

*A Brief History
of Colonial Mission
Work in Canada
and Australia*



by the
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF IRELAND

By REV. HUGH WRIGHT, B.A., S.B.ST.J.



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AND
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The Reformed Presbyterian Church
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IN

CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

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I

Colonial Mission Work in the British North American Colonies

THE year 1957 marks the centenary of the commencement of colonial mission work by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland in Australia. The Church, however, was carrying out such work long before that—not in Australia but in the British North American Colonies, mainly New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Work there, under the direction of the Missionary Society of the Synod of the Irish Church, had commenced as early as 1827. On 24th May of that year **Rev. Alexander Clarke** was licensed and ordained in Ireland. He later sailed for St. John, New Brunswick, where he arrived on 23rd August. His going was the direct result of a request from the Covenanters in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia that an ordained minister be sent to them, or that a young man be ordained specifically for the purpose of the mission there. After some exploration he selected Amherst, Nova Scotia, as the centre of his operations. Travelling extensively through the Maritime Provinces he established some fifteen mission stations.

In 1831 he was joined by **Rev. William Sommerville**, who, at the request of the directors of the Missionary Society of the Church, had been ordained “sine titulo” by the Southern Presbytery with the assistance of members from the Northern and Eastern Presbyteries. After visiting different parts of the Maritime Provinces he settled in the beautiful and fertile Cornwallis valley in Nova Scotia. Shortly afterwards Mr. Clarke and he constituted the Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. While the Synod felt that their doing so was premature, it none the less sustained their action.

In 1841 the **Rev. Alexander McLeod Stavely**, the son of Rev. Dr. W. J. and Jane (Adams) Stavely (Kilraughts), was ordained "sine titulo" on 12th May, as a missionary to St. John, New Brunswick. Arriving on the field in August of the same year, he took charge of the congregation in St. John, where a comfortable house of worship had been erected a short time previously. He laboured there and among the adjacent societies for thirty-eight years. On 16th June, 1879, he resigned his charge and returned to his native land, where some years later he became the minister of the united congregation of Ballyclare and Larne. During his ministry in St. John the congregation had the misfortune to lose their church and manse, which were destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1877, but later a new building was erected in a more central position in the town.

In 1842 some differences of opinion between Mr. Clarke and Mr. Sommerville were reported. Efforts were made to have the difficulties resolved, but without success. As a consequence, the Presbytery ceased to function for a time. The Synod having given instructions that it be resuscitated, this was done by Messrs. Sommerville and Stavely, as Mr. Clarke did not accede to the terms of reunion laid down by Synod. Mr. Clarke desired the liberty and the privileges of citizenship in Nova Scotia. He and all the congregations he represented became identified with the New School branch of the Covenanter Church, and in October, 1847, were united to the General Synod of the United States.

By this time another missionary was on the field—**Rev. James Reid Lawson**, who was licensed by the Southern Presbytery on 4th March, 1845, and was ordained by the same Presbytery, "sine cura," 18th September, as a missionary to the British North American provinces. He reached St. John, N.B., the same autumn and, after visiting different places, settled in the spring of 1846 in South Stream, N.B., which later became known as Barnesville. Ten years later he received a call from the Covenanter congregation in Boston, Massachusetts, and felt led to resign his charge in Barnesville. After a year's ministry in Boston he returned to Barnesville, though the congregation of First New York were desirous of his services. He continued to labour in Barnesville until partial paralysis caused his resignation, which took place on 12th April, 1882.

In 1848 **Mr. A. Stewart** was licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and laboured in the Campbell and Millstream settlements. The following year **Mr. Robert Stewart**, who had served for a time in the Mission of Connaught

in the west of Ireland and had obtained the London prize for proficiency in the Gaelic tongue, was ordained "sine titulo" in Ireland on 12th July, and went out to Nova Scotia. He laboured mainly in the district of Wilmot, N.S., for over thirty years, preaching also in Margaretville and Lawrencetown.

At this time all the missionary work of the Church, both at home and abroad, was carried on under the supervision and direction of the Missionary Society of the Church—sometimes referred to as "The Home and Foreign Mission Society." There was then no "Foreign Mission" as we know it today. Indeed it was only in 1844 that one first notices the germ of the seed which later developed into the Foreign Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland as it is known today. At the Synod of that year the Secretary of the Home and Foreign Mission Society read several interesting communications in answer to letters of inquiry respecting a suitable part of the heathen world in which to originate a Mission. The "foreign" work up to then was the work carried on in the British North American Colonies.

An overture from the Western Presbytery was adopted by the Synod in 1855. This overture had to do with appointing a Commission of Synod with power to transact all the business that might be referred to it. The several business schemes of the Church were entrusted to its care, a secretary being appointed by the Synod for each scheme. The four schemes mentioned in the overture are—1, The Irish Mission; 2, The Colonial Mission; 3, Ministerial Support; and 4, The Theological Hall and Synodical Business. This is the first official reference to the "Colonial Mission" as such—a name that was to last for a century. The Rev. Samuel Simms, Loughbrickland, was the first secretary to be appointed. Others who have held the office since are the Revs. John Newell, D.D. (Newtownards, and, later, Manchester), James Brown (Ballymoney), J. D. Houston (Ballyclabber), Robert J. Morrell (Knockbracken), Samuel Ferguson (Faughan), James R. Wright (Ballyclabber), and the present Secretary, Rev. Hugh Wright (Londonderry).

The annual reports to Synod with regard to the Colonial Mission make interesting reading. They show that progress was being made and that the fields were whitening to harvest. They reveal also many of the difficulties, for though there was much work to be done, the labourers were few, and many opportunities were lost because there was no one to grasp them at the time.

The twenty-ninth annual report of the Colonial Mission, presented to Synod one hundred years ago, in 1857, reads in part as follows:

“‘In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest now whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.’ All the main features of the process of natural culture and vegetation have their counterpart in the kingdom of grace. The natural *seed* is the gift of God. The grain grows from a seed; but, without earth, air, light, and moisture, the grain—though formed with all the capabilities of growth and reproduction in its own nature—could not grow and produce itself. So in relation to the kingdom of grace. The seed is the *Word*, and that Word is God’s gift; but the administration of the Spirit is absolutely necessary for giving effect to the Word of grace. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; and like floods on the dry ground so is the outpouring of the good Spirit of God.

“But man has also a part in the administration of the Gospel—a part given to him by God. Man must *sow*. We have gotten the Gospel from the sowing of those who went before us. It was faithfully sown by our fathers many ages before we were born. If the fathers do not sow the natural seed, the children cannot eat; and in a similar way, intellectually and morally, the generation rising up is moulded by the generation going before it. What an important motive does this consideration present for fidelity in fulfilling our great trust in relation to the Divine law! This precious deposit we have by God’s gift, and through the faithfulness of our forefathers. Let us not be high-minded but fear. Let us *sow* for our children’s sake—for the world’s sake. Yea, let us sow the Word that it may spread over all the earth and go down to the latest generations.

