



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Sad Events in The Free Church of Scotland.



Rev. Maurice Roberts

General Assembly further repudiates the gospel by indefinitely suspending Rev Maurice Roberts of Inverness.

A modernistic faction within the Free Church of Scotland, under the leadership of Prof. Donald Macleod has caused great distress to all lovers of truth, chiefly those of the denomination itself. Macleod, once the darling of many reformed conference platforms, has discarded his former guise as a spokesman for historic Christianity and alarmed many of his colleagues within the Free Church with what they consider are heretical theological views. Added to this, serious allegations regarding his moral behaviour have been circulating for a number of years. Despite many attempts to have these matters investigated with the courts of the church, Prof. Macleod has been shielded and protected by a hierarchy

**within the denomination over which he exercises a strange dominance.**

An attempt by three ministers to lay charges against Prof. Macleod that he had been guilty of bearing false witness in a civil court, had slandered fellow ministers, elders and Christians and had broken his ordination vows was made at the last Assembly in May past. The Assembly voted not to hear the accusations.

It was arising out of this issue that one of the Free Church's leading ministers, Rev Maurice Roberts, was charged with "contumacy" -- opposing lawful authority. This charge was laid following his statement that he had seen "evil and hypocrisy" within the Assembly. He was not permitted to justify his accusation but was rather summarily dismissed from his pulpit at the end of June.

Following that decision, Rev. Roberts commenced services in a school in Inverness, attracting congregations of 75 to 100 people.

***The following is taken from a letter he distributed to friends.***

July 1999

Dear Friends

I write this brief letter to you to express our deep appreciation of your kindness in writing recently and strengthening us with your encouragement at this time.

I feel that I had to say what I said to our General Assembly in May when I stated that I had witnessed hypocrisy and wickedness there. A minister of the gospel has to speak the truth and there are times when he has to risk becoming unpopular even with his brethren



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for being outspoken. I believe that that time had come in May of this year. Sadly I have seen our beloved Free Church of Scotland decline markedly over the past few years, especially since 1995, when a decision was taken by the General Assembly to 'close' all further enquiry into the allegations against Professor Donald Macleod.

The effect of my action in speaking out against the hypocrisy which I saw is that I have now been suspended from the ministry of the Free Church sine die (without a terminal date). I regard this as an act of great injustice in view of the fact that I was not given any opportunity at the recent Commission of Assembly to prove my allegations to be true, nor was I able to cite any witnesses nor to have any right of appeal, which would be the normal procedure. The reason for this rough justice is related to the fact that I have for some years held the view that a judicial church trial ought to be held on Professor Macleod in view of allegations widely heard against his behaviour and teachings. To the persons in the leadership of the denomination at this time this is totally unacceptable and I am now out of the ministry of the denomination.

However at the invitation of the people I have started services in a nearby school here in Inverness and we were encouraged on our first Lord's Day to see over fifty persons present at both services. This is a temporary arrangement in the hope that the congregation will one day come together again and the denomination's problems be put right. I pray God it may happen speedily.

Both Sandra and I are in good heart however. Sandra feels as much as I do that we have done what we could to put the Free Church's duty before it. If they will not do their duty the consequences are theirs and not ours. I cannot imagine how people in the Church can expect God to bless the denomination if matters are swept under the carpet. One of the mistaken ideas commonly heard is that we 'must just leave the matter now to God' and not attempt to place the professor concerned on trial. But God never told us that his providence is the rule of man's duty. The Free Church of Scotland has a well defined code of discipline which ought to be applied in this case as in all others.

Your kind letter is received with pleasure and gratitude. May God bless you and reward you for your encouragement to us at this time.

Yours sincerely

*Maurice Roberts.*