

WORLD MISSION COUNCIL

May 2010

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly

1. Receive the report.
2. Give thanks for the life and witness of overseas staff who have died, salute those who have completed their period of service overseas, and uphold in prayer all overseas staff who continue to serve.
3. Instruct the World Mission Council to sustain and strengthen its commitment to offering meaningful solidarity to partner churches in contexts where the Christian community comes under severe pressure because of its minority status.
4. Instruct the World Mission Council to work with partner churches on the development of inter-religious dialogue with a view to promoting religious freedom and resolving the difficulties currently faced by Christians who suffer on account of their minority status.
5. Instruct the World Mission Council to make known to the Church at large the situations of discrimination and/or persecution which are faced by partner churches and other Christian communities at this time.
6. Urge all Kirk Sessions to consider how their congregations can best (a) raise awareness of the issues facing minority Christians; (b) offer prayer support to minority Christians; (c) undertake advocacy on behalf of minority Christians, and (d) take practical action to demonstrate solidarity with minority Christians.
7. Approve the Priority Areas Action Plan (Ministries Council, section 1.3) and commit the World Mission Council, in partnership with others, to its effective delivery over the next seven years.
8. Give thanks to God for the work of Scottish Churches World Exchange and the commitment of Members and staff who, over the years, have enabled many to experience the rich vitality of the world church.
9. Noting the desire of the congregations of St Andrew's Nassau and Lucaya Kirk, Freeport to affiliate to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (USA) as an interim step towards the formation of a Presbyterian Church of Bahamas, agree to their severance from the Church of Scotland, commend them for their Christian mission and service over the past two hundred years and wish them God's continuing blessing as they take forward their life and witness in the Bahamas.
10. Note the decision of the World Mission Council to pass responsibility for the congregation of Greyfriars St Ann's linked with Arouca and Sangre Grande, Trinidad to the Council's Africa and Caribbean Committee.
11. Pass an Act amending Act VI, 2001 anent Overseas Charges in the following terms:
The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that: Act VI 2001 anent Overseas Charges (as amended by Acts IX and XII 2002, VIII 2003 and II 2008) is hereby further amended as follows:
 1. *By the deletion in section 3 (2) (a) of the words "Overseas Charges Committee" and the substitution therefor of the words "the appropriate Committee of the World Mission Council"*
 2. *By the deletion of "Lucaya Kirk, Freeport, Bahamas" and "St Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk, Nassau, Bahamas" from Schedule A.*
12. Thank all from around the world who have worked on the preparations for marking the centenary of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference and look forward to welcoming world church representatives to Edinburgh in June this year.

REPORT

Christian Communities in Minority Situations

"There is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it". 1 Cor.12.25-27.

An important responsibility of the World Mission Council is to listen to its partners throughout the world and to inform the Church of Scotland of what they are saying. Having heard from the various partners that Christians in many places face far greater pressure than the western church often recognises, and hearing their plea that their tale be told to the wider world, the General Assembly accepted the following deliverance in 2008 -

The General Assembly express solidarity with churches that are in a minority situation and are faced with discrimination and violence; resolve to share common commitment and take decisive action collectively to assist such minority churches that are caught in situations of violence and conflict; instruct the Council

(1) to find creative ways of including inter-religious dialogue as a vehicle to promote and protect the rights of minorities;

(2) to seek to bring awareness about such situations in the global Christian community

(3) to help and advise partner churches in developing self-understanding and identification through capacity building and theological education;

(4) to strengthen ecumenical groups and movements in minority churches for the building of a tolerant society; (5) to raise the issues facing minority churches in international forums for redress and remedy; and report to the General Assembly in 2009.

Recognising the scale and complexity of this deliverance, the World Mission Council soon realised that a report to the 2010 General Assembly was more feasible, and reported accordingly in 2009.

In 1800, an estimated 2,500 Christians died as a result of opposition to their faith. A century later, that total had risen to 34,400, and it is thought that more Christians died violent deaths in the 20th century than in all of previous Christian history. This pressure has not eased in the first decade of the 21st century: based on current statistical trends, it is estimated that around 176,000 Christians may have died for the faith in 2009.

It is recognised that Christians have also been among the oppressors and persecutors. The brutality of the Crusades is remembered throughout much of the Middle East, and the complicity of professing Christians in any genocide, including the Jewish Holocaust, cannot be forgotten. Christians have tortured and even burned their fellow Christians in the Inquisition, the religious wars throughout Europe and the treatment of witches in Scotland. It was observed in South Africa that *"Christians are killing Christians and other Christians are sitting on the fence."* Any report on the persecution of Christians must be made in a spirit of deep humility.

The World Mission Council also acknowledges that persecution of Christians is not new. Stephen was stoned to death as the first known Christian martyr, Paul was stoned and left for dead in Lystra and, with Silas, was beaten and imprisoned in Philippi. St John the Divine was exiled on Patmos. Persecution is a recurrent theme throughout the New Testament, as is the teaching that the coming of Christ brings crisis to the world.

In the centuries that have followed, Dutch and German Mennonites and French Huguenots migrated to avoid persecution, and Armenian Christians perished in what has been a largely forgotten genocide. However, there is widespread acceptance that the level of persecution of Christians, whether by discrimination or direct violence, has been greater in the last century than in any other period in the history of the Christian Church.

Since terrorist attacks on the United States of America on the 11 September 2001, new polarisations and pressures have been increasingly obvious. To a degree that may have surprised analysts and commentators a generation ago, religious loyalties have gained a new potency, and lie at the root of many of the world's ongoing civil wars and outbursts of political violence. Demographic projections indicate that religious feuds will intensify, especially as the future centres of global population are mainly in countries already divided by the great religious traditions of Christianity and Islam. [Jenkins, p164]

The impact of this is already being reported by many of the Church of Scotland's overseas partners. At a day conference held in Perth in February 2009, the Rt Rev Mano Rumalshah, Bishop of Peshawar in Pakistan, spoke movingly of threats on the life of clergy within his diocese and of a struggle to support those who, on converting from Islam to Christianity, are rejected by their families and left facing death threats and destitution. During last year's General Assembly, interviews with overseas church leaders were conducted; proving to be a humbling exercise for the interviewers as they listened to the realities of living as Christians in what can often be the most challenging of environments.

In the Middle East, Asia and parts of Africa, many Christian people live as a minority faith community. Some have lived in this way for many generations; others are newer communities. Some can trace their identity back to the early centuries of the Christian era; others are followers of Jesus Christ through conversion in more recent times. Often they live in harmony with neighbours from all faith communities, but at other times can be ostracised and marginalised, facing outright persecution or education and economic discrimination.

Those who live in places where Sharia law and, in particular, apostasy law, are exercised, can be exposed to extreme pressures. The position of women in such places is a major cause of concern.

For these people, being salt and light requires obedience and courage and involves considerable risk. Nevertheless, rather than being demoralised by such experiences, many Christians in such difficult circumstances demonstrate a degree of vitality and dynamism in their faith which suggests they may often be closer to New Testament experience than those who live in more comfortable and secure situations. A Christian refugee from the civil war in Sudan observed that, "In the West you haven't learned to trust God as we have had to learn to trust God."

Israel and Palestine

In the land of Jesus' birth, Christians find themselves caught between the avowedly Jewish state of Israel and a Palestinian community, some of whom, in desperation, turn to more radical and exclusivist forms of the Islamic faith held by the majority. The Christian community in Palestine, with its roots going back to apostolic times, is under pressure as never before.

In the context of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, Palestinian Christians suffer discrimination primarily because of their ethnic rather than their religious identity. Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine, and the harsh conditions which it imposes, inflicts privation and suffering on Palestinians regardless of their religious identity. Israel's policy of developing and/or allowing "settlements" on Palestinian land and the restrictions which it places on the everyday life of the Palestinian community creates a demoralising situation for Christians and Muslims alike. Christians living in the Holy Land, with their relatively high standards of education and connections in the Western world, often are in a position to emigrate, and many have chosen this option.

While similar numbers of young Christians and Muslims are leaving, it is estimated that out of every ten Muslims who leave eight will return, while out of every ten Christians who leave only two will return. This, together with the higher birth rate among Muslims, means that the proportion of Christians in the Holy Land is decreasing faster than the absolute number. Families find it even more

difficult to persuade their children to remain in a situation which grows more unjust and intolerable.

Historically, the Palestinian nationalist struggle united Muslims and Christians, with its intellectuals and leaders often being drawn from within the Christian community. Whether by means of an active Israeli strategy or simply on account of the pressures of the occupation, recent years have seen a growing polarisation between these two historic religious communities. While Muslim and Christian leaders work together on the human rights situation, the failure of the peace process can lead to Christians in general being regarded by some as being in collusion with the West in its perceived hostility to Islam and unquestioning support of Israel. At grassroots level, many Christians now find themselves subject to barbed comments and active hostility from their Muslim neighbours. There is also great concern that in the very cradle of Christianity the Arab Christian church is shrinking so rapidly. Historically, Nazareth was largely populated by Arab Christians but today they are in the minority. Outside the Church of the Annunciation, a group of Muslims erected a banner quoting the Koran, "God is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him." It was the chosen location rather than the Muslim statement of belief that was made, that caused most offence. In a context where Christians are in even more of a minority, such actions can easily make them feel vulnerable and threatened. This increases the sense within the Christian community that it has no future in its historic homeland.

A tragic incident in Gaza in October 2007 illustrates something of the sheer complexity of the situation. Rami Ayyad, who managed the only Bible Bookshop in Gaza, was kidnapped and subsequently found murdered a few days later. He had previously been beaten and accused of handing out Christian tracts, his family had received threats, and the shop had been firebombed a few months earlier. Local Christians and Muslims joined in condemning the murder, thought to be the work of an extremist

Islamist group. However, people from both Christian and Muslim groups also expressed their concern over forms of evangelism that were inappropriate within the context.

Initiatives of the Christian community in the Holy Land

While some have chosen to leave this deeply troubled situation, others have taken the decision to remain and to work for positive change. This has strategic importance since the Christian community has been recognised, in the words of the late King Hussein of Jordan, as "*the glue which holds the Middle East together*". Though a minority, the Christian community often forms a bridge between Muslims and Jews. Moreover, often against the odds, the churches have for many years run an extensive network of social services, which continue as a witness to the love of Christ.

The churches respond to the current demoralising situation with new initiatives, such as the Media Centre of the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem which seeks to research and promote the life, faith and culture of the Palestinian Christian community. Its work has attracted a body of young people who, despite living in "*the largest open-air prison in the world*", are confident of their identity as Palestinian Christians and determined to make their future in the Land. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, besides a massive commitment to sustaining the life of its membership, seeks to reach out through inter-faith engagement. The Sabeel Ecumenical Theological Centre in Jerusalem exposes the injustice of the current political situation and, in contrast to the prevailing ideologies of violence, advocates an approach of non-violent resistance to the occupation. Through its staff and institutions the Church of Scotland seeks to be an active and resourceful partner, sharing the pain of those who suffer and seeking to contribute to initiatives aimed at justice, healing and reconciliation.

Messianic Jews

Also under pressure in the Israeli context are the fellowships

of Messianic Jews. Without wishing to give up their Jewish identity they confess Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah and Saviour. This can expose them to considerable hostility, particularly from Orthodox Jews who sometimes organise demonstrations and other forms of harassment. Messianic Jews have occasionally found themselves subject to violence, such as receiving letter bombs.

On the other hand, in the Israeli community at large there is a growing acceptance of the witness of Messianic Jews. In a context where direct evangelism is prohibited, these believers, in common with Arab Christians, bear witness by the quality of their daily lives and are becoming known for their integrity and compassion. Increasingly they share in worship with Arab Christians, demonstrating the reconciling power of faith in Jesus Christ.

Bridge-building in the Holy Land

In this troubled corner of the world Christians are in a unique position to build bridges between the various sides. The Christian Church holds perhaps the best chance of bringing people together for a permanent solution; with its connections to the land where Jesus lived, ministered, and died; to the Jewish people, as Jesus was a Jew; to the Palestinian community, since most Christians are ethnically Arab/Palestinian.

The challenge to Christians is to further Jesus' ministry of reconciliation, breaking down the dividing walls of hostility and accepting all people being reconciled to each other and to God through Jesus Christ.

The Church of Scotland has its own contribution to make to this dialogue through the new Centre for justice, peace, and inter-faith dialogue planned for Tiberias, and for the first time in several years it has a full team of mission partners sharing in bridge-building in the Holy Land.

Egypt

Though predominantly Islamic, Egypt has a Christian minority thought to number around 12% of the population.

There is official discrimination against Christians, with Coptic Christians being especially singled out. By law the President must be a Muslim, though other political offices can be held by Christians.

Reports point to an increase in the persecution of Christians, with attacks by the pro-Sharia Muslim Brotherhood on churches and an increase in mob attacks, particularly on Coptic villages, properties and clergy. Other forms of persecution are more subtle, with only a very limited number of university places being made available for Christians.

As in some other predominantly Islamic societies, Muslims who decide to become Christians can face serious difficulties. Such converts can suffer human rights abuses ranging from illegal detention without official charges, physical intimidation from security forces to violence from religious extremists and their communities. Often those who are drawn to faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour opt to remain within an Islamic religious and cultural identity. Those who choose to be baptised and to be publicly identified as Christians may have to leave the country.

