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In these days of confusion and complacency, compromise and controversy we need to remind ourselves afresh of the words of our Saviour who speaks in simple language that to attain heaven, to go to God the Heavenly Father, to dwell forever in "Fathers House", the sole way, the simple way and the sure way is through Christ and Him alone. He says that "He" is the Way the truth and the life and that no one can go to the Father except through him. (John 14:6)

He is THE WAY... For the DETOURED one. We can be detoured or diverted in life by various means. By our inbred sinfulness as we follow our human hearts dictates. By Satan the enemy of our souls as we are led subtly by him as we listen to his deceitful lies that promises pleasure but brings pain.

He is THE TRUTH ... for the DECEIVED one. We live in a world where the current President of the U.S.A. Donald Trump speaks a lot about "fake news". Deceivers out there preach that we can get to heaven by our good works or by keeping the commandments or by being confirmed or baptised. (This is fake news) Jesus says categorically "You must be born again" for except that happens you cannot see or enter the kingdom of God, "This is the Truth"

He is THE LIFE ... for THE DEAD one. The Holy Scriptures remind us that yes we are born physically alive but we are also born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. We thank God that the same Divine power that raised Christ from the dead is the self-same power that raises the dead sinner out of the tomb of their sins. Our faithful Missionaries continue to preach week in and week out from the pulpits and the pavements of our city that Jesus Christ and he alone is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE.

Bobi Brown. Executive Secretary

Honorary Secretary's Report

Rev D Bannerman



THE UNCHANGING GOSPEL TO AN EVER-CHANGING CITY

It is, I suppose, inevitable that from year to year the Reports of the Mission Staff do not change very much. The routine labour of a City Missionary has changed little throughout almost 190 years of history; so it is inevitable that there will be a degree of sameness about the substance of many of the submissions.

It is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 11. Cor.4:2

The society in which we live in 2017 is not as easy a place to witness for Christ as it once was. There appears to be a growing level of intolerance of Christian faith and witness the like of which I don't think we have ever experienced before; and, worryingly, attitudes would appear to be hardening against what we might generally define as evangelistic outreach. However, faithfulness and commitment to the task of reaching people for Christ remains constant and universal throughout the Mission.

All the traditional means of evangelism are being fully utilised, together with many new and novel ways of reaching out to people. The preaching of the gospel is fundamental to reaching people for Christ, and in halls across the city, whether attended by many or few, this task continues with commendable faithfulness by members of the Mission Staff and other visiting preachers on occasions.

Some have experienced blessing through the preaching of the Word during the past year while all have sown the seed in faith believing that God, in His time, will prosper what has been sown and produce fruit to His glory.

Door to door visitation, while never easy, has been undertaken in most districts and in other places. Lots of gospel literature has been placed into hands and through doors in trust that the Holy Spirit will use it to give sight to the spiritually blind and lead them to the One who is the light of the world. In one district, specially written pieces of literature themed on East Belfast's own foot-balling son, George Best, found their way, in quantity, to Manchester where the famous number 7 winger remains something of an idol. Who can tell what God might do with those tracts in that needy city? Others, for whom the City of Belfast was, and perhaps still is, a foreign place, have found friendship and welcome as well as help in many areas of life and living.

It is often the case that the heart is first reached with the gospel through caring initiatives. Food and furniture have been used over many years as expressions of Christian concern for those less fortunate than others. The city has seen the rise of 'food banks' over the past few years, something that many had thought to have been consigned to history. A number of our missionaries have been engaged in this food-bank ministry, in some cases in cooperation with local churches, and also in the provision of items of furniture for those trying to re-establish independent living following some personal or family crisis. The Lord who said: '**Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.**' Mt.25:40 would surely be pleased.

Opportunities for witness are continuing to open up in Residential and Nursing Homes and an increasing number of our staff are engaged weekly or monthly in conducting services for the residents in such places – sometimes with the assistance of those who attend their Halls. Some residents have been led to the Saviour through this means of contact.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Gal.6:2

An important factor mentioned in a number of Missionaries Reports is the encouragement and involvement in their work of their home Congregations. A number speak of the faithful commitment to prayer by their 'sending' Church. Others value the direct input of outreach teams, (from their home Congregations or other

places) that help with Holiday Bible Clubs and other special outreach events for children and young people in particular.

