

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

9 February, 2018

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

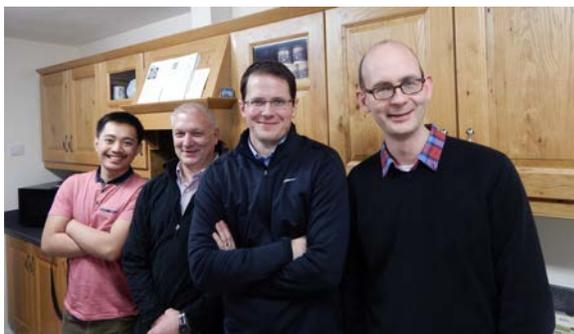
Church Visitors

Rev. Nathan Decker (Trinity PRC) and Elder Sid Miedema (Byron Center PRC) were this year's church visitors in the CPRC (18-25 January) and the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF) (25-29 January). It was good to have both of these men back with us again!



Annual Congregational Dinner

Their first engagement was the CPRC annual congregational dinner (19 January). Besides members and friends of the church in Ballymena, Rev. McGeown, Colm Ring, Manuel Kuhs, Chester Mansona, and Sam and Jason Watterson of the LRF made the four-hour journey to join us (and that is only one way!). After a good meal, William Graham asked the questions for an excellent table quiz.



Chester Mansona, Sid Miedema, Rev. Decker, Rev. McGeown

Rev. Decker preached at both of our Sunday services (21 January) and led a fine Bible study on Psalm 73 at the church on Tuesday morning. On the next night, his lecture on "Living Wisely

in a Digital Age" was well attended and the on-line video has attracted a lot of interest (www.youtube.com/watch?v=TorlK7c_CYw).

Besides the official church visitation with the CPRC Council, our two American brethren had dinner with several families and visited with other saints. On the morning of their departure for Limerick, they even fitted in breakfast with a former member (Kristin Crossett) and a current member (Carolyn Prins) of the church that Rev. Decker pastors.

Teaching in the CPRC

"Ezekiel's Prophecies Against Tyre" (Ezek. 26:1-28:19) was the subject of a recent 4-sermon series in the CPRC. God judged that wealthy island trading centre so that it was reduced to a rock upon which fishermen repaired and cleaned their nets. The prophet pictured the city as a great ship filled with international merchants and all their wares, but it was going to sink to the bottom of the Mediterranean. The king of Tyre thought that he was wiser than Daniel and even a god. His realm was another Eden for precious stones and gold, and he was like Adam or a cherub guarding the garden. Yet he was a fallen son of Adam and the image of Satan, and he would soon be cast from his garden of God and destroyed. The 4 sermons are on-line in audio (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/OTseries.htm) and video (www.youtube.com/user/CPRCNI), and soon will be available in a box set of CDs or DVDs for just £6.

In our Tuesday morning Bible study, we have been considering the Feast of Tabernacles, the most joyful of the Old Testament feasts. We have looked at its institution in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and its celebration in Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, and I Kings. More material is to come, including 4 major Old Testament passages and John 7.

Since the middle of November, our Wednesday night doctrine class has been studying the subject of baptism in connection with *Belgic Confession* 34. Our treatment has included the baptismal formula, the administrators of baptism, the requirements for a valid baptism,

immersionism, the mode of baptism, the meaning of baptism, etc. (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm). It is a rich subject that opens up a lot of Scriptures.

The fortnightly Ladies' Bible Study, which meets on Friday mornings, is now discussing Rev. Smit's book, *The Fruit the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. The fortnightly Saturday night Men's Bible Study has begun *Studies in Acts* by Mark Hoeksema. These fine RFPA resources are already proving beneficial to our members. Almost all of the copies of Rev. Brian Huizinga's "Keeping the Sword Drawn" brought over by the two church visitors have gone already (www.cprf.co.uk/pamphlets/keeping_sworddrawn.pdf). Some of the saints in the CPRC are also using a yearly Bible reading programme that Mary prepared from two existing programmes.

Others

"God's Saving Will in the New Testament" was the subject of a lecture I gave in South Wales on 25 January. There are two main Greek words that deal with willing, determining, desiring, wishing, etc., in the New Testament. What does a study of this concept in the New Testament reveal about the will of God's decree and the will of His command? We had a blessed night of fellowship with the saints, including with Timothy Spence, a member of the CPRC who is at a university in South Wales. Also a good number of books and box sets were purchased. The video is on-line (www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPml_52T_0).

The last couple of months have seen 14 translations added to our website (www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm): 6 Hungarian (by 2 young men who are coming to the 2018 British Reformed Fellowship Conference), 6 German (on Pentecostal issues by a brother who last did some translations for us in 2010), 1 Italian (by a Calvinistic Baptist in Sicily), and 1 Hindi (Prof. Engelsma's pamphlet "Try the Spirits" by Sam Salve in India).

We added our second video with French subtitles, thanks to Timothée Rapak of Reims. This brings our foreign language videos to 28 (www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2Y5Eq5r6y2HmXGp8oXTSI2QS6_FJYjyJ). The USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia often feature in the top 5 countries using the CPRC

YouTube page. However, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, of all places, have broken into the top 5 in recent times!

We continue to get a lot of good feedback. "I love the steadfast, Calvinist, Reformed theology [of the CPRC] on the internet. Bless you!" (Florida, USA). "Just a note to say thank you for the great book, *Knowing God and Man*. I couldn't lay it down once I started reading it. It is profound truth and an absolutely brilliant book. I will be using its contents for many references" (Northern Ireland). "I read the excellent article on the subject of Lefèvre ['Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: Pioneer of French Reform']...I would love to quote it in an essay I'm writing to raise awareness of Lefèvre and his influence on the Reformation in France" (France). "Thank you for the books you kindly sent me. They will be very useful in the year ahead and also for the *British Reformed Journals*. The materials you send me are so appreciated in these days of Arminian churches" (England). "I have been a long-time reader of your website and have encouraged many to read your articles. One of the members of our church has recently translated some articles for you into Portuguese" (Australia).

Bookings for the 2018 British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference in Hebron Hall, Cardiff (21-28 July) are coming on very well. Already we have heard from people in Germany, Wales, America, Northern Ireland, Brazil, England, Australia, Hungary, the Republic of Ireland, etc., that they are coming. The theme of "The Reformed Family—According to the Word of God" will be developed by our two main speakers, Prof. David Engelsma and Rev. Andy Lanning. The two-day trips include a fifteenth-century castle and Wales' most popular heritage attraction, which is also one of Europe's leading open-air museums. Much more information, including prices and the booking form, is on-line (<http://brfconference.weebly.com>). The North American booking secretary is Briana Prins (bprins@covenantchristianhs.org). Do join us!

Thank you for your support and prayers in Christ,

Rev. & Mary Stewart