Musa was born in Egypt and brought up as a Muslim. Whilst still a young man he made friends with a Christian and tried to convert him to Islam. He failed and started to take a great interest in Christianity. Knowing that according to Sharia law he could be executed for changing from Islam to Christianity he left the country. After various difficulties he arrived in Scotland as a refugee and, after a spell in a detention centre, was granted a humanitarian visa. Musa began to attend a Church of Scotland congregation and in due course was baptised as a Christian and changed his name. When his visa expired, with no warning he was forcibly repatriated to Egypt. He now felt very vulnerable and feared for his future. Even his family was against him, though they would not report him. He now aims to return to Scotland and participate fully in the life of the church.

For an Egyptian Muslim, the decision to be baptised as a Christian is a costly one. Nonetheless there are those who decide to take this path of discipleship, such as the Egyptian who was publicly baptised by the Pope Benedict XVI on Easter Day 2008.

What “a minority of the minority” can achieve

Members of the (Presbyterian) Synod of the Nile – a partner of the Church of Scotland – face a further challenge known to many Christians within reformed churches in the Middle East. They are a “minority of the minority” since most Coptic Christians are Orthodox. Nonetheless, they form the largest Reformed Church in the Middle East and offer a significant witness. They sustain a major commitment to educational and medical work, with 30,000 children in their schools, two hospitals and a network of clinics that are open to all. Evangelism takes place primarily through personal relationships as Christians live out the gospel and share it with their friends.

The Synod is active in promoting Muslim-Christian dialogue, both at the formal and theological level and at the level of everyday life in the community. In this way they seek to foster understanding and work for a greater level of tolerance.

Iraq

No consideration of Christians in minority situations would be complete today without reference to the difficulties which have occurred in Iraq following the American and British invasion of 2003. Before the First Gulf War, around 1 million Christians inhabited Iraq. Most were Chaldeans - Eastern-rite Catholics, who trace their faith back to the early centuries of Christianity. Some still worship in Aramaic, the language of Jesus. Even older are the Assyrians, descendents of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, whose Ancient Church of the East traces its origins back to the 1st century. Other Eastern churches were also represented, along with small numbers of Anglicans and Evangelicals. Under Ba'ath Party rule the Christian community enjoyed a significant measure of protection. Though oppressive in many ways, the Ba'ath Party did

not discriminate on religious lines so that, *eg*, Tariq Aziz, a Christian, could become Deputy Prime Minister.

In the sectarian conflicts which erupted in the wake of the 2003 invasion, Christians found themselves being systematically targeted. Church buildings came under attack with, in August 2004, a coordinated series of car bombings destroying five churches in Baghdad and Mosul. Christians themselves, perceived as being in collusion with the invading forces, were exposed to great danger. Clergy were murdered and Christians were kidnapped and tortured. On 29 February 2008, gunmen seized the leader of Iraqi Christians, the Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahho of Mosul, as he left church after leading afternoon prayers. His body was found two weeks later.

Many Iraqi Christians have taken the decision to leave their homeland for Jordan or Syria, where they seek refugee status before proceeding to other countries. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) reports that though Christians formed only 4% of the population of Iraq, 44% of Iraqi asylum seekers reaching Syria were Christian. It is estimated that at least half of the Christian population of Iraq have left the country while many more have been internally displaced moving to supposedly safer areas. Traumatic experiences of rape, kidnap and murder have led many to flee from their homes, embarking on a journey marked by danger and uncertainty.

The Church of Scotland has had little historical connection with the Christian community in Iraq. However, there are Presbyterian Churches in each of the main cities. When British troops were stationed in Basra in the south of Iraq from 2003, military chaplains made contact with the local Presbyterian congregation which was coming under great pressure amidst the chaos and violence of the post-invasion situation.

As a result, its Session Clerk attended the 2007 General Assembly and spoke movingly of the vulnerability of the congregation as many of its members had left and those

who remained feared for their lives. Like many of their fellow Christians in Iraq they face an uncertain future but remain steadfast in their faith.

Pakistan

Around 3% of Pakistan's 160 million people are Christian. Although there is a small Christian middle class of professionals, many of whom run Christian schools and hospitals with excellent reputations, most are former Dalits from the Punjab or tribal people from the Sindh. They are still poor and powerless people, likely to be employed in menial work or not employed at all. In the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) there are nearly 100,000 Christians, half of whom belong to our partner church, the Church of Pakistan.

Before 9/11 Christians were not under serious threat, being able to practise their faith openly.

To some extent this is still true, although Christians are increasingly seen by some Muslims as allies of western Christians who kill Muslims. Christians are murdered for their faith. Four years ago Babar, a pastor in Peshawar, was tortured and murdered, as was Sajjad an evangelist, two years later. Pashtun converts, in particular, often have to keep their conversion secret even from their families, as relatives have been known to kill converts.

In September 2009, a 19-year-old man, Farish Masih, was arrested on what the local Christian community believed were "trumped up" blasphemy charges because he was involved with a Muslim woman. He was alleged to have committed suicide in his prison cell, but media reports claimed that he was tortured, that his ribs were broken, and that he was murdered. Islamic extremists fired shots at his funeral, injuring some of the mourners, a mob attacked a local Roman Catholic Church and some homes, and the young man's father was beaten up before the security forces intervened.

Churches in Pakistan face increasing pressure through the increasing Islamisation of the legal system, taxation, and

public life. The increasing social and economic suffocation of the Christian community and the discrimination faced by Christians when seeking employment and in the workplace, can lead to significant poverty. Muslims converting to Christianity can lose all their inheritance rights, thereby leading to the problem of secret Christian believers and spies in the midst of new converts.

In October 2009, when leaders of the Church of Pakistan gathered with their international partners, their anguish was very clear. They related the most up-to-date news of communal trouble in Faisalabad diocese after allegations of the desecration of the Koran.

In Gojra a "frenzied" mob approached the Christian Colony and a team of militants attacked it with guns and flammable chemicals. Police were unable to deal with them and ran away. 72 houses were burnt, one man was shot dead and 6 members of his family were locked in a room and burnt to death.

Around Korian Muslims were encouraged from the mosque loudspeakers to bring their weapons and "teach the infidels a lesson". The Christians fled leaving all their belongings behind. Houses were looted and the means of their livelihood, motorbikes, donkey carts, sewing machines and bicycles, were torched. The government did intervene fairly quickly and charges were brought against many of those responsible for the violence. However, this led to counter-charges in which 100 unknown Christians were accused, as well as 29 named Christians, including the bishop.

The bishops and presbyters expressed their feelings of outrage and helplessness. In a statement adopted at that meeting they pointed out the parlous condition of the status and security of the religious minorities in Pakistan. They identified a hardening of prejudice in society against them, along with the addition of new clauses into the Blasphemy Law which is being

used and abused to harass and victimize Christians. The Executive Committee of the Synod called on the Government to repeal the Blasphemy Law, to police properly the incidents that arise, to monitor the courts and to legislate for affirmative action in the job market. They challenged the political parties to stop using the "religion card" in their campaigns, and invited all their allies to help eliminate discriminatory practices. They finished by challenging themselves and their allies to approach the militant/extremist groups and remind them of their common Abrahamic faith for the good of all citizens of Pakistan. They feel that their partners have not done enough to stand with them in solidarity, and appeal for practical help and for voices to be raised at the highest international levels.

Signs of hope

However, there are signs of hope. In 2006 the Diocese of Peshawar took the initiative in starting an inter-faith dialogue with a convention attended by 400 Muslims, 200 Christians, 100 Hindus and 100 Sikhs.

The most senior and respected religious leaders from the NWFP attended and gave the main addresses. There are now groups in all districts developing programmes which encourage peaceful co-existence. A group comprising people of all the faiths visited a refugee camp for Christians forced to flee the Swat valley. An organisation called Faith Friends has been established, and Faith Friends Youth Groups have been set up at grass-root level to promote peaceful co-existence. All those participating are at risk from extremists.

Nepal

Although Nepal is now a secular state rather than a Hindu kingdom, 80% of its 30 million inhabitants are Hindu. Christians, who have grown in number from 1,000 fifty years ago to 600,000 today, make up 2% of the population. Following decades of serious repression, churches in Nepal are currently growing at a remarkable rate. Although it is acknowledged that Christians experience a degree of

tolerance not known before, there remains a concern that, to date, religious freedom has not been enshrined in Nepali law.

There is evidence of an ambivalent attitude toward Christianity on the part of the Nepali government with one student being refused permission to study theology overseas on the grounds that he might want to make converts on his return.

However, the same student was allowed to go overseas to study Nepali culture in its encounter with Christianity as a social science project.

At the village level there are different problems. In one situation the only Christian in a particular village received negative comments from his family and friends and was called irreligious ("cow-eating"). Government officials assumed he had taken money and they were offensive, and when he visited a Christian friend who was in custody he was accused and treated aggressively.

A Christian died in a village which had no Christian cemetery. The family therefore used its own land for the burial, and this led to other villagers exhuming the body. When a group of Christians came to investigate they were beaten and driven seven kilometres along the road carrying the body. The village to which they went also refused burial, so they had to return to the original village with the corpse. Eventually the problem was resolved by the first villagers insisting on a cremation taking place, which was not the custom of that particular ethnic group. Reflecting afterwards on what had happened, some of those involved concluded that, while becoming a Christian can weaken the family and the community in the first instance, one way forward is to Christianise and reinterpret traditional Hindu or Buddhist practices. Another way is for Christians to be active in community work, and also in projects where people exchange labour, thus doing some bridge building between the different faith communities.

India

Around 80% of Indians are Hindus, but despite Christians only making up 4.8% of the population they number some 58 million in total. While there are proportionally more Christians in South India than in North India, there are some states in north-east India with a large proportion of Christians, eg Meghalaya with 76% and Nagaland with 93% (both on Bangladesh's northern border). Many Christians come from a Dalit background, and this is often reflected in the way the rest of society treats them. Even within the Church the caste system is still strong.

The 2008 violence towards Christians in Orissa

India's constitution provides for full freedom of worship for all religions, but the extent to which this happens varies considerably from state to state, as is seen in five out of the 20 Indian states having anti-conversion laws. In recent years the constitutional freedom of worship has been jeopardised by the rise of "communalism" in which communities assert their religious identity through hostility to others. This is always threatening and sometimes violent. State-supported violence against Muslims in Gujarat has been the most notorious expression of communalism but Christians also can be targeted. Violence against Christians in Orissa in 2008, when hundreds were beaten and 75 died, was the worst since independence in 1948.

More than 50,000 Christians were displaced, and more than 5,000 Christian homes and 250 churches and institutions looted and damaged, often by fire. The Church of North India's (CNI), response to the violence, and its efforts to bring aid to those affected, were hindered by the indifference of the state government and the indecision of central government. The CNI saw the situation, not only as one for appeals to different levels of government, but also as *"an acid test of the spiritual mettle of the Indian Christian Community as a whole as well as an opportunity to wake up from our complacency"*. The All India Christian Council regularly tries to highlight the plight of minorities.

The situation since 2008 remains mixed. There remains a real

fear of the violence recurring, and many pastors fear for their lives. However, the recent Indian elections have provided a measure of hope. The number of seats won by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party dropped, with all eight being lost in Orissa. The ecumenical All India Christian Council said in a statement that it *"saluted the people of India for the consummate and decisive manner in which they have rejected divisive, communal, and sectarian political forces"*.

The chief minister of Orissa has openly answered questions about the riots, naming the radical Hindu organisations which were involved in the anti-Christian violence. Altogether 524 people were arrested and 27 are still in prison. The Union parliament in New Delhi has also debated the tragic events of 2008. But even with that government involvement there is still a great fear among the Christian population of Orissa that the violence might recur.

The story of Pramod - an Indian Christian. *"Only if the culprits were arrested would we feel confident in going back to our village"* Pramod's words echo the thoughts of thousands of other displaced Christians from Orissa. He is one of the Christians that Christian Solidarity Worldwide met in a relief camp in Bhubaneswar last year, and he still cannot find his way home. He currently lives in a community of 45 Catholic families in a camp in the Khandhamal district of Orissa. The families have named the camp "Shanti Nagar" meaning "place of peace". This is the fifth place they have lived since the outbreak of violence in August 2008. The villagers in Betticola, where they used to live, say the Christians must convert to Hinduism - or they can never come back. If they do go back, the villagers have threatened to kill them.

A process of government compensation to those affected by the violence is in operation, but it has been hard for some people to access and there have been many bureaucratic frustrations. Some Christians still hope to return to their village, but others have fled to try and make a new life elsewhere.

China

The People's Republic of China is the largest country in the world with a population of 1.31 billion people. It is governed by the Chinese Communist Party. Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution declares citizens' freedom of religious belief, so long as it does not conflict with national security. The government recognises five national religions: Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Taoism and Buddhism. The two registered church groups - The Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) (the officially sanctioned Protestant church) and the Catholic Patriotic Association (the officially sanctioned Catholic church) operate under a number of regulatory controls - on their appointments of clergy and bishops, publication of literature, registration of meeting places, working with people under the age of 18, finances and their relationships with religious groups abroad. Despite these restrictions, the number of Protestant Christians belonging to registered churches has grown rapidly during recent years to over 16 million. The TSPM runs 18 seminaries and Bible Schools throughout the country. The Amity Foundation, based in Nanjing, also printed its fifty-millionth Chinese Bible in 2007. A recent visit from the Church of Scotland indicated possibilities of the Church working with the Amity Foundation.

Many millions of Christians meet in unregistered church and house groups. These "house churches" grew especially quickly in rural areas during the 1980s and 1990s, and there are now increasing numbers of "independent" urban churches, made up of professionals and businessmen. Catholic "underground" churches also continue to meet illegally, despite some moves toward rapprochement with bishops jointly recognised by the Vatican and the government. In 2009, the 35 bishops of these churches were all either in prison, under house arrest, under surveillance or in hiding. In many areas, unregistered church groups meet freely. However in others Christians continue to face harassment and fines, and some have been imprisoned, tortured or face forced labour. In some areas, unregistered church buildings have been destroyed and property confiscated.

