve such an excellent feast. He asked Rev G Craig, Rev J Clark and Rev R Kemp to speak.

Mr Smith then spoke of the late elder Mr A Nicolson, whose sudden death had taken place just two weeks before his induction. He spoke movingly of the congregation's sadness, but determination to carry on the Lord's cause in Bracadale and Duirinish.

The evening was brought to a close by worship led by the new minister, Rev Calum Smith.

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# Desk

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## **New Moderator: Rev Kenneth Macdonald, Scalpay**

*Rev John MacLeod, Assembly Clerk*

The Moderator Designate for the 2015 General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) is Rev Kenneth Macdonald (65), minister of the Free Church Continuing congregation in Scalpay.

Brought up on the Island of Lewis, in Bayble, Point, Mr Macdonald trained as a joiner and spent a number of years in the building trade and as a grocer.

His conversion in 1983 brought

important changes in outlook and Mr Macdonald went on to engage in short-term mission work in Bangladesh working for Tear Fund, leading a team of students doing voluntary work at a hospital complex. Nor did it stop there, because in 1989 he went to South Africa, with his family, as an artisan missionary, building new churches and renovating some of the older church buildings. There he also began to preach for the first time, out of

necessity due to the shortage of preachers, and became conscious of being called by the Lord to serve as a minister. That call led to a return to Scotland to study for the ministry. Ordained in 1997, he was minister in Snizort, on the Isle of Skye, for eleven years. Since 2008 he has been minister on the Island of Scalpay.

Mr Macdonald has represented the Church in Australia and in Zambia, preached at conferences in America and England and serves on the National Committee of the Scottish Reformation Society. He has also, on several occasions, led groups to visit Israel.

In such spare time as he has, he enjoys sea fishing, woodwork and reading political biographies.

Married to Coleen, he has two married sons: Mark (an operations officer with Scottish Natural Heritage) and Greg (Minister of the Free Church Continuing Congregation in Ness).

### **Arbroath Weekend**

*Katie Morrison*

On a lovely weekend in October, a group of young people met for the bi-annual Arbroath Weekend Away. The speaker was Rev Allan Murray (rtd Brora FCC) speaking on the topic of 'The Christian Life: A Comfort Zone or A War Zone'.

Opening the weekend from the first chapter in Nehemiah, Mr Murray talked on the rebuilding of the walls and how important the walls of defence are against the world. He gave a bit of context to the passage



explaining how the Babylonians had kept the Jews in captivity for 70 years and they now had started heading back to Israel. Having listened to an interesting talk, we all settled with tea and baking to finish the night off.

Next morning in Mr Murray's second talk, he convicted us by asking us, 'Are we too comfortable?' and pointing out that so many problems in our lives are because we've made our lives too comfortable. He took the example of Nehemiah moving from the luxury of the palace to the desolation of Jerusalem. Mr Murray then encouraged us by saying that the Christian life is a constant progression heavenward.

For Saturday afternoon, we split into our discussion groups and talked about the various questions put to us. After that, we parted ways with each other, some going to play football, some walking into town and others staying around the centre.

On Saturday evening Mr Murray talked on the types of opposition we will have in the world. He pointed out that mockery is the most common trial we will have along with Satan catching you when you're in your comfort zone. Mr Murray drew our attention to Nehemiah 4 verses 4-5 and questioned us – 'Are we willing to have that kind of prayer?' To close the talk, Mr Murray encouraged us by telling us that the weapons we are to use are not carnal but spiritual and they will always prevail.

Following a prayer meeting and a delicious breakfast, we met for the Sabbath morning service where Mr Murray once again preached practically to our hearts about prayer. He talked on humility in prayer, how it forms a covenant relationship and how prayer embraces the church. We were taught that prayer should be our instinctive first move and that nothing troubles Satan more.

We enjoyed a good afternoon of fellowship and food that

preceded a sermon from Romans 5 verse 19 on 'God's Provision in Christ for Sinners'. We were reminded that all our sins are paid for by God's most amazing provision for us.

Monday morning came all too quickly for us though and we headed back to our various homes encouraged and revitalized from a great weekend. We want to sincerely thank Mr Murray and Mrs Murray for their caring fellowship with us all. Very importantly we would like to thank the cooks, Jennifer and Isobel Ann, for their delicious cooking for us. We also can't forget Nathan for organizing the weekend and making sure everything ran smoothly.

