



*Rev.
Thomas
Miersma,
Home
Missionary*

*Proclaiming
the sovereign
grace
of our
Covenant
God
upon
the basis
of His
Holy Word*

*Jesus said,
“And other
sheep I have
which are
not
of this fold:
them also I
must bring,
and there
shall be one
fold, and
one
shepherd.”
John 10:16*

To the Loveland Congregation
and the churches

April, 2009

Dear Brethren,

With thanksgiving to God Who gathers and builds His church and Whose Word never returns void, I write this newsletter which has been long delayed until the future of the church was determined. Since I last wrote in November, many things have transpired. While the main news is that Covenant of Grace has been organized and instituted as a church here in Spokane, the fruit of the work here, I will take the time to trace what has been happening since I last wrote.

December was in certain respects an unusual month in Spokane. In a two and a half week period we had a series of snow storms that almost shut the city of Spokane down. Christmas Day, Old Years and New Years services had to be canceled. We were able to gather for worship on the Lord's Days, as the storms seemed to let up somewhat for Sunday, but travel even then was very difficult. Christmas Day was spent at the mission field parsonage shoveling four feet of drifted snow off the roof. I was thankful to have three strong sons.

The last days of December also were very cold, and the sewer line at the church building froze, in part because it was not buried deep enough. The result was that we could not use the building and met the first Sunday in January at a meeting room in a motel. The snow had to be cleared and much of the parking lot dug up to fix it. We had so much snow at the building that our parking lot virtually disappeared. The roof of the church also had to be shoveled.

In mid-January the weather relented and things slowly began to return to normal. In December the mission fellowship requested of the Loveland consistory that it be organized as a church. This was approved by the Loveland consistory and the Mission Committee and sent on to Classis West.

The request was made with eight households (five and a third families as synod would count them for assessments) and with ten children. There is also one couple who are marrying this month working toward confession of faith and adult baptism. Almost a week after the requests were made, two new families and one individual began to attend. They had initially come to the conference on the covenant last October. One of these families has seven children. Since then another couple also has started coming and there have been other new contacts. These families all live in the Post Falls, Idaho area just over the border from Spokane. The effect has been a significant increase in attendance and we are thankful for this development.

In March, Classis met and authorized the organization of the Covenant of Grace Protestant Reformed Church on the basis of those who originally made the request. We are thankful for this, as new contacts take time to be assimilated.

On the last day of March, the newly formed church was instituted at a service led by Rev. Rodney Miersma. Ryan Lathrop and Aaron Edwards were ordained as elders and Greg Duerr as deacon. This is a great joy for the congregation here and for the churches, as it has been many years since a church was instituted on a mission field. It is striking that none of the families has a reformed or presbyterian background—indeed many come from non-Christian back

grounds. It is the direction the Lord is leading us today in our mission work.

With the formation of a church in Spokane there come also many changes. The official mission work in Spokane has come to an end. The new congregation must call a new pastor, its first. Evangelism in the area will continue but now from a permanent base of an established church that sounds forth the Word.

With the organization Loveland Council also has made a request to Synod that it be released as a calling church. The congregation and the consistory have labored now for close to fifteen years as a calling church. This is a blessing and privilege, but it is also demanding work for the elders. The Mission Committee will probably seek another calling church based in the west.

The newly formed church, now a sister congregation in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and the missionary give thanks to God for His blessings in the gathering of His church. We would also express our thankfulness to the churches for the care and labor here, particularly to the Loveland congregation for its fellowship in Christ.

With the formation of a church, this means for me as a missionary that my labor under Loveland will be brought to a close as well. I must now wait upon the Lord for the labor He has in His kingdom. As my older two sons will be moving to Edmonton to attend graduate school, we will be making some adjustments in our family life as well.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Thomas Miersma
Western Home Missionary of the P.R.C.