“This is what we are attempting to do by our *Colonial Mission*. For about thirty years has the Irish Reformed Presbyterian Church been employed in sowing the Word of God in the British Colonies of North America. Hitherto the fruit has not been *very* abundant or luxuriant. The soil has been in some measure, unproductive, and the labourers have indeed been *few*. Still, we have had, as it were, a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains; and with gladsome hearts we anticipate the time when the fruits thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.”

Having referred to the need for additional labourers in the field to co-operate with those already there and to visit districts at

present destitute, the report goes on to state: "It is impossible for us as a Church to *stand still*; we must go forward, else interesting stations, now receiving partial waterings, shall of necessity be given up." This actually happened, for instance, in connection with one station in Annapolis which was taken over by the United Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. In addition, new stations were opening up from time to time and men were needed to man them. But the men were not there.

"Why not enter at once and occupy these and other stations?" states the report. "It has been said that England cannot afford to wage a little war; and neither can the Covenanted Church afford to conduct a small, cramped, and dwarfish Colonial Mission. We must go forward or we will go back. We cannot stand still. True religion has no mere nationalities, no peculiar domestic or provincial garb—no; the world is the field. The principles of the Covenanted Reformation are capable of universal extension, because these are Scriptural principles. Over the wide domains of Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, and America shall the doctrines of Christ's universal headship, the supreme and ultimate authority of the Divine Word, and the duty of men, in all the relations of life, to submit to the sceptre of King Jesus—in other words, the great leading doctrines of the Covenanted Reformation—spread far and wide, from pole to pole, from the river to the ends of the earth, till, 'like a sea of glory,' they cover the whole world."

One hundred years ago those words were penned. How true they are today! How well they sum up the modern situation! But, alas, the challenge was not fully met a hundred years ago. Many opportunities which presented themselves were not grasped—could not be grasped. The work did not go on as it might have done had the vision been turned into practice. Yet it did go on, with varying success. The few men available did their best to supply the needs of the widely scattered localities in which they found those sympathetic to their message.

But added difficulties arose. Because of the Fenian agitation it became harder to maintain the Covenanting principles. The Irish population in America had greatly increased as a result of the great famine of 1846-47. The first Fenian organisation—an organisation for the overthrow of British rule in Ireland—was formed in America in 1858. On top of the Fenian agitation came the question of Confederation—the four colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Upper and Lower Canada being formed into the Dominion of Canada in 1867. As a result of these political changes emigration from British North America to the United

States became much more evident than it had been. Also in Canada at this time taxes increased considerably—in some cases fifteen-fold, while the resources to meet them decreased. This tended to encourage additional emigration. The greater prosperity and the near neighbourhood of the United States lured many people away from the districts where they had settled. Many of the stations of the Church suffered in this way, especially the groups located in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Robert McGowan Sommerville, son of Rev. William Sommerville, was licensed by the Eastern Presbytery on 3rd January, 1861. He was ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia on 16th October of the same year, and was installed co-pastor with his father of the congregations of Horton and Cornwallis. He was released from Cornwallis the next year, and soon afterwards built a church at Wolfville, preaching there and in Horton for some years. In 1872 he withdrew from the pastoral oversight of Horton upon his appointment to the office of Inspector of Schools for King's County, N.S., though his people still continued for a time to enjoy the benefit of his Sabbath ministrations. The next year he accepted a call from the Cincinnati, Ohio, congregation in the United States, and later became pastor of the Second New York congregation. It is of interest to note that he declined a call from the congregation of Ballyclabber (Ireland) in 1861.

On his leaving Horton, his father, who had commenced the work there many years previously as an outstation, took over the charge of the Horton congregation in addition to that of Cornwallis, though they were twenty-four miles apart. "My plan," he writes, "is to resume the labours of early days, when I was vigorous and the places open; and now, with wasted strength, and in the face of 'many adversaries,' I begin again." This was no easy task for a man who by then had been over forty years in the mission field.

It was about this time that a call went out for at least one additional labourer, as there were two most promising stations in New Brunswick—Queensville and Littleton. Each place had a comfortable house of worship. No other Presbyterian congregation of any name was in the immediate neighbourhood of either. Large audiences were present whenever our missionaries were able to visit there, but it was impossible for the missionaries to give the stations the amount of attention and service which they desired and deserved.

Giving some idea of the hardships suffered by some of the mission stations through lack of preachers, Mr. Staveland on one

occasion reported that the congregation at Littleton had not been visited by a minister from the time he conducted a Communion Service in the autumn till he returned six months later. Naturally the want of public ministrations for such a lengthened period would be sadly felt by any congregation, retarding its prosperity as well as the progress of spiritual life in the hearts of the members. Littleton was one hundred and thirty-eight miles from St. John, the nearest congregation. Bearing this in mind and also the difficulties of winter travelling, the fewness of the ministers available, and the calls upon them elsewhere, it is not surprising that more could not be done for Littleton. Nor, since Littleton was not alone in this respect, is it at all surprising that the Clerk of Presbytery appealed to Synod: "We are really distressed for want of help. Promising stations are slipping out of our hands because we cannot attend to them. Other denominations are likely to enter into our labours. Is it impossible for you to do anything for us? We again renew our formal and most earnest appeal for help."

Due partly to the fruitless calls made on the Irish Church for additional labourers amid the pressing claims of the field, and partly to the fact that some felt that on account of proximity and the greater strength of the Covenanter Church in the United States of America the need for men might be more speedily and effectively met from there, a move was originated to change the Synodical relation of the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from the Church in Ireland to that in the United States. The Commission of Synod, with whom Rev. A. M. Stavely discussed the matter, when visiting Ireland in 1872, was quite sympathetic and had no desire to hinder the change whenever the Presbytery itself felt that such a change should take place. Presbytery was not yet decided as to the advisability of taking such a step. The matter was kept under consideration for a number of years, but was eventually abandoned in 1877, mainly because of financial difficulties. According to the Sustentation Scheme of the American Church, each aid-receiving congregation had to contribute to the scheme an amount per member which the congregations in the Presbytery felt they could not pay.

Year after year cries and appeals for help kept coming to the Synod and the Church in Ireland, but there was no one to respond. The cries became all the more urgent when all the ministers who remained on the field had passed the high noon of life and were sinking into the evening and the night. "To their power and beyond their power" they laboured in order

to supply their respective congregations with the Word of Life, and also the mission stations under the care of Presbytery, as well as embracing the many openings, public and private, afforded them in the Providence of God to make known the precious truth.