Gao Zhisheng is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, a Christian lawyer and a key figure in the "rights-protection" movement which seeks to defend minority rights through legal and constitutional means. Since 2005, Gao has been repeatedly arrested, imprisoned, and reportedly tortured. He has been missing since 4th of February 2009 when he was seen being detained by Chinese officials. Gao's wife and two children have since fled to the USA.

Pastor Zhang Rongliang, the leader of the unregistered China Church for Christ, was arrested without charge on 1st December 2004 in Xuhai village in Henan Province. He was later accused of falsifying a passport, obtaining passports by deception for three co-workers and illegally crossing the border. He is currently serving a seven and a half year sentence. This is his sixth imprisonment and he has previously spent a total of 12 years in prison.

The complexities of the Chinese situation

Chinese civil society has grown steadily in the last two decades as economic reforms have led to significant individual wealth and opportunities. However, imbalanced development has led to rising social inequalities and government controls remain in place to maintain social and government stability.

Christians and churches face challenges in adapting to rapidly changing social conditions, facing widespread corruption, and struggling to exercise constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.

Most religious Chinese continue to follow Buddhism, which is regulated through the Chinese Buddhist Association. Religious officials have begun to emphasise the role that religious groups can play in building social harmony and responding to natural disasters. Christians and other religious groups cooperated with government agencies to provide humanitarian relief after the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, and this has brought a positive response from Party officials.

The current overall picture of the situation of Christians in China is complex. Many hoped that the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 would help improve China's treatment of religious minorities (amongst others), yet this does not seem to have been the case, with a reported deterioration in religious freedom. The situation is unpredictable for many Chinese Christians, as the interpretation and implementation of government policy varies enormously from region to region. Although there is cautious optimism on the part of some Chinese Christians, concerns remain about the treatment of some individual pastors and church members.

North Korea

The Democratic People's Republic of North Korea has been a repressive and secretive communist state since it came into being in 1948, and it continues in this course under its current leader Kim Jong-Il, who came to power in 1997. It is a country where there have been a number of famines, the impact of which has been worsened as a result of governmental inaction. The government teaches that their first Leader, Kim Il Sung, is the "Great Leader", and should be obeyed and revered as a "god", and its citizens are encouraged to bow before his statue and memorise his political speeches. All people are to keep the "Ten Principles" "to revere and adore the Great Leader; and eternally lift him higher". Anybody who dissents outwardly from this philosophy pays a heavy price.

Before the communist regime was installed, Pyongyang was a centre of Christian revival. Today, it is hard to know the number of Christians in North Korea. North Korea is isolated from the rest of the international community, and its culture of surveillance and propaganda curtails freedom of expression - especially criticism of the government.

In the last decade, severe famine has led to a significant increase in the number of people fleeing North Korea, and this has brought increased information about the regime. Eyewitness testimonies from victims, guards, defectors and other witnesses are sufficiently detailed to indicate

that the number of severe human rights violations is deeply alarming.

The perceived threat from the Church

According to the ideology of the regime, society is divided into three classes - the core class, the wavering class and the hostile class. It is estimated that 27% of the population come into this "hostile" class, including former landowners and their families, those who collaborated with South Korea in the Korean war and those who are religiously active. Human rights abuses are seen at every level of society, but Christians are seen as a particular threat because they have an allegiance to a higher power, which is seen as a threat to the state's ideology. Some Christians are publicly executed, and others are taken away to camps where they are brutally treated. It is estimated that around 200,000 people are in political prison camps, and Christians suffer particularly badly as they are under pressure to recant their faith.

There are many reports of severe human rights abuses such as dangerous working conditions, malnutrition, torture, violence, rape and forced abortions. These camps continue to exist today, and crimes against humanity within them are a daily occurrence.

A former North Korean prisoner highlights the problem: "Why do people talk so much about the holocaust, saying 'we must never forget' and spending money on programmes to ensure this, yet say and do nothing about the similar things which are happening right now?"

Response: What does the Lord require of us?

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ... If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they

kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.
John 15: 18-21

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5:10

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
2 Timothy 3:12

Reference has already been made to the vitality and authenticity of faith often found in Christians who face discrimination and persecution. However, the plea from the Church of Scotland's partners who live in challenging and even dangerous circumstances is for an active solidarity that "weeps with those who weep." They call upon the Church of Scotland to highlight the prevalence of persecution and to campaign, as appropriate, on their behalf for the due observation of religious freedom for all.

The words of St Paul, with which this report is prefaced, provide a timely reminder of the indivisible links the Church of Scotland has with its Christian partners throughout the world: we are all of the one Body of Christ.

"There is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it." 1 Cor.12.25-27.

Alongside that theological basis for active solidarity with Christians in minority situations, a new urgency arises from the inter-connectedness and increasing polarisation of today's world. The impact of new means of global communication is felt in many ways. It means that, for example, Danish cartoons offensive to members of the Islamic community, can quickly give rise to violence in many countries. It also can allow members of the Church

of Scotland to be in instant communication with fellow-Christians facing discrimination and/or persecution.

The polarisation of the global community, particularly since 9/11, has led many people to retreat into their historic identities and to view those of other faith traditions with growing suspicion or hostility. Many partner churches draw attention to their being exposed to a far greater level of suspicion, hostility and active persecution than was once the case. They are acutely aware of how political decisions made in the West are perceived in their countries, and especially by those who choose to view such decisions as evidence of an increasing and highly volatile East/West, Muslim/Christian divide. They know how bullish talk of "crusades" against evil regimes on the part of western leaders can stir up a degree of resentment feared by Christians and Muslims alike.

Close links with partner churches in minority situations also reveal the vulnerability and value of these Christian communities. In spite of forming a small percentage of populations dominated by another faith tradition, their contribution to the well-being and stability of society at large can be out of all proportion to their relative size.

In Bangladesh, the only healthcare provided in some rural areas is provided for all people by the Church. In Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, reformed Churches provide some of the finest and best-respected schools, many of which provide future politicians, doctors and academics. If the exodus of Christians witnessed in Iraq were to happen in other countries where Christians form a minority, the consequences for the wider population could be far-reaching. Pre-emptive solidarity - politically alert, culturally sensitive and spiritually grounded – with Christians in minority situations is a gospel imperative for our time.

"Saying it" with people

In supporting Christians in a minority situation the Church of Scotland works most effectively in countries where it already has a relationship or partnership on the ground, and

seeks to concentrate resources where the need is greatest. It has “said it with people” by sending Mission Partners to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Israel/Palestine, and works directly with partner churches and with other denominations such as the Anglicans in Gaza and Lutherans in Bethlehem. Mission partners, each usually linked with two presbyteries in Scotland, have been able to inform and challenge people in the pews. They support through their work in such institutions as schools and hospitals, and through WMC funds which can offer subsidised fees for Christians as necessary. Through advocacy work in Nepal and Israel/Palestine they raise a voice for peace and reconciliation in support of the Christian community at various levels of government.

An increasingly important element of people’s support from the Church of Scotland is in the form of “twinning”, local-to-local contacts between congregations, presbyteries and dioceses. These have allowed personal contact to produce solidarity visits, often leading to practical or financial help. Pilgrim trips to the Middle East enrich the travellers and help the Christian communities who welcome them.

The Faithshare programme brings individuals to the UK and has offered training while others have received scholarships and training in their own part of the world. Moderatorial visits highlight and encourage Christians in minority situations by bringing their story to the world press. Area Secretaries make regular visits, record stories, share experiences, provide resources for the WMC, and demonstrate solidarity and friendship.

“Saying it” through the media.

“Saying it” in the media is another important way minority groups of Christians are supported. The WMC consistently highlights their situation through Update, the weekly email news bulletin, and in the regular magazine WM, which recently devoted an entire edition to the subject. These publications can reach congregations and people in the pews, inform them directly and also make them aware of other media outlets which particularly address

the topic. The Church of Scotland website also tracks the changing situation worldwide, and records responses from committees or councils. Any nationwide, public campaigns are made known, as is news of Scottish people working overseas in other mission organisations.

The Moderator, the WMC Convener and the area secretaries have all been active in advocacy through the media to alert church members and the wider world to the suffering of minority Christians, and to appeal for attention and justice. They have responded quickly in issuing letters or press releases about the situation in India, Gaza, and Pakistan.

However, sometimes our partners do not want Western churches to raise the profile as they may be accused of being allies of the West and any advocacy from the West can also become counter-productive.

“Saying it” through financial assistance.

Financial assistance represents an important expression of solidarity and support. In Bangladesh, money is given to people who minister to Christian communities across the country, and for theological training. The Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme receives funds for work with the poorest communities of all faiths, to provide clean water and micro-credit, and to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and of human trafficking.

In Nepal, money has been directed towards HIV and AIDS awareness, conflict resolution programmes and local community initiatives to deal with the root causes of poverty. Funds are given to support theological training in Bible Colleges. In Pakistan grants have provided help for shelter and education for Christian girls, other school facilities for children of all faiths, technical training, prison chaplaincy and drug rehabilitation/training. The WMC has given funds for Israel/Palestine through the Near East Council of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Centre, the YWCA, the Anglican Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza and the Bethlehem

Media centre. Money is given towards the education of young people in East Jerusalem and in Jaffa, for subsidising accommodation for clergy and church members in the Jerusalem Guesthouse and the Scots Hotel in Tiberias and for finding employment for Christians through the Centres. At the request of our partner churches, money has been sent quickly from the Asia and Middle East area committees for relief in crisis or emergency situations. Cyclones Sidr and Aila in Bangladesh, the dislocation of villagers from Swat in Pakistan, and the persecution in Orissa, India, have all prompted immediate giving.

The need for greater awareness

When a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom referred to the two historic religious traditions in Israel/Palestine, (Judaism and Islam), local Christians, whose roots are just as deeply embedded in that land, regarded this as typical of Western ignorance of their existence, let alone their plight. Partner churches consistently speak of the Western media's lack of attention to situations they face. Even more disappointing for many of these partners is the lack of awareness within Western churches. Above all other support, they ask for the prayers of their fellow Christians, and fear that where there is little or no knowledge, there will be a corresponding lack of prayer and support.

The World Mission Council acknowledges the challenge of helping the whole Church of Scotland to grow in awareness of the difficulties and dangers faced by fellow-Christians in places of opposition and persecution. Through much greater awareness, fellow Christians in minority situations are better supported, and Christians in the West can be better inspired by the example of those whose faith carries a high cost.

Sources of information about minority Christians

The World Mission Council uses its regular print publication *WM* and its weekly email *Update* to keep congregations informed of partner churches and others who are subject to discrimination and/or persecution. Further resources are available from organisations which have developed

a specialist ministry in this area. These organisations will visit churches and church groups to share their own experiences and stories and, around the church, raise the profile of minority Christians.

What can the World Mission Council and Kirk Sessions do as a response to this report?

"Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you came to look after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me"
Matthew 25 34-36.

1. Pastoral and practical support

Whenever Church of Scotland congregations have formal or informal links with Christians who face discrimination or persecution, their support and encouragement can make a significant difference. Christians in minority situations often feel isolated and forgotten; therefore contact from other churches can be a real encouragement and blessing. Advice might sometimes need to be taken as to how to pursue these relationships with sensitivity and not to endanger the very people we are seeking to support, and contacting the World Mission Council for guidance in such scenarios would be welcomed. Twinning between churches abroad and Scottish congregations are encouraged by the World Mission Council.

2. Be informed

The various organisations listed in this report provide a considerable amount of information via magazines and web-sites.

3. Pray

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." (Tennyson) Possibly the largest organised prayer effort is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), which happens worldwide every November. It focuses above all on intercessory prayer and practical action on behalf of persecuted communities of the Christian faith, and also encourages prayer for the oppressors, the nations that promote persecution, and those who ignore it.

The significance of prayer is seen in the story of Maryam and Marzieh, two young women who were imprisoned in Tehran's Evin prison after being arrested in March 2009. Maryam and Marzieh were both from Muslim families and had become Christians. They were arrested, their apartment was searched and Bibles confiscated. Neither woman had committed a crime under Iranian or international law. At a hearing of Tehran's Revolutionary court in August, the two women were ordered to recant their faith, which they refused to do, and so they were sent back to prison. They were released from prison in November 2009, and a recent report said: "In an amazing answer to our prayers, Maryam Rostampour and Marzieh Amirizadeh were released this week after 259 days in prison. They send their thanks to you for praying and supporting them, 'Words are not enough to express our gratitude to the Lord and to His people who have prayed and worked for our release.'"

4. Writing letters

A number of agencies (see resource list) keep a record of such Christians, and supply appropriate contact information along with advice as to how to write to people imprisoned for their faith. Every letter sent is important: it can lift the morale of the incarcerated individual and make prison authorities realise that there is international concern about the case.

It can take only minutes to write a short note or send a Christmas card to a prisoner, but the ramifications of this simple act can be very powerful.

5. Lobbying/Advocacy

The power of lobbying should never be underestimated, and there are numerous campaigns, such as Campaign for Burma or the Inclusive India campaign, which invite people to lobby on behalf of Christian minority groups. Making elected representatives aware of concerns regarding overseas matters is always valuable, and such communication, especially from a considerable number of people can inform and influence government policy.

6. Kirk Sessions

Kirk Sessions should make the situations of minority Christians around the world an important part of their regular business, educating church members about persecution and discrimination endured by their fellow Christians, ensuring that these situations are remembered in prayer, encouraging advocacy on their behalf, and demonstrating solidarity in practical ways. They may also, if they are not already involved in a twinning arrangement with an overseas congregation, look seriously at exploring this possibility with a congregation in a country where Christians are subjected to persecution and discrimination.

