

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church

Ballymena, NI

14 March, 2013

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Properties

Last month, I mentioned that we had paid off our church building completely. So the next item was to purchase the CPRC manse/parsonage from the PRC. The PRC bought the house in Northern Ireland about 20 years ago, with advice from Rev. VanBaren, who was over here at the time. Rev. Ron Hanko lived in Northern Ireland with his family for 8 years (1993-2001), and Mary and I have been here for about 12 years. The PRC kindly allowed us the use of the manse rent free. Recently, we received a very sizable bequest from Tom and Jessie Spriensma of Hudsonville PRC, which has enabled us to buy the manse outright. A price has been agreed upon between the PRC and the CPRC, so only the paper work remains to be finalized. The council had envisaged our having to pay the amount over, say, 10-15 years, but the Lord had other plans! His hand has been with us in this too, through the generosity of two dear saints.

Additional insulation was added to the manse's roof space, and 13 windows and the French doors were replaced. The house sure was cold and draughty when this was going on! We have also made several improvements in our church building. We stuck bumper stops to the backs of the 100 chairs to limit their knocking the walls, and the damaged paint work was touched up. A coat rack has been fitted below the stairs, and blinds will soon be attached over the sky lights to prevent the carpet from fading.

Members

Sadly, Mr. Desmond Callender passed away (7 February). Our brother was with the CPRC since its earliest days and was a faithful elder. He is our first member to have died. He loved Reformed doctrine and was the first in Northern Ireland to subscribe to the *Standard Bearer*. He also took care of the bookstore for a few years. I remember calling him in my days at university in Belfast some twenty years ago for my first

batch of PR pamphlets. He was only too keen to oblige! His last few years were difficult because of failing health, and before he saw his 80th birthday he saw the glorified Christ. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

In my last bimonthly letter, I mentioned little Lucas Hall, born prematurely to Philip and Susan, at just 2 pounds and 12 ounces (24 December). A month later, he was able to leave the hospital. He is steadily putting on weight (he is now about 7 pounds) and doing well. His grandmother, Marilyn Adams (First PRC), came over to help for some days in late January.

Recently, John McAuley fell in his home, fracturing part of his skull. After two spells in the hospital, he now is home again and doing better. He hopes to be able to make it to church meetings in the next few days.

Translations

The last two months have seen the addition of 33 translations (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm): 10 Italian, 3 Spanish, 3 Portuguese, 3 Esperanto, 2 Afrikaans, 2 Hungarian, and 1 each in Russian, Czech, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Romanian, Greek, Arabic, Twi, and Fante (the last two being languages spoken especially in Ghana).

I was very pleasantly surprised at the number of translations we now have on our website (or link to), the top languages being Italian 482, Portuguese 427, German 154, Afrikaans 92, Spanish 77, Russian 51, Dutch 51, Hungarian 48, Tagalog 33, French 20, Ukrainian 19, Chinese 19, Korean 13, and Danish 12. The total number of translations in 116 languages is now 1,761, though there may be the odd counting mistake! It is amazing the progress that can be made over a few years with adding a few translations each week!

Recently, the monies in our “Translator Fund” were exhausted, with books going to Brazil, the Czech Republic, Canada, etc. If anyone would like to contribute to the “Translator Fund,” please let me know (pastor@cprc.co.uk).

Others

Mary continues to tidy up the code on pages of the CPRC website (www.cprc.co.uk). The *Covenant Reformed News* articles are now sorted and she has started the Italian section. With 2013 being the 450th anniversary of *Heidelberg Catechism*, we created a special resource page (www.cprf.co.uk/heidelbergcatechismresources.html).

The two latest RFPA books have been selling well: Prof. Hanko's *A Pilgrim's Manual* on I Peter and Rev. Smit's *The Fruit of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, with three copies of the latter being sent to a brother in Wales earlier today. Recent preaching on the fascinating character of John the Baptist has resulted in the production of two new box sets of CDs and DVDs: “John the Baptist's Birth and Preparation” (Luke 1) and “John the Baptist's Public Ministry (I)” (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/boxsets.htm).

“Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Hypo-Calvinism” was the title of our last lecture in the CPRC (8 February). We promoted it widely with an article and paid advertisements in the local papers, flyers with the *Covenant Reformed News*, a trailer at the end of our Reformed Witness Hour radio broadcast, etc., but the weather was inclement and the attendance was a little disappointing. However, many more people have heard it on-line and the video is doing very well on YouTube (www.youtube.com/cprcni). The tragic thing is that many demonize real Calvinism as hyper-Calvinism (over and above Calvinism). Because of this smokescreen, their own hypo-Calvinism (under and below Calvinism) is able to escape undetected by most! They are able to get away with this because few define Calvinism by the *Canons of Dordt*, including their Rejection of Errors.

Visitors

As well as Marilyn Adams from the US (27 January), Michelle Lou-Hing, a niece of the Kennedys, from Trinidad and Tobago, worshipped with us (10 March).



David Hutchings, a fine young man from South Wales, has been reading Protestant Reformed literature for about a year and attending the lectures Rev. McGeown and I give in Porthcawl. He stayed with Mary and me for a few days, attending 2 Sunday services, 4 catechism classes, and 2 Bible studies, as well as taking in some lovely scenic walks (2-7 March).



The next evening, we welcomed 5 Brazilians to our home (8-10 March). I mentioned Thiago, Sarah, Nara, Lidi, and David and their excellent work with Portuguese translations in my last bimonthly letter. We had a lovely time with them, but, sadly, they had to return to Brazil today. They have done most of the work of translating Prof. Hanko's *Portraits of Faithful Saints* into Portuguese and plan to have it published as a book in Brazil.

Tomorrow, about noon, Rev. Carl Haak and Elder Peter Vander Schaaf will be arriving here for the CPRC's annual church visitation, D.V. It should be good!

May the Lord be with you all. Thank you for your prayers and support!

Yours in Christ,
Rev. & Mary Stewart