Rev. Wm. Sommerville was laid aside by ill health in 1871, with little prospect of his ever taking up work again, as he was now an old man. An appeal was made to the American Church for someone to come and supply his pulpit. **Mr. W. J. Sproull**, a licentiate, responded to the appeal and was appointed, and proved so acceptable that later on they made out a unanimous call in his favour. But ere that took place Rev. Wm. Sommerville, on 28th September, 1878, had passed away from his multiplied labours on earth to the rest and reward of the faithful. He was the pioneer missionary to the British provinces. His bodily vigour, mental endowments, and manly intrepidity fitted him peculiarly for missionary work. His abilities were those of a powerful evangelical preacher and a resolute defender of Scripture doctrine. He met and measured spiritual weapons with all opponents of different denominations. He was a gifted controversialist and his pen was seldom at rest. For a period of forty-seven years he was pre-eminently faithful to the Church he represented, to the interests of souls, and to the Master he loved to serve.

The prospects of the removal of some of the ministers by death, and all of them feeling the exhaustion and fatigue of a lengthened ministry, caused anxiety about future ministerial supplies. As a consequence of this and also in view of the fact that the Church in Ireland at this time was unable to fill its own vacancies, much less to send someone to carry on work in Canada, it is not at all surprising to find that interest in the matter of changing the synodical relation of the Presbytery was revived. It was only natural that the feeling began to grow both in Ireland and in North America that if the Church in the Colonies were to prosper it would have to be under the care and oversight of the Synod of the American Church. The fact that the American Church was now assisting with supplies encouraged this idea still more. A **Mr. Wylie**, a licentiate of that Church, came and rendered service, mainly to the St. John congregation. This permitted Mr. Stavelly, who was anxious to give place to someone else, to devote himself to carrying on negotiations with the American Synod about the transfer of the Presbytery to that Synod. The Irish Synod formally expressed to the American Synod its consent and desire that the transfer should be carried out. The brethren of the Presbytery formally memorialised the American Synod at New York, Mr. Stavelly supporting the

memorial by his presence. The rule about the contributions to the Sustentation Scheme of the American Synod still caused some difficulty, but the difficulty was overcome by the Commission of the Irish Synod agreeing that in the case of a congregation or station being unable to raise the amount required, the Irish Church should, for a time at least, continue to supplement the offerings of the people so as to qualify the congregations for the aid from the American Church.

And so the proposal for organic union between the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America became an accomplished fact. At the meeting of the American Synod in 1879 the Presbytery was most cordially taken under the care and jurisdiction of that Synod. Immediately upon the reception of the Presbytery by the Synod there was the appointment of two licentiates to labour in the bounds of the Presbytery for the coming year. Three separate congregations, within a year or two, each obtained an ordained minister—a fact which could not have been accomplished through the Irish Church. For some years the Irish Church continued to give financial assistance and kept in sympathetic touch with the field with which it had had connections for so long.

Today, eighty years later, there is still a congregation in Cornwallis where Mr. Sommerville laboured so faithfully. Until a few years ago there was a mission station in Barnesville where Mr. Lawson laboured long and faithfully too, but the Covenanter cause there now seems to have lapsed.





R.P. CHURCH, GEELONG



REV. A. M. MOORE, M.A.
1857-1897
(*first minister*)



REV. A. HOLMES
1897-1898
(*stated supply*)

II

Colonial Mission Work in Australia

(a) 1857-1897

THE work in the British North American Colonies comprised but one of the two main channels along which the colonial activity of the Irish Church has been directed. Undoubtedly the main stream flowed along this channel for fifty years or so and for the first thirty years it was the sole channel. But then a new channel began to open up.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1842 had sent out the Rev. James Duncan to New Zealand, where he was followed the next year by Rev. John Inglis, D.D. Mr. Inglis, together with the Rev. J. Copeland, later carried on mission work in the New Hebrides under the auspices of the same Church. In thus following emigrants to new countries the Scottish Church showed commendable zeal—as the Irish Church had done in connection with British North America. But it was not until about the year 1853 that the thoughts of the Irish Church which had turned so long westward began also to turn to the southern hemisphere and to her sons and daughters who had settled in those southern lands. At a special meeting of Synod which was held in Dervock that year, in connection with Covenant Renovation, Rev. J. A. Smith, the minister of Drimbolg, submitted some interesting statements regarding an opening for the spread of the Gospel and the promulgation of a covenanted testimony in Australia. The matter was referred to the Missionary Board, but it was not till some years later that the first man was obtained to minister to the needs of the members of the Church who had emigrated to Australia, when, on 13th July, 1857, **Mr. Alexander McIlwaine Moore, M.A.**, expressed to the Commission of Synod his willingness to go. His offer was accepted, Synod later expressing peculiar gratification that the Commission had designated him to the work and desiring that he should be ordained and sent forth as soon as possible to the scene of his future labours. He was ordained to the ministry and set apart as the first missionary to Australia, by the Eastern Presbytery in the College Street South Church, Belfast, on 18th August, 1857, some members of the Commission of Synod also taking part in the service.

Mr. and Mrs. Moore sailed from Belfast on 17th September and from Liverpool eleven days later, the total cost of their passages, outfit, and Mr. Moore's salary for the first year (£100) being £200. After a favourable voyage of eighty-four days the ship in which they sailed anchored in Hobson's Bay, off Melbourne. On landing at Melbourne they were cordially welcomed by the friends there of the Covenanted Reformation. Having spent a short time in Melbourne looking up families of Covenanters, Mr. Moore went to Geelong, where, as he writes in his first letter addressed to Rev. Thomas Houston, D.D., of Knockbracken, "I knew there were men of the right stamp, with whom I could take counsel as to my future mode of procedure and the scene of my labours." He continues, "And here I have been received in the most cordial manner by the friends of our cause. I may mention that my arrival was somewhat unexpected by them; for, whilst they had heard at one time that a minister was to be sent out, a later communication from Scotland hinted that it was doubtful if he would visit Geelong. But notwithstanding the doubt thus cast on my coming, there awaited us a furnished home belonging to a gentleman who resides at present in the country (or bush, rather), and who had kept it open for a length of time, in the hope that a minister might come out to labour here."

In this letter Mr. Moore also expressed a feeling of thankfulness and hope: "I have thus good reason to thank God and take courage. He has brought us over the trackless ocean in safety and in health, and raised up kind friends for us in this distant land, and the prospects of establishing our Church in this beautiful town and other parts of Victoria are most encouraging. Here let me hope I shall be honoured of God to lay the foundation of a cause which I believe will yet be as extensive as the world."

On the first Sabbath after his arrival in Geelong, 27th December, 1857, Mr. Moore "met a few friends for prayer." The next Sabbath, 3rd January, 1858, he preached from the parable of the mustard seed to a small congregation assembling at the house of Mr. John Wright; the third Sabbath he preached in the Free Church, later St. Giles. Consultations were held with interested friends as to the best means of establishing a congregation and procuring a place for public worship. The use of a large class-room in the Free Church school was readily granted for this purpose. Some time later a convenient public hall was rented by the congregation. The average attendance at this time at public worship was from fifty to sixty persons, the collections during the both services averaging £2. 5s. per Sabbath.