7. Support for partner churches

Whenever a partner church finds itself persecuted or discriminated against, the World Mission Council should take positive action, whether by sending visitors to that church to strengthen publicly the support that is given, or by campaigning vigorously on its behalf both to the government of that country and through campaigning organisations, both Christian and secular.

8. Inter-religious dialogue

It is imperative that alongside any advocacy on behalf of Christians who face discrimination and persecution there

is a corresponding respect for the religious traditions of other people. Many partner churches in minority situations are convinced that one of the greatest needs of the 21st century is for growing, constructive dialogue with the Muslim Community. Churches in the Middle East speak of the clamant need for understanding and respect between all three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Ill-considered advocacy that, often inadvertently, brands all members of a given faith community as persecutors can contribute to the polarisation which is part of the wider problem.

It is important to eschew any appearance of a partisan approach which is concerned only for fellow-Christians and unmoved by discrimination or persecution being experienced by other religious communities. To stand clearly on the side of justice, it is necessary to advocate religious freedom for all. It is the furtherance of this principle which is the best weapon with which to fight the discrimination and persecution currently being experienced by minority Christian communities.

Let us not be silent

"The greatest sin of our time, is not the few who have destroyed, but the many who have remained silent". (Martin Luther King)

The World Mission Council offers this report to the General Assembly in the hope and prayer that the Church of Scotland may -

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of those who are destitute. speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Proverbs 31: 8-9.

In prayerful and practical solidarity with those of the Body of Christ that suffer most, the whole Church will be strengthened, the world will be better served, and God

will be glorified.

Useful Resources

Books:

"Day to Day with the Persecuted Church – 365 Daily Readings" by Sovereign World International in co-operation with Open Doors.

Non-Muslims in Muslim Majority Societies, edited by Kajsa Ahlstrand and Goran Gunner.

Eyes of the Tailless Animals: Prison Memoirs of a North Korean Woman, by Soon Ok Lee.

Operation World, by Patrick Johnstone.

Secret Believers, by Brother Andrew.

On the Side of the Angels, by Joseph D'Souza and Benedict Rogers.

Modern Saints and Martyrs, by Caroline Cox and Catherine Butcher.

Magazines:

Connect and Encourage

Barnabas Aid

The Open Door Magazine

Release

Websites:

www.world-mission.org

<http://anglicancommunion.org/acns>.

www.asianews.it.

<http://www.barnabasfund.org>.

www.csw.org.uk

www.opendoorsuk.org.

www.releaseinternational.org.

www.steadfastglobal.org

www.awm.org

www.interserve.org

It is anticipated that future reports on much of the following ongoing work will be accessible on the internet.

Europe

The Presbytery of Europe's 17 congregations, mostly in mainland Europe but also in Malta, Bermuda and Sri Lanka, began as congregations of Scots living or visiting abroad - some well over 100 years ago - but their role has increased greatly and continues to develop. A new summary of this ministry and mission work can be found at www.europepresbytery.net. It encompasses everyone from international business communities to asylum seekers and refugees; worshippers drawn from five continents, and from the widest range of Christian backgrounds; mission work stretching into Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Every one of these 17 churches operates in a minority situation, offering distinctive reformed Christian worship, ministry and mission. A number of these churches also actively minister to Christians from persecuted minorities – in Sri Lanka, for example, where Christianity is very much a minority faith (circa 8%), and Reformed Christianity a tiny proportion of that.

Many of the European congregations have welcomed into their heart persecuted Christians from sub-Saharan Africa – Ghanaians in Rome and Brussels, Nigerians in Turin, and Africans from many countries in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. In Malta, very much in the front line of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing Africa, there is a growing community of Christians from northern and central Nigeria, where their lives were directly threatened, from northern Ghana, and from Sudan, Somalia and Chad – where Christians are also very much in the minority. The last year has seen a significant African refugee ministry developing through the Scots Church in Malta.

The churches of the Presbytery of Europe, like the church in Scotland, mainly operate within so-called "Christian countries" yet of course they face the challenges of marginalisation that Christians in all western nations know. Moreover as with some of our partner European churches, in some countries Protestants, or Christians in general, can be more than just marginalised: they can appear to

be actively opposed at governmental levels. In this past year our partners in Waldensian church in Italy have taken a brave stand against the Italian government's rulings on refugees.

In the suburbs of Prague, our partners in the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren saw the government try to take over a building they use to help refugees, especially Romany people, to be used as a nursery school. With international support from the Church of Scotland and others, this attempt was successfully resisted.

2009 saw four vacant charges being filled – Bermuda, Malta, Gibraltar and Lisbon – and Lausanne emerged stronger from a period of interim ministry. The Presbytery looks forward to the challenges of the coming decade.

Asia

The United Nations Development Programme describes Asia as the region that is the fastest growing in the world while at the same time home to half of the world's poor: a region that houses countries experiencing economic transition, two of the world's largest economies (China, India), middle income countries, and countries facing or recovering from conflict (including Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand)¹.

This diversity in economic strength is mirrored in the faiths of Asia: our partner churches bear Christian witness, through their life and service to Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs as well as to people who may not profess a faith.

Pakistan

Leaders and representatives of the Church of Pakistan met with partner church delegates for three days in October 2009. The Moderator of the Church of Pakistan Synod, Rt Rev Samuel Azariah (himself a special delegate at the General Assembly in 2008) spoke of how instability and terrorist violence affected the whole country while religious

¹ <http://www.undp.org/asia/> retrieved 14 January 2010

extremism, discrimination and intolerance has reached new levels. Rt Rev John Samuel, Bishop of Faisalabad, told of incidents in his diocese in the villages of Gojra and Korian where over 100 houses were burned and damaged and nine people died after a dispute over property descended into inter-religious violence. Rt Rev Samuel Pervez, Bishop of Sialkot, commented about an incident in Sambrial that led to death of a young Christian man who was in a relationship with a Muslim girl. Both these tragic incidents highlight the continued misuse of sections of the Blasphemy Law introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq.

A statement issued by the Church of Pakistan calls for the government to repeal this law and implement a range of policies to address the discrimination and insecurity felt by the Christian community, and also invites civil society to work together for peace and justice for all in the country².

A phrase heard repeatedly was the “Talibinisation of Pakistan”, yet in the face of this, the church is developing interfaith dialogue and remains committed to witness and service through health and educational ministries. There are also opportunities for the church to join with civil society to de-legitimise the Taliban and reclaim Pakistan for the overwhelming majority of moderate, peace-loving people.

During 2009, after Pakistani Taliban brutally took over the Swat valley in the northwest, public opinion for the first time turned resolutely against the extremists’ claim that they were fighting for Islam. This was followed by an offensive by the Pakistan military against Taliban militants in Swat Valley which led to a humanitarian crisis as more than two million people fled the fighting. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, this was the biggest population displacement since the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The Diocese of Peshawar set up a centre for displaced Christians in Mardan.

² “A Statement by the Church of Pakistan” adopted by the Executive Committee of the Synod, 21 October 2009

Over 100 families were accommodated and fed for nearly three months and WMC was one of a number of partners who gave grants to support the camp for these Internally Displaced People. Two couples were married during their stay in the camp while a baby born there was named Aman, meaning Peace. Such gestures are symbolic of the defiant hope of many Pakistanis of all faiths as they face violence and instability. The Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies reported 3,021 people killed and 7,334 injured in terrorist attacks in the al-Qaeda-inspired insurgency that has targeted civilians and destabilized the country.

There are stories of hope. Jan Masih, a Christian army sweeper in Swat, was kidnapped by Taliban and faced execution unless he became a Muslim. When Jan said he was prepared to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and be killed a *maulvi* (Muslim cleric) intervened and ordered Jan’s release on the grounds that he was a true Christian.

Bangladesh

Rt Rev Michael Baroi retired as Bishop of Dhaka in December 2009 and was succeeded by Rt Rev Paul Shishir Sarker who moved from Kushtia to the capital. Rt Rev Sunil Mankin was elected as the new Bishop of Kushtia and is the first person from the Garo ethnic minority to be a bishop in the Church of Bangladesh - an affirmation and celebration of the church’s multi-ethnic membership.

In November 2009 international partners met with church leaders in the last in series of consultations considering recommendations for the Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme (CBSDP). Due to excellent preparation, there was clear acceptance of the recommendations contained in the evaluation. These covered governance, organisational management, programme delivery, financial issues and linkages with the wider Church of Bangladesh, partners and donors. A working paper developed through the follow-up consultation exercises focused on the mission and vision of CBSDP and the need to develop an understanding of faith- and rights-based development, revisiting goals

and objectives, administrative and management issues, staffing policies and salaries, networking and partnership. While the general acceptance of the need for review and change is clear, there will be difficult decisions ahead for the leadership especially regarding staff where there may be changes in the roles of some people and salary levels will be reviewed.

WMC advertised for a post of lecturer at St Andrew's Theological College in Mirpur, Dhaka. Unfortunately no suitable candidates applied and the Church of Bangladesh request WMC to re-advertise in early 2010 for a suitable person to teach ministry candidates.

Nepal

Dr Mark Galpin was appointed Executive Director of United Mission to Nepal in April 2009. UMN "strives to address root causes of poverty as it serves the people of Nepal in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ." UMN is a cooperative effort between the people of Nepal and a large number of Christian organisations from nearly 20 countries on four continents. Multicultural teams of Nepali nationals and expatriate staff work alongside local organisations in less-developed areas of the country, building partnerships that lead to healthy, strong and empowered individuals, families, and communities. WMC is happy that it will once again have a mission partner serving with UMN when Joel Gitinji begins his work as Integral Mission Advisor for HIV and AIDS. Visit www.umn.org.np for more information.

WMC continues to build partnerships with National Council of Churches in Nepal, Nepal Institute of Theology and Nepal Ebenezer Bible College.

The International Crisis Group describes the political situation in Nepal as unstable as "the peace process now faces severe tests". The multiparty consensus on which it was based has frayed. The Maoists have not completed the transition to non-violent, pluralist politics and the old parties remain unrepresentative and out of touch with voters.

The Constituent Assembly, beset by delays, will find it hard to meet the May 2010 deadline for writing the new constitution. Progress on reforming the security sector, including the integration and rehabilitation of former Maoist fighters, has been slow and characterised by mutual distrust. The continuing existence of two standing armies – the Nepal Army and the Maoist People's Liberation Army – is inherently destabilising.

UN monitoring of both armies is due to end by May 2010. Its mission in Nepal, UNMIN, has been extended four times but it has been downsized and has no political mandate.³

China

In 2009 WMC withdrew from the Scottish Churches China Group and is now an active member of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's China Forum which "provides a channel of communication between the China work and its British and Irish stakeholders. This leads to joint action and project collaboration that provides effective partnership with the churches in China and Christian-initiated organisations working on social development issues."

It is difficult to estimate the number of Christians in China as membership between the official and non-registered churches overlap. Further, the official church tends to under-report its membership numbers while the non-registered churches tend to exaggerate. However, there are thought to be 60 to 100 million Christians in China, though some claim much higher figures. There are some 25,000 churches and 30,000 other meeting points. There is one national Protestant seminary and 18 regional or provincial seminaries and Bible colleges producing some 2,000 graduates annually, though standards and curriculum vary.

WMC's resources are now available to share with organisations and institutions in China who have

³ <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1265&l=1> retrieved 13 January 2010.

welcomed Church of Scotland as a partner. These include the Amity Foundation, an independent Chinese voluntary organization created in 1985 by Chinese Christians. The Amity Foundation's activities include Education, Social Welfare, Basic Health & Public Hygiene (including HIV and AIDS), Environmental Protection, Rural Development, Church-run Social Service and Disaster Relief, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.

At a consultation with international partners in Nanjing in October 2009 Qiu Zhonghui, General Secretary of Amity Foundation, spoke of the transformation of social structures as Chinese citizens change from being *Danwei* (Unit) persons to social persons; as information technology and the internet allow for more expression, awareness and communication; and the growing importance of community. The Amity Foundation faces new challenges: Human-Nature conflicts; Urban Poverty; Ageing Society. China is in transition and the shift from planned to a more market-oriented economy may allow more space for NGOs. Qiu, in reporting progress also acknowledged that there would also be "backward steps". Strategically, Amity Foundation aims to be a resource and a service provider, a capacity builder and a policy advocate. More information can found at www.amityfoundation.org

Another partner is Nanjing Union Theological Seminary whose new campus was provided by the Chinese government. The seminary currently has more than 200 students, just over half of whom are women, but has capacity for 500. There are 30 teaching faculties and the seminary is the only national level Protestant seminary and the only one permitted to have foreign lecturers. Opportunities for sharing with the seminary could include grants, scholarships for faculty development, library grants, encouraging suitably qualified people from the Church of Scotland to go to teach on either short- or long-term contracts. The possibilities and outcomes of the Church of Scotland's involvement in a key institution that serves a fast-growing church in one of the most important

countries in the world in the coming century are exciting and complex and will challenge our own thinking in the years ahead.

India

The Moderator, Rt Rev William Hewitt was invited to the Church of South India Diocese of Madras last December to participate in a series of events celebrating the centenary of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin. He and his wife also visited a few of the 1,200 churches and worship stations, 200 schools and colleges and other institutions run by the diocese. They met a range of people, including some of the 900 catechists and 500 Lay Preachers who assist 170 ordained ministers in rural and urban ministry. They learned, among many other things that the Diocese of Madras expects to baptise 5,000 converts and plant over 100 new churches each year and congregations take turns to pray for diocesan ministries from 9am to 5pm each day of the year.

