

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

16 February, 2017

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Church Visitors

Rev. and Sue VanOverloop (Grace PRC) and Sid and Lisa Miedema (Byron Center PRC) stayed with us at the CPRC manse from Friday 12-Saturday 21 January. It is especially enjoyable when our annual church visitors come with their wives!



Rev. & Sue VanOverloop, Lisa & Sid Miedema

As well as preaching at both Lord's Day services, Pastor VanOverloop led a Tuesday morning Bible study on "Paul's Prayers for the Ephesians" and gave a Wednesday night lecture on "Content With Who I Am in Christ." The *Ballymena Guardian* and the Belfast *News Letter* carried articles promoting this speech. The congregation and visitors appreciated Rev. VanOverloop's ministry.

Building the wall in Nehemiah 3 was the theme of this year's official church visitation with the CPRC Council (Monday, 16 January). What a great example to the church of all ages: In Nehemiah's day, everyone joined in the work despite the opposition of the ungodly!

Our congregational dinner in the Ross Park Hotel was a good night of fellowship (Friday, 20 January). Our thanks to William Graham for his fine work as the after-dinner quizmaster. Besides our four church

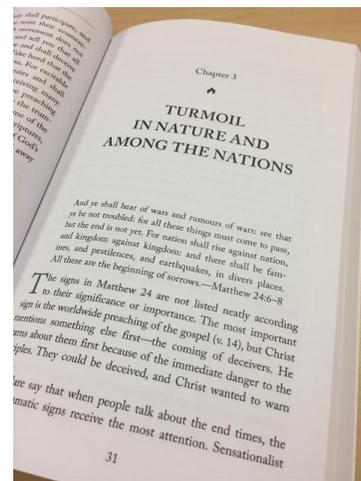
visitors, most of the congregation, and a good number of friends, our nephew Travis Hanko (Grace PRC) was also present at the dinner, having flown to Northern Ireland for a couple of days during a university course in the Netherlands.

Alicia Prins and Dana VanDyke (Trinity PRC) were in Northern Ireland in late December, staying with David and Kirstin Crossett. Our thanks to them and the church visitors for bringing over a good number of books for our church.

Rev. McGeown's New Book

The CPRC Bookstore has been getting out a lot of RFPA literature of late, including Prof. Hanko's excellent book, *Corrupting the Word of God: The History of the Well-Meant Offer*.

Our current bestseller is Rev. McGeown's *Called to Watch for Christ's Return* (www.cprf.co.uk/bookstore/calledtowatch.html). Apart from our BRFC Conference books, which we sell at a very low cost, no other book has sold so many copies in such a relatively short period.



Our biggest difficulty lies in keeping up a stock of them through couriers travelling from Grand Rapids to the CPRC or the

Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF). For the present, I am holding off sending articles on *Called to Watch for Christ's Return* to the Ballymena press because we are running low.

Three weeks ago, I e-mailed a piece to newspapers in the Cookstown area of Northern Ireland, where Pastor McGeown was brought up and where most of his family live. The *Mid-Ulster Mail* put it on their website and linked to it from their Facebook account. They also published it in full and prominently in their weekly printed version, along with two photos of the author and his book (2 February). This garnered more sales than any such article we have had published in any (secular) newspaper before. Hopefully, some of the new people reading this superb book on Matthew 24-25 and the end times will develop a spiritual taste for the truth of the biblical and Reformed faith, and will want other materials from the CPRC Bookstore in the future.

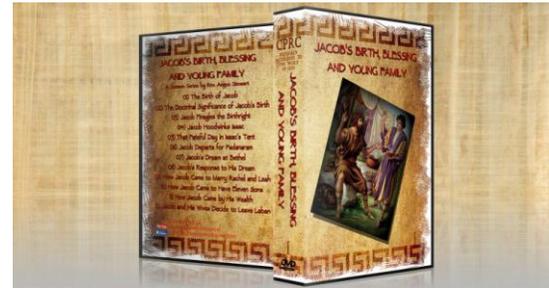
Others

The ministry of the blessed Word continues in the CPRC in various forms. On Tuesday mornings, we have been tracing the Old Testament's teaching on holy wars from the Pentateuch through the historical books, especially Joshua and Judges.

We recently concluded six Wednesday night classes on "The Government of and Offices in the Church" (*Belgic Confession* 30). We refuted Charismaticism, Episcopalianism, and Anabaptism by insisting on only and all the three permanent, ordinary, and biblical church offices: pastors, elders, and deacons. On this scriptural basis, we then considered church office-bearers in connection with the Spirit of Christ, good order, and broader assemblies (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm). It was good to have with us in the class two visitors from the Republic of Ireland, one from Co. Wexford and one from Co. Limerick, Colm Ring of the LRF.

Last Sunday's services included the 31st

sermon on "The Life of Jacob," the longest series I have preached (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/OTseries.htm). Stephen Murray has already produced two of the three box sets on Jacob (CD or DVD), covering sermons 1-12 entitled "Jacob's Birth, Blessing, and Young Family" (Gen. 25-31) and sermons 13-22 on "Jacob's Enemies: Laban, Esau, and the Canaanites" (Gen. 31-35).



The last two months have been very quiet on the translation front, with just 10 added to our website: 5 Spanish, 2 Hungarian, 2 Indonesian, and 1 Portuguese (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm). However, we have also received our first ever subtitled video. Tibor Bognár, who was at the 2016 British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference, added Hungarian subtitles to a YouTube video of my sermon on "The Sovereignty of God (I)." This video is atop our special Hungarian page, which contains some 185 translations (www.cprf.co.uk/languages/hungarian.htm).

With 2017 being the 500th anniversary of the great Protestant Reformation, the CPRC is delighted that Prof. Engelsma has agreed to come to Northern Ireland to give some speeches in October and early November, and to preach on three Lord's Days. We are holding a mini-conference on Saturday, 21 October, DV, the week before the PR Seminary conference in Grand Rapids. This also means that I am released to preach for the LRF on Sundays 29 October and 5 November, when Rev. McGeown is to be in the US to speak at Reformation conferences in Michigan and Colorado, respectively.

May the Lord be with all His believing children, the children of the Reformation,

Rev. & Mary Stewart