After concluding a series of discourses on the Terms of Communion, and having held repeated diets for examination, Mr. Moore admitted a number of persons into the membership of the Church. On the evening of 22nd June, 1858, the first congregational meeting in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church was held in Australia. At that meeting a committee of management was elected. Later, elders were chosen and on the first Sabbath of December, 1858, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed for the first time to the Reformed Presbyterian congregation in Geelong. On that occasion thirty-six persons sat down at the Lord's Table.

By March, 1859, the congregation had moved to a still larger place of worship, for they had rented the new Temperance Hall, seating between four and five hundred persons, for £45 per annum. The membership then was forty-five and the attendance at the Sabbath services averaged from seventy to one hundred and twenty persons.

It was not long before Mr. Moore and the congregation had taken steps towards erecting a suitable church building of their own. The project was completed and the present fine church building was opened on 10th August, 1862. The opening services were conducted by the Rev. John G. Paton, who had been sent out a few years earlier by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland as a missionary to the New Hebrides. A manse was erected beside the church building in 1869, the Church at home being encouraged by Synod to aid the congregation in their efforts to provide a home for their minister, thus saving the large outlay of means required for house rent in a new country.

Though results were encouraging for a time, there were difficulties to be faced. Migration was continually taking place, office-bearers and members moving to new places, or finding it difficult to keep in touch with the work in Geelong owing to distance. The lack of fellowship with a brother minister must have lain as a heavy burden on Mr. Moore. When the first call went out from Synod for workers for Australia the Synod asked for two workers. When Mr. Moore volunteered he had the hope that it would not be long till the second worker materialised. An effort was made to secure another worker to co-operate with him. The Rev. John Bates was sent out by the Scottish Synod, but as his health was not good, he was not able to enter upon the work, and died shortly after reaching Sydney. Time and again Mr. Moore refers in his reports and letters to the need for more workers. Indeed the calls for help from Australia were just as urgent and came as frequently as did those from North

America, and with no better result. "Send out one or two of your ablest men to take possession of some of the large centres of population," he writes. Or, again, "Families who have left the mother Church recently are lost to our communion through want of ministerial supplies." One wonders what the situation there, and in Canada too, might have been today if only it had been possible for those cries for help to have been answered. Many years were yet to pass before another minister was to come out to labour along with the minister of Geelong in spreading the glad tidings in Australia.

For some years prior to 1880 Mr. Moore had to take up teaching as well as his other work, presumably for financial reasons. He refers to this and also the need for other workers in a letter dated 1st April, 1880: "Cut off as we are from the fellowship of the Church in the homelands, we stand much in need of your prayers. Brethren, pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you. Having given up the work of tuition last December, I felt the comfort of the freedom at the communion. You can understand this when I mention that on the three days of the solemnity I delivered in all nine discourses of different kinds. Perhaps you may think the congregation is to be pitied that has to endure all this from one man, and there is no doubt but by a variety of gifts the Church might be edified and souls more refreshed. But how is a change to be brought about if you will do nothing for us in the way of sending out fresh labourers into this dry and parched land? When are you to respond to the Macedonian cry—"Come over and help us?" Is it any wonder that the report of the Colonial Mission Committee to Synod that year suggests that it is humiliating that for twenty-two years Mr. Moore should have been labouring alone and the Church has never been able to fulfil the promise made of additional labourers?

Some years later Mr. Moore's letters show how the solitary worker felt wearied with the long struggle. And then, at last, there came the prospect of relief. A theological student, who had been advised by his doctors to go to Australia for health reasons, petitioned his Presbytery to license him to preach so that he might be able to help Mr. Moore if he were spared to reach him. Alas for the hopes that were raised when the Australian friends were told that Mr. Kerr was being sent out! How disappointed they were, one can well imagine, when the news of his death reached them.

In an endeavour to obtain an additional worker the Synod, in 1889, was asked by the Committee to offer to a suitable man,

if such could be found, a guarantee of £100 a year during three years, along with outfit and passage, with the understanding that this would be in addition to anything he might receive in Australia. But no one offered to go. Rev. R. H. Davidson did volunteer in 1893, but later withdrew his offer. Later still an offer was received from an undergraduate of Glasgow University, a member of the Church, resident in New Zealand, to be appointed Scripture Reader in connection with the Mission. The Committee did not see its way to accept this offer but instead encouraged the applicant to complete his university and theological training, after which, if he still wished to labour in the colonial field, the question of his suitability for the work could then be considered.

In the autumn of 1896 word was received that Mr. Moore's health was failing. The next news was that he was completely laid aside from pastoral duties with little or no hope of recovery. On 18th February, 1897, the lonely worker fell asleep in Jesus after thirty-nine years of faithful service.

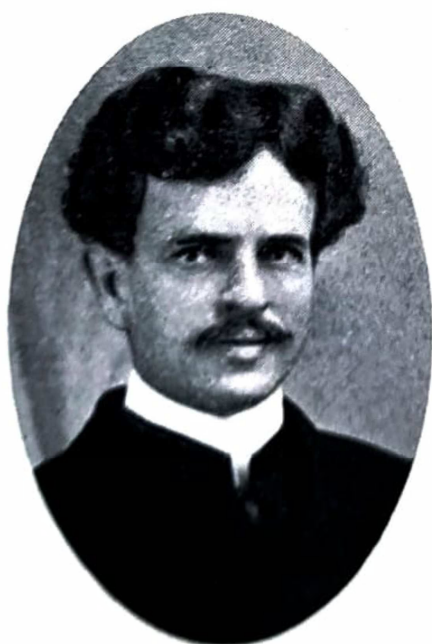
In the report of his ordination in "The Covenanter," September, 1857, the following statement occurs: "Mr. Moore is an able preacher, a superior scholar, a man of manly independent mind, and one who has given evidence of extensive acquaintance with, and cordial attachment to the principles of the Covenanted Reformation." This reputation he sustained throughout his long ministry. In an obituary notice in the "Southern Cross" (Melbourne), the following sentences appear: "Publicly and privately, with voice and pen, he preached the common truths of Christianity, and emphasised the distinctive doctrines of the Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanting Church. As in his opinion, so also in his friendships he was firm and unchanging. In conduct he had set before himself a very high ideal, and the erectness which characterised his bearing was but a symbol of the uprightness of his character all through. He leaves behind him the memory of a blameless life." The Rev. W. Dick, M.A., then editor of "The Covenanter," referring to his death, said, "Our Church has been singularly blessed with ideal missionary pioneers, and Mr. Moore was one of the noblest of them all."