Conclusion

WMC continues to maintain relationships with partner churches in Burma/Myanmar, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand and together explore ways to develop our relationships. WMC believes that the Church of Scotland has much to learn from engagements with our partners' churches in Asia as they witness in diverse cultures as minority faith communities seeking to leaven society. The Church of Scotland, which often seems to be trying to manage decline, has the opportunity to learn and be revitalised by this part of the world church which expects and achieves growth.

Africa and Caribbean

Zambia

The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) continues to grow and its membership currently stands at around 3 million divided into 1060 congregations with 250 ministers and 45 Diaconal workers. A good urban example is the new St Andrew's Church on Independence Avenue in Lusaka

which has grown in less than 50 years from a congregation of 50 to 9000 today. There is also a Church School that meets on the same premises.

The UCZ's mission is a holistic one, supplying, equipping, facilitating, empowering and healing the community enabling building and development. The Church works in partnership with the Government to provide health and social services. There are a number of schools, clinics and hospitals, including Mwandu, which are run by the UCZ.

At Synod Headquarters the process of reviewing the Church structure is underway trying to address the needs of the fast-growing membership of the Church. There are plans to establish three more offices and departments to deal more specifically with women, youth and children.

The project department is trying to find help with the preservation and maintenance of the David Livingstone Memorial at Chitambo. The Ministry of Finance has assisted with the Synod being able to purchase construction material VAT-free.

The United Church of Zambia's General Secretary Rev Chrispin Mbalazi visited the World Council of Churches in Geneva as the UCZ is keen to deepen its ties with the ecumenical family. Mr Mbalazi believes there are many areas in which the UCZ can contribute to the worldwide ecumenical family in the fight against poverty, HIV and AIDS and corruption.

"The church is at the forefront of the fight against HIV and AIDS," says Mr Mbalazi. UCZ is promoting a number of HIV and AIDS initiatives from home-based care programmes to providing free treatment facilities at hospitals.

Addressing poverty and corruption is high on UCZ's agenda. Zambia's relatively small economy, which is centred on mining, is feeling the impact of shut downs and lay-offs. UCZ are asking the government to take protective measures for those affected by job losses.

In 2008 Zambia experienced devastating floods and in order to support the people affected the UCZ became heavily involved in training programmes for farmers in rural areas in the western part of the country. Although at times the problems can seem overwhelming, and the capacity of the church so small, the UCZ still tries to do what it can.

Keith and Ida Waddell continue to do good work in Mwandu. The Ministry of Education has given the Church permission to open its first grade 10 high school class this year. Keith has taken on responsibility of overseeing the building programme. The work began in July, but with some complications the building had to be put on hold. However, with the go ahead now given from the government there will be a flurry of activity to get things in order for the opening. This is another example of the United Church of Zambia and the Government working together to provide public education for materially disadvantaged pupils. UCZ is grateful for the Government's backing for this project to improve the educational opportunities for children in its area.

Ida is the HIV co-ordinator and to date the project has 1914 HIV+ people under its care of which 1478 receive ARVs (Anti-Retroviral Drugs). 155 are children. An important development has been the attempt to enroll people earlier. There is still a distressing tendency for many patients to leave things until it is too late. Stigma and a lack of education are still mainly to blame for this. Patients often die because they stop taking medication as they have no food and are chronically malnourished so are more open to opportunistic infections which pull them even further down. The starting and stopping of medication is leading to cases of treatment failure.

Malawi

In May 2009 Malawi held its fourth democratic presidential and parliamentary election since 1994. Malawians elected President Bingu wa Mutharika for a second term. With a resounding victory in the general election, he holds power

with a healthy parliamentary majority. While Malawi is still among the poorest nations, it has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and Western donors hope its relative stability over the past decade will not be disrupted. Poverty, agriculture and health care are the big issues for Malawi, where two-thirds of the population live on less than one U.S. dollar a day and AIDS has orphaned an estimated one million children.

The Church of Scotland has continued to partner with the Scottish Government in supplying funding for the Nkhoma Safe Motherhood Programme <http://www.nkhomahospital.org/> This Programme received one-year funding of £265,000 at the end of 2008 and it is hoped that the application for a continued 3-year funding will be successful. The project aims to improve women's access to health, especially complications in pregnancy, by providing training for traditional birth attendants. The scheme will also provide a number of bicycle and motorcycle ambulances and allow the Synod's health service to update its IT systems. This will help to ensure that women are able to reach the hospital when problems arise. Maternal health is a priority for the government of Malawi where the maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. The project has already seen a steady increase in the number of admissions to maternity units, deliveries and referrals since the start of the project. The project has been able to procure 30 bicycle ambulances and three motorbike ambulances, set up a revolving fund for repairs and provide training in maintenance of the vehicles.

Helen Scott continues to serve at Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School as Deputy Headteacher. David Morton has just been appointed at Nkhoma hospital as a Medical Doctor. He and his wife Rebekah moved to Malawi at the beginning of December 2009 and have settled in well. Robert Jones has been appointed as a Pharmacist at Nkhoma. He will be accompanied by his wife Ritu and their two children Sophie, who is three, and Zara who is 20 months old. The other post which has been filled is that of lecturer at Zomba Theological College.

In December 2009 a series of earthquakes hit the Karonga area which comes within the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod of Livingstonia. Many people lost their homes, and at the time of writing, the CCAP are pulling resources together in order to co-ordinate the humanitarian activity to support those affected by the earthquakes. Many international partners have been able to support this.

Climate Change

Representatives of 10 African countries met in Ethiopia to try to agree a common position on climate change. It is considered that African nations are among the lightest polluters but analysts say they will suffer the most from climate change. One of the criticisms is that Africa fails to make its voice heard in the debate.

However, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), Ghana was invited to the Windsor "Alliance of Religions for Conservation – United Nations Development Programme" celebrations in November 2009 to receive an International award from the UN General Secretary for the EPC's leading work on Climate Change. The Windsor event, hosted by HRH the Prince Philip brought faith leaders together from around the world. The aim of the conference was to launch and discuss long-term initiatives tackling Climate Change.

Agenda 21 is one of the development programmes of the EPC focusing on sustainable development. It has a poverty reduction project in three districts in Northern Ghana with an emphasis on nutrition, environment and sanitation. It has established sanitation clubs in secondary and primary schools equipping them with basic hand tools to facilitate cleaning of the environment and to carry out best practice demonstrations.

Programme of Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)

In 2009 the 50th anniversary celebrations of PROCMURA were held in Nairobi, bringing together over 70 delegates

representing circa 25 countries. Representatives from the Presbyterian Church of Sudan, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana were all present. The celebrations, lasting four days, considered inter-faith relations across Africa.

Islam and Christianity are the predominant faiths across Africa and PROCMURA's purpose is to bring both together to explore peaceful co-existence. Regardless of faith the people of Africa suffer common hardships. Some of the key issues highlighted, particularly in respect of women, were as follows:

- a) it is commonly felt that scripture is used in a negative context when relating to women;
- b) culture impacts negatively on women both in Muslim and Christian communities;
- c) violence and other forms of abuse against women is common regardless of faith;
- d) whether Muslim or Christian, positions of leadership, especially at the local level, are rare for women.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe underlying problems persist. However the fledgling Government of National Unity has reduced some of the political tensions. Since the country, in February 2009, adopted the US dollar as its currency the economic climate has stabilised. Key workers receive only minimal salaries, industry has vanished and the country has overwhelming unemployment. The HIV and AIDS pandemic continues to wreak destruction on children and adults. Health and education services have seriously deteriorated. The collapse of social infrastructures endangers community health through other epidemics such as cholera. Anyone without access to foreign currency is unable to purchase food. In the absence of the Rule of Law people's liberty and safety are always at risk.

Against this background the churches remain a continuing source of encouragement and hope. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe of our partner church, the Uniting Presbyterian

Church in Southern Africa, maintains an active presence in many urban communities. The Presbytery is in the process of establishing 20 new congregations in rural areas by 2012.

Church of Scotland members John and Mary Miller were Scottish Churches World Exchange volunteers in Zimbabwe for much of 2009. In October 2009 together with the Rev Alistair Shaw, Moderator of the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley, they attended a conference on Zimbabwe sponsored in Denver by the Denver Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church of the USA. This 'Denver Summit' was attended also by five members of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and members of the UK's United Reformed Church Eastern Synod. Important principles emerged from the Denver Summit. In this critical era for the church in Zimbabwe the value of support from overseas partners cannot be overstated. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe has designated priority tasks for itself, and the three overseas partners have committed themselves to contributing material and human resources in support of these priorities.

The four partners determined that the interaction among them must be reciprocal. For the church in Zimbabwe lives in New Testament times where faith is immediately relevant, a matter of life and death. The other partners know they have lessons to learn from Zimbabwe about life and worship in this dimension.

The Presbytery of Zimbabwe operates as both a local presbytery and also a national church. It is beyond the scope of our Locally Supported Partnership – from the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley - to relate adequately to the church at national level in Zimbabwe.

Accordingly the Council's Africa/Caribbean Secretary will further the action plan of the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley by linking them in to the communication systems of the wider Church of Scotland. In this way information and prayer requests can be co-ordinated across the whole church.

In addition it is hoped to establish a strategic approach to congregational twinnings, to ensure that some Zimbabwe congregations are not disproportionately supported while others are left out altogether. In support of the central structure of the church the Council this year gave a second Emergency Grant of £15,000 to the Presbytery of Zimbabwe.

The Council is delighted that the minister of Banchory-Ternan West Parish, the Rev Donald Walker, has recently accepted a call from St Columba's Church in Mutare. Donald is now a minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, and the Council commends Donald and his wife Judith to the prayers of the whole Church.

The Council will continue to fulfill the instruction of the 2009 Assembly to support the Presbytery of Zimbabwe with prayer, material and personnel resources.

The Caribbean

2009 has seen little engagement with the Caribbean. This is due to change in personnel and limited resources. However, there continues to be a number of Twinnings within Jamaica, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago. It is also planned that the Africa and Caribbean Secretary will visit the Caribbean in the latter half of 2010 in order to engage more fully with Partner Churches.

In 2009, the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands embarked upon a programme of renewal and transformation in response to what has been discerned as a God-given call. Using a broad-based approach, the United Church undertook a process spanning approximately five years which included review, dialogue, prayer, discernment, and planning. The exercise of listening and heartfelt sharing clearly indicated that the United Church needed to renew their approach to ministry in the community. This would mean embracing radical restructuring and refocusing in an effort to deepen the effectiveness of the ministry of the church.

Israel - Palestine

Working in the Middle East is neither easy or predictable. These factors make our work and witness there all the more important – working for peace in an area of conflict, justice amidst unfairness and discrimination, reconciliation in the face of division, long-term sustainability in a changing climate, and above all love for our Christian brothers and sisters, and for all our neighbours in the region and beyond. The conflict continues, and although it is not open warfare as witnessed in Gaza at the beginning of 2009, there is simmering disquiet which flares up on occasions such as the feast of Rosh Hashana when there were incidents on the Temple Mount/ Haram al-Sharif, or house evictions in East Jerusalem, or when the pressures of the occupation bite too hard on either side.

2009 saw Israel elect a right-wing government, and 2010 will see elections for the Palestinian Authority, but many voices throughout the land bemoan a leadership vacuum with accompanying fatalism or despair about the lack of obvious solutions to the conflict or leaders mandated to resolve it.

Great hope was held out for the influence that the new US President Barack Obama could have in changing the paradigm, especially after a landmark speech in Cairo in June 2009, but there has been little development since then.

Some, such as Arik Aschermann, the founder of Rabbis for Human Rights to whom the Church of Scotland Guild has pledged a grant as part of their interfaith project, foresee further bloodshed in war or intifada before peace can break out, as he noted in a blog entitled "Armageddon, Straight Ahead". Elsewhere, there are calls for a single, bi-national, bi-cultural state: as Jonathan Kuttub, a Palestinian attorney wrote in the LA Times at the end of 2009 "we need to start thinking of how we can live together, rather than insist on dying apart." The Christian presence, though small, is an important bridge providing a gleam of hope. An important development at the end of 2009 was the

launch of the Kairos Palestine document, a cry for love and justice of which more is reported below and accessible on www.kairospalestine.ps.

On the economic front, the end of 2009 saw Israel appear to turn the corner out of recession, so that both St Andrew's Guesthouse and the Scots Hotel had high-performing months of November and are set for continued recovery in 2010. Last year's report made reference to the fact of "change being a constant" in the Middle East, but the Council is happy to report that this year, consistency of staff and stability within our own team have enabled relationships to be established and work to be progressed in a more considered and sustainable fashion. A particular strength is the commitment to the region, to peace, to our Christian partners, and to witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ that the increased number of permanent appointments is seen to embody.

Parish Ministry

St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem with St Andrew's Church in Tiberias form the basis of a Parish Grouping, with a Minister and Associate Minister. The Minister, Rev George Shand took up his post in Holy Week 2009 and Rev Colin Johnston, took up the post of Associate Minister at Tiberias in October 2009. Thus for the first time for a number of years there is a team for ministry with a long-term commitment to the church and to building relationships. This work includes:

- nurturing and developing the local congregation which includes local people and expatriates on longer term-contracts;
- providing support and guidance, where required, to staff of all three Church centres in which the staff group, coming from a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds, reflects the commitment of the Church to the whole of the community;
- connecting positively with the many visiting groups and individuals who want to know about the work of the church and helping them understand more fully the

- Palestine-Israel issues as the church experiences them;
- working extensively within the local community to support all those who seek to make a positive contribution to their own community and to peaceful living together.

