

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

15 May, 2012

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Annual General Meeting

Last night the CPRC held its annual general meeting, upstairs in our church building (Monday, 14 May). Rev. McGeown, who had stayed in Northern Ireland after our pulpit swap the day before, gave a fine missionary report on his work in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF). After the meeting proper concluded, we watched slides of the saints in the LRF compiled by Julian and Joseph Kennedy. Stephen Murray, who records our services on video for YouTube and produces box sets of CDs and DVDs, etc., brought a fine audio-visual report. Handouts were available listing our YouTube statistics; our best-selling box sets for the last year (the box set on the angels came first) and the last three years (“Ezekiel’s Vision of the Future” was top); our best selling books for the last year (*Federal Vision: Heresy at the Root* was first) and the last five years (*The Five Points of Calvinism* led the way); and the financial statement. Our treasurer, Ivan Reid, had the pleasant task of presenting the financial report. By God’s grace, the church building is now paid off (we have the £27,500 or so in the bank for the contractor whenever he is able to fix the few small items on the snagging list) and we have a sizable amount that we can put towards purchasing the CPRC manse from the PRC.

The latter item was voted upon at the meeting by the male confessing members and was overwhelmingly approved. In the future, the CPRC can discuss the details of buying the manse with the relevant committee of the PRC.

Internet

About a week after our last bi-monthly letter, Mary uploaded the new-style CPRC website, with a new header, blue background, fly-out menus, etc. The next couple of weeks were spent ironing out glitches (if one can speak

of ironing glitches!). Many pages still have to be reformatted with the code cleaned up, but this can be done bit by bit over the next few months, D.V. Mary also has put on-line all the translations she had received over the last year or so: 32 Afrikaans (Nic Grobler), 15 Hungarian (Balint, a student from Budapest, who is coming to this summer’s British Reformed Fellowship conference in Northern Ireland), 5 Spanish (Brent DeJong of Holland PRC and Marcelo Sanchez, a brother from Chile studying theology in Brazil), 2 Russian (John Egorov from Rostov-on-Don), 1 Serbian and 1 Chinese (Andrew Mui, who owns a house adjoining our church property).

We give free books to our translators as a thank you and this is funded by generous saints in the PRC and various parts of the world. Most recently, Hudsonville Ladies Bible Society made a donation to our translator fund. I led their study on the Psalms during my internship about 12 years ago, when we looked at the Psalms in the late 30s, and I still have fond memories of our time together. Rev. McGeown led the group through Psalms in the 110s and 120s about 4 years ago. I wonder how many of the ladies made it from Psalm 1 all the way to Psalm 150?

The CPRC YouTube site continues to grow through the hard work of Stephen Murray (www.youtube.com/cpreni). Now we have well over 1,300 videos on-line which can be watched for free, and subscribers are increasing. Recently various series were grouped together in “playlists”: “The Word” (10 sermons), Portuguese Lectures (7), “God’s Glorious Perfections” (10), “Moving House for God’s Church” (6), “The Son’s Messianic Kingdom” (5), “Christ’s Glorious Transfiguration” (3), and, most recently, “Zechariah’s Night Visions” (11).



George Wilkinson

Other News

George Wilkinson has become a member of the CPRC and was able to join us at the Lord's Table (25 March). George first attended one of our meetings when Prof. Hanko preached on the night of the official dedication of our church building (5 August, 2010). At our next several services, Prof. Engelsma brought the Word. It is great to have brother George with us!

The catechism season finished recently and the covenant children (ably encouraged and trained by their parents) did very well in their end-of-year tests. Tomorrow night will be our last Wednesday night class of the season on the *Belgic Confession*, which will conclude our study on "Original Sin" (Article 15). I have found it an immensely rewarding study. Next we begin family visitation, which starts on Monday (21 May). Our Tuesday-morning class on "Eschatology and Time," since it does not clash with evening family visits, will run longer.

Mary's sister, Carrie Dykstra, and her daughter Carleen, from Faith PRC, stayed with us for a few days (29 March – 9 April) and, since they wanted to visit the Limerick Reformed Fellowship, I arranged a pulpit swap with Rev. McGeown (8 April). Beth Buchanan's parents, Hank and Barb DeVries (Randolph PRC), were also in Northern Ireland for part of April. Briana Prins (Trinity PRC), who has been studying in the University of Limerick, came up for the weekend to say farewell to the saints in the CPRC (6 May) before returning to her family in the US.

"God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility" was the topic for a lecture in Ballymena (20 April). The speech explained the

relationship between the two and showed that the biblical and Reformed teaching actually *increases* man's responsibility or accountability (as opposed to Arminianism)! An article I sent to the 2 local Ballymena papers was published in both, along with paid advertisements. Several saints in the church helped by distributing fliers about the upcoming speech. Attendance was good and we sold a number of Reformed books and box sets. The same lecture was given the week before in South Wales (12 April), where we sold about \$180 worth of books, DVDs, and CDs, plus donations.

The last issue of the free monthly *Covenant Reformed News* saw the completion of volume XIII. Most of the first 200 were produced by Rev. Ron Hanko (Rev. VanBaren did the first few issues) and now 320 issues have gone out. Twenty years have passed since the first *Covenant Reformed News*! Apart from copies for people in the CPRC and the PRC, we send the *News* to over 1,100 postal or e-mail addresses in over 60 countries, including about 230 in Singapore. Some of those who get the *News* by mail receive up to 11 copies for passing on to others. Also, Rev. McGeown posts about 20 issues to people in the Republic of Ireland, Rev. Daniel Kleyn e-mails it to over 70 people in the Philippines, and some churches in the US and Canada distribute it in various ways. We have over 200 translations of *Covenant Reformed News* articles in 7 languages from the last 120 issues.

There are still places left at this summer's British Reformed Fellowship Conference in Northern Ireland (28 July – 4 August), and there is still time to book flights. "Ye Shall Be My Witnesses" is the theme, which shall be developed in 6 main lectures. The conference centre, a lovely old house, is a short walk from Belfast Lough. Day trips include a twelfth-century Norman castle and the new Titanic museum in Belfast. Booking forms are on-line. Those 5 or under are free (www.britishreformedfellowship.org.uk). For more details, contact the North American booking secretary, Cyndi Kalsbeek (708-331-1026 or ckalsbeek@yahoo.com), or Mary (bookstore@cprc.co.uk).

May the Lord be with you all,

In Christ,
Rev. & Mary Stewart