(b) 1897-1909

Mr. Moore's closing days were cheered with the news that the **Rev. Archibald Holmes**, of Ballybay and Fairview congregations, was going out to assist him for at least one year. The news of Mr. Moore's death was received by cablegram



GEELONG MANSE



REV. W. MCCARROLL, B.A.
1899-1903



REV. A. M. THOMPSON, M.A.
1904-1909

the very day on which Mr. Holmes sailed from Plymouth. Mr. Holmes reached his destination safely and was most kindly and most cordially received by the family of the late Mr. Moore and by the congregation. As well as ministering to the congregation in Geelong, he undertook a week-evening service in a rented room in Collins Street, Melbourne, at which there was an encouraging attendance of from fifteen to twenty-five persons.

As Mr. Holmes had agreed to go for one year only, and as there was a scarcity of ministers in the Irish Church, Synod's Colonial Mission Committee turned to the sister Church in America for help. Eventually **Mr. Walter McCarroll, B.A.**, a nephew of the late Rev. Wm. McCarroll of Belfast, expressed his willingness to labour for a term of three or five years. A licentiate, a graduate of Geneva College and the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Mr. McCarroll at this time was in charge of the Spring Gardens Reformed Presbyterian Mission in Allegheny. The Professors in Allegheny recommended that if accepted for this work, Mr. McCarroll should take his final Session at the Theological Hall in Belfast. Synod agreed to invite Mr. McCarroll to adopt this course with a view to his being sent out as early as possible the next summer. Mr. McCarroll accepted the call and came over to Ireland. He was ordained by the Eastern Presbytery to the Gospel ministry and designated to that work in Geelong congregation on 24th January, 1899. He and Mrs. McCarroll arrived in Geelong the following April. The evening he arrived he took part in the mid-week prayer meeting which was then being held.

Mr. McCarroll laboured for four years in Geelong and then accepted a call to carry on mission work in the island of Cyprus under the Foreign Mission Board of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. He later returned to the United States of America, and, after ministering to a congregation in New York for many years, and then to the congregation of Santa Ana in California, is now living in retirement on the West Coast of the United States.

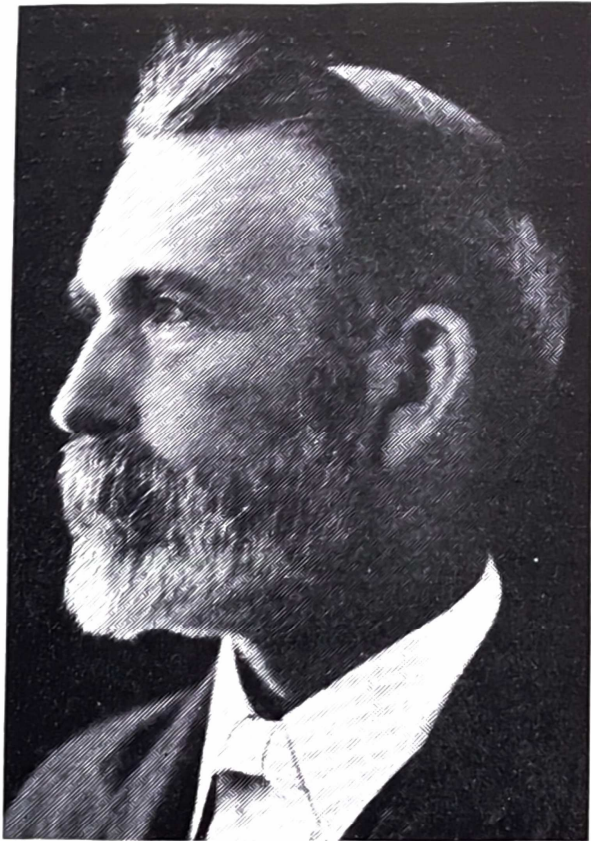
In view of Mr. McCarroll's forthcoming departure from Geelong, Synod instructed the Eastern Presbytery to take steps to ordain Mr. David Musgrave, a licentiate, who would then be sent out as pastor of Geelong congregation for one year. Man proposes, but God disposes. So it was in this case, as Mr. Musgrave, owing to ill health, had to give up hope of being able to go abroad.

Efforts were then made to get someone else to take up the work, but these efforts were unavailing until a communication was received from America from **Rev. Albert Melville Thompson, M.A.** Mr. Thompson, though brought up in the American Church, had earlier responded to a call from the Irish Church for men to fill their vacant pulpits. He was ordained and installed as pastor of the Ballylaggan congregation in 1898, but returned to America in 1901. Hearing of the need in Geelong, he offered his services and Synod accepted his offer for a period of three years, on the understanding that this period could be extended if desired. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson gave themselves devotedly to the work of their Master till Mrs. Thompson's health failed, and they returned to Ireland, where Mr. Thompson became pastor of the Stranorlar congregation. After three years there they returned to America, where Mr. Thompson served in different congregations till failing health caused him to retire. Living in the bounds of the Santa Ana congregation in California, he entered into the presence of his Lord, "Whom having not seen he loved," early on Sabbath morning, 18th January, 1948.

(c) 1909-1957

There was a short period between the time when Mr. Thompson completed his term of service and the arrival of his successor, during which the pulpit was vacant. At the meeting of Synod in 1909, **Rev. Hugh Kennedy Mack, B.A.**, minister of Drimbolg, volunteered to go to Geelong and take up the work there should Synod see fit to release him from his congregation and send him out. Synod did so and Mr. Mack arrived in Geelong on 8th October, 1909, and laboured there for thirty-seven years, with but one visit to the homeland during that time. He resigned the pastoral charge of the congregation on 3rd September, 1946, and preached his farewell sermon on 12th January, 1947, shortly after the arrival of Mr. Barkley, his successor. He passed to his eternal rest on 1st November, 1951.

For the first twenty years of his ministry in Australia Mr. Mack was like Mr. Moore in that he bore the burden and the responsibility of the work alone, as no brother minister became available during that time. Always he had the interest of Christ's kingdom very much at heart and gave of himself unsparingly in the service of His Lord and Master. Even after his retirement from the active ministry he still maintained this interest, and gave all the help he could, willingly and unassumingly. He was faithful to his Lord, faithful to his family, faithful to his people and faithful



REV. H. K. MACK, B.A.
1909-1946



REV. A. BARKLEY, M.A.
1946-

to the committee in the homeland. A man of sound wisdom who carefully weighed his words, he exerted a great influence for righteousness far beyond the bounds of his particular congregation in Geelong. Members of other denominations have placed on record their tribute to the worth of his character and of his work for his Lord. He was a doughty warrior and defender of the faith, both by word and by pen. An ordained minister for fifty-six years he at last ceased from his works and entered into rest. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

In order to allow Mr. Mack an opportunity to visit the homeland **Rev. William Reid McEwen, B.A.**, was appointed by Synod to go out and take charge of the work during Mr. Mack's absence, and afterwards to continue as a second worker in Australia. Mr. McEwen was ordained in Newry by the Southern Presbytery on 5th September, 1928, and sailed from Belfast on 14th September, on his way to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in the United States of America, where, with the permission of Synod, he attended the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary for one year. He then continued on his journey to Australia, which he reached on 9th August, 1929. He received a cordial welcome from Mr. Mack and the Geelong congregation. For the first year Mr. McEwen was mainly engaged in the work in Geelong, thus giving Mr. Mack an opportunity to visit outlying districts and explore possibilities for extending the work. In so doing Mr. Mack brought cheer and joy to many an isolated family from the North of Ireland who appreciated the few opportunities that they had of hearing the "Old Gospel" proclaimed, and of joining in a simple service.

