

ASSEMBLY MISSIONS NIGHT

Overview:

Thursday night is always a highlight at the General Assembly when the work of International Missions is showcased and delegates are received. The feedback from Commissioners and visitors alike was that tonight was a particularly special evening.

For many, the highlight came when **Billy Graham** addressed the assembly and his passion and love for the people of South Africa and his passion and love for the Lord Jesus Christ was obvious. He spoke of an older woman who in her own language addressed God as a beautiful or perfect gentleman. The Moderator thanked Mr Graham and described him as a perfect gentleman.

May 20, 2010

Report of International Missions Board

The Moderator took the chair at 6.30. The General Assembly sang Psalm 126 (Sing Psalms) led by **Evan Macdonald**

The Moderator read Romans Chapter 10, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"

The Moderator constituted the General Assembly with prayer. He commended the work of mission overseas and he remembered especially **Mrs Annie Margaret Macdonald** - who is very unwell, to the prayers of the church

Rev Iain MacAskill (Rosskeen), Chairman of the International Missions Board was asked to present the IMB report

Iain MacAskill spoke of exciting times at home and abroad where the boundary between international and domestic mission has been removed. The HMB and IMB are working closely together to raise awareness and raise funds for the work of mission throughout the denomination. **Alex MacDonald & Bob Akroyd** will give a presentation later this evening about the work of mission.

Mr MacAskill addressed the General Assembly and gave thanks for those who are integral to the work of the IMB. He thanked **Charlie and Daphne Douglas** for their excellent work on From the Frontiers. He drew special attention to the work and dedication of **Mr Calum Ferguson**, Secretary to the board - he is the best secretary a board could have. And thanks too to **Mrs Liz Ferguson**. Appreciation was expressed to Calum Ferguson with enthusiasm from the General Assembly. Thanks were expressed too to Mr Bob Akroyd.

Mr MacAskill commended the Moderator's address and highlighted the recent cup final in Glasgow. He spoke of the good welcome to the "Arabs" from Dundee when they came to Glasgow. Mr MacAskill commended the work of the Martyn Project in making the "Arab"

feel welcome in Scotland. Mission work does not just take place over there but it is taking place here.

Third Mr MacAskill wanted to thank **Mr Ernest Brown**, from the EPC of Ireland for his input into the church's work in India. The work in India is very exciting more than 300 new believers with more than 100 new baptisms. Iain spoke of his first hand visits to India and commended the work of **Mrs Lalin John** who passed away last year. Sorrow was expressed concerning Mr David John's unwillingness to resign and the division that brought to the Indian church.

Mr MacAskill said the church needed to learn from the WFM for their fundraising skills – warm appreciation was expressed to the WFM from the General Assembly

The Chairman of the IMB encouraged the Assembly and its visitors to buy **The Ochre and the Blue** - a labour of love and a gift to the church from Billy & Elizabeth Graham.

Bob Akroyd (Buccleuch & Greyfriars, Edinburgh) addressed the General Assembly: It was good to see so many visitors at the General Assembly

Latin America

Going again a fortnight today. We once again give thanks for the blessing there has been in the Colegio San Andres. Soon to celebrate 93 years and the way in which we are building upon that heritage. Clive Bailey has achieved remarkable progress in just over two years.

We remember **the Baileys, the Smiths, the Reanos and the Fords. Manuel Reano** had to stay in Columbia instead of coming here today. There are key people in key positions in key institutions. We are supporting two of the three most significant institutions in Latin America: Lima Seminary and Medellin. We are the simple greatest funding partner of both of these institutions. In each of these instances, we are investing in the future of each country by investing in education and training.

The Martyn Project

An example: Turkey has 70 million people. Estimates of evangelical Christians are 3,000 to 4,000. Many of the early churches were in Turkey. The gospel is again taking root there. We continue to pray and seek God's blessing.

Partnership:

We can do more with others than we can do on our own. FC and Latin Link have a conference in June in Inverness. We're looking for opportunities to partner with various organisations. Remember the work of London City Mission, Latin Link, etc This is your work and your mission and we have every reason to rejoice.

Questions

None

Iain MacAskill moved the report & Bob Akroyd seconded the report

Speakers

Alex Cowie (Partick) spoke about the work among Jewish people. In an age when Jewish evangelism is enjoyed unparalleled blessing, the Free Church of Scotland has no workers active in this ministry.