The importance of prayer in relation to reaching people for Christ is stressed by our Missionaries. As in church life, attendances at meetings for prayer varies from good to could be better; but it is in the prayer times that the burden of the work is brought before the Lord. In answer to prayer, many opportunities for personal and corporate witness have been opened up. Many fruitful contacts have been made in visitation of hospitals or in the conducting of funerals. Meeting with people in the stressful experiences of life has afforded opportunities to introduce the great bearer of burdens and some have found the Lord through such encounters. A number of members of staff speak of the privilege of coming alongside people in need and testify to the spiritual fruitfulness that has resulted on occasions.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." Mk.16:15 (NIV)

That commission given to the Disciples of Jesus is one that has been extended around the world and across the ages and is fully embraced by the Mission and its Staff. It finds expression through many different and varied activities throughout the districts where our Missionaries work and through the many activities and opportunities that constitute the work and witness of our Mission.

Sunday School work, traditionally the bedrock of our work among children, is tending to struggle in these days; with numbers attending, even in some of our most active districts, reducing year on year. However, other means of reaching children and young people, which might not meet on the Lord's Day but are fulfilling a similar role at other times of the week, are being utilised. Holiday Bible Clubs, Christian Endeavour Societies and Good News Clubs go some way to filling any vacuum caused by dwindling numbers attending on Sundays. A number of missionaries speak of the value of having input from Child Evangelism Fellowship workers and other specialist teams to assist in this work.

In some halls, uniformed organisations, staffed by trained and competent leaders, continue to influence young lives, not only through weekly activities but through annual camps and other special events. A number of young people have been won for Christ over the past year.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the desire to be all things to all people in order that he might win some. 1.Cor.9:22. That seems to be a fitting description of a City Missionary. Our members of staff have faced many social and domestic problems in their districts yet another year. Some have encountered the destructive influence of alcohol and drug abuse in families; others the carnage caused to family life by the breakdown of relationships that have left adults and children vulnerable, and in some cases, impoverished. Yet others have been faced with attempts at suicide in families.

One member of staff who has faced a number of these issues during the past year perceptively concludes: it seems that we live in a time where people want Church and Mission to be available to offer and supply all manner of things, with the exception of the gospel!

While that is undoubtedly true, and could probably be endorsed by other missionaries; nevertheless, the staff continue to care, to pray, and to engage with the society in which we live and the sphere of labour to which they have been appointed, with their faith and trust, not so much in their own gifts and abilities, but in the Lord of the harvest who has called them to be labourers in His vineyard. They continue to take: **THE UNCHANGING GOSPEL TO AN EVER-CHANGING CITY** - knowing that:

"Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps.126:5-6 (ESV)

MISSION HALL SUPERINTENDENTS

- Ronnie Armour Fairview Road
- Vacant Mountcollyer
- Bert Crooks Sandy Row
- John Douglas Kilburn Street
- George Dunbar Island Street
- Vacant Canton Street
- Tommy Irwin Jersey Street
- Norman Jackson Ballybeen
- Vacant Bloomfield Drive
- Vacant Kimberley Street
- Evan Rice Glencairn
- Vacant Rathcoole
- Roger Thompson Great Northern St
- Bobby Woods Shore Road
- Fred Teeney Mayo Street
- Vacant Ballysillan



President R Armour



Vice President and
Treasurer R Thompson



Honorary Secretary
Rev D Bannerman

THERE IS NO EXERCISE
BETTER FOR THE HEART
THAN REACHING
DOWN AND
LIFTING
PEOPLE UP.
WWW.VERYBESTQUOTES.COM
— John Holmes



President:

Mr Ronnie Armour

Vice-President:

Mr Roger Thompson

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr Roger Thompson

Honorary Secretary:

Rev Denis Bannerman

Executive Secretary:

Mr Bobi Brown

GOVERNING BODY

The President, Vice President, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary, with the following:

Rev D Johnston
Rev B Stevenson
Rev J Maddock
Mr E Rice
Rev D Rankin
Rev G F McKeown
Rev A S Smyth
Rev B Smyth
Rev S Castles
Rev W M Smyth
Rev I Fleck
Mr F Teeney
Mr R McMenemy
Mr W H Crooks
Mr J Douglas
Mr N Jackson
Mr G Dunbar
Mr T Irwin
Mr R Woods
Rev B McManus



LEAVING A LEGACY?