But most importantly, we are thankful to God for His never-ending mercies toward us. We thank Him for bringing His servant to preach His Word to us, and for the fellowship we had over the whole weekend.

The next weekend, God willing, is to be held on Friday 13th to Monday 16th February 2015.

### **Southern Presbytery Colloquium**

Learning from our brethren in the USA, the Southern Presbytery organised a colloquium for ministers, office-bearers and interested laymen. It was held in Shettleston church on Saturday 13th December. Three papers were given: 'The Exercises' by Rev John J Murray, dealing with a kind of fellowship meeting for ministers held in the Scottish church following the Reformation – a precursor to presbyteries which were first organised only in 1581; 'The Trinity in Christian Practice' by Rev Alasdair Macleod; and 'John Owen on Communion with God' by Rev Andrew Allan. Helpful and profitable discussion followed each paper. The brethren felt edified and encouraged and agreed to continue such meetings twice yearly.

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## North Korea: Not Hopeless

*E Kendal*

On Saturday 13 December North Korea's deaf football team played a 'friendly' match against Australia's deaf football team in Sydney's Olympic Park. Furthermore '[the Korean] Church group World Milal Australia organised the event with the help of Deaf Football Australia, with parishioners hosting the players in their Sydney homes'. This contact was undoubtedly a miracle in answer to the prayers of many. May we persevere in prayer for many seemingly hopeless causes because we believe they are not hopeless, for Jesus Christ is the Eternal King and 'Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end' (Isaiah 9:7). Lord, we commit ourselves to another year in thy service, to intercede in confident faith for thy precious, persecuted church. Amen.

## Displaced and Traumatized

*E Kendal*

As we head into 2015, hundreds of thousands of Christians are struggling to survive as refugees or IDPs (internally displaced peoples). Driven from their historic homeland in Upper Mesopotamia, hundreds of thousands of Assyrian Christians are struggling in camps and shared accommodation across Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. Having lost everything, they are dependent on Christian aid groups and local churches for their day-to-day survival. Around 150,000 Assyrian IDPs are in Iraqi Kurdistan (and some in Baghdad) being sheltered in churches, schools, shopping centres and by local believers. Arriving with only the clothes on their backs, they too are dependent on the generosity of others. In Sudan, many thousands of Christians have been driven from their homes in South Kordofan state by the genocidal regime in Khartoum. Tens of thousands have fled to camps in South Sudan. Tens of thousands seek shelter in caves and trenches in the Nuba Mountains awaiting Khartoum's threatened Final Solution. The number of Christians displaced by Islamic militants in Nigeria, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo is quite enormous. Of course their needs are beyond the material, for these refugees and IDPs have been traumatised by war, with most having lost loved ones. Understandably, their faith is sorely tested. As we head into 2015, will we commit to living simply and supporting a Christian aid group so our brothers and sisters might simply live? As we head into 2015, will we commit to pray for the displaced?

## Captive and Enslaved

As we head into 2015, people are slowly becoming aware that slavery is alive and flourishing in the 21st Century and growing at an alarming rate. The victims are commonly from poor and marginalised communities; many are persecuted Christians. Today thousands of Christians exist as bonded labourers in Pakistan and as trapped labourers in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

Today thousands of Christians suffer as sex slaves to Islamic jihadists in Northern Nigeria, Cameroon and 'Islamic State', and as chattel slaves of Sudanese and Gulf Arabs. Christians fleeing persecution in the Horn of Africa are snatched from camps and trafficked into the Sinai where they are tortured to extort ransom payments. Committed Christian abolitionists and anti-trafficking activists are getting busier, rescuing captives and redeeming slaves with full knowledge that nothing will change until the culture changes through spiritual transformation. As we head into 2015, will we commit to supporting the spread of the Gospel, for the witness of the Word and the Spirit? As we head into 2015, will we commit to pray for the captives?

## Family Breakdown Study

*Christian Institute*

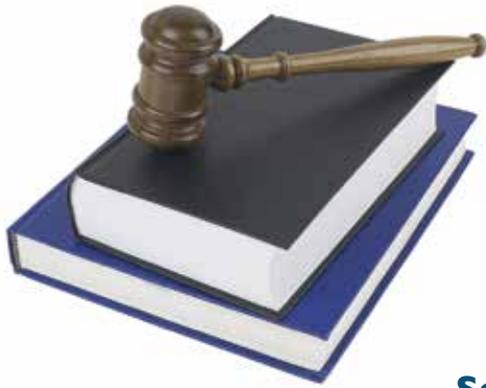
A landmark study on family life has revealed a huge increase in family breakdown and highlighted the vital role of marriage. According to the study, more than one in three children underwent domestic upheaval, such as parental break-up, by the age of eleven.

