

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

15 November, 2011

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

CPRC

The last couple of months in the CPRC have been busy and fruitful. Anga Dyck, who moved here from Germany, made her public confession of faith (15 September). We have ten catechumens this year in four classes: one on Sunday mornings and three on Monday evenings. On Tuesday mornings, we are studying “Antichrist in the Book of Revelation,” and currently we are on the second beast in Revelation 13. On Wednesday nights in our *Belgic Confession* class, we are treating Article 12: “The Creation.” Its lengthy discussion on angels has occasioned an in-depth study of this subject. So far we have had eight sessions on this topic, and we are still on the *good* angels! I have been doing a lot of reading on God’s “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14) and have found it very rewarding, especially as regards their role in the giving of the law and in God’s revealing His will to Daniel, Zechariah, and John in the last book of the Bible. The audios of these classes are on-line (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm).

Having completed a ten-sermon series on “The Word” in John 1:1-18 (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/boxsets.htm), I am now preaching on “God’s Glorious Perfections.” We are looking at His “incommunicable” attributes first and have already considered Jehovah’s sovereignty and unity.

The church websites are doing very well. Our main website (www.cprc.co.uk) averages about 1,250 users per day and about 5,000 pages per day. We may well have had more sermons listened to on-line in October than any other previous month (it is more complicated to calculate audios

listened to from our website statistics). Mary’s revamping of the website is on-going; it is a big project. The CPRC YouTube site is proving a very helpful witness (www.youtube.com/cprcni). We have now had over 50,000 videos watched and a good number of people have subscribed to it, especially recently. Our thanks to Stephen Murray, who spends a lot of time working on our YouTube site and making CDs and DVDs and box-sets.

Recently, Ballymena council refunded 90% of the bond we gave them as guarantee that we would lay asphalt on the road leading to our church property. Our building contractor (whose accountant had a long-term illness) has sent us his final bill and our quantity surveyor will be discussing details of this with him. We have also paid off in full a bill of about \$7,500 with the RFPA. Thus we are now able to say with more confidence where we are financially. We are in a position, in the days ahead, to look into installing live web-casting of our services and pamphlet racks in the narthex.

The *Ballymena Times* asked me to write an article (“The Unchangeable God”) for their “Paper Pulpit” (13 September). The *News Letter* published a letter I wrote them, giving six biblical arguments against the Church of Ireland’s tolerating a homosexual minister in a civil partnership (17 October). The same paper published Philip Hall’s letter about ordaining sodomites in the PCUSA (12 October).

We enjoyed having Anna and Kezia Carins, of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) in Australia, stay with us over a weekend (22-24 October). They are members of Launceston EPC in Tasmania, pastored by Rev. Mark Shand, with whom I spent three happy years at the PR Seminary. The next two Lord’s Days, Beth Buchanan’s

parents, Henry and Barb DeVries of Randolph PRC, were with us.

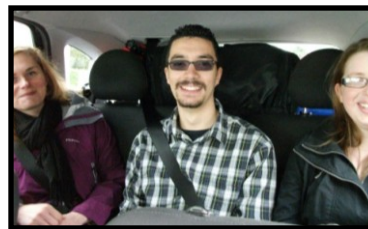
Overnighter in Carlingford

While Marco Barone of Italy was with us (10-27 September), we held the second overnighter for saints from the CPRC and the Limerick Reformed Fellowship and friends. Seventeen of us, including Flora Wanderley from Brazil, stayed in The Foy Centre in Carlingford in the Republic of Ireland (23-24 September). It is a beautiful old coastal town, complete with the remains of a thirteenth-century castle and a fourteenth-century Dominican friary. The sunny, warm weather made for great views and lovely walks through the medieval town and nearby forest park.



Rev. McGeown led a discussion on the priesthood of believers on the Friday night, while I looked at the antithesis on Saturday morning. The overnighter was arranged at relatively short notice, for Mary and I had returned from North America only on 16 August and had a lot of catching up to do, but it worked out really well and all enjoyed the fellowship.

When time came for all (sadly) to break up, Mary and I drove to Limerick, for we had arranged a pulpit swap with Rev. McGeown. Marco, Anga, and Debbie Murray came with us; this was Debbie's first time at the LRF. It is always good to spend time with the saints there.



Two Lectures

Since my last bi-monthly letter, I gave speeches in South Wales on “The Unchangeable God” (6 October) and in the CPRC on “Christ Alone!” (28 October), the latter being a Reformation Day lecture. We advertised the Ballymena speech in our trailer after the Reformed Witness Hour broadcast, through the *Covenant Reformed News*, an article and a paid ad in the *Ballymena Times* (25 October), and fliers posted through doors in Ballymena by several willing helpers from the church. We were very pleased with the attendance, including a good number of visitors who came from quite a geographical spread: Bangor, Belfast, Cullybackey, Portrush, and Londonderry (if you want to check it out in an atlas!). The speech is on-line in audio, and the speech and the question and answer session are on-line on video (www.youtube.com/user/CPRCNI?feature=mhee#g/c/49CF0018BC1B5912). It was a fine night, with people staying around for a long time afterwards, fellowshiping, having a cup of tea, or buying books or CD/DVD box sets.

BRF Conference

We are working on the 2012 BRF Conference booking form, which should be finished in the next couple of weeks. The conference is to be held in Northern Ireland (28 July–4 August), in the hope that attendees can avoid the crowds connected with the 2012 Olympics in London. We are looking forward to the fellowship and the fine lectures planned on the theme “Ye Shall Be My Witnesses” (www.britishreformedfellowship.org.uk).

We trust you too are encouraged in serving our great God and Saviour.

May His grace be with you,
Rev. & Mary Stewart