The aim of the Belfast City Mission is to reach the “Churchless, careless and the poor”. Since 1827 we have been putting the Gospel into practice by sharing with the people of Belfast. We long to see the lives of those who have been left behind being transformed. What can you leave behind to ensure we are here for future generations? Having an up to date, professionally written Will that enables your family to know how to carry out your wishes accordingly after your death. Leaving a legacy to the Belfast City Mission could really help us to make a difference! A gift in a Will, large or small, will be a legacy which lives on!



WHAT? 2018 ANNUAL RALLY **WHERE?** ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS
WHEN? THURSDAY 26TH APRIL 2018 @7.30 P.M. **WHO?** SPEAKER
REV SHAW THOMPSON SINGER AMY ROBERTS
PRAISE LED BY PS150



2017 Annual Christmas Appeal



As you all are probably aware each Christmas we have our Annual Christmas Appeal. Churches province wide donate toys, toiletries, confectionary and foodstuffs for hampers to be distributed among the most needy in our 16 mission districts.

This year's dates (D.V.) are.....

Monday 4th December to Wednesday 6th December (10.00am to 3.00pm)

Monday 11th December to Wednesday 13th December (10.00am to 3.00pm)

PLEASE NOTE ALL GIFTS MUST BE NEW (Due to health and safety)

Unfortunately we cannot accept second hand goods

OUTREACH AND MISSIONS

Preaching the gospel whether in our Mission Halls, Churches, Open-Air, Nursing Homes or on the doorstep is the bread and butter of our work. Our deep desire is to share our faith with others wherever we find them. Usually about twice a year the staff as a whole team up and evangelise a chosen district together. It's a great boon to the Missionary of that particular district and it is great fellowship doing the work one with the other. This past year we have covered two districts as a staff, Ballysillan and the Great Northern Street Hall. We go armed with invitations to the services in the halls and a sound piece of Gospel literature. Of course district visitation continues weekly through individual Missionary's and helpers around our 16 districts.

OPEN AIR WITNESS

We continue to hold open air services throughout the year at Cornmarket on specific Fridays at noon. The sad reality that people today in the busyness of life seem to be content with their lot and have no time to stop and listen but rather show disdain or find it amusing while some are downright hostile as we stand and tell them the good news of the gospel the very message that could transform their lives for good. We do of course get some good contacts especially with many tourists now visiting our city and we are able to share our faith with them and the difference that Christ can make in their lives. Do please continue to pray for us as we reach out to the passer-by.

DOOR TO DOOR EVANGELISM

Our aim as a Missionary Society is to contact people of our city who do not belong or attend any particular Church at all. This form of evangelism is getting more difficult just like the open air as people are reluctant to speak to us especially about Spiritual matters. On the positive side we do have people attending our halls through contact on the doors and also have the great privilege every once and a while of leading them to Christ at their own fireside.

GOSPEL MISSIONS

We are humbled as a Mission to be asked by various Churches to take part in "Special Evangelistic Meetings" Our Executive Secretary; Bobi Brown has conducted two Missions in the Newry Presbytery. Firstly in Clarkesbridge Presbyterian Church from 16th- 23rd November 2016 and secondly in Jerrettspass and Kingsmills Churches from the 2nd-12th March 2017. Both of these Missions were preceded by the B.C.M. staff doing outreach in those particular rural areas. Bobi has also been requested to take a further 2 missions in 2017. From 1st -8th October he will be the speaker at the Iron Hall, Templemore Avenue, Belfast and then in October from 15th-22nd he will preach at Crossgar Presbyterian Church (Aghadowey). We would value your prayers that precious souls will be saved through these efforts.

Two of our own Mission Halls, Glencairn and Ballysillan have had Gospel Missions during the past year also, when the Speakers were Rev Hugh Mullan and Mr Willis McDowell respectively.