Local Partnerships

We have two formal partnerships. The first is a longstanding partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem which has involved exchanges of personnel and support of projects and has encouraged congregational twinning opportunities. The main focus of current activity with the Diocese is the development of a 'Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Centre' in Tiberias. The centre is an exciting development which would utilise our church building and work alongside our church. A Partnership Working Group meets regularly to take this forward.

In March 2010, the Moderator, Rt Rev William Hewitt, signed a Partnership Agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). The general terms of this agreement were approved at the 2009 General Assembly. As with the Episcopal Diocese the WMC looks forward to developing our relationships with the ELCJHL, ensuring a mutually beneficial arrangement.

The Local Christian Presence

Crucially important is the support of local churches. The Christian community is a minority group which finds that the tensions of the region have a disproportionate impact on it. One result of this is that many young local Christians are leaving the region and the Christian community is getting smaller. The Church of Scotland is one of the international churches that the Middle East Council of Churches look to for positive support and understanding of their experience.

At the end of 2009 the local churches, supported by the World Council of Churches, launched what is now called the 'Kairos Palestine' document. This controversial document is supported by the leaders of all the local

churches, and by most of the organisations the Church of Scotland works with and would call partners. It therefore has implications for the work of the church on the ground in Israel-Palestine, and what it can do to support partner churches in what will be a difficult and perhaps dangerous time for them. They have expressed what they see as the distinctive Christian message that arises out of their experience, and that Gospel challenge is for all parties within the conflict situation in the Middle East, particularly Israel, and for churches throughout the world. It is crucially important that the document is understood for what it is, and the positive things it can offer. Debate in this region is so often not about what is said but about defending positions against attack. It is important that the debate on 'Kairos Palestine' is actually about what is said, and the Church of Scotland can have a role in contributing to this.

International Partnerships

At the end of the Kairos Palestine document the writers encourage others to, ".....come and see our reality." It is a continuing priority of the Church of Scotland in Israel-Palestine to find ways to build an increased understanding of the issues in the Middle East and the experience of local people of good will. To this end the Council encourages Twinning at every opportunity, and support projects such as the Guild Israel-Palestine project with Christian, Muslim and Jewish organisations. It is a priority to find ways to link the Church in Scotland, and other areas, with the experience and reality of Christians here in Israel-Palestine.

Tabeetha School in Jaffa

Led by Mr Antony Short and a competent and experienced Senior Management Team, Tabeetha School continues to improve its performance and reputation as a good quality school where a happy, creative and productive atmosphere is maintained in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-national environment. Pupils and parents were proud to be able to bring samples of their nation's cuisine for the school's "International Food Day" in October, enjoyed in

a room strewn with flags of the 35 nationalities at the school.

As the children grow and learn together, leaving politics at the door, they demonstrate that the conflict so often seen in this region need not be repeated down the generations.

While not focused entirely on grades and statistics, the school is pleased to be able to report an improving trend of "strength in depth" so that although the graduating class was a mixed bag of results, the next year down performed exceptionally well at AS-level, and the GCSE class obtained a result of 78% A-C grade, far above the sub-50% reported a decade ago and above the national average in England and Wales of 67% at A-C Grade. The high quality and reputation are also shown in the continued demand which results in the school continuing to fill all of its 330 places, attract a full quota of staff, and retain students to A-level.

The school's new Amuta status has helped with relations with public authorities, and has also been a driver for improvements in governance, documentation and administrative efficiency.

A new parents' group has been invaluable in strengthening the school's good relationships with the local community, while an alumni group started by alumni is improving connections with former pupils of Tabeetha all over the world.

St Andrew's Scots Guesthouse, Jerusalem

St Andrew's continues to receive praise and commendations for its warm atmosphere, high quality and friendly service, but does not sit on its laurels.

Mr Rimon Toubassi has kept a close-knit, high-performing team, rewarding good performance and encouraging loyalty. The guesthouse gardens have been significantly improved and consistently maintained to create an attractive outdoor space to complement the renovated interior, and which is used commercially for special events

as well as to provide a resource for our partners such as a youth group from the Sabeel Ecumenical Centre and a charity bazaar each spring. The guesthouse interior has also been kept up to date with continued improvements to accommodation and to the library.

Despite the Gaza conflict at the beginning of 2009, and the global economic crisis which impacted the first quarter of the year, the Guesthouse's financial performance remained high, returning £102,000 in lease payment and net operating profit, while covering more of the "shared" central costs of the Church's operations in the country and spending very little on advertising. A particular success has been the relaunching of the Guesthouse's weekend brunches, which have attracted a varied clientele and increased revenue while also building a "buzzing" but not intrusive atmosphere. The Guesthouse hosted 28 groups in 2009, and pilgrims were common guests, both as individuals and groups, and the guesthouse has been happy to welcome many visitors from the Church of Scotland.

Scots Hotel, Tiberias

Mr Shimon Kipnis has skilfully managed the Scots Hotel through a challenging year in terms of economic recession and political conflict, both of which struck the premium tourism in the regions hard, so that the Scots Hotel was not as badly hit as the general market in Tiberias and Galilee. The hotel's occupancy rate was 59% and despite more than 60% unexpected increase in municipal rates it returned £176,000 in lease payments and net operating profit. It continues to receive plaudits and positive press both locally and abroad as a high-quality boutique hotel, professional and with a warm and friendly atmosphere, employing a loyal team from a multi-ethnic and multi-religious local community.

During the year the hotel has welcomed Christians either as individuals or in groups. In addition to hosting 206 pilgrim groups from outside Israel and Palestine, the hotel has been a centre of hospitality for 50 local Christian groups to

whom the hotel and Church are made available through subsidies. It is hoped that the demand on subsidies will increase and anticipated that the demand can be met from the hotel.

Social Enterprise

During the past year, the Leadership Team of the Church of Scotland's Centres in Israel Palestine, including the heads of each Centre and the two Ministers, have come together regularly to share their experiences and encourage each other. In spring 2010, this team took two days away to build stronger relationships and consider their roles as part of a single entity in Israel Palestine. Part of this process of examining and defining our Values, Vision and Mission over the year has been a growing sense of responsibility to our history, community and environment, and steady progress along the road to being united as a social enterprise.

Working towards an assessment by Good Corporation on corporate responsibility of each Centre, including educational quality indicators for Tabeetha as well as indicators of governance, community relations, good employment and good management, the team now aims towards a higher goal of having a positive impact on the local community and its challenges. This will infuse the principles of reconciliation being implemented in the Centre for Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Dialogue, and link with similar initiatives in other Councils and areas of the Church of Scotland both within and outwith Scotland and Israel Palestine.

Scottish Churches World Exchange

Since its inception in 1992 the Church of Scotland has led the way in the development of World Exchange as an ecumenical instrument of the Churches in Scotland. SCWE is jointly owned and managed by the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church through SCIAF. This ecumenical structure has given considerable freedom to experiment with different forms of voluntary service

throughout the world. Volunteers who served through SCWE in 2009 are listed in Appendix VI to this report.

Since 1992 approximately 600 volunteers from all walks of life have served in over 20 countries of the world most of whom have been deeply influenced by the witness and commitment of the church they encountered while overseas. Many have remained in contact with the place they worked and the people with whom they shared part of their life.

In addition, World Exchange has been instrumental in developing new opportunities for service, for example, with the support of the Board of National Mission as was, to develop a volunteer programme in Scotland; with the University of Malawi launch a successful volunteer programme in "Malawi for Malawians"; developing the CCAP Likhubula House in Malawi supporting the welfare and education of orphans, providing activity weeks for over 2,000 local young people and developing curriculum activities for leadership courses with the assistance of Glenmore Lodge and other Scottish outdoor centres.

Despite its success on many fronts SCWE has been challenged over recent years by reduced income from its members and increasing costs of its activities and in February, reluctantly, took the decision to wind down its operation. While work continues in that process World Mission Council is exploring how, within its own resources, it can continue with a volunteer programme as an invaluable strand of service which compliments the Council's strategy in partnership of "saying it with people".

Overseas Charges

St Andrew's Nassau and Lucaya Kirk, Freeport: the Next Step towards the Presbyterian Church of the Bahamas

It has been a long-held ambition of the Church of Scotland congregations in the Bahamas to form their own denomination, following the example of many other churches around the world which began their life

under the wing of the Kirk. Senior elders speak of having advocated this move as long as fifteen years ago. Since 2005 the World Mission Council has been encouraging the fulfilment of this dream and reported to the 2008 General Assembly that: "The two congregations in the Bahamas plan to form a Presbyterian Church of the Bahamas and are working on the preparation of a constitution attuned to local conditions while being rooted in their Church of Scotland history." A year later, in 2009, the Council reported to the General Assembly that there was evidence of "fresh impetus to the aspiration to form a Presbyterian Church of the Bahamas, initially comprising the Church of Scotland charges."

A significant development during 2009 is that the Kirk Sessions of the two charges came to the view that, while the formation of a Presbyterian Church of the Bahamas remained their goal, at this stage they do not have the capacity to run a denomination on their own. They therefore propose, as an interim step, to affiliate to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the USA. Unlike the Presbyterian Church (USA), this denomination is willing to admit congregations outside the borders of the USA. Furthermore it has a Presbytery in Florida, very close to the Bahamas, where the two congregations could have the experience of being part of a working Presbytery and benefit from the capacity and supervision which it offers.

The Kirk Sessions therefore decided to recommend to the congregations that they should leave the Church of Scotland at the General Assembly of 2010 and join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. At a formally constituted meeting of Lucaya Presbyterian Kirk it was moved: "That we the members of the Lucaya Presbyterian Kirk, after a long and happy association with the Church of Scotland, do now agree to permanently separate ourselves from the Church of Scotland forthwith." On a vote being taken, 40 members voted in favour and three against. It was further moved: "That the Lucaya Presbyterian Kirk offer itself as a candidate for membership in the Evangelical Presbyterian

Church of America". On a vote being taken, 40 members voted in favour and three against.

At a formally constituted meeting of St Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk it was moved that the following steps be taken:

Step 1 – Go through the process of being released from the Church of Scotland and make our affiliation with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). We will also magnify our profile in Nassau by using the 200th Anniversary [of the congregation] (and the 450th of the Reformation) to have special events highlighting our heritage. Provide intensive training and teaching for members and elders regarding our faith.

Step 2 – With the help of the resources of the EPC we expand our mission in Nassau as we try and reach a new generation of worshippers for the Kirk. We begin a series of talks with potential candidates for joining us in the PCB including more interaction between the Kirks already existing in the Bahamas.

Step 3 – Work on a constitution that will establish the practices and procedures of the new denomination.

Step 4 – The formation of the new denomination.

On a vote being taken, 32 members voted in favour and 16 voted against. At the mission station on Abaco, two members voted in favour and four voted against. The total vote was therefore 34 members in favour and 20 against. The motion therefore carried.

Following the congregational meetings, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church confirmed its willingness to receive the two congregations. In October 2009 the Convener and Secretary of the Church of Scotland World Mission Council Overseas Charges Committee visited both congregations and found a very positive spirit in regard to membership of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as an interim step towards the formation of a Presbyterian Church of the

Bahamas. The Council therefore recommends that the two congregations be released with the blessing of the 2010 General Assembly as they take forward their life and witness in the Bahamas.

Implications for the Church of Scotland

Should the above recommendation be accepted, there would remain only one overseas charge: Greyfriars St Ann's linked with Arouca and Sangre Grande in Trinidad. In this event, the Council recommends that the Overseas Charges Committee be discharged and responsibility for the overseas charge in Trinidad passed to the Africa and Caribbean Committee. Since the latter Committee already has responsibility for partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, it is well placed also to exercise responsibility for the Church of Scotland charge in that country.

Local Development

Working together with the Panel on Review and Reform following the Commission of the General Assembly of 2008 for 'a study into the effectiveness of overseas mission on the life of the local church communities, where they have an interactive partnership with an overseas project' has been an opportunity for the World Mission Council to have on record the findings of a piece of independent research.

The document 'Partnership in Mission' will be presented as part of the Panel's report to the Assembly but it is important to note its significance here also. The impact of world-wide partnership can be seen in the comment of one church member of their experience of being part of a twinning in Zambia *"It has been a life-changing experience for me. It has been a joy to watch people grow through this"* or that of a member who was involved in hosting a family during a twinning visit with a congregation in the Czech Republic *"They changed from being visitors to being friends and part of our family, and so they remain."* The document highlighted not only the benefits but also the challenges, therefore providing a working document for the World

Mission Council as it seeks to resource congregations, engaging with them to recognise their unique situation and to contribute effectively. The study has shown that partnerships at local level in Scotland with the world church are many and varied. However, the growing demand for developing twinnings with Partner Churches has had an impact on the work of the Council, in particular in relation to resourcing Church of Scotland Congregations.

The addition, in December 2009, of a new member of staff, Karen Francis, whose main responsibility will be to help congregations as they take the early steps along the road of twinning, has been a positive step.

The research has informed the development of new resource material for twinnings including a monitoring and evaluation tool which has just been piloted by Lothian Presbytery and their partner the Diocese of the Eastern Highlands, and Murrayfield Parish Church and their partner community of Kwamibekrom in Ghana. Other resources are in development including information about safety and security when planning visits.