In addition, more than one in five children whose parents split up experienced emotional or behavioural problems. The latest research, from the Centre for Longitudinal Studies, followed the lives of 13,000 children born in the year 2000. It showed that by age eleven only half of the children's parents were still married, compared to 60 per cent when they were toddlers. A similar study from 1969 found that around 90 per cent of children aged eleven still had married parents.

Twice the rate of children whose parents split up experienced behavioural and emotional problems compared to those whose parents remained together. The study also demonstrated a link between marriage and family stability, showing that cohabiting parents are more than twice as likely to separate as those who are married.

Harry Benson of the Marriage Foundation commented: 'Politicians can no longer safely ignore what these big national studies are telling us – that children whose parents don't stay together face much higher risks to their well-being. It is also clear that very few parents who do not get married stay together. Politicians are incredibly glib in the way they ignore marriage but the message should be absolutely clear – if we are not encouraging parents to get married we are increasing those risks'.

Last November a survey commissioned by family lawyers revealed some of the devastating effects of divorce on children. According to the findings by Resolution, almost two thirds of 14 to 16 year-olds whose parents divorced said that their education was negatively affected. One in seven said that the stress involved with their parents' split caused them to turn to drugs or alcohol. It also found that a fifth of children never saw one or more of their grandparents again.



# Books

## **Songs of the Spirit: The Place of Psalms in the Worship of God**

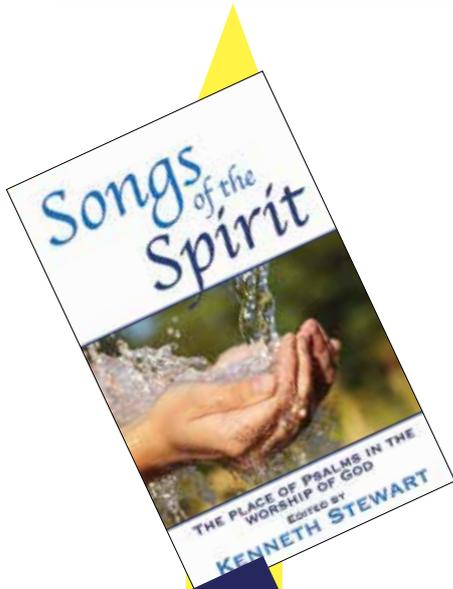
Ed. Kenneth Stewart

Reformation Scotland Trust,  
pbk, 210pp, £5.00.

Obtainable from:  
Reformation Scotland Trust,  
Whiteside House,  
Bathgate EH48 2RX.

Or contact:

[manager@reformationscotland.org](mailto:manager@reformationscotland.org)



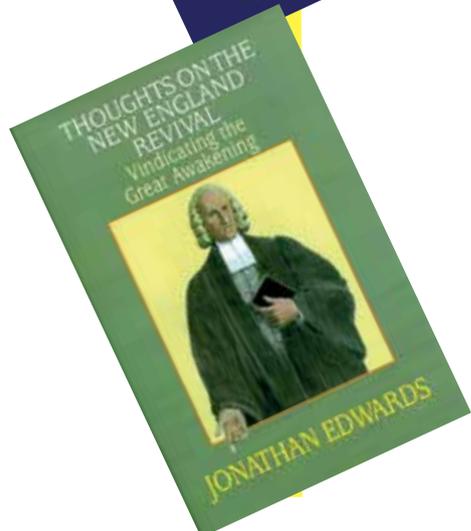
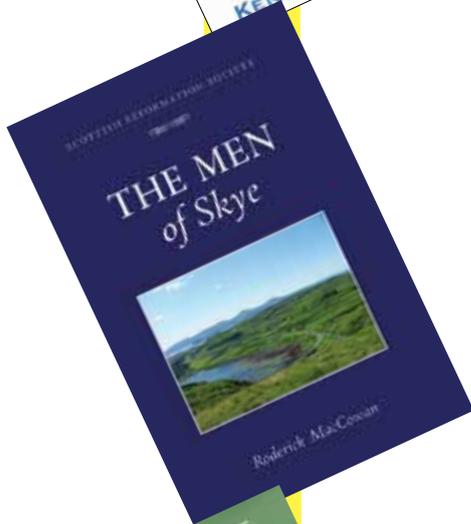
There is a tremendous confusion in worship today. For many churches, anything is acceptable, providing it feels good and the congregation enjoys it. The vital question seems to be, What will attract people? Will the outsider feel comfortable? Recently on holiday we went to worship in an Elim Church. The small hall was crowded but they kindly gave us seats. Men, women and children read passages of Scripture, sang songs, or gave a thought. Prayer was a cacophony of voices. The sermon was moralistic rather than evangelical, factually inaccurate in part and when the preacher finished his mother got up to stress some points. Do Bible rules matter? Is there in Scripture a regulative principle? Of course there is. God is greatly concerned about worship and has not left it up to man's imagination. In 2010 the Free Church of Scotland, which is the largest of the evangelical Presbyterian churches in our land, gave up its adherence to exclusive, non-accompanied, Psalm-singing in public worship. For a hundred years the Church had followed this practice and her office-bearers were bound by their