Mr. Mack, accompanied by his daughter, Miss Lillie Mack, arrived home on furlough in May, 1931, and visited the majority of the congregations of the Church in the succeeding months. He returned to Australia, travelling via the United States of America, on 12th April, 1932, and took up once again the work of his congregation.

For some time after Mr. Mack's return Mr. McEwen travelled here and there throughout the country, conducting services as opportunities arose, and looking for the most suitable place in which to settle and commence the task of building up a second congregation. Eventually he commenced this task in McKinnon, a suburb of the city of Melbourne. For many years Mr. Mack had conducted a monthly service in Melbourne itself. Mr. McEwen was now able to relieve him of this, as well as carrying

on the work in McKinnon. McKinnon was a growing district where there was yet much room for development and where there were few churches convenient. Mr. McEwen rented a house which served not only as a home, but as a meeting-place for a Sabbath School and for a Sabbath evening service. It was not long till the house was not big enough to accommodate all the children. Commencing with seven the first day, the number attending had increased to an average of thirty by the end of the year. Since then, as the work has developed, the attendance has often been over the one hundred mark.

Mr. and Mrs. McEwen were home for a short furlough in 1938 when they were able to attend the Convention commemorating the tercentenary of the signing of the National Covenant of Scotland and were able also to visit the home congregations and put before them the claims of the work in Australia. They were home again, this time accompanied by their son, Alastair, in 1950. This time Mr. McEwen did deputation work in both the Irish and Scottish Churches. These visits helped to increase interest in the work in Australia, and as a result the contributions from the various congregations for the work increased considerably.

In October, 1939, the erection of a church building was commenced in McKinnon on a site which had been purchased some years earlier with this end in view. Though not completely finished in every respect, it was opened for public worship on 24th February, 1940, Mr. Mack giving the main address and also taking part in the special services the following Sabbath. In 1947 permission was given by Synod for the Church building to be extended by the erection of a hall at the rear, but unexpected difficulties beyond the control of the congregation prevented this being done just then. Permission was also given for the erection of a manse on a plot of ground near the church. The manse was completed in 1949, being officially opened on 30th July. The hall-extension work was later carried out, the official opening of the hall being on 8th December, 1952. The church building and the manse are free of debt, but there is still a deficit on the hall. Friends in the home Church gave liberally to help to defray the cost of these buildings. The congregation itself is to be congratulated on the efforts they have made and are still making to clear off the debt.

The congregation of McKinnon was not formally organised as such until 11th April, 1946. On that occasion Mr. McEwen preached on the text 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3, after which Mr. Mack led in prayer, organising the congregation in the name of Christ the Head and under the jurisdiction of the Reformed

Presbyterian Church or Synod of Ireland. Mr. Mack then addressed the members concerning their duties along the lines indicated by the Terms of Communion of the Church. Trustees were appointed and the Church freehold property was transferred to them. The organisation of the congregation was carried out by the Standing Commission in Australia of the Eastern Presbytery which had been set up in 1944 on the instruction of Synod. Elders were ordained by the Commission of Presbytery on 8th June, Mr. A. Ramage, the senior elder in Geelong congregation, acting along with the members of Commission. After the ordination service the elders met with the Commission and the chairman, Mr. Mack, constituted the session of the McKinnon congregation. Rev. W. R. McEwen was appointed Interim Moderator. Later, on the arrival in Geelong of Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., the Standing Commission of Presbytery was increased to five members—the three ministers and one elder from each congregation.

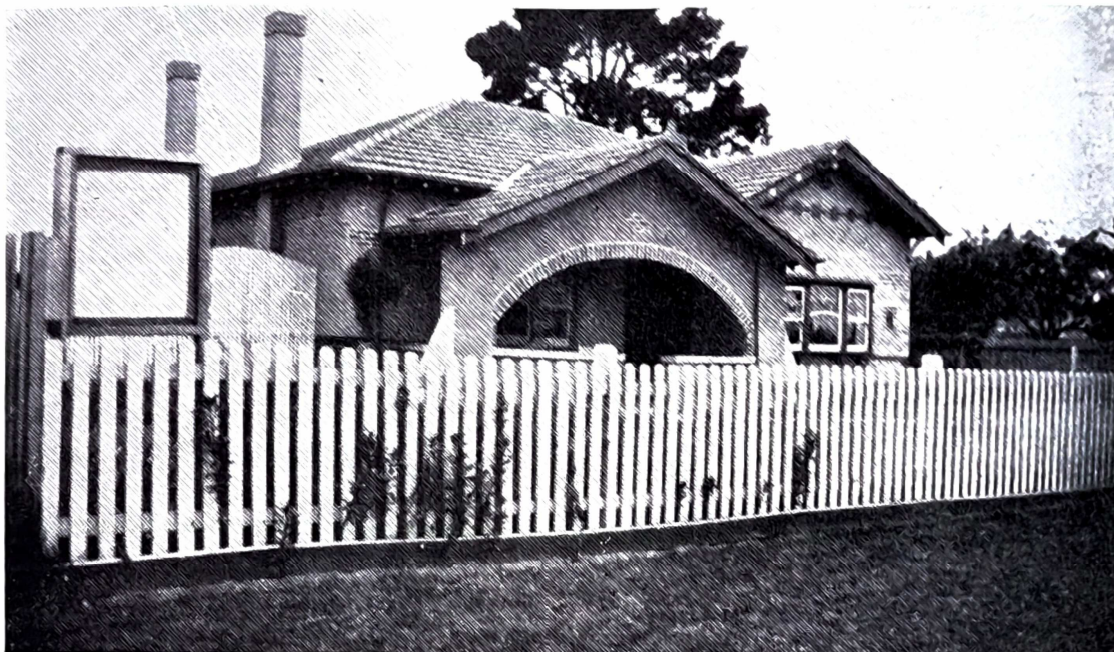
Knowing that in the normal course of events Mr. Mack could not continue in active service very much longer, Synod, in 1945, gave the Colonial Mission Committee authority to take all steps necessary for sending out another missionary to Australia. **Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A.**, minister of Cregagh Road congregation, Belfast, offered his services, and was officially appointed, on 12th March, 1946, to succeed Mr. Mack. It was not till 3rd September, however, that the pastoral tie between the Cregagh Road congregation and Mr. Barkley, and that between the Geelong congregation and Mr. Mack were dissolved, Mr. Mack having agreed to continue as stated supply until Mr. Barkley was able to take up duty. Difficulties—due to the aftermath of the Second World War—were experienced in getting passages for Mr. and Mrs. Barkley and their two daughters, but eventually they left London on 28th November and reached Melbourne on 31st December, 1946—a very much quicker journey than that experienced by the Moores ninety years earlier.