He spoke of the connection with Jewish people and how important connection and background are in this work. He spoke of the Jewishness of our Saviour and the Jewishness of our faith. It is a lonely ministry but it is an important ministry. This is an appeal from the heart - remind ourselves of our interest in Jewish work and bring the gospel to the Jew first.

Dr John Ross (Dumisani) spoke and endorsed Mr Cowie's comments. He presented a gift to the retiring moderator **Rev Douglas MacKeddie** of a membership badge of the Young Men's Christian Association.

South Africa is passing through very difficult times following the 20th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela. Strikes, shortages, violence are everyday realities for the black communities. Whites blame corruption but the situation is more complicated than that - this is the context in which the FCSA ministers and in which Dumisani operates.

South Africa will soon be hosting the World Cup - the impression of visitors may be very positive but it will be superficial. There is the biggest wealth gap in the world - real poverty. There is a huge disparity in unemployment. HIV and TB are in the increase. This is a dark background but in this context the church is shining like a diamond against a black velvet. The Free Church of Southern Africa (FCSA) experiences great challenges but also experiences great joy. It is a joyful church and a growing church. The growth is slow but evident – both spiritual and material growth. Providing manses is paying dividends. Districts where ministers live in the district enjoy greater blessing and encouragement than those where the minister travels in from outside. The greatest need of the church in South Africa is sound Bible teaching & Dumisani is a major provider of degree-level training from an evangelical and reformed perspective in the Eastern Cape. Thank you for continuing to fund Dumisani and thank you for your support and prayers. Please give thanks for Dumisani its staff and its principal Alistair Wilson.

HMB/IMB Powerpoint Presentation on Mission (Alex MacDonald & Bob Akroyd)

Alex MacDonald, Home Missions Board

Mr MacDonald highlighted Home Mission and the six projects highlighted for fund raising. Mission defined and explained in our context. Raise the profile of mission with HMB and IMB. New policy requires each board to raise funds for its work - this year each board to

raise £150,000. (30% of their budgets). This is extra money to the congregations' contributions.

National Mission - Home Mission - taking the gospel to our own communities. Some congregations are strong and some are struggling. He paid tribute to **Neil MacMillan** our development officer

6 Home Missions Projects – (highlighted this year)

Project 1. **Argyll** - Team Ministry to support ministry in that large area with limited gospel impact

Project 2. **Elgin & Forres** - Making Jesus more widely known than "Speyside"

Project 3. **SOS - Service to Overseas Students** based in Glasgow under the leadership of **Finlay & Christine Mackenzie**

Project 4. **St Andrews** - Student work under leadership of **Alasdair I Macleod**
We might not see immediate benefits in these works but are investing in the lives of future leaders whether in St Andrews or SOS in Glasgow

Project 5. **Sleat & Strath** - revitalisation and church planting in Skye

Project 6. **South Uist & Benbecula** - church plant more than 10 years ago still requires support from the wider church

The HMB does a lot of other work not represented here - your support can make a difference! We have great opportunities of reaching people in our country with the Gospel

Bob Akroyd, International Missions Board

We are looking for new opportunities as well as existing field. We have a growing work among the unreached.

IMB supports:

Work in Seven countries on three continents

Nine Free Church missionary couples

Two national workers

3 schools in two countries

National Churches in India and South Africa

Work among the Jewish People

The IMB like the HMB need to raise £150,000 this year (30% of its budget)

If Church responds liberally we will need more missionaries. Perhaps short term trips for young people.

Project 1: **Presbyterian Free Church, India**. Unprecedented response to Gospel in villages.

