

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

27 December, 2018

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

US Trip

“The RFPA, the CPRC, and the Spread of the Truth” was the title of my lecture on 27 September at the annual meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association in Grace PRC (www.youtube.com/user/ReformedFreePub). Our congregation and its witness is massively helped by the RFPA, so it was good to accept its speaking invitation.

The day before, I gave a chapel speech for Eastside Christian School in Grand Rapids on “The Sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17). That evening, at the request of Principal Pete Adams, I delivered a lecture with slides on “Martin and Katie Luther: The Reformation of Marriage” to supporters of Eastside. Sadly, the CPRC does not have a Christian school, so it is an extra privilege to do something to help Reformed education.

Mary and I made our first ever visit to Wingham PRC in Ontario, Canada, on Sunday, 30 September, when I preached at both services and gave a PowerPoint presentation on the witness of the CPRC in the evening. We stayed at the home of Travis Hanko, our nephew, and his wife, Averly (Kikkert), whom we first met at the 2016 British Reformed Fellowship conference in Northern Ireland.

On Wednesday, 3 October, “Martin and Katie Luther: The Reformation of Marriage” was again the subject, this time for Pittsburgh PRC's 21st Annual Reformation Lecture. There was a good attendance, including some who had watched CPRC YouTube videos. It had been some years since we were last in Pittsburgh and it was lovely to see some old friends, as well as learning from the experiences of Rev. and Mary Bruinsma in missions and smaller churches.

Between Wingham and Pittsburgh, Mary and I stopped off at Niagara-on-the-Lake (where some significant conferences were held involving missions, fundamentalism, and dispensationalism) and the powerful Niagara Falls. After Pittsburgh, we hiked and dined with Lee Carl Finley, who has had an article on Job published in the *British Reformed Journal*, and his wife, Jennifer, and their daughter, Rebecca,

in Ohio. We also benefited from our visit to the Creation Museum in Kentucky.

On the Lord's Day of 7 October, I preached in Southeast PRC and Zion PRC, where I also showed CPRC slides. Meeting the saints in the PRC is always a blessing and it helps strengthen our sister-church relationship with you. After enjoying our relaxing trip and visiting family and friends, we flew home armed with as many RFPA books and PR pamphlets as our weight allowance would permit.

Back in the manse in Northern Ireland, we met up with Rev. Ken Koole, who had been preaching and teaching catechism classes in the CPRC during the last two weeks. The next Sunday, he took the services in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship (LRF).

Other News

Due in part to the pile-up of other work after our trip to America (and Canada) for the RFPA speech (24 September - 8 October), my usual bimonthly letter has become, in this instance, a quarterly letter, covering the period from 17 August almost to the end of this calendar year. During these four months and ten days, we had an excellent haul of 60 new translations, including 14 Hungarian, 7 Portuguese (by a Brazilian believer who migrated to Australia and his brother back in Brazil), 6 Polish (by a new translator), 6 Russian (including the “Foreword” and the first three chapters to the British Reformed Fellowship book, *Be Ye Holy* by Profs. Hanko and Engelsma), 3 N. Sotho and 3 Zulu (all of the *Three Forms of Unity* in these two languages were supplied to me by a brother from South Africa), 1 Afrikaans, 1 French, and 1 Italian.

However, it is our Spanish section that has seen the largest increase in the last quarter of a year (www.cprf.co.uk/languages/spanish.html). Doner Bartolon of First PRC in Grand Rapids sent us 18 translations, mostly of Rev. Rodney Kleyn's Reformed Witness Hour addresses on eschatology, along with links to their Spanish video recordings on the PRC Español YouTube channel. We added Doner's contact details at the bottom of all of our 195 Spanish translations and he has already heard from two interested brethren in Chile.

Besides visitors to our Sunday services from the PRC (about ten saints), England, and Canada, Mary and I enjoyed hosting Peter and

Bec DeJong from Launceston Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Australia (13-15 October), as well as Giovanni and Sarah Pecora from Turin in Italy (10-17 November). The Pecoras heard of the CPRC through the over 550 items on our Italian webpage (www.cprf.co.uk/languages/italian.htm).