RATHCOOLE LADIES

Rathcoole had a "Ladies Day" on 1st July 2017 to encourage the ladies from the hall their friends from the district to come together and have Fun, Food and Fellowship as a form of outreach. There was a time of praise, a table quiz, Christmas in July were Lynda Magill led a craft making class making items for the festive season and of course lunch together. The special speaker was Linda King wife of Pastor Jackie King (Calvary Baptist Church)



Office Staff/Retired Missionaries and Widows



Angela Magill



Martha Brown



David Bell



*Bobi Brown
Secretary*



George Ferguson



Sam Morrow



Errol McCrory



Jim Lawther



Eddie Kelso



Harry Creighton



Raymond Hume



Ernie Shooter



Roy Graham

Remember especially in your Prayers our Mission Widows

Mrs Janet Smith (Bob Smith)

Mrs Ellen Cooke (Billy Cooke)

Mrs Jean Anderson (R G Anderson)

Elizabeth McCullagh: *One of God's best*



Losing my precious mother-in-law, Elizabeth McCullagh, in March of this year has to be one of the most profound experiences of my life to date. There is no doubt grieving for her as a family has in recent months been heavy, painful and difficult. She was for us too young; too full of life; had too much to offer; was loved desperately by Billy and us all and yet, for His reasons, God called her home. And, while we may never fully know or completely understand His reasons for doing so, as Christians we can with absolute assurance, trust in His Sovereign purposes. God is a good God, even when life isn't. If honest, however, we do like the Psalmist ask When all that is good falls apart, what can good people do?' (Psalm 11:3) David provides the answer with a confident declaration: '...the Lord sits on his throne in heaven' (Psalm 11:4).

His point is unmistakable. God is undeterred; and despite our unravelling, He is still in control. While life takes us by surprise, nothing takes Him by surprise. Although still relentlessly sad for our loss, we have grown so much as a family since Elizabeth's untimely death. We've had cause to celebrate too. Shortly after her passing, we had the joy of welcoming the newest member of our family: Ellie Elizabeth Rose Gamble. It was a bitter-sweet moment; but also a precious one which brought much happiness to us as a family in the midst of great sorrow. We're discovering afresh how God graciously gives His people help to endure and overcome life's tragedies (1 Corinthians 10:13). With His help, and pulling together as a family, we will get through this. It won't be easy and it won't be quick. But with His track record we have no reason to be afraid.

He delivered Daniel from the Lion's den; Peter from prison; Jonah from the belly of a Whale; David from Goliath...in fact, He delivered Goliath to David! Deliverance is everywhere in the Bible. Lepers were delivered from disease; Thomas from doubt; Lazarus from the grave; Paul from shackles and the Church from slumber. God gets us through stuff: 'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.' (Isaiah 43:2)

Elizabeth loved many people and many things in life; her mother and brothers; her husband; her daughters; her sons in law; her grandchildren and her countless friends and family at Island Street and beyond. Her love of baking though, perhaps, helps us capture the spirit and resolve with which she faced life and in the past year, her illness.

Like any good cake, choice of ingredients is important. Family, friends, faith and her inimitable sense of fun and laughter kneaded together to make her the person that she was. Just like the heat of the oven when baking, Elizabeth's intense passion for the Lord, His work and His people drove her to rise. She was committed to whatever she put her mind to. But despite her commitment in the kitchen, experience in baking and careful sieving of flour, the dough didn't always rise. She learned life was exactly the same. Ups and downs, rising and falling. Nevertheless whatever she put her mind and her hands to, you knew it would always look nice and taste even better. She took time when icing a cake; the kitchen door was closed and carefully she'd smooth the rough edges off and 'Voilà', a masterpiece. Elizabeth's attitude towards God's involvement in our lives was just like that too. She knew in His hands, any difficulties we'd face could be smoothed over. She knew God's hand at work in her life even in the darkest moments of her illness: "When the events of life unexpectedly overtake me, the Lord supports me and brings me to a place of safety and salvation." (Paraphrase of Psalm 18:18/19) Life (with God), like a cake, is to be tasted and enjoyed. We're to savour every bite and relish every experience, knowing that life on earth is merely a starter course for heaven. Elizabeth certainly took that much seriously. She fervently loved her family; proudly championed her faith; greatly cherished her friends and quietly served her Saviour. What a woman! What a Christian! What a blessing to know and love and greatly miss. Jason Nicholson

'For all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman' (Ruth 3.11, NKJV)

MISSION / STAFF NEWS

Retirement

Mr Arthur McClelland who has served in the Mission from January 1983 (34 years) in two halls Ballysillan and latterly Shore Road. Unfortunately Arthur's health has not been great these past years, and so he has decided to Retire on his 65th birthday which is 26th July 2017. We wish Arthur and his wife Lilian every blessing for the future.