ordination vows to support the practice. But it appears that few in that body care for truth or bother about these vows nowadays?

Here we have an excellent book which shows why the church should continue to follow the regulative principle and worship God only as He has prescribed. We have the command to sing only Psalms. The New Testament church and the early church in its first few centuries used only unaccompanied Psalms. The Calvinistic Reformers, the Puritans, and the Presbyterian churches of Scotland, until weakened by Arminianism and liberalism at the end of the Nineteenth Century, only sang the Psalms. Sadly today the vast majority of churches seldom sing a Psalm, show scant respect to the inspired songbook which God gave us and think that they themselves can write far better songs for worship than those which God has given us. What an insult to God! What arrogance on the part of man!

I would strongly recommend this book to you. It begins with an excellent chapter on what we should sing, by Rev Kenneth Stewart. Rev John Keddie provides a long and useful defence of Psalm-singing. David Silversides in his usual masterly way shows the sufficiency and adequacy of the Psalter. Three Free Presbyterians, the late Rev William Maclean, Donald Balfour and Matthew Vogan provide useful contributions. Rev David Murray explains the therapeutic value of singing the Psalms. The book ends with a further chapter by Rev Kenneth Stewart which shows that musical instruments should not be used in public worship.

*Rev William Macleod*



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## The Men of Skye

Roderick MacCowan

Scottish Refomation Society,  
pbk, 235pp, £9.95 (incl p&p).

Copies of *The Men of Skye*, first published in 1902, have long been vanishingly rare, and this new edition will be welcomed by those of us who have long guarded our treasured volumes, lent them reluctantly, and carefully ensured their return. It is a heart-warming collection of biographical sketches of notable nineteenth-century laymen on the Isle of Skye, and thus offers valuable insight into our spiritual heritage in that part of Scotland.

The sketches were written by Roderick MacCowan (1871-1948), a young Skyeman studying at the time for the ministry with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, deeply sympathetic to the spirituality of the Highlands. He eventually joined the Free Church, as part of the movement led by the future Principal John Macleod, and served as Free Church minister of Kiltarlity from 1908 to 1936. It is worth noting that had MacCowan not faithfully gathered this information and published it, much of it would have been irretrievably lost.

*The Men of Skye* will be found a delight to read for those who share MacCowan's passion for the Highland religion of a better day, a warmly experimental Calvinistic Christianity. He sturdily contends for the superiority of this solemn, robust piety, marked more by rigorous self-examination, and by a horror of sin in all its manifestations than by extravagant public professions of assurance, in contrast to the religious trends of his own generation, which we see only magnified and further exacerbated a century later.

Chief points of interest include his stress on the role of laymen in spreading the Gospel to Skye at the beginning of the nineteenth century, while evangelical ministry only came in later years. Above all, the cause was built by the blind catechist Donald Munro, subject of the first sketch, whose teaching ministry from his little meetinghouse on the shore of Loch Snizort helped spread the Gospel to every parish on the island. I was fascinated to read that it was on the site of this meeting house that the Free Church, school and manse were built after 1843, and of course that building, in its incomparably beautiful setting, remains precious to many of the Lord's people to this day as a 'Jerusalem', as MacCowan calls it, a place of blessed experiences of meeting with God.

In his sketch of Hector Maclean, MacCowan gives an account of the great revival under the preaching of 'Maighstir Ruairidh' (Rev Roderick Macleod), who was left from 1844 as the sole Free Church minister for many years on the whole island. From the spring of 1843, he began holding open-air meetings at Fairy Bridge, the meeting point of three roads in the North West of Skye,

which were abundantly blessed. This blessing continued in the plentiful conversions under his faithful ministry in Snizort over many years following.

