

# Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

9 July, 2011

Dear saints in the  
Protestant Reformed Churches,

## Barbecue

With the end of the Bible study and catechism season, the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church (CPRC) in Northern Ireland began family visitation (23 May–25 June), with Hebrews 13:17 as our theme text. For the first time, family visitation included our missionary, Rev. Martyn McGeown, labouring faithfully in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF), and George Wilkinson, a brother who has been attending our Sunday services since last summer when Profs. Hanko and Engelsma were here.

After family visitation concluded, I had more time to catch up on various things, including some reading, writing, and correspondence, as well as work in the garden/yard. Julian Kennedy, Sam Watterson, Anga Dyck, and my mother helped Mary and me with trimming the hedges and bushes, clearing the patio, and cleaning the windows to get the manse/parsonage ready for a congregational barbecue on Friday, 8 July.



We were relieved and delighted that the weather was warm and dry. Most of the saints in the church were able to make it, though Philip and Susan Hall (who were not long back from their trip to the US) spent the evening in the hospital, for little Corey fell when they were getting ready to come to the barbecue and hurt his arm. We were joined by several friends of the congregation: Sam Watterson of the LRF, the Spences (some of you will remember Hilary from the 2010 British Reformed Fellowship [BRF] Conference), Michael Foster (who was in the US for the graduation of Rev. McGeown, his brother-in-law, in June, 2010), the Dulys (who attended our recent “overnighter” in Newcastle), and Jonathan and Caragh Moore and their family with the two Dutch girls who were staying with them (the Moores have been to several BRF Conferences). William Graham arranged for a bouncy castle, which was very popular

with the younger ones and some of the older ones! Several joined in some games of football. Ivan Reid did the barbecuing as always; the sausages from our new supplier were especially good! It was a wonderful evening of relaxation and fellowship.



## CPRC Services

Currently, we are on the names of our Saviour in the *Heidelberg Catechism* preaching. After completing an eleven-sermon series on “The Prayer of the Church in Babylon” (Is. 63:7-64:12), I began a five-sermon series on Psalm 2, entitled “The Son's Messianic Kingdom.” We put these (and, indeed, all of our recent) sermon series into attractive box sets which we sell, especially through the *Covenant Reformed News*, to saints in the British Isles and as far off as the US and Australia. We also list the various box sets on-line ([www.cprf.co.uk/audio/boxsets.htm](http://www.cprf.co.uk/audio/boxsets.htm)) and have been very pleased at sales. Our three best selling box sets in the last year are “The Word of God for Our Generation,” the 2010 BRF Conference speeches by Profs. Engelsma and Hanko (30 sets); “Ezekiel’s Vision of the Future” on Ezekiel 37-39 (29 sets); and “The Most Avoided Chapter in the Bible” on Romans 9 (26 sets).

On Sunday, 26 June, Rev. McGeown preached at both services in the CPRC (including the Lord's Supper service in the morning), for he had little time to write new sermons for the LRF after returning from the US on 24 June where he represented the CPRC as our missionary at the synod held in Grandville PRC. While Rev. McGeown was in Ballymena, I preached in Limerick for the saints there.

Rebekah Faith Halliday, the second daughter of Gareth and Leona, was baptized on 3 July. May the Lord fulfill His gracious covenant promises to the children of believers! Becky and Emily Feenstra and Breanna Meelker of Redlands PRC worshipped with us (26 June)—pictured below after a picnic with us in

the grounds of the 2012 BRF Conference centre. Corina and Mel from Chilliwack Free Reformed Church in British Columbia, Canada, school friends of Rosanna Ferguson, the daughter of our former pastor, Rev. Ron Hanko, joined us at the Sunday services of 3 July.