Project 2: **Mission schools in India**

Project 3: **Dumisani Theological Institute**, South Africa

Project 4: **Medellin Seminary** in Columbia

Project 5: **Lima Evangelical Seminary**, Peru

Project 6: **The Martyn Project**

Reminded the Assembly of the Great Commission. Great opportunities to do great things in the name of our great Saviour

ORDER of the DAY – Reception of Mission Board Delegates

Iain MacAskill presented the following Delegates to the Moderator:

John & Elizabeth Ross - South Africa

Dr Ross was invited by the Moderator to address the General Assembly. Dr Ross presented a PowerPoint presentation of the work in South Africa. Dr Ross spoke of material starvation but even more important was the problem of spiritual famine. He also spoke of the openness to the gospel and hunger for the word of the Lord. Dumisani is providing a unique education in the Eastern Cape - but the seminary does not have sufficient funds to meet this challenge. The value of the pound has declined while the cost of living has increased. He asked the General Assembly, Is there anything more you can do to help? John & Elizabeth attend a local FCSA church. Their own language skills are limited but they feel very much a part of a Free Church family. There has been real encouragement in their time in the congregation.

Thank you for sending us to South Africa - this is the best move we have ever made. Thank you for supporting us and praying for us and thank you to Calum Ferguson for all of his practical support.

Please consider developing a personal relationship with Dumisani through e-mail, facebook, etc. Please help Dumisani to train a new generation of African pastors teachers and evangelists. Join Dumisani's growing list of friends to relieve South Africa's spiritual famine

Colin MacLeod - Martyn Project

Colin MacLeod was invited by the Moderator to address the General Assembly.

The General Assembly was lead by **Evan Macdonald** in singing Psalm 96, Sing Psalms

Samit Mishra – India

The General Assembly was shown a video from Samit Mishra about the work of the Gospel in India. He appreciates the support of the Free Church of Scotland over many years. He is delighted about the blessings he has seen and recognises the challenges to come with the work of outreach evangelism and mission. The appointment of **Fakir Chand** as an evangelist is a great opportunity to extend the gospel in the surrounding villages. Pray for new believers that they would not backslide.

Mike Moore - Christian Witness to Israel

Mike Moore was invited by the Moderator to address the General Assembly. Mr Moore said that he appreciated the comments of Alex Cowie ('To the Jew first') and the opening psalm (126) and opening prayer of the Moderator. **Grace Lan** who has been unwell, has returned to the U.K. **Alex Cowie and Ray McCabe** continue to serve in the Jewish community in Glasgow. New opportunities for outreach including outreach to New Agers because many Jews are searching for meaning in New Age mysticism.

Mike Moore expressed appreciation for the support of the Free Church of Scotland. He remembered past missionaries from the Free Church in a time of difficult labour. Today when there is a time of reaping - there are no Free Church workers in CWI. Encourage your young people to consider attending the Summer School in Jewish Evangelism and challenge your people to consider the work of mission to Jewish people and take part in this reaping time. They may go forth with weeping and with the Lord's blessing return with rejoicing carrying sheaves.

Billy & Elizabeth Graham - South Africa (Retired)

Iain MacAskill presented the Moderator with a copy of **The Ochre & the Blue**, the history of the Free Church Mission in Southern Africa by Billy & Elizabeth Graham.

Billy Graham was invited by the Moderator to address the General Assembly. Billy Graham mentioned four things they learned from writing this book. It was a privilege that they greatly enjoyed and offer it too the Lord and to the church.

1. From preparing this book, they learned to look back over 100 years to the Free Church of 1900 recovering from the trauma of 1900 - a church which was small but which resolved to enter into missionary work. Within 20 years, missionary work was established on 3 continents! There was a concern about funding but it was believed that the welfare of the home church was not neglected in seeking to fulfil the great commission.
2. The diversity of talents and gifts in the missionaries that God provided in South Africa. The Lord used each one - not one was perfect. When he speaks of missionaries he speaks of the wives of South Africa.
3. The faithfulness of the church in supporting this work over many decades. The enthusiasm for mission hasn't waned for more than 100 years.
4. It is a testimony to the faithfulness of God—in face of weakness, inexperience, and mistakes.

It is a church whose best days are yet to be. We are delighted to hear about Dumisani and its work. We are delighted to hear of the lives that are changed by the gospel, changed by Jesus. This is the stuff of mission. The words of Samuel Rutherford - "If one soul from Anwoth meets me in glory, then my heaven will be two heavens in Immanuel's land" There will be many in Glory on that last day who will have cause to give thanks for the church in Southern Africa and to give thanks for Jesus who has done everything.

The Moderator thanked each of the delegates.

The Moderator made special mention of **Billy & Elizabeth Graham** for their book, for their service and for their character.