On a historical level, it is interesting to note the remarkable mobility of the Men, at least within Skye, most living in several different villages in the course of their lives, sharply contrasting with more settled communities elsewhere, as on Lewis. Also, the South of Skye, Strath and Sleat, is acknowledged to have been different from the rest of the island, partaking less of spiritual blessing during the period in question. Though the cause had subsequently strengthened, MacCowan still observed a difference in his own day in the evidence of Gospel blessing between North and South Skye, and perhaps it can still be observed today.

Central to these sketches is a continued emphasis of the need for real, personal spiritual experience of saving grace, and of consistent public and private Christian living. To those inclined to despondency, it is heartening to read of men living their lives in the face of God and men, as consistent believers. The sketches are unusually literate, with many relevant Biblical quotations, but also with hymns, spiritual poets like Milton and Herbert, and Gaelic verse being frequently quoted.

*Rev Alasdair Macleod*

## Thoughts on the New England Revival: Vindicating the Great Awakening

Jonathan Edwards

Banner of Truth, hbk, 294pp, £12.33

What have we to do with a little band of settlers on the East Coast of North America with their erudite minister, before the Jacobite Rebellion? This book is much more than a parochial defence of church practice in revival times: it is a searching analysis of our spirituality, as much today as then. This man knows the map of the soul and detects all the feints of hypocrisy relentlessly. We claim, as a church, to have acted in faithfulness to God – read this book and all shades of false righteousness and double motives will be laid bare. Visit the court of this faithful servant of the Lord if you want assurance of a 'conscience void of offence toward God and men'. Under 96 pages on 'Things to be corrected or avoided', he takes up, 'The duty to consider and guard against errors into which the promoters of religion may fall'. He says, 'It is a mistake I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed to their wounding, that they think they are in no danger of going astray or being misled by the Devil because they are near to God'; therefore, he says, Luke 21:36 is never out of date!

This is just one of countless challenging analyses of the Christian's errors which arise from: 'a. Undiscerned

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spiritual pride, b. Wrong principles, c. Ignorance of Satan's advantages and devices'. These are the cause of promoters of revival being wrongly blamed, eg for 'making too much of outcries and effects on the body'; 'of men's earnestness in warning and entreating one another'. Edwards says we rather have an 'Obligation to Promote This Work'; many telling biblical examples are quoted. He also suggests 'Reasons for believing that the great work of God for the world's conversion may begin in America!' He can be excused for believing this as he recounts the mighty works of God in that region: 'The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures and honours ... their consciences awakened and ... made sensible of the pernicious nature of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to lie under the guilt and the displeasure of God ... young people, by a powerful, invisible influence on their minds ... have been brought to forsake things ... they were greatly addicted to ... as their frolicking, vain

company-keeping, night-walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language and lewd songs. He goes on, 'multitudes in New England have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth ... together with a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Saviour, and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; and of the wonders of Christ's dying love, and the sincerity of Christ in the invitations of the gospel'. 'God has also made His hand very visible and His work glorious in the multitudes of little children that have been wrought upon ... and effects on many that have been ignorant and barbarous, as I have before observed of the Indians and Negroes'. For these and other reasons, set out in five closely-reasoned chapters, this timely reprint is worth close perusal. The whole is set out under clear headings and subheadings, as we have come to expect from this publisher. All in all, a valuable addition to any bookshelf.

*Rev David S Fraser*

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## Modesty in Dress

*Rev Kenneth Macdonald*

**T**his is a subject that seems to be more relevant in our day than ever before. While 'fashion' is not a subject in which some of us are experts, nevertheless it is a subject that should not be ignored by any Christian. It obviously applies to us all in one way or another. Should we be concerned if we see a Christian dressed in a manner that seems inappropriate or immodest? Should current fashion trends influence how Christians dress?

The Apostle charges older Christians, and ladies particularly, to address such issues, and be good examples to the younger, as taught in Titus 2:3-5 where the word 'sober' means chaste and modest. One of the commentators commenting on these verses says, 'such ought to be in their clothing, and in their speech, and in the whole of their conduct and conversation, as become the character which they bear, and the profession they make'. Peter has similar teaching on the whole subject of appearance (1Pet.3).