Transfers

There have been two transfers that have taken place recently. Mr Jordan Neill who has been working alongside Arthur in Shore Road for the last 18 months has been appointed Missionary of the Rathcoole Hall. The second transfer is that of Gary Bingham who has been Co-Missionary alongside George Lunn for the past year will take over the reins at Shore Road Hall due to Arthur's Retirement.

Resignations

Two of our Governing Body members have resigned from their positions due to various circumstances in their personal lives. Rev Billy Gray and Rev R. J. McCullough who have been faithful supporters of our work for many years have stood down. Again we wish them God's richest blessing for the future days.

Prayer for Staff

Do especially continue to remember Billy McCullagh (Island St) who lost his wife Elizabeth to cancer and his ongoing health problems including his loss of sight. Other members of staff need your prayers that the Lord would touch them with his healing hand, these include, Tom Gamble, David Bisset and his wife Janice and of course Arthur McClelland.

From Belfast to Ballymoney

Mr Bert Crooks Superintendent of the Sandy Row Hall has moved home from the Finaghy area of Belfast to Ballymoney although he still remains as Superintendent and member of the Governing Body. The folks of Sandy Row had a special night for him along with a beautiful cake to mark this move.



Celebrating a 40th Anniversary

The 281st Girls Brigade Company (Rathcoole Hall) which began in 1976 while Mr Roy Graham was the Missionary has still a very strong company today. Miss Carolyn Hewitt has been Captain of the company the full 40 years and three present day Officers Angela Magill, Margaret Lofthouse and Paula McKinney have all had a connection with the company for those 40 years joining as children. The Brigades Anniversary Enrolment was held in November 2016 and a special celebratory dinner was held in Corrs Corner hotel with many past members attending.

Promoted to Glory but tinged with sadness

As each year follows the next it is inevitable that we lose some members connected with our work. This past year we have said farewell to...

Elizabeth McCullagh	(Office, see page 11)
Billy Halliday	(Superintendent of Canton St Hall and Member of the Governing body)
Cecil Holley	(Former Superintendent of Mayo St, Treasurer of the Mission and Member of the Governing Body)
Elizabeth Montgomery	(Wife of the late William Montgomery, former Missionary)
Edward Thompson	(Former Auxiliary Secretary in the Tansy Hall, Ballinderry)

We sincerely pray that God who is the God of all comfort and consolation might minister to those who miss their loved ones dearly.

"We sorrow not as others who have no hope" (1st Thess 4:13)



B.C.M.

Left to 1

W.Simms. M. Waddell. D.Bell. S.Kyle. G. Lunn. E.McCrory (Retir)
G.Bingham. B. McCullagh. A.Williamson. T.Gamble. W.



M.STAFF 2017

to right.

retired) W.Logan. P.McCaw. B. Brown. (Executive Secretary) J.Neill.
W.Cowan. I Patterson. L.Watson. A. Martin. T. Marshall.

EVERY *picture* TELLS A STORY...

The old phrase says “every picture tells a story”. Likewise we could say “every photograph reflects memories and captures history”. It has also been said “a remembered past has treasures in it we cannot afford to lose”. All of these quotes and phrases we can attribute to the Belfast City Mission as we reach another milestone in our history of 190 years.

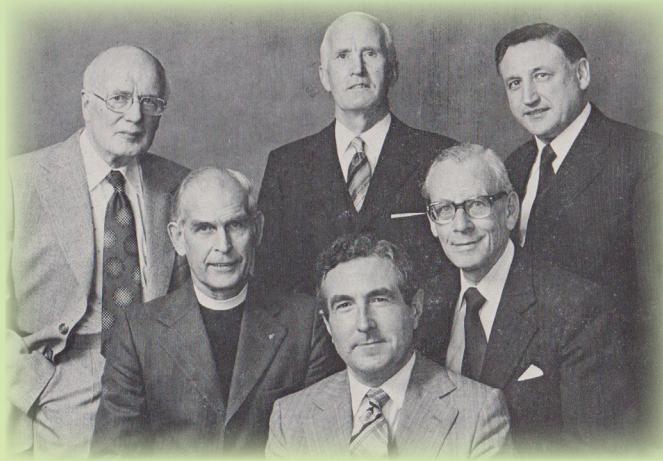
If we are honest all of us love nothing more than to sit down and troll through photographs from the past. When we embark on such a task we can spend many hours trying to guess when the photo was taken and also we endeavour to put names to faces. We also sometimes can cringe especially if we come across a photograph of ourselves. However, we are always told “the camera never lies”.