Further Speakers

Dr Fergus Macdonald (Buccleuch & Greyfriars) commended the work of **Lima Evangelical Seminary** (SEL) from his firsthand experience. He expressed concern that there was little reference to the two Presbyterian Churches with which we have sister church relations. He encourages visits from the IMB with leaders from both of these churches to achieve a memorandum of agreement with these churches, as has been the case in the past.

Douglas MacKeddie (Maryburgh) spoke of his visit as Moderator to South Africa with his wife Katie. It is hard to describe the experience which was better felt than telt. He appreciated his visit to Dumisani and to the districts. He appreciated the warm hospitality of his hosts - especially the many meals which accompanied Presbytery meetings in South Africa. We can learn from this model in our meetings here.

Tim Donnachie (Bishopbriggs) spoke about volunteers who came to Colegio San Andres. They were a great help to the school, to the missionaries and to the students. Opportunities exist in Lima and also in the **Eastern Europe for Christ camps**. We need people, you don't have to be young you don't have to be a teacher. All you need to be is a Christian and be able to speak English - you would be doing a great service to the Lord.

Roddie Rankin (Plockton & Kyle) spoke about **London City Mission**. He recognised the big hearted people in the International Board - especially Iain MacAskill. Plockton & Kyle have four missionary couples involved in the London City Mission and the Free Church of Scotland has one of its ministers **Dr John Nicholls** as its director.

LCM has celebrated its 175th anniversary, yet the mission is suffering from financial problems. Missionaries have been made redundant and others are required to raise 20% of their funding. Please consider inviting LCM workers to speak at your fellowships and consider supporting these workers in their strategic work in the great city of London. Pray for them and remember that they need our support. He mentioned **Donald & Roseangela Fraser** who are missionaries for WEC. Donald is a member of Kyle Free Church and Roseangela is from Brazil.

Evan Macdonald (Glasgow City) commended the work of WFM in their fund to support a volunteer. They have supported volunteers in London, Peru, South Africa with our mission and with other missions. Funds are available to Free Church members. Up to £250 is available as a gift to help with travel or related expenses. Since 2007, 15 volunteers have been helped with funds exceeding £3,000. Let your young people know about this fund. Contact **Maggie Macleod** on the WFM Website.

Iain Macdonald (Cumbernauld) asked for the prayers of the General Assembly and the church for the country of Thailand and especially the work of **Sandra MacDonald** with OMF. Sandra is finding people all over Scotland from Thailand and there are real opportunities to share the gospel. He also drew the attention of the church to the many Filipinos living and working in Scotland especially in the nursing and care professions. They are in this country for a reason - let's send them back to their own country loving the Lord Jesus Christ and making Him known to their own people.

Donnie G MacDonald (Portree) commended the work of **Asian Link** and recommended **Martin Dudgeon** as an excellent speaker. Mr MacDonald can give more information about the work of Asian Link.

Angus MacRae (Dingwall) commended the Missionary Prayer Notes and especially **Mrs Daphne Douglas**. Thank you for including workers in different missionary organisations. We need to be reminded of mission - this brings us huge blessing as a church. When we serve the Lord overseas, He blesses us here. Remember the **Nakahashis** serving in Japan and the **Raes** in the Philippines and **Caitriana Nicholson** serving in East Asia with support from Glasgow City Free Church.

Alasdair Macleod (Lochbroom) reminded the General Assembly of **Gwen and Mark Thompson** who will soon be returning to serve with the Anglican Church in Jerusalem.

Iver Martin (Stornoway) was concerned about the way of making mission known to young people who will be the next generation of missionaries. Involve them in the life of mission. It exposes them to the gospel in another country. It focuses the prayers of the home church. When they return can we have them speak to the General Assembly on Missions Night? Can we take the risk next year and ask some young people to speak about their experience in mission and bring their friends to hear about it.

The Moderator asked for prayer for **Marsali Campbell** in her work for Dwelling Places, Uganda.

Mr MacAskill thanked the speakers and commended the work of International Missions to the prayers of the church. He suggested having dedicated prayers meetings for Home and International Meetings.

The Session was concluded with the singing of Psalm 24: 7 - 10 (Scottish Psalter) led by **Evan Macdonald** to the tune St George's Edinburgh

The Moderator prayed and pronounced the Benediction