

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

13 June, 2017

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Two Lectures

“Are Unbelievers in God’s Image?” was the title of a speech in the CPRC (12 May). This is a crucial subject, especially in our day, for the false view is being pedaled to support homosexuality, women in church office, universal grace, etc.

What is the nature of the *imago dei*? How does Scripture define it (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10)? What is the relation between the image, the likeness and the glory of God? What do Martin Luther and the Reformed confessions teach? Did you realize that the claim that unbelievers share the divine image means that believers have *two* images of God and already had one before their conversion?



Are Unbelievers in God’s Image?



A good number were in attendance, with others watching live on-line. Both the speech (with slides) and the question session afterwards are on-line in video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=t73YQhEzKt0). A write-up of the lecture is being published in several articles in *Salt Shakers*, the magazine of the young people in the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church (CERC) in Singapore (www.cprf.co.uk/articles/unbelieversinimage.html).

Last week, Mary and I were in South Wales for a lecture on “N. T. Wright, Justification and the Reformation” (8 June). Wright is a former Anglican Bishop of Durham (#4 in the Church of England) and the most influential spokesman for the New Perspective(s) on Paul (NPP) with its radical redefinition of justification, the key doctrine which launched the Reformation half a millennium ago.

It was good for me to have an occasion to read more about Wright and the NPP, for they are influencing evangelicals in the UK and around the world, as well as the Federal Vision, especially in North America. As one considers these heretical movements, the truth of the biblical and Reformed faith stands out more sharply and strongly than ever before. Prof. Engelsma’s latest RFPA book, *The Gospel Truth of Justification*, is a superb contemporary work on this glorious doctrine. It is also refreshing because so many of the critiques of Wright and the NPP are weak and half-hearted.

This speech was our first meeting at our new venue in South Wales. Some days after we booked the hall, the British Prime Minister arranged the General Election for the same date. On the day itself, we discovered that Margam Community Centre was also a polling station!

However, our room was in a different part of the building, so that was not a problem. Whereas the turnout of the UK electorate was high (68.7%), sadly the date clash did not help the turnout at our Reformed lecture. A lot more will be reached by the audio (www.cprc.co.uk/ntwrightjustification.mp3) and video (www.youtube.com/user/CPRCNI) though.

Church Activities

With the end of the Monday night catechism and Wednesday night *Belgic Confession* classes for the season, our annual family visitation began. This year our text was Galatians 6. All but 3 of the 25 visits have been completed. It has been an encouraging and edifying time.

Our Tuesday morning class continues through the summer. We are presently studying the division of the promised land in the second half of Joshua, material not often covered but instructive chapters of God's Word!

After 9 sermons on "The Conclusion to Christ's Farewell Discourse" (John 16), we have now begun a series on "The Healing of the Lame Beggar" (Acts 3-4). There is a lot to be learned here regarding miraculous healings (as opposed to those of Charismaticism and Romanism), evangelism, how the apostles interpreted Old Testament predictive prophecy and the periods in which it is (and is not!) fulfilled, defending the faith, persecution, etc.

Others

Besides the generous giving of our members, we have had sizable donations from Scotland, USA, England, and Australia. The CPRC has been able to increase its giving to the 2018 budget of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF). Our thanks to you in the PRC for helping us financially with this mission work.

The CPRC Bookstore had a lot of sales in May. However, our translation work seems to be slowing down of late (sadly!). The last two months saw the addition of 7 Hungarian, 1 Czech, and 1 Portuguese (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm).

A previous bimonthly letter mentioned that Hungarian subtitles were added to a CPRC sermon on "The Sovereignty of God." Tibor, the translator, reports that this was watched by three classes of students in a Roman Catholic school in Hungary: "There was a girl in the first group who stated that

the Bible does not teach predestination but it is a human invention. The second group was silent because the students were astonished. The third group said that it was a good sermon.... [Since even] the 'Reformed' pastors in this city are Arminians, it is possible that these students heard/read their first real Reformed sermon in their life."

Elder Brian Crossett is the CPRC delegate to the PRC Synod in Hudsonville. Possibly this year will see more of our members in the US than ever before. Marco Barone has already been; Jennifer Hanko is presently there; later Philip and Susan Hall and family, Rev. McGeown (as well as his sister, Shelley, and her family), David, Kristin, and Sophie Crossett, and Mary and I will all cross the Atlantic, D.V. Some of these saints will make the trip more than once. All enjoy worshiping with and visiting fellow saints and family in the PRC.

In our trip (17 July – 14 August), I am to preach in 2 churches in Washington (Spokane and Lynden), 2 churches in Alberta (Edmonton and Lacombe), and 2 churches in Michigan (Providence and Hudsonville). It will be good to be back with members of our sister churches in North America.

May the Lord be with you all!

In Christ,
Rev. & Mary Stewart