All of us have a duty to care for one another, but biblical love for our brothers and sisters in Christ may mean that at times we have to address awkward issues that may be difficult for us. Any correction or advice should be given in a loving gracious manner but if we are of a teachable spirit we will see the Lord's kindness in a fellow believer being willing to address such situations

with us. We can have much to learn from our blessed Saviour in this!

Whatever our congregation, it is an issue which ought to be seriously considered, and it is not always the younger ones who need to be reminded of the biblical norm regarding how we present ourselves in worship services and also in public.

While the focus is usually on women in this matter, there is also a need for men to take great care in not drawing unnecessary attention to themselves. The Lord requires the same high standard from both male and female. As Christians, to provoke anyone to talk about what we wear rather than about our Christ-likeness is a shame to us.

### **What does it mean to dress modestly?**

Both men and women should seek to bring glory to God in their manner of dress as in every other area of life. Paul exhorts women to dress modestly and decently: 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works' (1Tim.2:9-10). Our dress, jewellery or hair style, is to be sober, and not in any way showy, immodest, or obviously costly. While the Bible here only addresses women, and that in our own day too can be where most problems lie, the same teaching must also apply in principle to men.

Modesty in the way we dress is not just for church; it is to be the standard for all Christians at all times wherever they are. The key to understanding what constitutes modesty in dress is to examine the attitudes and intents of the heart. Those whose hearts are inclined

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toward God will make every effort to dress modestly, decently, and appropriately so as not to attract attention for the wrong reasons.

A godly person endeavours to do everything with a 'God-ward' perspective. We are not to forget that our bodies have been redeemed by Christ and are now the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19-20). Those whose hearts are inclined toward self, will dress in a manner designed to draw attention to themselves with little or no regard for the consequences for themselves or others.

Dressing in an immodest fashion, especially wearing revealing clothing, may cause brothers and sisters in Christ to fall into sin. Remember our Lord's searching words: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell' (Mat.5:27-29). While the emphasis in this part of Scripture is on the 'lookers' could it not be argued, while not excusing such sin, that the 'looked at' have a duty not to dress in any way which would tempt to sin?

### **What about keeping up with fashion?**

When Scripture says we are to dress modestly, what exactly does that mean? Does a woman have to be covered from head to toe in drab clothing and deliberately wear what is just as likely to attract attention by being years out of date? There are cults and religions in the world that demand this of women. But is that the biblical meaning of modesty? Certainly not! However a Christian woman in her dress should resist the temptation to go along with the fashion of the day, when that is immodest, being wise enough to know that that type of attire will not be honouring to her Lord. She should be aware of her responsibility as a witness for her Saviour. Also the thought that she may cause some man to sin against God because of her dress should cause her to avoid such. Her great wish should be to reflect her love for her Saviour by modesty and sobriety in all aspects of her life.

Should a man only wear a dated dark suit and never anything fashionable? That surely is not what Scripture means for men any more than for women when it speaks of 'modest apparel'. Yet men should be sober in dress.

When clothing is purchased the impression we are to give by what we wear should always be in our thoughts. There is nothing wrong with being fashionable, and especially for our young folk, as long as there is no compromise on modesty nor intention to be provocative or showy.

Biblical modesty with regards to clothing then is to do with being 'sober' and 'decent' so as not to draw attention. If people's hearts are inclined toward godliness, they will ensure they wear clothing that is neither provocative nor revealing in public, and so do not adversely affect their personal testimony as children of God.

### **Casual clothing in Church?**

There seems to be a growing trend for more casual clothing to be worn to church by some. This especially can be seen in men, young and not so young. I fear this may often speak of a casual attitude to worship. While a man may not have the same problems as far as modesty is concerned, he can still dress sinfully by deliberately drawing attention to himself.

Some will say, 'It's the heart that matters'. Indeed, but what the heart is like will be reflected in everything about us. Whether we like it or not, judgments are usually first made on the basis of appearance. Granted, sometimes wrong judgments are made that way, but why give anyone reason to question your motive for wearing what will attract unnecessary attention?

We all, whatever our age, need to be aware of worldliness in our attire and demeanour. In coming to God's house we are coming in a special way into the presence of the King of kings and should dress appropriately.

None of course will ever be refused entry to our congregations for not appearing in 'right clothes' but we would hope that any such would soon learn as they see the good example of how to dress appropriately in God's house.

### **Conclusion**

How we dress reveals much about us. Modesty in this, as in every area of life, shows humility of heart and a concern not to offend. This should be the attitude of all who love the Lord. Young and old, male and female, must ask themselves, 'Am I, wherever I am, appropriately dressed, "modest (in my) apparel?"' (1 Tim 2:9).