Throughout the years of the Mission there have been many photographs taken to create moments in time so much so that it is impossible to include them all. Within this short compilation of photographs there are people who we may remember with great affection and others we may not know.

There may be areas that we recognise as they were at the time and now changed, faces and fashion that have also changed over time too. Whatever the case may be each photo that was taken is a memorable moment in the long history of our Mission.



















FINANCIAL REPORT

Looking at our Income

'Voluntary Income' This relates to Subscriptions and Donations from groups and individuals, Trust funds and Legacies. The sum of £293,000 reveals an increase of £75,000 on the previous year. Of this, it is satisfying to note that Subscriptions and Donations, which total £204,000, are up again this year by £47,000 and Legacies, which total over £87,000, are up, by £28,000 - as you will be aware, legacies are unpredictable but we are always grateful for this source of income. With regard to Trust Funds, they are down by £1,000. 'Activities for generating Income' This relates solely to the charity shop which we closed this time last year. Therefore it comes as no surprise that with a total of £1,000 there is a drop of £8000 on the previous year. 'Investment Income' This covers all sources of interest and dividends. With a total of £45,000 it has decreased by £6,000 on the previous year. 'Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities' covers Mission Halls and Auxiliaries and with a total of £261,000 there is an increase of £5,000. Of this, Income from Mission Halls with a total of £200,000 is up £4,000 on the previous year and from Auxiliaries with a total of £61,000 is up £1,000. 'Other Income' This new category covers any other source or sources of income and in this case it refers to the disposal of a fixed asset, ie, the sale of a small strip of land adjacent to one of our halls which fetched £10,000. Two of our halls are currently for sale and awaiting purchasers. Hopefully they will be included in next year's report under this item.

Turning to Expenditure

As already stated, our expenditure of £718,000 shows an increase of £18,000 on the previous year. In each of the 3 categories the details and changes are: -'Expenditure on Raising Funds' (ie., Costs of Generating Funds) The sum of £630,000 reveals an increase of £43,000 on the previous year. Of this, Salaries at £479,000 are up £37,000. Incidentals with a total of £26,000 are up £17,000 (this category includes costs relating to the annual rally and computer software packages), Stockbroker's management

fee of £13,000 is down £2,000, Caretakers wages, fuel and light at £2000 are down by £1,000. Notably, the Charity shop expenses at £2,000 show a decrease of £8,000. Some other categories show little change from last year; these include Office rent at £8,000, Office repairs at £2,000, Stationery and telephone costs at £8,000. 'Expenditure on Charitable Activities' (ie., Costs of) With a total £82,000 there is a decrease of £20,000 on the previous year, Of this, Repairs and Maintenance at £23,000 is down £25,000 from the previous year, Caretakers Wages, fuel & light at £35,000 is up £2,000, Mission Hall expenses, at £8,000 is up £2,000, Rates and Insurance at £9,000 is up £1,000, Again, in some other areas with low expenditure there were minor changes up or down. 'Other Expenditure' (ie., Governance Costs) These relate to the necessary legal, audit and professional fees incurred by the Mission. The total sum of £6,000 is down £4,000 on the previous year.



In Conclusion

Often in the Scriptures we discover that the relationship between God and His people and the blessings that He has for them is likened to that of a shepherd and his sheep. For example, in Psalm 95 verse 7 we read "for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care". Also, Jesus refers to himself as being "The Good Shepherd" and all those who believe and trust in him are His sheep whom He cares for and loves greatly. We who are involved in the BCM fully realise this wonderful and amazing truth because it is apparent to us in so many ways in the various aspects of our work. One of these is our finances where, in spite of the effects of the ongoing difficult and uncertain economic times, we have continued to experience our Lord's blessings through the provision of adequate finances.

Roger Thompson (Hon Treasurer)