

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

16 March, 2012

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Church Visitors

This year our church visitors were Rev. Bill Langerak (SE PRC) and Elder Sid Miedema (Byron Center PRC). Both were on their first trip to the island of Ireland, working in the CPRC in Ballymena (20-27 January) and then in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF, 28-31 January), about which Rev. McGeown has written to you last month.



Rev. Langerak and Sid Miedema

Rev. Langerak's Sunday sermons, Tuesday morning Bible study on Christ's post-resurrection appearance in John 21:1-14, and Wednesday night speech on "The Bible's Interpretation of the Antichrist" were much appreciated. His lecture was advertised widely using a trailer after our Reformed Witness Hour radio broadcast, flyers with the *Covenant Reformed News*, articles in the local press (*Ballymena Guardian* and *Ballymena Times*), etc., and there was a very good attendance (25 January). From the question time afterwards, it appeared that some thought that Rev. Langerak was going to give the actual name of the man of sin!

The two brethren visited with many of the church members in their homes, and John McAuley took them to see the mayor of Ballymena in the town hall. Rev. Langerak and Elder Miedema were guests at our annual congregational dinner, this year held in the Adair Arms Hotel in Ballymena (27 January). Several friends of the church were also present, plus Rev. McGeown and the Kuhs family from the LRF and Briana Prins of Trinity PRC, who is currently studying at the University of Limerick. It was a great night, with the after-dinner quiz ably chaired by William Graham.

Wedding

More folks from Limerick were back with us five weeks later for another big event, the wedding of Sam Watterson and Anganeta Dyck (2 March). This was the first wedding in our new church building and it was between two non-CPRC members (though Anga was a member with us before she moved to Limerick), neither of whom are from Northern Ireland (Sam is Irish and Anga is German). This meant that the wedding day in Ballymena was arranged from Limerick, and guests drove from the Republic of Ireland (six stayed with us the night before the wedding) and flew from Germany to attend! The service went without any hitches, and the ladies in the church did a fine job serving at the cake reception afterwards. It was good to meet members of Sam and Anga's family for the first time, especially at the later reception in the Adair Arms.



Sam and Anga Watterson

Weddings are beautiful and very encouraging. I hope we have many more in the years to come! The new couple honeymooned in Portugal, where they spent some time with Nuno and Alina Pinheiro and their lovely children.

Other News

Speaking of Nuno, we now have on-line the videos of five lectures, a question-and-answer session, and a short speech on the importance of catechizing, that he translated when Rev. McGeown and I were in Portugal last year. Stephen Murray of the CPRC spent many hours working on changing the video format produced on the expensive high-definition camcorder owned by a Portuguese brother to the format he normally uploads to the CPRC

YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/cprcni). Along with a video from a previous trip to Portugal in 2009, we now have eight Portuguese videos along with some 350 articles translated in Portuguese (www.cprf.co.uk/languages/portuguese.htm). We have already gotten some good feedback on the videos from Brazil, the world's largest Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) country.

Mary's work overhauling our main website (www.cprc.co.uk) continues, and she hopes in a few days to upload the new-look website. Lord willing, by the time most of you read this, it will already be on-line.

After our CD box set on the angels, we have now produced a box set on "The Devil and the Demons" from our Wednesday night classes on the *Belgic Confession*. The *Ballymena Times* published a short piece I sent them on this and we advertised it in the last *Covenant Reformed News*. Box sets come in multiples of two, so we added Rev. Langerak's sermon in the CPRC on "The Man-Eating Lion Survival Guide" (I Peter 5:8-9) to the nine classes as a bonus disk. More recently, we moved to the next couple of articles on God's providence and the creation and fall of man (*Belgic Confession* 13-14).

Sadly, the UK civil government is seeking to bring in laws for homosexual "marriage." A letter I wrote explaining the biblical teaching was published in the two Northern Ireland papers (*Belfast Telegraph* and *News Letter*) and the *English Churchman* (in a larger form). Julian Kennedy's letter, answering a humanist's attacks on Scripture, was printed in the *Belfast Telegraph*.

The CPRC Bookstore is going well, with especially good sales in January. Through the generosity of a friend in England, we recently sent £150 worth of books to the Evangelical Library in London.

At the request of members, we produced a new tri-fold introducing our congregation by explaining the words in our name in the following order: church, Protestant, Reformed, and covenant. We ran copies on our digital duplicator and some of the congregation helped fold them after a Wednesday night class. A fair number have already been passed on to family and friends.

This being a missionary-type letter, I have referred to some of the things we do as a witness to others outside the church. But the majority of the work is with the saints in the congregation through the Lord's Day sermons, catechism classes, Bible studies, pastoral visits, fellowship, etc., as is the case in your own churches in the US and Canada. Ephesians 4:15-16 sets forth God's goal and way of working through His people: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual

working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Heidelberg Catechism preaching of late has been on the section on the church (ecclesiology) in Lord's Days 25-30. This time we have especially been setting forth the biblical and Reformed teaching over against the Anabaptist notions of house churchism, another attack on Christ's church.

Elsewhere, we are currently in the middle of a series on "Zechariah's Night Visions" (Zech. 1-6). Our Tuesday morning class, after finishing "The Antichrist in the Book of Revelation" (Rev. 13; 17), is looking at "Eschatology and Time," beginning with the Bible's teaching on "The Two Ages," this age/world and the age/world to come.

Our friend Marco Barone from Italy was with us for a week (1-7 March) to attend Sam and Anga's wedding. It is always good to have him with us. He plans next to be in Northern Ireland for the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference.



Marco Barone

BRF Conference

There is plenty of room left at this year's BRF Conference in Northern Ireland (28 July – 4 August) and still time to book the flights (www.britishreformedfellowship.org.uk)! We have been informed by Lorne House (the conference centre) that they have more en-suite rooms for us, so we are reducing the cost per person in a non-single en-suite room from £380 to £350 (full board). The North American booking secretary, Cyndi Kalsbeek (708-331-1026 or ckalsbeek@yahoo.com), will be able to tell you what this reduction means in terms of US dollars.

Meanwhile, Rev. McGeown is almost finished proofing the eight chapters of the new BRF book, *The Reformed World-View: The Word of God for Our Generation* (the speeches of the last conference in written form). In some weeks, DV, we hope to send it off to the publishers. Our thanks to various PR churches or evangelism committees who are pre-ordering large amounts of this book or helping us with this project.

May the Lord be with you all.

In Christ,
Rev. & Mary Stewart