**Does a woman have to be covered from head to toe in drab clothing and deliberately wear what is just as likely to attract attention by being years out of date?**

## Congregational Remittances - December 2014

	ORDINARY REMITTANCES			
	CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2014	2014 Dec	2014 To Dec	2013 To Dec
<b>Presbytery of Inverness</b>				
Aberdeen	389	1,300	21,491	20,101
Duthil-Dores	109,883	685	25,657	23,246
Inverness	0	3,000	28,990	30,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	1,400	22,421	18,000
<b>Total Inverness</b>	<b>110,272</b>	<b>6,385</b>	<b>98,559</b>	<b>91,347</b>
<b>Northern Presbytery</b>				
Assynt & Scourie	686	3,385	9,361	8,785
Brora	700	0	17,058	21,281
Kiltearn	188	800	8,012	7,379
Tarbat	0	8,100	20,514	19,964
<b>Total Northern</b>	<b>1,574</b>	<b>12,285</b>	<b>54,944</b>	<b>57,409</b>
<b>Southern Presbytery</b>				
Arran	599	481	8,833	8,849
Ayr	0	3,300	12,495	10,514
Dumfries	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh	254,497	2,500	32,742	34,368
Glasgow - Partick	105,697	1,400	28,000	30,000
Glasgow - Shettleston	115	2,000	27,200	26,004
Glasgow - Knightswood	550	2,057	30,233	29,272
Rothsay	0	1,000	2,000	1,460
<b>Total Southern</b>	<b>361,458</b>	<b>12,738</b>	<b>141,503</b>	<b>140,467</b>

### Outer Hebrides Presbytery

Cross	0	2,009	26,542	24,771
Harris - Leverburgh	425	1,500	19,494	18,177
Harris - Scalpay	500	1,900	30,033	28,868
Knock & Point	0	1,300	16,111	14,438
North Uist	38,515	1,552	14,000	12,000
Stornoway	4,361	7,202	107,849	95,551
<b>Total Outer Hebrides</b>	<b>43,801</b>	<b>15,463</b>	<b>214,030</b>	<b>193,804</b>

### Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron

Bracadale	33	1,000	16,788	5,770
Duirinish (Waternish)	0	0	3,000	2,800
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	295	1,400	20,316	18,234
Lochalsh	455	1,150	18,968	17,279
Poolewe & Aultbea	543	1,000	12,273	14,258
Ullapool	0	0	0	44
Portree	0	1,200	21,695	21,365
Snizort	1,000	3,300	28,043	27,498
Strath	45	1,150	8,799	7,018
<b>Total Skye/Lochcarron</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>129,882</b>	<b>114,266</b>
Smiths Falls			2,000	

### Total Congregations

<b>Total Congregations</b>	<b>519,474</b>	<b>57,071</b>	<b>640,919</b>	<b>597,293</b>
Other Donations	1,230	2,457	28,748	30,357
Legacy		0	111	133,353

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>520,704</b>	<b>59,528</b>	<b>669,777</b>	<b>761,003</b>
Including Gift Aid	1,527		130,773	101,652

## Visit to Sri Lanka Rev William Macleod

It was a great privilege and encouragement for me to visit Sri Lanka and my good friend Partheepan and to see the work which God is doing through him. I was due to visit China to do some teaching and thought since I was in that part of the world I should also travel to the Free Church (Continuing) mission in Vavuniya. I arrived in Colombo airport around midnight, tired from an intense ten days of teaching and a day's travel and with a cold which I had caught on my last day in China. However it was a great joy to see Parthee's happy face and also to meet his brother Vijay again. We went to Vijay's home which is about an hour's drive from the airport, grabbed some hours' sleep and were up again at 6am to drive the six, or so, hours to Vavuniya. Vijay is minister of Trinity Reformed Presbyterian church in Colombo. He and his wife are delighted to have a two month old son, Calvin Jeremiah, after being married quite a number of years. There were various serious difficulties in the pregnancy but God was gracious to them. Vijay's church kindly provided the transport for us and Vijay did the translation into Tamil at the conference. We arrived in Vavuniya in the early afternoon, went to Hotspot just round the corner for a curry and then had a couple of hours rest. At 4pm we went to the church