The CPRC Reformation Day Lecture this year was titled, “Two Men from Trier: Karl Marx (and Communism) and Caspar Olevianus (and the Heidelberg Catechism)” (26 October). 2018 was the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx from Trier in western Germany. Trier is also the city of Caspar Olevianus, one of the principal authors of our Heidelberg Catechism. The speech compared and contrasted these two men from Trier: their lives, their main works, their ideas, and the results of their ideas. Key issues in the clash of worldviews between Marx’s atheistic communism and Olevianus’ Reformed faith include origins, alienation, work, private property, class struggle, the good life, history, and the end times! Much of the left-wing, anti-Christian, politically-correct world is based on Marxist and neo-Marxist thinking. The video, complete with a PowerPoint presentation, is on-line (www.youtube.com/watch?v=tN34URO2NXU).

I gave the same speech, also with slides, in South Wales (22 November). The lecture was very well attended and it was followed by a lively discussion.

My previous speech in South Wales was “Christ Our Sacrifice in Isaiah 53” (31 August). Before the lecture, Mary and I headed to Devon in SW England to check out two possible venues for a British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) conference. The first was Heatree Activity Centre in the wild and rugged Dartmoor National Park (www.heatreeactivitycentre.co.uk). The second was Brunel Manor in the English Riviera, the mansion in which Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the great mechanical and civil engineer, intended to retire (www.brunelmanor.com).

Reports of July’s BRF conference on “The Reformed Family—According to the Word of God” with Prof. David Engelsma and Rev. Andy Lanning were carried in the *English Churchman* (14 & 21 September) and *Evangelicals Now* (October). An article about Rev. Martyn McGeown’s excellent book *Grace and Assurance: The Message of the Canons of Dordt* was published in the *Ballymena Guardian* (13 December) and the *Tyrone Courier*.

Our Tuesday morning Bible class has

enjoyed studying the burnt, peace, sin, and trespass offerings in Leviticus 1-7 and how they picture the work of Jesus Christ. Some of the results of these studies are to be found on-line in two tables: “The 6 Stages in Offering the 4 Bloody Sacrifices in Leviticus 1-7” and “Lessons Regarding Sin, Christ, and Our Calling from the 4 Bloody Sacrifices in Leviticus 1-7” (www.cprf.co.uk/quotes.htm#sacrifices).

The second and third box sets of the Wednesday night classes on baptism from *Belgic Confession* 34 are entitled “OT Prophecy on the Children of Believers in the NT Age” (covering Isaiah 40-61, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel 34-37 in 6 CDs) and “NT Teaching on the Children of Believers” (8 CDs treating passages in all four gospel accounts, Acts and most of Paul’s epistles, plus the relationship between circumcision and baptism, and the Reformed view of covenant children). These doctrinal box sets are available from the CPRC at a very reasonable rate and all the Belgic Confession audios can also be listened to free on-line (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm).

The CPRC YouTube page recently reached the 1,000 subscriber mark (www.youtube.com/user/CPRCNI). Stephen Murray, our audiovisual man, has put many hours of hard work into putting thousands of our videos on-line, and making DVDs and CDs.

The new *British Reformed Journal* (BRJ) was recently published, with articles on “Answering the Fool” (Rev. McGeown), “Our Covenant God: Friend, Husband, and Father (3)” (Seminarian Matt Kortus), “Martin Luther and God’s Saving Righteousness (2)” (Rev. Stewart), and “God’s Universal Church: A Report on the 2018 BRF Conference” (Rhonda Boer). US subscribers will soon be receiving their copies. Subscription for 4 issues of the BRJ for those in North America costs \$20 (US). Simply make your check payable to “Mary Stewart” and mail it (with your name and address) to **Mr. Fred Hanko, at his new address: 725 Baldwin St., #A-18, Jenison, MI 49428.**

Our thanks to all who sent us letters, cards, and e-mails. We ask for your indulgence in not replying individually for we already post thousands of items every year (*Covenant Reformed News*, BRJ, books, free pamphlets, and other church work).

The Lord be with you all in 2019!

Rev. & Mary Stewart