'Saying it with people' has become a mantra of World Mission Council and it is the opportunity for making personal connections that often results in growth, both individual and corporate. It is inspiring to see the breadth of this within the Faithshare Programme, (see appendix six) and realize this is only a cross-section of world connections for the whole Church. 19 members of Tarbert Youth Fellowship on arrival back on the Isle of Harris after visiting Hebron Church, Tansen, Nepal wrote *"The trip was a time of real blessing – every member learned something important and saw God at work in significant ways. We developed our relationship with members of Hebron Church and look forward to this increasing in the future. Through us the wider community on Harris are now benefiting from our experience."* The congregation of Auchtermuchty linked with Edenshead and Strathmiglo had the opportunity to receive visitors but also to visit Namadzi CCAP in Malawi this year.

During the visit they met MacDonald Kadawati, General Secretary of CCAP Blantyre Synod who spoke of the positive ethos of partnership, welcoming shared values and the opportunity to move forward together.

"Tiyende Pamodzi... lets go together along dusty roads, under the searing sun, on foot, by the light of the moon, sharing faith under the mango tree or in a mud built prayer house. ... as Jesus would have done." So what next? This is usually the question after a Faithshare visit and it is usually a multi-faceted answer.

One component of the answer seen in the report from Orkney Presbytery after a visit from members of Thyolo Highlands Presbytery in Malawi was to work towards engagement with the wider community in both countries to bring a long-term focus and new resources to strengthen the whole partnership. Summing up a visit to Methillhill and Denbeath Church their Trinidadian Partners said *"the essence of the twinning is in discovering what we have in common. It is like opening a door to fresh air, it is invigorating, refreshing and we are all wondering why it was not done before!"*

Ness Bank Church in Inverness has been in regular email and skype contact with a church in Nanping City, China. As a trusting relationship has developed, they have been able to share information about difficult circumstances which in turn have been upheld in prayer.

St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow have approached their twinning with Holy Family Episcopal Church in Raineh, Galilee as a journey of friendship, in response to the cry of Holy Family for friends in the wider world to walk with them in their life and work in a most challenging context. Christians comprise less than 2% of the population, and life for Palestinians in Israel has become increasingly difficult. Good friends support each other, and St Michael's folk are seeing more clearly the need for advocacy on behalf of Palestinian Christians, not as part of an issue-based solidarity but as part of a developing understanding

through friendship in Christ's name, seeking together the peace and well-being of all.

It is a regular occurrence to work with colleagues in other Councils to bring a World Dimension to their work. It was most definitely a success, despite a huge commitment of time and resources to bring 17 children and six adults from Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Hungary to the National Children's Assembly on Iona in October 2009. Their integration with Scottish children was almost instantaneous and bonds of lifelong friendship were formed. Shared learning between the leaders was a positive experience and has led to the first Children's Assembly being planned for CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi to take place in April, 2010.

The Priority Areas Committee of Ministries Council and World Mission Council both work in spheres which are considered the margins of society. One area of mutual connection is through the Together for a Change Project where communities see how people in another part of the world deal with various issues which in turn helps to see problems differently and hopefully offer new insights and solutions. During the next three years four new communities are being supported to learn with and from each other. The impact of this project on the lives of some of the poorest people living in Scotland and within communities in some of the poorest countries in the world has been and is continuing to be significant. One of the newest links is between Greenock East End and Zambia Compound, Kafue, Zambia. In both communities there is significant unemployment due to closure of local industry.

The World Mission Council is committed to working with Priority Areas Committee, other Councils and Committees of the Church as well as a wide range of broader partners to deliver its Action Plan for the next seven years. Many of our Partner Churches work in fragile situations: economic, climatic, political or religious instability are some examples. The courageous nature of partners in these situations is often inspirational and the potential for shared learning for

the whole church when our two committees co-ordinate work is huge.

It is impossible to open a newspaper, magazine or watch television these days without hearing a mention of Climate Change. World Mission Council as a stakeholder in the Church of Scotland Climate Change Programme has committed itself to ensure a global dimension within its work and has taken the lead in the production of a module for Eco-congregations relating to the International dimension of Climate Change. Our Partner Churches in Bangladesh consistently ensure this very important subject remains high profile as year by year they lose land to the sea. Issue 33 of WM, the Council's magazine challenges congregations to think beyond 'being green' to tackling the root causes. Congregations involved in links with overseas partners often are moved by the reality of the effects of climate change. The congregations of Papa Westray linked with Westray, pride themselves on their 3rd Eco-congregation award but also are challenged to share together with their Malawian partners sustainable methods of combating Climate Change.

Our campaigning activities and advocacy are important to our Partners overseas; many who are unable to make their voice heard in the international arena ask us to do it for them. We continue to encourage congregations to share with members ways in which they can be part of something bigger: signing a campaign postcard demand justice for persecuted Christians; joining together with the 8000 people making their voice heard at 'The Wave' in Glasgow in December 2009 or continuing to lobby MP's to ensure funding promises by the rich nations of the world to the Global Fund for TB, HIV and malaria are kept. It was good to have Joy Tudu in Scotland in September. Joy, an activist working with the Church of North India, shared passionately his work in relation to land rights of Adivasis in Jharkhand and the issues related to prevention of land grabbing that are affecting the communities.

The project receiving support from the Boys Brigade World Mission Fund in 2010-11 is Bethesda Children's Hospital in Budapest, run by the Reformed Church of Hungary. This was unveiled in Stornoway in November 2009 when the 2nd Stornoway Company hosted the Moderator as he received £12,000 for the previous year's project.

The occasion was marked by the commissioning of a new pipe tune called 'The World Mission' written by Pipe Major Peter Mackay.

In a world where communication methods are constantly evolving thought has been given this year to development of new resource materials and refreshment of others.

The WM magazine has been given a new look and is being launched at the time of the General Assembly. One very practical reason for this is to reduce postage costs. However it is also available on the website to download, as is our weekly e-newsletter 'Update'. Several very interesting short audio files have been created and used by radio stations around Scotland and further afield. These too are available on the resource section of the website.

Plans are in place for new resource materials, both web based and printed and these will be available by September. Working with our Mission Partners, we are seeking to update the Partner Plan Scheme, and are encouraging them to use blogs. It is hoped to develop these along with our Facebook profile during 2010.

In the spirit of Church without Walls over the next year World Mission Council is decentralising its conferences for its key stakeholders at local level, the World Mission Presbytery Conveners. Plans for 5 events around the country which will allow training, information and sharing not only for the Presbytery Conveners but for members of congregational world church teams also are underway. Working with small regional groups we hope to provide a forum for networking opportunities and sharing of good practice and inspirational stories.

HIV/AIDS Project

The Council has continued to assist with the provision of administrative support for this project of the Church. During the year, as noted within the Council of Assembly's report, it became clear that the Councils of the Church were finding it difficult to provide funding beyond 2010 to assist with the staffing of the project. This reality required the World Mission Council to consider its continuing support for the project. The outcome was a resounding agreement to continue the management and administration of the "Church of Scotland HIV Programme" entirely from within its own resources from the 1st January 2011 for three years in the first instance. The Council looks forward to the continuing and encouraging support of the Programme from congregations and presbyteries.

St Colm's College

It was with great regret that the World Mission Council has taken the decision to sell St Colm's College in Edinburgh. Opened in 1909 as the Women's Missionary College of the United Free Church, and most recently being the headquarters of Scottish Churches World Exchange, St Colm's has been the place in which many have been prepared for mission and service in Scotland and throughout the world. Its history has been long and distinguished, and it rightly holds a fond place in the hearts of those who have been associated with it. However, following extensive research, and noting the amount of money required to maintain and to develop St Colm's for use in the 21st century, the Council recognised that it does not have the resources that such a building requires. In reporting this difficult decision, the Council salutes the hard work and dedication of the Friends of St Colm's, Scottish Churches World Exchange and all who have cherished the place over the years.

Edinburgh 2010

'Edinburgh 2010' has been established to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, which strengthened evangelistic work

worldwide and led to the emergence of the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century, including the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC). In 2000-1 'Towards 2010' was formed as a Scottish conference series reviewing the eight 'commissions' which had formed the substance of the 1910 Conference. In 2005-6 Towards 2010 helped in the formation of an international process which led, in 2007, to it taking the title 'Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today'.

In April 2007 Dr Daryl Balia, a South African missiologist and an ordained Methodist, was appointed International Director for the project with an office at New College, and employed by the University of Edinburgh.

In September 2007 the General Council met for the first time in Edinburgh and became in effect the governing body for the project. With 20 representatives from all the major World Church denominations the General Council is unprecedented, bringing together the Anglican, Evangelical, Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic churches.

From the start the opportunity for Scotland to 'welcome' the World Church to this celebration was recognised as important, and the Scottish Coordinating Team (SCoT), set up by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), has been arranging the practical support. Although only partially a project of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh 2010 has been reported on to the General Assembly for the last five years.

These reports have been included in the Council Reports with cross references in the Reports of Mission and Discipleship and Ecumenical Relations. As the host nation Scotland clearly has a particular place in helping to bring this project to a successful conclusion. The General Council is grateful to the Church of Scotland for agreeing, through the World Mission Council, to handle the project's finances, and, through the Ecumenical Relations Committee, for employing one staff member.

This last year has seen significant progress towards a successful and worthy celebration of 1910. Under the able management of Dr Kirsteen Kim the study process has continued to explore the nine key themes relating to the nature of the Christian faith and mission today through a wide range of meetings and conferences around the world. The results of this process will be available in a special publication produced for the June conference. At its meeting in April 2009 the General Council aware of the impact of the world-wide recession and the shortage of funds, decided to reduce the conference from 1000 delegates to 250. The conference arrangements are being handled by the University of Edinburgh's Office of Life-Long Learning.

The conference is to take place at the Pollock Halls, University of Edinburgh, from 2 – 6 June 2010, with a closing act of worship in the Assembly Hall on Sunday 6 June at 3 pm which it is expected over 1,000 people will attend. The project has been very well served by the employment of Dr Jasmin Adam as Communications Officer with the remit of handling its communications and public relations aspects. Through the development of a website, a monthly newsletter, brochures, and using Facebook and Twitter, the project is well placed to enable participation by a world-wide audience. Plans are being made to stream the conference's closing act of worship on the internet.

Three publications during the year have made significant contributions. Professor Brian Stanley's 'The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910' promises to become the definitive history of the 1910 Conference, Professor David Kerr and Professor Kenneth Ross edited 'Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now', a retrospective assessment of the eight commissions of the 1910 Conference, and Professor Ross produced 'Edinburgh 2010: Springboard for Mission', a primer which both looks back to 1910 and helpfully sets the context for 2010 and the challenge for the next century. By the time of the

conference it is expected that 'Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today' edited by Dr Balia and Dr Kim will also have been published.

Those who would like to know more about Edinburgh 2010, and who would like to be involved, are advised to go to the website www.edinburgh2010.org and follow the links. Following the close of the Assembly the final lecture of the Alexander Duff Lectures will be given by Professor Dana Robert in the Assembly Hall. This will be something of a 'curtainraiser' for the June conference, and is open to all.

"Give thanks to God for the worldwide impact of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, encourage congregations to pray for fruitful outcomes from the centenary conference, and extend a warm welcome to all who travel to Scotland in connection with the centenary."

In the Name of the Council

COLIN C RENWICK, *Convener*
STEWART GILLAN, *Vice-Convener*
SHIRLEY BROWN, *Vice-Convener*

ADDENDA

The Rev Colin C Renwick

In 2010 Rev Colin Renwick completes his term of office as the Convener of the World Mission Council. It is with deep appreciation for both his person and work that we bid farewell to Colin Renwick as Convener of the World Mission Council. Having served as Convener of the Middle East Committee during the final years of the Board of World Mission, he answered the call to succeed Alan Greig as Convener of the Council in 2006. The Council, a year into its mandate, faced the considerable challenge of having to find its way forward in the wake of significant cuts to the World Mission budget, the reorganisation of mission partnerships into centrally and locally supported work, and the resultant redundancies in mission partner posts.

In response, Colin has led the Council with wisdom and compassion, leavened with his characteristic wit and good humour. He has represented the Church on important occasions in the life of overseas partner churches, and has been an energetic advocate for World Mission in the wider Church at home. His leadership regarding Israel and Palestine has been of crucial value, particularly with regard to the management of our institutions; the recruitment of new personnel; the signing of historic partnerships with the Diocese of East Jerusalem (Anglican) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land; and organisational and financial support of those working for justice and peace. We are grateful as well to his wife Eilidh for her understanding and support during a Convener'ship that called for a great deal of time to be spent away from home. From Jordanhill to the Jordan and back again, Colin has fulfilled a demanding calling exceptionally well, and we wish him and Eilidh joy and continued fruitful service in the years to come.

In the Name of the Council

STEWART GILLAN, *Vice-Convener*
SHIRLEY BROWN, *Vice-Convener*

Rev Dr Kenneth Ross

After 11 years as World Mission Council Secretary, Ken Ross has returned to parish ministry. With his encyclopedic knowledge of the history and personnel of the World Church and 10 years of experience as a professor within Chancellor College in the University of Malawi, Ken's contribution to the Church of Scotland's engagement with its overseas partners has been considerable. Blessed with a keen mind and clarity of expression, Ken has penned many fine reports for the General Assembly and other bodies. It is in no small measure due to his enthusiasm and knowledge of the history of global mission and of the issues facing churches in the 21st century that the Edinburgh 2010 celebrations have taken shape.

Ken's concern for those who are the victims of poverty and oppression throughout the world has been obvious to all who know him. He has been a passionate and effective advocate and will continue to be so. In thanking Ken, and in wishing him and his wife Hester God's blessing in all that lies ahead, members of the World Mission Council are confident that his passion for mission, his ability as a

communicator and his pastoral sensitivity will stand him in good stead in this new chapter of his life.