### Other News

Mary recently calculated that the CPRC Bookstore has sold 3,216 books in the last five years (2 July, 2006–2 July, 2011), not counting RFPA Bookclub sales of new books to RFPA Bookclub members. The top 10 books are, in order, *Keeping God's Covenant* (237), *The Five Points of Calvinism* (220), *Prosperous Wicked and Plagued Saints* (87), *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (80), *Doctrine According to Godliness* (77), *The Confessions and Church Order of the PRC* (76), *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom* (74), *When You Pray* (71), *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (66), and *The Sixteenth-Century Reformation of the Church* (58). The top sellers for this past year are *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (66), *Peace for the Troubled Heart* (34), *Contending for the Faith* (27), and *Bound to Join* (22).

Translations have been relatively quiet in the last two months: 4 Italian and 3 German pieces were added to our website. With increased running costs because of our new building and limited feedback, we decided no longer to continue the Reformed Witness Hour broadcast. The programmes are excellent but we are on the edge of the radio station's main catchment area. When we notified Radio North (outside Londonderry), they reduced the fee for us, while they line someone else to take our slot on Sunday mornings next year. We accepted the lower charge.

Last month, I gave a lecture, "For Whom Did Christ Die?" in both South Wales (2 June) and Lurgan in Northern Ireland (24 June). The speech in South Wales went well. Earlier that day we visited Sonia Hill, an elderly lady, now in a rest home, taking her out for lunch. The lecture in Lurgan, our second in that town, also went well. Friends in Belfast lined up a minibus so that they could bring others; eleven of them came in total. That made about twenty visitors, apart from people from the CPRC. The question and answer time after the speech was lively and included disagreement with one man on total depravity, for he wanted some sort of goodness in humanity along

with some sort of common grace. The lecture and the questions are on the CPRC YouTube page ([www.youtube.com/cprcni](http://www.youtube.com/cprcni)). For this speech, Mary and I prepared and produced on our duplicator a short accompanying pamphlet to give to those who attended. Rev. Rodney Kleyn has since asked a publisher friend of his from Edgerton PRC to make copies of this pamphlet more professionally, in connection with my giving this speech in Spokane on 5 August (D.V.).

### Upcoming US Trip

In just a few days, Mary and I fly out for our biennial trip to North America (18 July–15 August). We are trying to get round the various Protestant Reformed churches and mission fields; this time we included Edmonton and Lacombe, for they are churches that I have never even seen and so I have never preached there. That fixed the area of our trip to the NW. Our niece Mandy Hanko is to be married in Lynden PRC on Friday 29 July, so that big event determined another date. Camping has been arranged with some of Mary's family in Glacier, MT, for the week beginning Monday 1 August. I am to give a speech in Spokane on Friday 5 August on "For Whom Did Christ Die?" (the title has been changed from that which I wrote in my last bimonthly letter). This means that after we arrive in Missoula airport in Montana (19 July), God willing, and meet up with Mary's parents (who are driving out west to join us in our travels), and have a meal with a *Covenant Reformed News* reader who lives in the general area, we will be driving more or less counter-clockwise, sight-seeing, camping, etc., and preaching and giving PowerPoint presentations in several Protestant Reformed churches: 24 July, Edmonton (AM) and Lacombe (PM); 31 July, Lynden (AM & PM); 7 August, Spokane (AM & PM). On Monday 8 August, we are to fly from Missoula to Chicago and drive to Grand Rapids in a rented car. Unfortunately, we will only have a few days in western Michigan, for we fly back to Northern Ireland on Monday 15 August after preaching in Hudsonville (AM) and Providence (PM), the day before.

With our North American trip coming up, we have sent out the July *Covenant Reformed News*, the new *British Reformed Journal*, and (now) the bimonthly letter! We have more writing, visiting, etc., to do in our remaining days in Northern Ireland. While we are away, Rev. Heath Bleyenbergh of Providence PRC is to preach for the CPRC for three Sundays (24 & 31 July and 14 August) and for the LRF on Sunday 7 August.

It will be great to see many of you again this summer. Thank you all for your encouragement and prayers.

By grace,  
*Rev. & Mary Stewart*