Mr. Barkley is proving a worthy successor of those who preceded him as leaders of the congregation. Like them and like his fellow-labourer in McKinnon, he is a stalwart defender of the Covenanted Reformation and a faithful witness to the truth. The Geelong session was strengthened by the addition of three new elders in 1949 and a fourth in 1954. Considerable renovation has been carried out to the church building and manse. In 1956 a proposal by the Geelong congregation to build a new hall, as the little schoolroom they had was too small for the demands

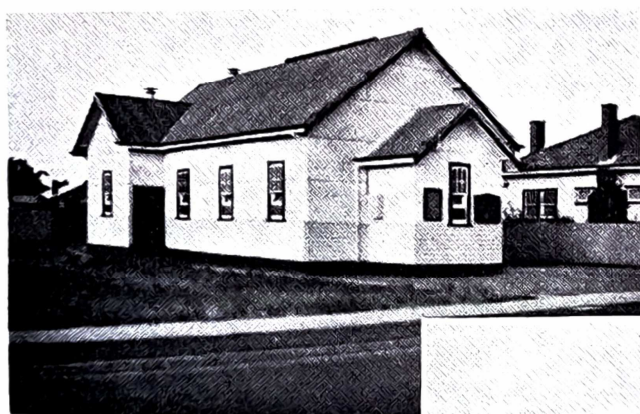
made upon it, received the sanction of Synod. Unfortunately the economic situation in Australia at that time was such that an order was promulgated by the Government prohibiting practically all loans for building purposes other than private dwellings, so the proposed scheme had to be laid aside for a time. Meanwhile, however, the congregation is concentrating on raising the necessary funds for the erection of the hall and hope that the way will soon open up for them to proceed with their plans.

When Mr. McEwen was home in 1950 the question of the Irish and Scottish Churches co-operating in the work in Australia was raised for discussion. Synod instructed its Colonial Mission Committee to contact the Scottish Synod and to explore the possibility of such co-operation taking place. The Committee did so and received a favourable response from the Scottish Synod. Rules for the joint management of the Mission were drawn up and were approved by both Synods. On 20th May, 1955, the first meeting of "The Colonial Mission Board of the Irish and Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Churches" was held, the Board on that occasion being constituted in prayer by the Rev. W. J. Gilmour, B.A., the Moderator of the Irish Synod. Since then the name has been altered to read "The Australian Mission Board . . .," as it was felt that the word "colonial" was now very much out of date so far as Australia was concerned. While the two Synods co-operate in the management of the mission, the responsibility for the financing of the work remains with the Irish Synod. Financial support is received, however, from some of the Scottish congregations.

Bearing in mind that 1957 would be the centenary of the commencement of the work of the Church in Australia, the Board, with the approval of both Synods, invited Mr. Barkley to come home on furlough that year, but it was found more convenient for him to come somewhat earlier than originally planned. He and Mrs. Barkley and their two young sons arrived in Belfast on 6th November, 1956, after a very pleasant voyage via Cape Town. Their daughters remained behind in Australia. During the next five months Mr. Barkley had a very busy time visiting all the congregations of both the Irish and Scottish Churches. In addition he was able to make a short visit to Holland to contact some of the brethren there who are connected with the Dutch Reformed Church, as there is at the present time considerable emigration of members of that Church to Australia and New Zealand. They hold many of the distinctive principles and doctrines for which the Covenanters Church has been witnessing and it is well that the bonds that tend to unite us should be



MR. McEWEN'S HOME, 10 MALCOLM STREET,
WHERE THE WORK IN MCKINNON COMMENCED



THE ORIGINAL
CHURCH BUILDING,
MCKINNON

MCKINNON MANSE



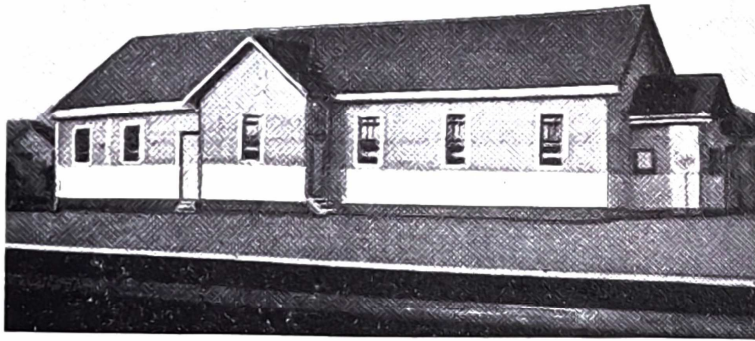
strengthened, especially as in Australia today there are many who preach and teach "another gospel" and the defenders of the Truth must be alert and active, and must stand shoulder to shoulder. Close contact is also being maintained in Australia with the Free Church, now officially known as "The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia." Mr. Barkley's visit, like the visits of his predecessors, did much good to the congregations in the homeland, as well as arousing interest in the work being done in Australia. Sailing from London on 11th April, the Barkleys reached Geelong again on 8th May, 1957.

Mr. McEwen and Mr. Barkley do not confine themselves simply to carrying on the work of their respective congregations. The need of the times calls for a much wider witness than that. So whenever and wherever an opportunity offers to witness to their Lord and Master they seek to embrace that opportunity. Addresses over the radio, religious instruction in State schools, writing to the Press, lecturing, teaching—all these means, and others too, are made use of in their efforts to defend and disseminate the Truth. In addition to giving a series of lectures annually on the subject of Church History in the Melbourne Bible Institute, Mr. McEwen is Secretary of the Bible Union of Australia and editor of its official organ, "Evangelical Action," which is published monthly. Since the increased flow of Dutch emigrants to Australia began some years ago there has been close contact with ministers and members of the Dutch Reformed Church. As a result of the desire that young men being trained for the ministry might be assured of teaching that is doctrinally sound, a few years ago a Reformed Theological College was founded. Mr. Barkley is one of the teaching staff and lectures in Church History and Hebrew. In this way the bulwark against the spread of Modernism, Arminianism, and many other "isms" is being strengthened.