In the name of the Council

COLIN C RENWICK, *Convener*
STEWART GILLAN, *Vice-Convener*
SHIRLEY BROWN, *Vice-Convener*

APPENDIX I**Staff and family members overseas between 1 January to 31 December 2009****ASIA****Church of Bangladesh**

Dr Helen Brannam	Doctor	Bollobhur Hospital (Ecumenical appointment)
Mr David Hall	Development Consultant	Church of Bangladesh (Ecumenical appointment)
Mrs Sarah Hall Rebecca Reuben and Matthew	Education consultant	Church of Bangladesh (Ecumenical appointment)
Mr James Pender Mrs Linda Pender	Environmental/Conservation work	Church of Bangladesh, social dev. Programme, Meherpur (Ecumenical appointment)

Caribbean, Central and South America**Bahamas**

Rev Scott Kirkland Mrs Anita Kirkland Pricilla and Sarah	Minister	Lucaya Presbyterian Kirk, Colombo
Rev John Macleod Mrs Carol Macleod Bethany and Andrew	Minister	St Andrews Presbyterian Kirk, Nassau

Trinidad

Rev John Bacchas Mrs Claudette Bacchas Kerri-Ann and Shena-Marie	Minister	Grey Friars St Ann's with Arouca & Sangre Grande
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Middle East & North Africa**Israel/Palestine**

Rev George Shand Mrs Margaret Pressland	Minister	St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem and St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Tiberias
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Mr James Laing Mrs Nicola-Jayne Laing John	Regional Manager	Israel
Rev John Cubie Mrs Moira Cubie	Locum Minister	St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem and St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Tiberias
Mr Anthony Short Mrs Darya Short Joelle and Ezra	Principal	Tabeeetha School, Jaffa.
Rev Colin Johnston	Associate Minister	St. Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem and St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Tiberias
Rev Ian Clark	Locum Minister	St Andrew's Church, Tiberias
Rev Alistair McGregor	Locum Minister	St Andrew's Church, Tiberias
Rev Ian Alexander	International Co-ordinator	Sabeel (Ecumenical Appointment)
Mr Jimmy Maxwell	Chemistry Teacher	Tabeeetha School, Jaffa
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Malawi Miss Helen Scott	Teacher	Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School
Dr David Morton Mrs Rebecca Morton	Medical Officer	Nkhoma Hospital

United Church of Zambia

Rev Colin Johnston	Tutor	United Church of Zambia Theological College, Mindolo (Ecumenical Appointment)
Mr Keith Waddell	Mission Support Partner (Education)	Mwandi UCZ Mission, (Ecumenical Appointment)
Mrs Ida Waddell	Mission Support Partner (Medical)	Mwandi UCZ Mission, (Ecumenical Appointment)
Ms Jenny Featherstone	Trainer	Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, (Ecumenical Appointment)

APPENDIX II**DEATHS**

Rev Robert McMahon	July 2008
Rev J Wilfred Moore	10 March 2009
Rev Robert Manson	4 April 2009
Rev Lindesay Robertson	23 June 2009
Miss Helen McMillan	6 September 2009
Rev Maxwell Craig	26 September 2009
Miss Margaret Ritchie	6 October 2009
Mrs Robina Logie	25 October 2009
Rev Frederick Marshall	28 October 2009
Miss May Wilson	29 October 2009
Mrs Lillian Moore	10 January 2010
Mr Ron Hunston	30 January 2010
Rev Dr Charles Morrice	26 February 2010

APPENDIX III**BRITISH AND IRISH AMITY TEACHERS' GROUP (BIATG)**

BIATG Teachers currently working in the Peoples Republic of China:

2006

Christine Green (Wuwei)

2007

Kath Saltwell (Lanzhou)

2008

Ian Groves (Nanjing)

2009

Robert Kenyon (Hezhou)

Claire Brook (Qinzhou)

Angela Evans (Lanzhou)

APPENDIX IV**MISSION ASSOCIATES**

Tony and Catherine Paton	CMS, Lao
Mike and Jane Fucella	Church of Christ, Thailand

APPENDIX V**WORLD EXCHANGE VOLUNTEERS OVERSEAS
2009**

Clare Arnold	Kenya
Chris Barr	India
Emma Cowan	Malawi
Judith Craig	India
Blodwin Farquhar	Malawi
Norma Forbes	India
Claudia Fusaro	Malawi
Fiona Grimmond	India
James Hutchinson	Malawi
Fiona Hutchinson	Malawi
Neil Hewitt	Malawi
Sean Keighren	Malawi
Kevin Kilty	Malawi
Dorothy Martin	Malawi
Zsofia Molner	Malawi
Hamish Muiry	Malawi
Ross Muiry	Malawi
Mary Miller	Zimbabwe
John Miller	Zimbabwe
Cecillia Stephens	Malawi

APPENDIX VI**FAITHSHARE VISITORS 2009/2010**

Father Samuel Barhoum, Holy Family Episcopal Church, Raineih, Galilee, Israel. St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow, Scotland. (11- 18 February 2009).

Mr Thomas Joramson, Rev Henry Kaira, PCEA, Umoja Parish Church, Nairobi, Kenya. Colinton Parish Church, Edinburgh, Scotland. (20 – 31 March 2009).

Mrs Margaret Cranston, Mrs Susan Macdonald, St Kenneth's Parish Church, Kennoway, Scotland. CCAP, Lusangazi Congregation, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (17 April – 2 May 2009).

Mr Lovemore Mkandawire, CCAP, David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. Gardenstown and Macduff Parish Churches, Scotland. (21 April – 19 May 2009).

Mrs Elizabeth Mondol, Rev Martin Mondal, Church of Bangladesh. Presbytery of Angus. (1 May – 16 May and 1 May – 26 June 2009).

Rev John Mlera, Mr Bennet Mukiwa, CCAP, Namadzi Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Auchtermuchty Parish Church with Edenshead and Strathmiglo, Auchtermuchty, Scotland. (27 May – 13 June 2009).

Mr Sameh Bebawy, Coptic Orthodox Church, St Mary's Church, Luxor, Egypt. Luss Parish Church. (1 – 25 June 2009).

Mrs Faye Buchan, Rev Elizabeth Fisk, St Ninian's Parish Church, Dunfermline, Scotland. ECCB, Orlova Congregation, Czech Republic. (11 – 15 June 2009).

Mrs Fernella McCarthy, Mr Anthony Bayley, Church of Scotland Greyfriar's St Ann's, Trinidad. Methilhill and Denbeath Parish Church, Scotland. (2 – 6 June 2009).

Ms Ellie Kapenda, Mrs Esther Kawerama, Mr Stanley Mkandawire, Mr Enos Msowoya, CCAP, Ekwendeni Hospital. Presbytery of Ross, Scotland. (12 June – 2 July 2009).

Mrs Margaret Misuli, Mrs Joyce Nkandawire, Mr Kester Chiwalo, Rev Davidson Moyo, CCAP, Thyolo Presbytery, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. Presbytery of Orkney. (3 – 17 June 2009).

Ms Ashley Liddell, Ms Pamela McTaggart, Rev William Hunter, Ruchazie, Glasgow, Scotland. CCAP, Baula, Malawi. Together for a Change. (24 June – 14 July 2009).

Miss Fiona Duke, Miss Suzanne Farrant, St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow, Scotland. Holy Family

Episcopal Church, Raineih, Galilee, Israel. (22 June – 1 July 2009).

Miss Kirsty Mackay, Miss Rhona McKellar, Miss Jayne Morrison, Mr Ryan Toor, Tarbert Church of Scotland Youth Fellowship, Scotland. Hebron Church, Tansen, Nepal. (16 July – 3 August 2009).

Ms Elizabeth Chilvers, Mr Ian MacAulay, Auchtermuchty with Edenshead and Strathmiglo Church, Auchtermuchty, Scotland. CCAP, Namadzi Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. (22 July – 13 August 2009).

Mrs Marjory Cowie, Mrs Williamina Hartley, Mrs Mary MacDougall, St Ninian's Parish Church, Glenrothes, Scotland. HRC, Ramacsahaza Congregation, Hungary. (27 July to 2 August 2009).

Mrs Heather Johnson, Mr David Johnson, Mr David Ogilvie, Rev Gordon Savage, Maxwelltown West Church, Dumfries, Scotland. PCEA, Mathia Congregation, Karatina, Kenya. (30 July – 11 August 2009).

Miss Suzanne Farrant, Miss Rachel Hutcheson, Mr Colin Scott, COSY, Mission and Discipleship Council. ECCB, Youth Camp, Czech Republic. (25 July – 3 August 2009).

Mrs Isobel Wood, Newmachar Parish Church, Newmachar, Scotland. UCZ, Kitwe, Zambia. (13 – 23 July 2009).

Mr Harry Ngwira, Mr Josham Thawi, CCAP, Engcongolweni Congregation, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. Dalgety Bay Parish Church, Dalgety Bay, Scotland. (30 August – 22 September 2009).

Mrs Trisha Meyer, St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Brussels, Belgium. PCG, Christ Presbyterian Church, Adentan, Ghana. (7 – 25 August 2009).

Miss Tambudzai Makwelele, Miss Mary Musonda, UCZ, Chipembi Girls School, Zambia. South Leith Parish Church, Edinburgh, Scotland. (6 – 28 August 2009).

Mr Joy Tudu, Church of North India, Synodical Board of Social Services. World Mission Council and Christian Aid, Scotland. (1 – 29 September 2009).

Dr Basil Obasi, Mr Nnanna Uma, PCN, Presbyterian Urban Health Services, Aba, Nigeria. Banchory Ternan West Parish Church, Banchory, Scotland. (3 – 22 September 2009).

Mrs Carol Chimuzu, Mr Justin Chabwera, Rev Peter Kandulu, Mr Clifton Thyangathyanga, CCAP, Balaka Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Castle Street Church, Dingwall, Scotland. (18 September – 13 October 2009).

Ms Carol Finlay, Rev Robin Hill, Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project. CHAM, CCAP Ekwendeni Hospital AIDS Programme, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (19 – 29 September 2009).

Mrs Doris MacKenzie, Holy Trinity Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland. Rev Gift Simwera, CCAP, Theological College Ekwendeni, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (15 September – 7 October 2009).

Mrs Babra Hunga, Mrs Eunice Lowole, Mr Thomas Hara, Mr Martin Nsini, Baula, Malawi. Ruchazie, Glasgow, Scotland. Together for a Change. (16 September – 5 October 2009).

Ms Ruby Dagadu, PCG, Osu Ebenezer Congregation, Accra, Ghana. Cramond Kirk, Edinburgh, Scotland. (4 – 14 September 2009).

Mr Daniel Gaturu, Rev Joseph Njoroge, PCEA, Icaciri Congregation, Gatundu, Kenya. Birse and Feughside Parish Church, Banchory, Scotland. (19 September – 5 October 2009).

Mrs Ana Melo, Rev Abel Padilla, PRCC, Presbytery of Havana, Cuba. Moray Presbytery, Scotland. (6 – 20 September 2009).

Mr Custom Mwale, Ms Elimase Mndoli, Ms Siza Mulambya, Miss Sharon Chikuse, Master David Nyirenda, Miss Fannie Nyangulu, Miss Lucy Kaunga, Master Hope Soko, Miss Staphel Nkhandwe, Miss Mthise Ziba, Master Phunziro Chinula, Master Rodwell Madise, Miss Annie Mzumara, CCAP, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. Mrs Joyce Kafumbe, Miss Elizabeth Chibuye, Miss Niza Mbalazi, United Church of Zambia. Rev Sicily Muriithi, Miss Caroline Kuria, Master Brian Githaiga, PCEA, Kenya. Rev Endre Iszlai, Master Marton Viranyi, Master Balazs Barath, Master Daniel Stevens, Hungarian Reformed Church and the Presbytery of Europe. Mission and Discipleship Council, Children's Assembly, Iona, Scotland. (8 – 16 October 2009).

Mrs Rosslyn Scott, Rev Lynn Brady, Abdie and Dunbog linked with Newburgh, Scotland. United Church of Zambia, Mwandi, Zambia. (5 – 29 October 2009).

Mrs Gladys Moyo, Mrs Tecla Usayi, Rev Mark Phillips, UPCSA, Presbytery of Zimbabwe. Greenock and Paisley Presbytery, Scotland. (5 – 20 October 2009).

Mr Craig Christmas, Mr Paul Christmas, St Blanes Church, Dunblane, Scotland. CNI, DISHA, Kalimpong, India. (10 – 26 October 2009).

Mrs Cynthia Douglas, Rev Alexander Douglas, Blackhall St Columba's Church, Edinburgh, Scotland. UPCSA, Pirie Mission, Eastern Cape, South Africa. (9 – 27 November 2009).

Mr Joel Gathinji, UMN, HIV and Aids Technical Advisor. Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project. (12 November – 6 December 2009).

Rev Bill Brown, Dr John Crispin, Murrayfield Parish Church, Edinburgh. PCG, Kwamebikrom, Ghana. (10 – 22 February 2010).

Mrs Jemima Bell, Mrs Dorothy McMonagle, The Guild and World Mission Council, Church of Scotland. Interfaith Action in Israel and Palestine. (15 – 27 February 2010).

Mrs Grace Millward, Mrs Marilyn McCann, Livingston Old Parish Church, Scotland. CNI, St James Church, Kolkata, India. (25 February – 8 March 2010).

Miss Jane Martin, Rev James Simpson, Mrs Anne Stott, Mr David Stott, Chalmers Ardler Church, Dundee. PCEA, Kayole Congregation, Nairobi, Kenya. (6 – 16 April 2010).

Rev Alexander Horsburgh, Rev Alison McDonald, Presbytery of Lothian. CNI, Diocese of Eastern Himalayas. (26 April – 13 May 2010).