for a kirk session meeting. Rev Harry Woods from Scotland joined us by Skype. We had decided to draw up a roll of communicant members, so we interviewed six people who joined the congregation by profession of faith, the administrator Maran and his wife, the evangelist Pritheepan and his wife, a widow woman, and Dino, Parthee's wife. All were accepted and prayed with. We then interviewed two teenage boys, Felix, Maran's son, Beniell, Pritheepan's son and a girl, Logie, the daughter of the widow woman. They gave a clear testimony of their faith and so it was decided to grant them baptism, to be administered at the close of the service that evening. On the Saturday evening another young woman, a teacher in the church kindergarten, appeared before the session and she also was accepted as a member on profession of her faith. This means that along with Parthee himself the congregation now have a membership of eleven. Two or three others have also expressed an interest in being baptised but it was decided that it was best to leave them for a few months to mature and consolidate. The service began at 5pm with an attendance of around 35. I preached on the marks of grace and Parthee translated. Following the service, I performed the baptism of these lovely young people which I found a very moving experience. After the service a cup of tea was served and later there was a gathering of eight or nine young folk in the manse. They asked some hard questions, including What is the unforgivable sin? On the Saturday we visited and had lunch with Maran's

family and had dinner with Pritheepan's family. Both showed us great kindness and generosity. Again the evening service was at 5pm. The communion service on the Lord's day morning was memorable for me. It was a wonderful experience sitting at the Lord's Table with these Sri Lankan children of God. In the evening the church was quite full, with every chair taken and children sitting on mats on the floor. Over 100 were present including many children who are taken by bus to the Sabbath School each Sabbath afternoon from the village of Selvanagar, where the kindergarten has been established. All sat attentively as I preached. In China I spoke through a gifted and able woman interpreter. She translated only what I said. It was quite different in Sri Lanka as Parthee interpreted for me. I felt it was more me preparing the bullets and Parthee firing them. Sometimes the translation was considerably longer than the original sentence as the preacher pressed home the point.

When one considers that the work in Sri Lanka began less than three years ago and that Parthee preached for the first six months to a morning congregation of just his wife and at the prayer meeting midweek for three months to the same one person, it is wonderful to see how the work has now developed.

On the Monday I visited the kindergarten. This is financed by Ceylon Christian Care who have been a wonderful help to Parthee in providing finance for the work. Here the children greeted me with bouquets of flowers. They sang a song for me and put on a little performance in my honour. I had the privilege of addressing them briefly. Also I met the local police chief who had come along and the chairman of the parents' representatives. We also visited some other members and adherents in their homes. We were in one home where the father seems to have been converted recently. The house was very poor with only one chair on which I had to sit while others stood. There is no supply of water in the house nor even a well nearby. His wife is in the Middle East working as a domestic servant while he remains at home looking after the three little children. He now recognises that this is wrong and said that when she returns at the end of her contract she will not go abroad again. It was good to see him at all the services avidly taking notes.

Parthee not only ministers to this 'church extension charge' but also runs a Seminary, preparing men for the ministry. As with our own Seminary in Scotland, classes are held two days every month and between times students do reading and essays. There are around twelve students and two more have just joined. Some of these are pastors already in different churches and others are students who feel the call to the ministry. On the Monday a conference was organised for these men and their wives and the ministers in Vijay's church were also invited. It was great to meet Kerey Thayananth again and



*Newly Baptised: Logie, Felix and Beniel*

catch up with his news. He studied at our Seminary in Scotland before Parthee and now labours as a minister in Trincomalee in the east of Sri Lanka. Along with members of the congregation around fifty gathered at 4pm on Monday for the first three-hour slot. I spoke on Justification and Adoption. On Tuesday we gathered again at 9am for three hours and later in the day for a further three hours. I spoke on Sanctification. Folk listened well and at the end of each session useful questions were asked.

For me it was early to bed on Tuesday night and up again at 5.30 for the long journey back to Colombo. Then on Wednesday it was up at 3am to head for the airport and the two day journey home via Bangkok and Dubai.

I thank God for the privilege of being there and seeing for myself the work of God. People could not have been kinder. The food was delicious. The only negative was the mosquitoes. They were very fond of my sweet white blood! On my first night in Vavuniya I counted 64 bites. I have a slight allergy to mosquitoes so I came out in itchy red blotches. The following nights we used fly spray and I kept the fan going all night which seemed to deter them. When I felt a little miserable I thought of Livingstone in the jungles of Africa suffering from various fevers and malaria and told myself that I had really got off very lightly!



“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,  
that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation;  
that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

**Isaiah 52:7**