

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

11 July, 2013

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Wedding

On Tuesday, 9 July, David Crossett of the CPRC and Kristin Prins of Trinity PRC were joined together in holy matrimony. About twenty were over from the US, plus a family from Denmark, with friends and family of the Crossetts, and many from the CPRC in attendance. The joyous occasion was blessed with gorgeous weather—hot and sunny. I do not think we have ever had so many doors and windows open for any meeting in our new church building.



After the service, tea and scones were provided upstairs. The good fellowship continued at the reception and dinner at the Roe Park Resort. David's and Kristin's families and friends did an excellent job of organizing the day, so that all ran very smoothly. Christian weddings are wonderful things as Christ brings together two of His children and makes them one flesh. May the Lord bless the happy couple in their life together.



Kristin's uncle, John Van Baren of Hope PRC in Grand Rapids, came to Northern Ireland for the wedding with his wife, Val. So the CPRC asked him to give a PowerPoint presentation on the work of Rev. Titus and the Protestant Reformed Churches in Myanmar (PRCM) after the Sunday evening service (7 July). It was very interesting and much appreciated. It was uploaded in two parts to the CPRC YouTube page (www.youtube.com/cprcni) where it is receiving a good number of hits. The *Ballymena Guardian* carried the article we sent them about this missionary witness.

The Friday night (5 July) before the wedding, we had a barbecue at the manse for the congregation, friends, and our PRC visitors, including Rev. and Mrs. Van Baren, who were instrumental in the purchase of the house twenty years ago. The beautiful weather meant everyone was outside, which enabled the people from the US and Northern Ireland better to meet and fellowship. The more energetic ones played some volleyball.

The Sunday (30 June) before this, Kristin and her parents and her siblings who had made confession of faith joined us at the Lord's Supper. We hope that, through their time with us in Northern Ireland, the Prinses are reassured that their daughter is with good friends in Christ and that they will want to visit often.

New Members

On Sunday, 16 June, three Belfast men, Willie John Mawhinney, his brother Ivan, and his son-in-law Alan Hermon were received as members. We first met Willie John some two and a half years ago when he accompanied a subscriber to the *Covenant Reformed News* to the manse to check out the CPRC Bookstore. It was five months later that the three

Belfast brethren first attended one of our meetings, a lecture in Lurgan, entitled “For Whom Did Christ Die?” (24 June, 2011). Willie John, Ivan, and Alan came to many of the lectures by Profs. Hanko and Engelsma at the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference in Bangor, near Belfast, in the summer of 2012.

The three men then started attending our services more and more regularly, listening to on-line audios and reading the *Standard Bearer*, RFPA books, and PRC pamphlets. We are delighted that they have joined us.

Trips

For our thirteenth wedding anniversary, Mary and I spent a few days in Scotland (10-14 June). Our first stop was the venue for the BRF Conference (26 July–2 August, 2014), Gartmore House, near Loch Lomond (www.gartmorehouse.com). We spent a night there; had three meals (all excellent); checked out the rooms in the beautiful eighteenth-century mansion, the sports hall, and the other buildings; walked around the lovely 75-acre grounds; spoke with staff; checked out the nearby town and the local area; and climbed the 3,000 foot Ben Lomond. We are now looking forward to next year's conference even more (<http://britishreformedfellowship.org.uk/index.php/conferences/upcoming>).

On our last day in Scotland, we went to St. Andrews, a very important town in the history of the Scottish church and state, and the home of golf and Scotland's first university. It has two beaches, a harbour, a cathedral (now in ruins), a castle, a museum of golf, and lovely shops. Afterwards, in consultation with the BRF Council, it was decided that our second BRF Conference day-trip would be to St. Andrews (the first is to Edinburgh), and we have lined up an excellent Reformation walking-tour guide, whose tour will include abduction, murder, and several martyrdoms, and involve a Hussite emissary and the Reformer John Knox.

While in Scotland, we also visited with two dear saints who receive the Covenant Reformed News and order from the CPRC Bookstore. We had only corresponded by e-mail, phone, and letter before, so it was great to meet and fellowship with them.

On Sunday, 16 June, Rev. McGeown and I had a pulpit exchange. We met for the first time two saints who have been attending the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF) services, and had dinner with Sam and Anga Watterson and their little boy, Jason. While we were away, six Singaporean saints visited the CPRC, the first time, I think, we have ever had members of the PRC's sister church, the CERC, in the CPRC. They also dropped off some hard copies of *Saltshakers* magazine produced in Singapore.

On Wednesday, 19 June, I spoke in South Wales

on “Rest for the People of God,” for I have been preaching a series on Hebrews 4, which deals with this comforting truth.

Other

This year's family visitation went very well, with most of the visits being in late May. Shortly afterwards, Elder Ivan Reid headed to the US with his wife, Lily. Ivan was the CPRC delegate to the PRC Synod in Hudsonville in mid-June. The Reids returned encouraged from their time in our sister churches and with some PR pamphlets and RFPA books to replenish our depleted stocks, including the new book: Prof. Engelsma's *Battle for Sovereign Grace in the Covenant*.

The last two months have been a bit quieter than usual regarding translations: 4 Hungarian, 6 Italian and 8 Spanish. Currently, three people are helping us in Spanish: a lady Spanish teacher of Mexican extraction living in Quebec, a pastor in Cuba, and a licentiate in Chile—saints in North, Central and South America (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm#spanish)!

Two new box-sets have also been produced: “Christ's Priestly Office” (*Belgic Confession* 20-21a) and “The Happiness of Jehovah's Sheep” (Ps. 23) by Rev. McGeown (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/boxsets.htm). Earlier today, we posted out many of the new *British Reformed Journals*. The others will be passed on over the next few days. When we go to the US on Tuesday (16 July), DV, we will bring with us copies for American subscribers, to cut down on postage costs.

Our trip to the US is drawing very near (16 July–13 August), and I would imagine we will be there before many of you read this. I am to preach in Calvary and Heritage (21 July), Lynden (28 July), Randolph (4 August), and Grandville and Faith (11 August), plus give three PowerPoint presentations on the CPRC from the perspective of its sister church relationship with the PRC and attend the weddings of a niece and a nephew. We are looking forward to being in your midst again.

May the Lord, who builds and defends His church, be with you.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor and Mary Stewart