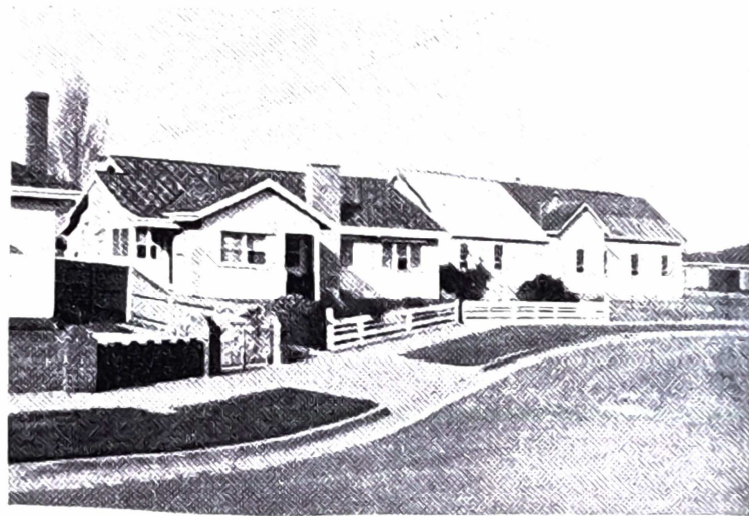
No one would be quicker to admit than the men in Australia themselves that if it were not for the prayerful and financial support of the Church at home the work of the mission could not have been carried on in the past, nor could it be carried on in the present. The Women's Missionary Associations, in particular, have given splendid support. It is eminently fitting that in the centenary year of the commencement of the Church's work in Australia this support should be recognised by the Synods enlarging the membership of the Australian Mission Board to include four representatives of the Women's Missionary Unions—three from the Irish Union and one from the Scottish.

One hundred years ago the report of the Colonial Mission Committee to Synod spoke about sowing the seed of the Word. Seed has been sown faithfully and prayerfully ever since. For the greater portion of the time the labourers were few and the fruit did not seem abundant. But God is to be praised that now the fruit is more abundant, and steady progress is being made, even though the opposition from the world and the devil is still great. One hundred years ago it was said: "It is impossible for us as a Church to stand still: we must go forward. . . . We must go forward or we will go back. . . . The world is the field." That still holds true—We must go forward!—even though the tide still flows strongly against us. The world is the field today in a way that the men of a century ago never imagined. The motor-car, the aeroplane, the radio, television, scientific advances of many kinds—things such as these have brought the ends of the earth to our very doorsteps. They have brought also new problems as the "material" tends to supplant the "spiritual" and many people have no time or thought for the things that are unseen but eternal. The vision of one hundred years ago is yet far from being realised—the vision of the great leading doctrines of the Covenanted Reformation spreading far and wide, from Pole to Pole, from the river to the ends of the earth, till, 'like a sea of glory,' they cover the whole world. Will that vision have been attained by the end of the next century? We would keep that vision before us as individuals, as families, and as a Church. We would encourage one another here in the homelands; we would encourage our brethren in North America; we would encourage our brethren in Syria and Lebanon; we would encourage our brethren in far away Australia, and wherever else throughout the world there are those who bear aloft the old Blue Banner "For Christ's Crown and Covenant." "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "The Lord of us hath mindful been and He will bless us still." To Him be "praise and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN."





R.P. CHURCH
AND HALL (*at left*),
McKINNON.



COMPLETE SUITE OF BUILDINGS:
MANSE, HALL, AND CHURCH,
McKINNON



REV. W. R. McEWEN, B.A.
1928-

Geelong Reformed Presbyterian Congregation

(First Congregational Meeting held 22nd June, 1858)

— O —

Former Ministers

REV. A. M. MOORE, M.A.	-	-	1857-1897
<i>(first minister)</i>			
REV. A. HOLMES	-	-	1897-1898
<i>(stated supply)</i>			
REV. W. McCARROLL, B.A.	-	-	1899-1903
REV. A. M. THOMPSON, M.A.	-	-	1904-1909
REV. H. K. MACK, B.A.	-	-	1909-1946

Rev. W. R. McEwen, B.A., who was sent to Australia in 1929 to labour as a second missionary, for some years took part in the work in Geelong as an associate member of Session.

Former Members of Session

JAMES RAMAGE	-	-	1858-1910
HUGH BROWN	-	-	1861-1875
JOHN MILLER	-	-	1861-1872
GEORGE GRAHAM	-	-	1875-1884
FLEMING McDONALD	-	-	1899-1918
ROBERT J. MOORE	-	-	1899-1934
<i>(son of Rev. A. M. Moore)</i>			
JAMES BROWN	-	-	1915-1938

Mr. Lawrence Kay, certified as an elder from the Greenock congregation of the R.P. Church of Scotland, was residing in Geelong on Mr. Moore's arrival, but was, it seems, prevented by illness from taking his place as a member of Session.

OFFICE-BEARERS, 1957

Geelong Reformed Presbyterian Congregation

Minister:

REV. A. BARKLEY, M.A. (1947)

Members of Session:

ARCHIBALD RAMAGE	-	-	-	1899
<i>(son of James Ramage)</i>				
ROBERT W. BOLTON	-	-	-	1949
C. S. MILLS	-	-	-	1949
J. A. WARNOCK	-	-	-	1954
ROBERT MACK (<i>Clerk</i>)	-	-	-	1949
<i>(son of Rev. H. K. Mack)</i>				

Managers:

R. MACK, R. W. BOLTON, C. S. MILLS, S. J. KELLY,
J. A. WARNOCK, A. E. BOWEY, J. D. ALLEN

Secretary:

R. W. BOLTON

Treasurer:

R. MACK

Though appointed in Ireland in 1946, Mr. Barkley was not actually installed as minister of the congregation till 1947.

— O —

McKinnon Reformed Presbyterian Congregation

(Work in the district commenced in 1933 :
the congregation was organised 11th April, 1946)

Minister:

REV. W. R. McEVEN, B.A. - - - 1946

Members of Session:

J. McCONAGHY	-	-	-	1946
A. HALKET	-	-	-	1946

Managers:

J. HALKET, E. HANNAH, S. PARK, D. M. HALKET

Secretary:

D. M. HALKET

Treasurer:

A. HALKET

Addendum

Since this booklet was written Mr. Barkley has advised the Australian Mission Board that he has been appointed principal of the Reformed Theological College in Geelong and has been invited to assume full-time teaching duties in connection therewith. He feels led to accept the invitation and has asked to be relieved of the pastoral charge of the Geelong congregation as from 1st January, 1959. At its meeting in 1958 the Irish Synod issued an appeal for a volunteer to go to Australia to succeed Mr. Barkley as minister of the Geelong congregation. Who will say, "Here am I; send me"? Who will arise and go? "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."